TRANS-BORDER COOPERATION AS A FACTOR OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper describes trends, forms and results of trans-border cooperation of the commune of Dukla located in the northern part of the Podkarpackie province in the territory of the administrative district of Krosno bordering Slovakia.

The research shows that the commune of Dukla undertakes and develops trans-border cooperation with Slovak partners in many interesting fields and to do this they apply for financial help from the European Union. As result of undertaken actions within such cooperation, a lot of planned projects were achieved, which contributes to socio-economic improvement in the commune under research, first of all improvement of standard of living, which in turn fosters further development.

Keywords / Klúčové slová: trans-border cooperation, local development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Among theories of regional development, worth mentioning are “from the bottom” theories presenting various possibilities of regional development to great extent independent from central decisions and actions. Such theories clearly emphasize how one’s own strength and endogenous potential as well as cooperation with other regions are important.¹ Therefore nowadays, mobilization of endogenous potential of regional development aiming at constant dynamism of local development is commonly considered as the main motor factor of regional development. Local development is meant here as actions undertaken by local actors (local governments, business entities and other institutions and organizations) who consider valorization of local resources and territorial specificity. So, local development signifies “the bottom” way of generating development dynamism based on endogenous resources using all internal developmental potential of different spatial scale including territorial groups characterized by some coherence. Finally, local development are attitudes and actions showing readiness to “take responsibility for one’s own fate” and involving majority of

¹ Głąbicka K., Grewiński M., Polityka spójności społeczno-gospodarczej Unii Europejskiej, Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa 2005, s. 35.
local community. The issue of local development is not only “development in a local scale”, it is above all the “bottom” character of development dynamism. Apart from the “bottom” type of dynamism, local development shall be also understood as a whole including not only economic but also social, cultural, ecologic, political and other aspects of development.²

Local development, however, does not exclude national interference which is of complementary importance and may (and even should) encourage local initiatives. Similarly in local development, investments from outside the region are not excluded provided they are included in the network of territorial relations and integration with local environment. Now, the necessity to open territories (local environment) to the endogenous environment and the need to develop the network of inter-regional, or even international, relationship are being emphasized. The benefits of close relationships with such can bring positive results if they are totally open. It means involvement of local types of actions in international division of labour including all market and business requirements essential to valorize local resources.³

On the other hand, possibilities of development of borderland areas need to be associated with their geographical location, features of natural environment and human-made environment as well as with people themselves. Provided, however, the developmental monofunctionality of such areas is given up in favour of its multifunctionality. And trans-border cooperation is a chance here as it supports the increase of socio-economic promotion and standard of living of the areas and thus it improves social and economic coherence with other regions.⁴

Trans-border cooperation is an each commonly undertaken action aiming at strengthening and further development of neighbourhood relations between communities and territorial authorities of two or more partners, and also at making agreements essential to realize projects that have been planned.⁵

In most cases, local and regional communities and territorial authorities as determined according to internal law of partner countries become subjects of such cooperation. The cooperation works on different levels of institutional organization – among others in governmental commissions, commissions of spatial planning, trans-border euro-regions, it is also established between particular communes. The cooperation is carried out on the basis of agreements or without them, and it includes structures established by national, regional or local authorities. It is optional to enter

² Pietrzyk I., Polityka regionalna Unii Europejskiej i regiony w państwach członkowskich, PWN, Warszawa 2006, s. 32–42.
³ Pecqueur B., Le developpement local, Syros/Alternatives, Paris 1989, s. 51., Pietrzyk I., Polityka ..., op. cit., s. 33.
such cooperation which respects various national affiliation of participating countries, therefore, it does not disturb territorial integrity of particular countries.6

The principal purpose of trans-border cooperation is to bridge obstacles that could divide bordering countries and this way get rid of barriers resulting from the existence of borders themselves thus making the border only administrational one. Moreover, it helps ease the results of borders, which improves standard of living of borderland communities.7

The Madrid Convention and European Charter of Borderline and Cross-Border Regions clearly show that suggested scope of trans-border cooperation can be wide and multi-aspectual and at the same time it can be different for particular regions.8 Therefore, trans-border actions undertaken by most of them are most often included in the following groups:

- **Economy** (improvement of cooperation of small and middle-sized business entities, development of connections between suppliers and recipients from particular neighbouring countries, getting rid of institutional and informational barriers that make contacts difficult, free flow of goods, capital and workforce, including solving structural problems of trans-border work market and mutual research and development of new manufacturing technologies);
- **Communication infrastructure, transport and personal cross-border movement** (planning, building and maintenance of communication lines and other technical appliances of beyond-local significance, crossing national border, so creating unified system of local public transport);
- **Spatial management and regional policy** (continuous trans-border monitoring of spatial management by means of socio-economic analyses, creation of mutual regional plans of direct implementation as the most gone form of trans-border spatial management and also determination of coherent concepts of urban development for neighbouring cities/towns and other inhabited areas);
- **Scientific research, education** (cooperation of universities and professional schools, mutual educational establishments and recognition of university diplomas);
- **Tourism and tourism economy** (establishment of trans-border concepts in order to strengthen the significance of tourism as an important economic factor of region attractiveness, coordination of decisions taken in connection with mutual foundation and financing of tourism infrastructure and proper actions making free border crossing easier, especially in tourism movement);
- **Culture and cultural heritage** (learning about neighbours’ cultural heritage, mutual language learning, cultural exchange: exhibitions, plein air and

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7 *Europejska Karta Regionów Granicznych i Transgranicznych*, SERG, Szczecin 1995.

8 Ibidem.
cooperation of cultural centres and also mutual organization of various mass events, e.g. sports, tourist or music events);

- **Natural environment and nature protection** (actions meant to successfully protect the most precious natural, landscape and cultural borderland areas by creating: international biosphere reserves, trans-border areas of protected land and international parks, as well as common waste management, organized creation of coherent planning and environment management system in particular trans-border spheres due to continuous information exchange and consultations on pollution and dangers);

- **Social issues** (in the field of health care – it is possible to establish norms of trans-border aid of emergency services and agreements on health care including conditions of expenses redistribution of potential treatment);

- **Public services** (cooperation of fire brigades and police);

- **Communal infrastructure – technical and social** (decision harmonization of organization and management of such services as: water supply and treatment, gas and energy supply, besides it is possible to organize, maintain and commonly use communal appliances);

- **Agriculture**;

- **Prevention and control of damages caused by natural disasters** (e.g. mutual aid in emergencies and prevention steps in a form of common monitoring systems in the case of e.g. avalanche danger, forest fire danger, water and rainfall level, concentration of chemical elements in the atmosphere and others);

- **Information policy** (establishment and update of mutual basic statistical data, edition of common press, international publications, radio stations);

- **Leisure and recreation** (creation of interesting trans-border recreational areas)

- **Improvement of telecommunication and information technology** (harmonization of rates for telephone calls and establishment of one area code for the whole trans-border region so that the calls were not treated as international ones);

- **Cooperation of various regional social and economic organizations**;

- **Region promotion** (based mainly on integrated system promoting the whole trans-border region in other markets);

- **Applying for EU funds to be used to implement development projects** (agreements on the use of special European help programs in order to make the access to financial sources easier).  

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2 BODY OF THE PAPER

2.1 PURPOSE, SOURCE MATERIAL

The purpose of the article is to identify trends, forms and results of trans-border cooperation of the commune of Dukla located in the northern part of the Podkarpackie province in the territory of the administrative district of Krosno.

This unit of territorial government was especially chosen to be the subject of the research because it is a trans-border commune which directly borders Slovakia (there is a ca 34km of borderline). The commune owns a road border crossing in Barwinek, which considerably facilitates mutual neighbourhood contacts. Additional criterion taken into account in the process of commune selection was the fact that the commune of Dukla has undertaken a trans-border cooperation with two Slovak territorial units, which, considering their affiliation to EU, creates convenient conditions of such cooperation.

Data and information from Dukla City and Commune Hall are source material in this article.

2.2 RESEARCH RESULTS

The trans-border cooperation between the commune of Dukla and Okres Svidnik (Kraj Presovski) and also Starost Office in Ladomirova (Kraj Presovski) was initiated at the beginning of the 90’s, soon after socio-economic changes which facilitated new possibilities of cooperation between Poland and Slovakia. However, at first it was based mainly on informal cooperation, and only later on partnership agreements were made between those territorial units, i.e. local authorities of the City and Commune of Dukla and their counterparts abroad. The first agreement, made with the Starost Office in Ladomirova, was signed on 4 January 2001 in Dukla. Then, on 11 May 2007, the Okres Svidnik joined the so far two-party agreement during a Trans-border Seminar in Svidnik.

The principal aims of trans-border cooperation are to enhance relations between neighbouring regions, develop their infrastructure, foster economic cooperation, protect the environment, and to promote tourism, and cultural and educational activities.\(^{10}\)

In order to further develop the cooperation between the parties, a list of mutual actions meant to be performed on both regional and local levels was formed. It was clearly emphasized, however, that the plan shall be verified annually to secure systematic character of undertaken cooperation.\(^{11}\)


\(^{11}\) Porozumienie o współpracy..., op. cit.
The partnership agreements regulate the scope of cooperation carried on in the following fields:

- **Functioning of local governments** (their structure, competence, work and mutual exchange of expertise);
- **Protection of natural environment, communal services** (above all care for natural environment, mutual waste utilization and school cooperation within ecological education of children and youth);
- **Public safety** (both-side information and insights flow in order to improve safety)
- **Culture** (organization of cultural events aiming at exchange of bands and soloists, besides monitoring of plentiful monuments of historical and ethnic heritage of both regions and obviously cooperation between primary and junior high schools);
- **Tourism** (common organization of various types of tourist events such as fairs, acquaintance with tourist offers and marking tourist routes);
- **Company cooperation** (support of trade development and intensification of cooperation between Polish and Slovak companies and agro-tourist farms);
- **Sport** (organization of partnership competitions in various sports disciplines, cooperation between sports clubs, hunting clubs, fire teams, which supports common practice and competition);
- **Promotion** (promotion of common projects within the scope of the above issues of the trans-border cooperation).\(^{12}\)

There are the goals that have been achieved so far:

1. **Functioning of local governments**
   In May 2000 in the commune of Dukla a conference on “Strategies of development of rural and rural-urban communes” was held. Among the guests invited to participate in the conference were Slovak local authorities of Ladomirova and Svidnik, representatives of Regional Development Agency from Slovakia and from rural and rural-urban communes of southeastern Poland.\(^{13}\)

2. **Safety**
   In September 2005 the Building of General Emergency Unit in Dukla was opened to the public. The Unit is also the headquarter of the Crisis Reaction Centre which if needed supports borderland Slovak neighbours. The scope of help includes basically: help in the case of flood and other natural disasters, fire protection, help in the case of borderland road accidents. Founding of such emergency unit made the time of reaction to natural disasters and accidents occurring in the commune of Dukla and borderland Slovak area shorter. Also


\(^{13}\) Boczar-Różewicz K., Współpraca..., op. cit., s. 2.
safety on the tourist routes along the Polish-Slovak border and on commonly prepared trans-border tourist routes has been increased.\(^\text{14}\)

3. **Protection of natural environment**
   
   Trans-border cooperation is realized here by means of:
   
   - participation in various types of trainings and seminars organized by both Polish and Slovak partners;
   
   - organization of open-air didactic workshops for teachers (on the area of protected land of the Polish-Slovak borderland);
   
   - education of children and youth by participation in ecological events such as “Earth Day” or “Cleaning the World”.

   On 2 June 2005 representatives of the commune of Dukla participated in the “Seminar on forests” organized by the Starost Office in Ludomirova. The Slovaks prepared a bilingual leaflet on how to protect nature in the Slovak borderland area including forest protection. On the other hand, Inspector for Environmental Protection in the commune of Dukla discussed issues connected with environment protection in the area of the commune of Dukla.

   Moreover, the Slovaks used municipal waste stockyard area in Dukla to perform trainings which were held there in 2001, 2002 and 2005.\(^\text{15}\)

4. **Tourism**

   a) Common work on trans-border tourist routes such as:

   - **Petroleum route** (theme route)
     
     The route that leads through places related to history of oil trade. Its main part: Jasło - Krosno - Sanok - Lesko - Ustrzyki Dolne - Sambor -Borysław -Drohobycz - Lvov makes hiking and bicycle tourism more attractive. In the commune of Dukla the trail goes though Równe and Wietrzno-Ropianka.

   - **The Route of Carpathian Sanctuaries - Krosno - Stropkov** (theme route)
     

   - **The Wooden Architectural Route** (theme route)
     
     The route runs through the Podkarpacie region and includes nine paths. Three of them Krosno-Brzozów, Sanok-Dukla and Jasło-Dębica-Ropczyce run partly through the Low Beskids. The Krosno- Brzozów route in the commune of Dukla runs through: Wietrzno - Chyrowa - Zawadka Rymanowska - Zyndranowa –

\(^\text{14}\) Ibidem, s. 3.
\(^\text{15}\) Ibidem, s. 2.
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Jaśliska.

- *The Wine Trail* (theme route)
  
  It corresponds to the old tradition of wine trade and leads from Krosno-Dukla-Barwinek or Jaśliska-Slovakia to Hungary.

- *SK3 – trans-border horse riding route from Brenna to Wołosate*.\(^{16}\)

b) Trans-border Tourist Information (TIT) was established in Dukla on 1 January 2006. It offers bilingual or trilingual promotional materials on the whole region of the commune of Dukla and Okres Svidnik. Its main aim is to inform visiting tourists from Poland and abroad about tourist attractions, accommodation, leisure centres, cultural and sports events on the area of the borderland.

c) On 1-2 July, for the first time, the Trans-border Tourist Fair was organized in Dukla by both partners equally, i.e. the commune of Dukla and the Okres of Svidnik. The goal of the Fair was to present tourist offers from the Polish-Slovak borderland and inform on common tourist attractions, which helped create a uniform Polish-Slovak trans-border tourist offer.

d) Cooperation between tourist information centres and tourist clubs operating on the borderland area of Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine.

e) On 6 August 2006 on the borderline peak in Baranie (situated south of Olchowiec) a 17-metre view tower was open to the public. The tower offers a spectacular view of the whole Polish-Slovak Low Beskids. Its main originators as well as creators were Slovak tourists from Svidnik and surrounding areas – all of them members of a tourist association “Nizke Beskydy”.

5. Culture

The trans-border cooperation in this area includes above all cultural exchange between particular regions and lies in mutual exploration of neighbours’ cultural heritage and participation in various cultural events, such as:

a) The „*Od Rusal do Jana*” Festival of the Lemko Tradition in Zyndranowa – organized since 1990 by the Museum Society from Zyndranowa with the support of the authorities of the commune of Dukla. Lemko from Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine and also tourists participate in the event.

b) The religious-folk festival „*Lemko Kermesz*” in Olchowiec – promoting Lemko culture since 1990. Groups from Poland, Slovakia and Ukraine participate in the event.

c) *Euroregional Craft and Handicraft Fair* in Dukla organized from 2000 by the “*Animare*” Association of Cultural and Ecological Initiatives as an event accompanying the “Dukla Days”. You can buy

\(^{16}\) *Strategia rozwoju Gminy Dukla na lata 2007-2010*, Urząd Miasta i Gminy Dukla 2007, s. 29-31.
souvenirs from craftsmen from Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine and Hungary.

d) Exhibitions and holiday fairs in Dukla, Svidnik and Bardejov during which annually participate craftsmen from Poland and Slovakia.

e) Fairs in Bardejov and Svidnik in which, since 2001, also craftsmen from the commune of Dukla have participated.

Moreover, to meet Dukla inhabitants’ needs and expectations, in 2000, the Centre of Craft and Handicraft was founded in Dukla. It is used as a place of meetings and trainings of those interested in the subject, it also integrates the society of Polish and Slovak craftsmen as they can meet and exchange their experience there. The main aims of the Centre are:

- artistic trainings in the field of: painting, sculpture, weaving, basketry, artistic pottery, decorations made from ecologic materials, lacemaking, cross-stitch embroidery, artistic glass painting and holiday decorations;
- applying for financial support necessary to organize trainings;
- organization of exhibitions and fairs (for this purpose, in 1996-2006, the City Hall in Dukla hosted an art gallery of folk artists under the patronage of “Animare” Association of Cultural and Ecological Initiatives);
- promotion of craft and handicraft by means of fairs and participation of Dukla craftsmen and their Slovak partners in national and foreign fairs.  

6. Sports competition

a) In January 2006 in Pulawy near Rymanów and in Medvieda in Slovakia there was a ski competition organized within the Polish-Slovak EURO-SKI Karpaty spartakiada for children and youth. The commune of Dukla was its main organizer, and it was supported by the Starost Office in Ladomirova and Okres Svidnik. The main goals of the spartakiada were:

- establishment of permanent structures of trans-border cooperation in the field of winter sports, especially participation of children and youth from borderland areas in such events;
- promotion of winter sports – Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing in the trans-border region of the commune of Dukla and Okres Svidnik.

b) In February in Tylawa a cross-country skiing competition was held under the umbrella of the Commune of Dukla Mayor. It was the last Polish-Slovak competition of the EURO-SKI Karpaty winter spartakiada for children and youth.

c) Competition of fire teams – organized interchangeably in the commune of Dukla and Okres Svidnik;

d) Football matches – played during Dukla Days and Svidnik Days.  

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17 Gmina Dukla, Roksana, Krosno 2006, s. 46-47, Boczar-Różewicz K., Rzemioślo i rękodzieło artystyczne jako czynnik rozwoju gospodarczego i kulturowego gminy Dukla, Urząd Miasta i Gminy Dukla 2002, s. 6 i 8, Strategia..., op. cit., s. 23.
7. Promotion

All events organized within the Polish-Slovak trans-border cooperation were promoted in articles included in local press such as “Dukielski Przegląd Samorządowy” and “Poddukińskie Nowinki” – Svidnik newspaper, as well as in regional press such as “Nowyny”, “Nowe Podkarpacie”, “Super Nowości” and “Dziennik Polski” and radio stations “Rzeszów” and “Bieszczady”.

Besides, a lot of bi or trilingual publications were released, among which the following are worth mentioning:
- Catalogue of Handicraft;
- Booklet: Polish-Slovak „EURO-SKI Karpaty 2006” winter spartakiada
- Trans-border Tourist Guide: Commune Dukla – Okres Svidnik – including information indispensable for a potential tourist visiting the trans-border regions.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short name of the project</th>
<th>Period of realization</th>
<th>Co-financing by EU (PLN)</th>
<th>National co-financing (PLN)</th>
<th>Project worth (PLN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building and equipping the general emergency unit in Dukla</td>
<td>06.2003-09.2005</td>
<td>617 855,45 (75,00%)</td>
<td>206 116,10 (25,00%)</td>
<td>823 971,55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and development of trans-border tourism in the East Carpathians</td>
<td>08.2005-07.2006</td>
<td>104 203,80 (75,00%)</td>
<td>34 734,60 (25,00%)</td>
<td>138 938,40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish-Slovak &quot;EURO-SKI Karpaty 2006&quot; winter spartakiada</td>
<td>01.2006-06.2006</td>
<td>59 242,65 (75,00%)</td>
<td>19 747,55 (25,00%)</td>
<td>78 990,20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish-Slovak &quot;EURO-SKI Karpaty 2007&quot; winter spartakiada</td>
<td>01.2007-05.2007</td>
<td>31 083,05 (41,45%)</td>
<td>43 906,20 (58,55%)</td>
<td>74 989,25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>812 384,95 (72,74%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>304 504,45 (27,26%)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1 116 889,60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: data from the Dukla City and Commune Hall.*
We should emphasize that the commune of Dukla skillfully acquires financial support from the EU to realize their developmental projects of trans-border character. So far, the commune of Dukla obtained sufficient financial help from the Interreg III A Community Initiative Program Poland – Slovakia to realize 4 common trans-border projects, obviously including the Slovak partners (table 1). The projects are:
1) “Improving borderland emergency services in the case of flood, fire and road accidents in the borderland area by building and equipping the general emergency unit in Dukla” (infrastructural project);
2) “Promotion and development of trans-border tourism in the East Carpathians, especially in the area of the commune of Dukla and Okres Svidnik” (‘soft’ project, priority: socio-economic development and action: protection of natural and cultural heritage);
3) „Polish-Slovak "EURO-SKI Karpaty 2006" winter spartakiada” (micro-project, priority: priority: socio-economic development and action: support of local events);
4) „Polish-Slovak "EURO-SKI Karpaty 2007" winter spartakiada” (micro-project, priority: priority: socio-economic development and action: support of local events);

3 CONCLUSION / ZÁVER

The EU funds for various trans-border projects are the main chance of socio-economic development of the Podkarpacie borderline areas which are considered to be problematic and which need investments according to EU structures.

The research shows that the commune of Dukla uses so called location rent to initiate and develop trans-border cooperation with Slovak partners. The commune authorities know that socio-economic actions taken within the trans-border cooperation is one of the most important directions of development of the region because it gives a chance to overcome economic stagnation in the commune. Therefore, they also apply for EU funds.

Commonly taken trans-border actions consider above all economic specificity and potential of cooperating borderland areas. Partnership agreements regulate the scope of cooperation in many different fields, i.e.: local governments, environment protection, communal services, public safety, culture, tourism, company cooperation, sports and promotion.

As result of undertaken actions within the trans-border cooperation, a lot of planned projects were achieved in most of the areas under cooperation, which contributes to socio-economic improvement in the commune under research, first of all improvement of standard of living, which in turn fosters further development.
REFERENCES / POUŽITÁ LITERATÚRA