

THE IMPACT OF TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FROM BIHOR COUNTY ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION DURING 2014-2020

POLGÁR István, PhD., Lecturer, University of Oradea

Abstract. The intensification of cross-border interactions, the progress achieved in the process of European integration and the expansion of the EU to the east raises the issue of cross-border cooperation in a political-geopolitical context.

The issue of cross-border cooperation in general goes beyond geographical, economic and legal approaches. If we intend to treat the phenomenon from a specific point of view, we will find ambiguities and uncertainties regarding the role and functioning of some institutions in the process of cross-border cooperation and partnerships.

Therefore, the full analysis of the cross-border cooperation process cannot be done only if we also evaluate the effects produced by the institutions in the local governance sector and their political dimension.

The principle of partnership applied in Cohesion policy, offered the opportunity to the participants in the cooperation process to weaken the traditional relations between the actors. Certain actors, who are legally subordinated in the programming phase, become partners in the implementation phase.

The process of cross-border cooperation, beyond the general cohesion policy, not only reshapes the legal-administrative relations in a certain national state and especially at local level, but also manages to transpose it on a cross-border basis.

The study aims to realize an inventory of the contributions and achievements of some institutions from the local governance apparatus in Bihor County in the process of cross-border cooperation in the development period 2014-2020.

Keywords: cross-border, regional, cooperation, European, public

The political behavior from the last centuries, regarding the territory and the border of the European states, often generated tensions and conflicts. These disagreements have led to the creation of barriers in the border areas.

The main conflicts of the twentieth century occurred mainly because of political and ideological reasons. The borders of states became real insurmountable barriers not only for enemies, but several times also for their own citizens. This character of the borders created rather the role of elements that prevented the emergence of common activities and values. Although from a strategic point of view, strictly from the perspective of border regions, they were directly interested in developing a strategy based on cooperation with neighboring regions. Nevertheless, the specificity of Europe is given not only by the diversity of cultural and historical realities, but also by the existence of numerous borders between states¹.

Most often because of strategic and/or military reasons border areas, or peripheries were strongly connected to the center. Moreover, in most cases migration

¹ Charles Ricq, *Manual de cooperare transfrontalieră pentru uzul colectivităților locale și regionale în Europa*, Ediția a 3-a, București, 2000, p. 8-15

flows from the periphery to the center could be observed². People in the border regions, who were mostly affected by the consequences of historical conflicts, have gained mutual fears and animosity over time. The conditions that created these relationships undermined the availability of cooperation and contacts³.

As the EU takes on new members and its external boundaries gradually shift, socio-economic and political transformations are taking place at the borders that not only adumbrate new regional development opportunities but also many potential problems and tensions. In an enlarged Europe there are necessary long term commitments to support local and regional initiatives of cross-border cooperation⁴.

During the process of European construction, respectively the integration of European states in the community structures, a change of perception can be noticed which focus on the borders of the national states. These changes firstly appeared in the process of opening up, economically in the space of the single market. Secondly the changes appeared at political and social level, in the space of the European Union.

European Union and the process of integration in the European Community developed itself on three basic ways, creation of a common market, development of common institutions and several common policies. Market integration has progressed a long way, although it stops and restarts again. The institutional integration is left behind, but the most difficult of all is represented by the common policies, especially where they have required founding.

With the reform of the Structural Funds, regions have gained a key role in the design and implementation of regional policy. Yet some of the weakest regions were not equipped with appropriate institutional structures and have struggled to benefit⁵.

But the lag was visible also in the management of the borders. The enlargement of the European Union to the east, a process materialized by the integration in the community of several former communist states, led to the change of perspectives on the old community borders. This was materialized through the relocation of the external borders of the EU on the borders of these states.

The hard frontier, which in the view of the European institutions would ensure the protection of its citizens, has thus become primarily the responsibility of the new members of the European Union⁶.

Nowadays almost a third of EU citizens live and work in Europe's border regions. The management and perception of these borders have both a direct and an indirect

² Ilieș, Alexandru, *România între milenii. Frontiere, areale frontaliere și cooperare transfrontalieră*, Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2003, p. 92-97

³ Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu (coordonator) Mircea Brie Nicolae Toderaș *Cooperarea transfrontalieră între România și Ucraina, respectiv între România și Republica Moldova. Oportunități și provocări în perioada 2014-2020*, Institutul European din Romania, Bucuresti 2016 p. 22-26

⁴ Alexandru Athanasiu, "Foreword", in *"The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions"*, ed. Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, 7-8, (Bucharest, C.H. Beck, 2013).

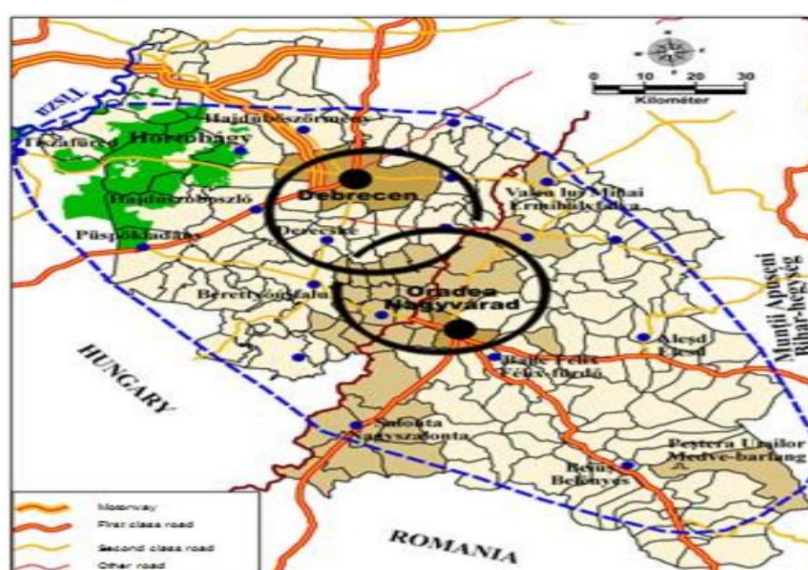
⁵ István Polgár, *The Phenomen of Migration and Integration of Minorities in the European Union in Migration and European Integration of Minorities*, ed. István Polgár, Ioan Horga, Mircea Brie, (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2016), p. 9-11;

⁶ Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu (coordonator) Mircea Brie Nicolae Toderaș *Cooperarea transfrontalieră între România și Ucraina, respectiv între România și Republica Moldova. Oportunități și provocări în perioada 2014-2020*, Institutul European din Romania, Bucuresti 2016 p. 22-26

impact on their lives. People living in border regions often face specific challenges, either in finding a job or having access to healthcare and other public services, or in terms of daily commuting and overcoming administrative problems⁷.

The fall of communism brings into broad day light, for the first time in decades, the concept of diversifying the one's offer and possibilities in obtaining the usual necessities. In the case of Bihor county (north-western part of Romania) and its neighbouring Hungarian county Hajdú-Bihar, the frontiers begin to lose their attribute as impenetrable and dangerous physical barriers towards a somewhat better living and a more liberal society⁸.

At present, cross-border cooperation has proven to be the most effective tool for overcoming the barrier effect and the role of border separation and for strengthening the territorial cohesion of border regions.



Map. no. 1: Cross-border cooperation drivers and examples

Source: Süli-Zakar, I., & Kecskés, T. (2015). *The historical borders and the cross-border connections' effect on Debrecen's spirituality and cultural economy.* *Eurolimes*, 19, 99-116.

Cross-border cooperation. Conceptual and legal background

European cross-border cooperation aims to approach challenges, which are jointly identified and solved in border regions. Also, it proposes to exploit untapped growth potential of border areas, through the cooperation process, for a harmonious development of the whole European Union.

Cross - border cooperation agreements and partnerships have recently become increasingly important in the context of the European Union 's cooperation policies for Member States or for the European Neighborhood Policy.

⁷ European Committee of the Regions, *COR-2020-02615-00-00-AC-TRA (EN) 410/1397*, Bruxelles, 2021

⁸ Brie Mircea, *European Instruments of Cross-Border Cooperation- Case Study: The Romanian-Ukrainian Border in Identities, citoyennetes et democratie, 20 ans apres, sous la direction de Fabienne Maron, Grzegorz Pozarlik, Editions Bruylant, p. 265-280, Bruxelles, 2010*

Cross-border cooperation can be defined in relation with direct collaboration between neighboring regions, found along a border, regardless of the level at which this partnership is achieved.

Cooperation can be achieved in all areas, between all national, regional and local authorities, involving all actors. Moreover, in the European Treaties the need to ensure a harmonious development, reducing the development gap between different European regions or states it is described as a priority.

Regional and cross-border cooperation operates with the principle of subsidiarity, of "reallocation of authority"⁹ from the state level to the administrative-territorial units situated in the border areas having the main goal to balance regional imbalances. Thus, cross-border cooperation agreements are a way to promote good neighborliness, stimulate balanced economic development and social stability by capitalizing on local and regional resources in joint projects.

The efficiency, reliability, authenticity and legitimacy of the European construction process and of the European integration process is also linked to the success of cross-border cooperation.

The basic principle of cross-border cooperation is the creation of a contractual space in border areas in order to find common solutions to similar problems. It is important that state entities must not ignore the needs of their peripheral communities, the particularity and specificity of the neighborhood problems¹⁰.

Cross-border cooperation is like a classic type of mutual cooperation between two neighboring border regions. It involves states, regions, administrative units at different levels and social groups, covering all areas of daily life and participating in the development of common programs, priorities and actions. Usually cross-border cooperation is favored by the cultural, ethno-linguistic and the historical heritage of the area, and by the presence of the national minorities. For example, we can mention the Hungarian community from Romania, the common ethno-linguistic heritage of the population, are favorable elements in the process of cross-border cooperation.

It should also be noted that cross-border cooperation between administrative-territorial units from Romania's border areas depended and depends on the degree of openness allowed by the political regime, the standard of living and the cultural, historical and ethnic affinities of the neighboring countries.

European territorial cooperation is one of the objectives of cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint and political actions between national, regional and local actors in different Member States and EU's external neighbors.

Over the time, cooperation at the European borders passed through a process of change from the perspective of the European policies. For the internal borders of the EU

⁹ Benoit Dicharry, Jeremy Hamm, *L'Union européenne est-elle toujours au service du défi de la convergence ?* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333651522_L'Union_europeenne_est-elle_toujours_au_service_du_defi_de_la_convergence [accessed May 15, 2021].

¹⁰ Charles Ricq, *Manual de cooperare transfrontalieră pentru uzul colectivităților locale și regionale în Europa*, Ediția a 3-a, București, 2000, p. 10.

the Cohesion Policy was developed and for the external borders, the European Neighborhood Policy was responsible¹¹. The Cohesion Policy was meant to reduce the gaps between the more developed and less developed regions from the Member States. While the European Neighborhood Policy it is supposed to bring a new approach to the relations between the European Union and its neighbors. These relations should be better and superior to the traditional relations, based on simple cooperation¹².

Whether we evaluate the EU's management regarding its domestic borders or we look at its external borders, cross-border cooperation has proven to be a promoter of integration, at least at regional level.

The efficiency of cross-border cooperation depends on the coordination of all actors involved in this process, but also on the cooperation implemented at all levels, doubled by the existence of an adequate legal framework. Malfunction at one of the levels can lead to the failure of the whole process.

European territorial cooperation, is getting even more important as the challenges faced by the Member States and regions go beyond national and regional borders and require joint action, cooperation at the appropriate political and territorial level.

Therefore, cross-border cooperation is no longer the strict prerogative of the member states as international actors. An important role in this process is attributed to the local and regional administrative structures from the border areas. These structures can create development associations or transnational corporations which are able to answer the specific challenges and these can promote a proper economic and political environment¹³.

To realize a successful cross-border partnership, it is necessary to find the right partner on the other side of the border and to cooperate with it on an equal bases. Also, it is important that cooperation must respect the interests of each party involved. The European Union encourages and stimulates the development of partnerships for cross-border cooperation.

The interest of the EU is not only to assure a harmonious development of the regions on either side of the border, but also to strengthen the European spirit and identity among its citizens, beyond their national and ethnic identities¹⁴.

European Territorial Cooperation Programs are playing the role of a forum for identifying common solutions and developing strategies for issues that transcend national borders¹⁵.

Romania is an active beneficiary of the Cohesion Policy and its Convergence objective. In this context, territorial cooperation programs played a role in supporting

¹¹ Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *Noua Europă. Identitate și model European*, Polirom, 2015, p. 305-310

¹² Ibidem, p.311-320

¹³ Cătălin-Silviu Săraru, *Considérations sur les accords de coopération transfrontalières entre les unités administratives-territoriales limitrophes des zones frontalières de la Roumanie et les structures similaires dans les pays voisins*, in *Curentul Juridic*, nr. 2(45)/2011, p. 88.

¹⁴ Mircea Brie, Daniela Blaga, *Identity rematch in the European space*, in *Cultural Diplomacy at the East and West Borders of the European Union*, 2015

¹⁵ <https://www.aebr.eu/cohesion-and-territorial-cooperation-in-the-new-financial-framework> [accessed May 5, 2021]

several sectorial programs, like the Regional Operational Program in order to support innovative actions, which could later be financed and implemented under these programs¹⁶.

Last but not least, the participation of Romanian beneficiaries in as many territorial cooperation projects as possible stimulates convergence and cohesion and the development of partnerships with the authorities at regional and local level in the partner states.

Cross-border cooperation drivers and features

The frontier has gone through allot of changes in terms of understanding the space of a culture, race, religion, city or nation. Growing from physical walls, intense militarized areas to a formal understanding of regions with no physical boundaries or restrictions of any kind, the frontier or the border, has been an area of the utmost importance to the different branches of science. The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the development of the phenomenon called cross-border cooperation.

In the process of EU-integration the Hungarian-Romanian state border is becoming even more permeable as well. Despite the fact, that Romania is not member of the Schengen Agreement, crossing the borderline between the two neighbouring countries is much easier than a few years earlier. The growing permeability of the European borders contributes to the unification of the economic potentials of the neighbouring areas supplying benefits on regional and local level.



Map no. 2: Open border crossing points for road traffic at the Romanian-Hungarian border

Source: <https://www.politiadefrontiera.ro/en/main/i--map-with-the-itinerary-of-the-open-border-crossing-points-at-the-romanianhungarian-border-7592.html>

¹⁶ European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, *Territorial Cooperation in Europe. A historical perspective*, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2015, p. 130-132

Even if Hungary joined the European Union on 1 May 2004 and Romania on 1 January 2007, by the common European destiny of the two states, they are obliged to achieve a strengthened partnership focused on increasing their welfare and harmonious economic development¹⁷.

The border between Romania and Hungary has a total length of 448 km, of which 415.9 km land and 32.1 km river (the Mures, Cris, Someş rivers)¹⁸. On the Romanian side there are four counties, Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiş, and on the Hungarian side there are Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád. All the 8 counties are classified as NUTS III and are integrated in 4 regions of level NUTS II¹⁹. The Romanian-Hungarian Border covers the South-Eastern and Eastern part of Hungary and the North-Western and Western part of Romania. The eight counties have a total surface of 50,454 km², of which 43.7% Hungarian and 56.3% Romanian area. The Hungarian territory is 23.7% of the total surface of Hungary, and the Romanian part is 11.9% of Romania. The total population in 2004 was more than 4 million, of which slightly less than half lives in Hungary, and slightly more than half lives in Romania²⁰.



Map no. 3: *The eligible area of the Romanian-Hungarian Cross Border Cooperation Programme*

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/en/eligible-area/>

Particularities and areas of cross-border cooperation in the field of territorial governance structures

¹⁷ Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, *The Frontier Worker. Romania-Hungary Study Case.* in *The Frontier Worker – New Perspectives on the Labor Market in the Border Regions*, ed. Adrian Claudiu Popoviciu, Dana Cigan, 25-27, (Bucharest, C.H. Beck, 2013)

¹⁸ National Institute of Statistics, Statistical yearbook 2011, Geography, Meteorology And Environment, p. 11, http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/Anuar%20statistic/01/01%20Geografie_ro.pdf, accessed in April 20, 2021

¹⁹ The counties Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar belong to Észak-Alföld Region; the counties Békés and Csongrád are part of Dél-Alföld Region; counties Arad and Timiş belong to West Region; counties Satu Mare and Bihor are part of the North-West Region. For further details it can be seen Eurostat, Regions in the European Union, Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics, NUTS 2006 /EU-27, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-020/EN/KS-RA-07-020-EN.PDF, accessed in April 20, 2021

²⁰ http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/programme_area, accessed in April 19, 2021

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the INTERREG program made step forward from the status of a “mainstream program”, held in the previous programming period, in the framework of the European structural policy. In this period, the program is characterized by a stronger thematic focus in programming as well as a more intensive impact orientation when choosing and implementing new cross-border projects²¹.

If we analyze the objectives of the program from the functional task-focus point of view, we can observe that the practical cross-border cooperation approaches in Europe are focusing on a wide range of domains and fields of action. Depending on the respective territorial context, these cover classical fields of regional development, specific approaches of cooperation in sectorial policy areas or areas of public services of general interest²².

In the last 15 years, in Central and Eastern Europe there has been a significant development regarding the management of problem solving, which appear and target the cross-border cooperation areas.

Although there is an institutional framework at Community level, which is present in the Member States through different implemented EU policies and programs, the level and the forms of cooperation between territorial governance structures differ from state to state²³.

There are Member States that built and developed relations for a stable cross-border cooperation at institutional level. On the other side, there are states, which are still guided by a general skepticism regarding cross-border cooperation between territorial governance structures. Another factor, which makes cooperation difficult, is the lack of communication between the actors.

The cross-border cooperation process will generate significant and effective results only if the actors involved set common goals and allocate the necessary resources.

In the following, we propose a synthesis of all contracted projects by public institutions from Romania, Bihor County, from the eligibility area of the Romania-Hungary cross-border cooperation program, in the period 2014-2020. The source of the presented data is the web archive of the INTERREG, Romania-Hungary Cross border cooperation program.

Nr. crt	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
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²¹ Beck, Joachim, *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit im Prozess der Europäischen Integration*, in: Wassenberg /Beck (Hrsg.), *Living and researching cross-border cooperation* (Vol. 3): *The European Dimension of Cross-Border Cooperation*, Stuttgart (Steiner Verlag), 2011, p. 129 – 148

²² Beck, Joachim, *Cross-border cooperation and the challenge of transnational institution-building – the example of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)*, in RECERC no.1 Spécial, 2017, available at <http://recerc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/R9beck.pdf>

²³ Daniel Badulescu, Alina Badulescu, Catalin Adrian Bucur, *Considerations on the Effectiveness of Cross-Border Cooperation in Public Order and Civil Protection Services. The Case of the Romanian – Hungarian Border Area in LEX LOCALIS – Journal of Local Self-Government*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2015, p. 559 - 578

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU 68	Creating a joint tourist destination in the crossborder area of Lugașu de Jos and Komádi, through cross-border protection of natural heritage values along the Crișul Repede Valley	PRO-CRV	Comuna Lugașu de Jos	Komádi Városi Önkormányzat Asociația "Pro Valea Crișului Repede – Pro Sebes Koros Volgy"	904,905.47	769,169.64
2.	ROHU 126	Nature preservation, protection and promotion on both sides of the Romanian-Hungarian border	PRONATURE	Consiliul Județean Bihor	Primaria Vadu Crisului Asociația Centrul pentru arii protejate și dezvoltare durabilă Bihor Körösszegapáti Nagyközségi Önkormányzat	2,500,000.00	2,125,000.00
3.	ROHU 48	Development of an integrated response capacity to cross-border emergency situations	DIRCCES	Town of Alesd	Sinteu Comune Szarvas Town Self Government	485,400.00	399,532.74
4.	ROHU 14	Conservation, protection and promotion of the natural values from the Salonta-Békéscsaba crossborder area	The nature corner	Municipiul Salonta	Körösök Völgye Natúrpark Egyesület Asociația Milvus Transilvania Vest Békés Város Önkormányzata	2,997,387.86	2,547,779.68
5.	ROHU 53	Conservation and protection of the cross border natural heritage of Bihor - Hajdú-Bihar counties	Na-Tu-Re	Comuna Sinmartin	Asociația Pescarilor Sportivi Aqua Crisisus Fundatia pentru cultura si educatie ecologista Ecotop Zold Kor -a Fold Baratai Magyarország Tagja	2,835,216.60	2,409,934.10
6.	ROHU 115	From One Bridge to another - De la un pod la altul – Hídtól hídig	FOBTA	Comuna Sălacea	Hortobágy Község Önkormányzata	1,611,547.26	1,369,815.16

Chart no. 1: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, First Open Call - December 2019

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Contracted-projects-12.12.2019.pdf>

Based on the information obtained from the Interreg RO-HU date base, after the first open call in December 2019 a total number of 21 projects were contracted. From the 21 contracted projects, there are 6 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU179	Administrative bridge between towns in the Romania - Hungary cross border region	ABBTROHU	Orasul Alesd	Comuna Sinteu Orasul Marghita Szarvas Varos Onkormanyzata Szarvas Town Self-Government Berettyoujfalu Varos Onkormanyzata/Berettyoujfalu Town Self-Government	362,500.00	308,125.00

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
2.	ROHU183	SAFE BORDER, SAFER LIFE SAFEBOR	SAFEBOR	Institua Prefectului-judetul Bihor	Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Rendőrfőkapitányság/Hajdú-Bihar County police Inspectoratul Teritorial al Politiei de Frontiera Oradea Inspectoratul de Politie Judetean Bihor	287,904.85	244,719.12
3.	ROHU200	Crossborder events for crossborder citizens	CCC	Toboliu Commune	Körösnyaghsány Local Self Government Girisu de Cris Commune Nojorid Commune	77,000.00	65,450.00
4.	ROHU265	LET'S CELEBRATE OUR TRADITIONS TOGETHER TOGETHER	TOGETHER	COMUNA CETARIU	KABA Város Önkormányzat - KABA City Local Government	70,400.00	59,840.00
5.	ROHU271	The Minority Question in the ROHU crossborder area: Slovak Culture, Tradition and History without Borders	SCTH	Comuna Sinteu	Csabai Szlovákok Szervezete/Organization of Slovaks from Csaba	71,500.00	60,775.00
6.	ROHU280	Cultural Cooperation among Citizens from the Salonta-Gyula Cross-border Area Co-cultured	Co-cultured	The Municipality of Salonta	Gyula town	80,000.00	68,000.00
7.	ROHU283	Sustainable cross-border cooperation for citizens between Marghita and Berettyóújfalu municipalities	CCC_MB	Municipiul Marghita	Berettyó Cultural Center	80,000.00	68,000.00
8.	ROHU289	Connecting the traditions of the Crisul Repede Valley	CCRV	Comuna Vadu Crişului	Körösszegapáti Nagyközségi Önkormányzat - Körösszegapáti Local Government	79,999.00	67,999.15
9.	ROHU198	Open Doors for Culture and Tradition in Europe	ODCTEU	Town of Alesd	Kaba Town Self-Government	74,055.00	62,946.75
10.	ROHU319	Joint program for cross - border cooperation between young people	4 YOUTH	Paleu Commune	Hosszúpályi Commune Cetaiu Commune Kaba town	200,600.00	170,510.00

Chart no. 2: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, Second Open Call – March 2021

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Signed-contracts-2nd-open-call-website-19.03.2021.pdf>

In the second open call a total of 37 projects were contracted. There was a number of 10 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Nr. crt.	eMS code	Project title	Acronym	Lead beneficiary	Partners	Total budget euro	Total ERDF euro
1.	ROHU425	Joint Development of Human Resources	HRArea UAT	UAT Comuna Paleu	Derecske Város Önkormányzata	1,337,577.8	1,136,941.13

		in CrossBorder AreaJoint Development of Human Resources in Cross-Border Area			Asociatia Pro Cariere		
					Asociatia de Dezvoltare Intercomunitara Zona Metropolitana Oradea		
2.	ROHU-421	Improve employment in Bihor County, Oradea and Hajduboszormeny through the development of the local potential infrastructures	CBC-EMPLOYMENT	Municipality of Oradea	Development Agency of Bihor County	7,507,873.22	2,549,531.04
					Local Government of Hajduboszormeny City		
					County Agency for Employment Bihor		
3.	ROHU-426	Support to the local economy by encouraging alternative use of agricultural products	ALTERAGRI	Directia pentru Agricultura Judeteana Bihor	Asociatia „TRANSILVANIA TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER"	1,679,320.00	1,427,422.00
					Oficiul de Studii Pedologice si Agrochimice Bihor		
					Science for Environment Public Foundation		
4.	ROHU-359	Promoting an integrated approach regarding the improving of the employment rate and business environment at the level of Marghita and Berettyoujfalú microregions	CROSSLOCAL DEV	Marghita Municipality	Municipality of Berettyóújfalu	2,615,165.66	2,222,890.81

Chart no. 3: List of contracted projects by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County as Lead Partner, Third Open Call – June 2021

Source: <https://interreg-rohu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Signed-contracts-Open-call-3-23.06.2021.pdf>

In the third open call a total of 31 projects were contracted. There was a number of 4 projects contracted as Lead Partner, by Romanian territorial governance structures from Bihor County.

Based on the data presented in the three charts, we can affirm that even though the number of territorial government structures present in the list of beneficiary/lead partners is fluctuating, still these are playing a very important role in the implementation of the cross-border programs.

Conclusions

The border region is the collision point of cultures, religions, languages, administrations, legislations and economic influences. All these factors have substantial contribution to the development of the phenomenon called cross-border cooperation.

The issue of cross-border cooperation in general goes beyond geographical, economic and legal approaches. If we intend to treat the phenomenon from a specific point of view, we will find ambiguities and uncertainties regarding the role and

functioning of some institutions in the process of cross-border cooperation and partnerships.

Therefore, the full analysis of the cross-border cooperation process cannot be done only if we also evaluate the effects produced by the institutions in the local governance sector and their political dimension.

At present, cross-border cooperation has proven to be the most effective tool for overcoming the barrier effect and the role of border separation and for strengthening the territorial cohesion of border regions.

Cross-border cooperation can be defined in relation with direct collaboration between neighboring regions, found along a border, regardless of the level at which this partnership is achieved. Cooperation can be achieved in all areas, between all national, regional and local authorities, involving all actors.

Cross-border cooperation is no longer the strict prerogative of the member states as international actors. An important role in this process is attributed to the local and regional administrative structures from the border areas. These structures can create development associations or transnational corporations which are able to answer the specific challenges and these can promote a proper economic and political environment.

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