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OF HUNGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**DISCUSSION PAPERS**

**Special Issue**

**Hungarian–Romanian and  
Hungarian–Ukrainian border  
regions as areas of co-operation  
along the external borders of Europe**

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## **Preface**

This Discussion Paper of the Centre for Regional Studies is indeed timely. Our understandings of borders, border regions and crossborder cooperation have been affected by overlying geopolitical events, reflecting concerns of the times and the ways in which Europe and its internal and external borders have been perceived. 2004 marked an historical year in the process of European enlargement; ten Central and Eastern European states, as well as Malta and Cyprus, joined the European Union. Above and beyond that, a new round of enlargement is likely in 2007 as Romania and Bulgaria prepare for membership. Viewed from the co-operation perspective, particularly the regional and local cross-border kind, EU enlargement, the imposition of Schengen criteria for visas and cross-border mobility as well as new “partnerships” with Ukraine and other neighbouring countries provide a rapidly changing geopolitical context. 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 portend new regional development opportunities but also many potential problems and tensions. One of the central questions that emerges from these simultaneous processes is one of “re-bordering” in all of its multifaceted senses.

The “Wider Europe” initiative, unveiled last year by the EU Commission, expresses a will on the part of the EU to avoid future divisions due to socio-economic disparities, political divergences and conflicts of interest. This is to be achieved through comprehensive co-operation agendas that transcend political, economic and cultural dividing lines. The EU appears genuinely committed EU to an “alternative” geopolitics, based on partnership and non-exploitative interdependence. This, however, requires regional partnerships that can flexibly manage heterogeneous economic and socio-political realities. At the same time, however, economic particularism and selective border regimes could have profoundly negative effects on the eastern border regions of the new EU-25, particularly in the case of Hungary and other new member states. This could also exacerbate development gaps between the EU-25, the future EU-27 and non-EU states. Additionally, while free trade and open borders are upheld as necessary for economic partnership, securitisation and stricter regulation of the EU’s external boundaries threaten to limit the extent to which transnational civil society and socio-cultural co-operation can flourish.

Stifling border interaction that could be vital to economic and social development locally would confirm fears of a “Fortress Europe”. Hence, at the shifting borders of the EU it will be necessary to find mechanisms that mediate between external pressures and local concerns and transcend socio-economic, political and systemic asymmetries. This book examines capacities for “region-building” on Hungary’s eastern borders in anticipation of the next round of EU

enlargement and the inauguration of the EU's New Neighbourhood Policy. This includes, among others, co-operative structures, governance practices, conflict-minimising dialogue and strategies for joint economic development. For several years now, the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has been carefully scrutinising potentials for border transcending co-operation practices and urban networks between Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine. It is only fitting that the pioneering work of Bela Baranyi and his co-authors receive greater international attention at this crucial period of Europe's geopolitical transformations.

Berlin, August 2005.

James Scott  
EXLINEA Project coordinator  
Free University of Berlin

## **Introduction**

The Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border sections (which are 447.8 and 136.7 kilometres long, respectively) and border regions touch Hungary from the east. Although they share several common characteristics, still it is reasonable to survey them separately. Both eastern border sections of Hungary were designated by the Peace Treaty of Trianon concluding World War I; however, there are significant differences between them both as regards their past to date and their future prospects. In the case of the Hungarian–Romanian border section, on both sides of the border the same state has existed since the borders were drawn, while several different state formations succeeded each other on the Ukrainian side of the present Hungarian–Ukrainian border. Another significant difference is the fact that this border section is the only gate of Romania to the West, whereas The Ukraine can join the European socio-economic and cultural affairs via Slovakia and Poland, as well. In addition, the public administrative and the statistical system of Romania and The Ukraine are considerably different from both one another and the Hungarian system. The system of statistical data collection is not fully compatible with the EUROSTAT system even in Hungary, in Romania it is only partially and in The Ukraine not at all compatible with the European system. This makes the comparative study of the two border regions rather difficult, if we insist on the same indices. As regards future prospects, the two border regions cannot be treated jointly, either, as Romania will become a full-right member of the European Union in 2007, while the date of the possible accession of The Ukraine is impossible to forecast at this point. Even besides the above facts, we can see fundamentally different historical, socio-economic and political dimensions, also different traditions and ways of life in Romania and The Ukraine.

The region's socio-economic development is significantly lagging behind the European Union's average indicators. The total Hungarian–Ukrainian frontier zone and the northern Hungarian–Romanian border are peripheral areas within their mother countries. Thus, two peripheral areas are meeting at the border. Since Hungary's EU accession (May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004) the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is a long-term, the Hungarian–Romanian border is a short-term external border of the EU. Before the change of the political system (1989) East-Hungarian borders were very strict. The East Central-European political transformation opened them up but the quality and intensity of cross-border cooperation is still low, very few economic cooperation projects have been established so far. The enhancement of cooperation activities is further hindered by ethnic problems. For this reason the current researches are seeking for further areas of CBC.

Debrecen, August 2005.

Béla Baranyi  
editor

# I BACKGROUND STUDY OF THE HUNGARIAN–ROMANIAN AND THE HUNGARIAN–UKRAINIAN BORDER REGIONS

## 1 Hungarian–Romanian border region

### 1.1 Historical dimension

The Hungarian–Romanian border region experienced several stormy periods, just like the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, although its development from its creation until now has been totally different. Although the present Hungarian–Ukrainian borderline is a young formation created by the *peace treaty signed in the Great Trianon Palace* around Paris on 4 June 1920, the border region in the broader sense had already had frontier functions during the course of history. The present border region is situated where the “core area” of the historical Hungary, and Transylvania, a territory that had always had a kind of independence, meet. This frontier function became especially palpable in the mid–16<sup>th</sup> century, when Hungary broke into three pieces as a result of the Turkish occupation and the *Duchy of Transylvania* became independent. From that time on, the internal borderlines dividing Hungary began to function as real borderlines and became a military, political and cultural buffer zone for a long time.

In addition to the frequent changes of the borders as a function of the power relations, the already difficult situation is further complicated by the fact that a significant part of the present border region belonged to the so-called *Partium*, i.e. the “*annexed parts*”. The name of the territory comes from the fact that the Hungarian “parts” consisting of four counties were awarded to the princes of Transylvania during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, without being annexed to Transylvania, with the condition that after the death of the last prince these territories would be subject to the authority of the Hungarian king again. After several changes of the authority, in 1877 this territory was melted into the neighbouring counties, so it ceased to exist in the administrative sense of the word.

The *border zone between the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania*, a part of the Kingdom with its own inner public administration, *never functioned as a dividing border* – with the exception of the time of the Turkish occupation –, *unlike the present borderline between Hungary and Romania*. The internal border, almost unnoticeable for centuries, became a very much palpable borderline after the *Peace*

*Treaty of Trianon* – with a different location, though. Probably it was Romania among the neighbouring countries the relationship to whom was the most tense for a long time. It is mostly due to the fact that among the artificially designated new state borders, the designation of the Hungarian–Romanian border, completely neglecting the ethnic relations, was the most painful for the mutilated mother country, because of the loss of territories bigger than the “remaining” country and the large number of Hungarian ethnic population living in them. The new eastern borders cut the biggest territory and population from Hungary. As much as 103 thousand square kilometres and 3.5 million population was given to Romania, of whom some 1.7 million declared themselves Hungarians. It was logical that the most frequently declared objective of the Hungarian revisionist efforts was to reclaim Transylvania and the Partium from Romania, in addition to Upper Northern Hungary from Slovakia. This was achieved temporarily by the two Vienna Awards made in 1938 and 1940.

Following World War II, just because of the temporary re-annexation of the North Transylvanian territories to Hungary, the Romanians became rather untrusting towards the Hungarians. Also, because of the debates and other measures further exacerbating the assumed or real *ethnic conflicts*, the mutual lack of trust caught hold in the thinking of the two nations (mostly of the leading elite). The “friendship and brotherhood” declared in the socialist era only existed in the slogans, in reality the relationship between the two countries was rather tense. The *border functioned as a real wall* in these times, practically blocking any co-operation and it was almost impossible even to pass the border. Following the revolution of 1989, the collapse of the dictatorship of Ceausescu, the hope was born for the settling of the relationships. However, the co-operation quickly starting at lower levels was seriously hindered by the reviving *nationalism*, which brought to the surface again the latent or suppressed problems, which naturally resulted in the growing fear of the modifications of the border.

Although there are definitely positive changes in the relationship of the two countries nowadays, it is very difficult to annihilate the prejudices gathered for decades or centuries, so it is feared that the problems may occasionally appear for a long time. The favourable political, economic and social transitions, however, gradually amount to the easing of the suspicious, untrusting and consequently often tense relations, because both parties are slowly starting to recognise the necessity of co-operation, learning from the European examples. The co-operation as close as possible is inevitable not only because of the Euro-Atlantic integration of the two countries, but also because the Trianon borders tore apart economic units that had functioned for centuries, and divided shaping macro-regions. The dominant principle behind the designation of the border was the principle of “*reorganization*”, which aimed at the creation of viable successor states by the acquisition of the necessary macro-infrastructure, above all the traffic system, especially the key

railway networks. This is why the victorious powers awarded to the successor states the semi-circle shaped railway network constructed on the line of medieval market towns, on the edge of the mountains and the Great Hungarian Plain, which of course created the connection among the states of the shaping Little Entente. The “railway-driven” state borders, however, neglected not only the ethnic borders (they ran in almost completely Hungarian-inhabited territories), but also tore the towns of the direct border region and their catchment areas, in some cases even splitting settlements (e.g. Nagylak). The result was a distorted spatial structure on both sides, and in Hungary also a town-deficient border region, peripheral in both economic and spatial structural sense, was born.

The designation of the border resulted in harmful effects that are still palpable, and the elimination of the negative consequences can only be achieved by the operation as a single region of the territories that used to make an organic whole. In order to achieve this, however, the borderline separating the two countries has to disappear not only from the map but also from the minds of the people, especially the responsible political leaders.

Over the decade and a half since the systemic change, the opinion about the border of those living along the eastern borders of Hungary changed several times and rather quickly. After the strict isolation typical for long decades, the change of the political systems in 1989 raised the hope in many that the opening of the borders would allow the regular touch with their relatives on the other side of the border, and that the relationship between the two countries would be finally normalised. The initial enthusiasm, however, was soon overshadowed by the difficulties concomitant with the systemic change, because in Hungary it was mostly the eastern part of the country, originally in a backward position that suffered the most from the economic transformation, the shift to the market economy. The declining standards of living, the mass unemployment etc. made more and more people think that the unlimited opening of the Eastern borders was a mistake. The Hungarian–Romanian border was crossed not only by masses of emigrants escaping from the troubled inner political conditions following the revolution in Romania, but a formerly unknown phenomenon, criminals and illegal workers appeared, too.

Parallel to these processes, in the East Hungarian areas, suffering from very many difficulties anyway, more and more people became anxious about their living after the mass influx of cheap labour, and many people also felt that the reception of refugees was an excessive sacrifice by Hungary. The concerns that are still present sometimes are well demonstrated by the fact that those who opposed the signing of the Hungarian–Romanian Agreement Declaration in 2001 forecast the inflow of millions of Romanian labour force – but these fears later turned out to have no ground.

These days *uncertainty is not so typical feeling any more of those who live in the direct border region*, because it is certain now that Romania (after the Hungar-

ian accession on 1 May 2004) will join the European Union in 2007 too, which raises several issues. It is perceived by the people on both sides of the border that the role of the region will be significantly appreciated after it becomes temporary an external and after 2007 an internal EU border, which offers a possibility never seen before for the catching up. Despite the large number of open questions, most people on both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border are looking forward to the possibility of the restoration of the former, organically born economic, infrastructural etc. relations and to the decrease of the separating role of the border.

## 1.2 Legal dimensions

The present *Hungarian–Romanian border region* (Figure 1) – as we have referred to it several times before – is not the product of an organic historical development, it was created *on legal grounds*, it is *an artificial borderline created by the Peace Treaty of Trianon* signed on 4 June 1920. The designation of the border, which totally neglected the arguments of Hungary and the ethnic principles, carried from the beginning the danger of territorial revision in case of another war. This actually took place after the *2<sup>nd</sup> Vienna Award* (when North Transylvania and the Székely Land were annexed back to Hungary, temporarily increasing the territory of the mother country with 43.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup>-s and 2.6 million inhabitants).

Following the conclusion of World War II, however, the state borders designated at Trianon were restored. The agreement on the re-start of goods traffic was signed with Romania first (as soon as in 1945). At this time the bilateral border traffic covering the direct border zone (a 10–15 kilometre wide stripe) was revived, but this had to be eliminated, by the pressure of the Soviets. During the 1950s, the defence of the border became more and more serious; sometimes mine blockades were located along the borders of even the “friendly socialist countries”. No wonder that the traffic across the border dropped to a fraction of what it had been before.

The easing of the political climate only allowed in 1969 the *bilateral border traffic* (border crossing stations only available for the citizens of the two countries), although with significant restrictions. Only those were entitled for a licence to use these bilateral border crossings who lived within a 15 kilometre distance from the border (excluding from the beneficiaries the whole of the Hungarian ethnic group living in the Székely Land), and only certain border crossing stations could be used. During the 1970s, the improvement of the technical and living conditions (car use, the opening of more and more border stations, the boom of tourism etc.), as well as the political consolidation considerably increased the traffic across the Hungarian–Romanian border, too. Although the border became more closed again

during the dictatorship of Ceausescu, no restrictions were introduced in the form of official contract between the two states. It is another issue that other official tools (taxes, duties, requirement of the proof of financial coverage of the stay abroad etc.) and less official ones (presents and tips to the frontier guards; passengers intentionally kept waiting for a long time) efficiently influenced the will to travel, and these “habits” are still there sometimes, making the trip difficult for the passengers.

Figure 1

*The Hungarian–Romanian border region*



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

The *legal frameworks of the border defence and border traffic* will significant change again because of the introduction of the Schengen norms, which Hungary will have to apply when becoming a full-right member of the European Union. However, as the Romanian citizens can travel without visa to the member states of the European Union since 2002, the main difficulty will be not the more strict legal regulations but the proof of the adequate financial means.

In addition to the agreements on the border defence and border traffic, of course several other *inter-state agreements* were made between Hungary and Romania which directly influenced the progress of the cross-border relations. The most im-



portant is the *Hungarian–Romanian Treaty* (Act No. XLIV. of 1997), which basically determine the frameworks of co-operation. The primary task of the *inter-governmental special committees* set up in accordance with the Treaty (e.g. Special Committee for the Co-operation of the Ethnic Minorities, Special Committee for the Co-operation in the Field of Economy, Trade and Tourism, Special Committee of Cross-border Issues and Inter-municipal Co-operation, Special Committee for the Co-operation in the Field of Transport, Water Management and Environmental Protection etc.) is to work out and supervise the co-operations concerning the “common issues” of Hungary and Romania.

Several *co-operation agreements* between the two countries were and are still in effect, covering almost all fields of the socio-economic life (e.g. the agreement on inter-modal freight traffic, Hungarian–Romanian investment protection agreement, agreement on the mutual recognition of degrees and certificates issued by accredited educational institutions and of academic degrees, Hungarian–Romanian agreement on the co-operation in privatisation etc.). Among the *agreements*, the ones on *water management* and environmental protection are of special importance because of the geographical endowments.

The basic framework in this latter issue was defined by the *Hungarian–Romanian Agreement on the Border Rivers*, signed in 1986, and the agreement on the “*Co-operation in the field of the protection of the environment*”, in effect since 2000. Several other water management agreements are still in effect, too (e.g. the *Agreement on Flood Protection*, *Agreement on the Inland Waterways*, *Regulation of the Exchange of Information* etc.). A closer co-operation is evidently justified by the fact that the border section divides natural eco-systems (including eco-corridors of great value), also, there is a surface and sub-surface water connection between the two territories, with several rivers and streams crossing the border, there are common surface and subsoil water bases in the region. In addition, the industry in the border region – especially in the Romanian part – is characterised by outdated and polluting technologies, which means a high environmental risk, justified by the series of cyanide and heavy metal pollutions of the Tisza River and the tributaries.

Besides the Treaty and the international agreements in effect, the direct cross-border co-operation is considerably affected *from the Hungarian side by the Act No. XXI of 1996 (on Regional Development and Physical Planning) and its amendment in 1999*, while the similar *Act No. CLI of 1998 and the connected government decrees in Romania*, which provide a legal framework for the developments affecting the border region, implemented from national and other resources.

In the relationship of Hungarian and Romania in the recent years, the greatest attention was gained by the *Act No. LXII of 2001 on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries* (commonly known as the “*Status Law*”) and the connected so-called “*Hungarian–Romanian Declaration of Agreement*”. As regards the execution of the Act, which provided special (health care, travel, employment etc.)

allowances for the Hungarians living outside Hungary, no final solution has been reached until now, despite the series of negotiations.

The legal frameworks of the co-operation are considerably affected by the *changes in connection with the Euro-Atlantic integration processes*, because there are significant differences in this respect between the two countries. Hungary became a full-right member of the European Union on 1 May 2004, following the signing of the accession treaty on 16 April 2003. Romania, on the other hand, is not included in the first round of the enlargement, and the associated member status, which Romania gained in 1993, will remain in effect until 2007. Although considerable progress has been achieved in Romania too in the field of the harmonisation of law, the country reports regularly mentioned that no actual progress has been made in the field of the assertion of the principle of partnership and in the establishment of monitoring, evaluation and the system of regional statistics – despite the fact that each of these alone sets back the accession to the European Union.

Although there are no special administrative units or separate border government system on either side of the border, three *business zones* have been created on the Hungarian side (the Bihar, the Békés county and the Makó Business Zones), which offer different allowances and try to utilise the advantages of the border location and strengthen the economic co-operation between the border regions.

In the intensification of the cross-border co-operation, a significant role can be played by the *Euroregions* created in the 1990s and the more recently shaping smaller scale Euroregional organisations and initiatives, and by the *twin city relations*, which may be the most effective tools of everyday operative co-operation (e.g. Nyíregyháza–Szatmárnémeti<sup>1</sup>, Debrecen–Nagyvárad<sup>2</sup>, Békéscsaba–Arad, Szeged–Temesvár<sup>3</sup> etc.)

In the Hungarian–Romanian border region, two large Euroregions with different character, history and operational conditions can be found: the *Carpathians Euroregion* and the *Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion* (Figure 2). The direct preliminary of the establishment of the Carpathians Euroregion covering the Northern half of the border region was the creation of the Carpathians Foundation in 1989, which for the first time in Hungary declared the importance of keeping in touch with the people on the other side of the border. Because of the stormy historical events of these years and in order to decrease the tensions, the representatives of the border regions of the neighbour states concerned (*Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and The Ukraine*) sat down and founded on 14 February 1993 (using the already existing organisational elements of the Carpathian Foundation) the *Interregional Organisation of the Carpathians Euroregion*, which Romania joined not so much afterwards.

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<sup>1</sup> In Romanian: Satu Mare.

<sup>2</sup> In Romanian: Oradea.

<sup>3</sup> In Romanian: Timișoara.

## Figure 2

Euroregions in the Hungarian border region

This huge interregional organisation – as opposed to the *Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion* founded in 1997 – is not an independent, bottom-up initiative, it started to work within frameworks defined “from above”, considering higher political objectives. In addition, the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion re-connected territories along the south-eastern borders of Hungary which had been a relatively more developed area within a single country, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and had common historical past going back to centuries, whereas the Carpathians Euroregion is an absolutely “multinational” formation.

Although both Euroregions have had and still have an indisputable role in the recognition of the partnership based on mutual advantages, they have not been able yet to implement their original objectives, because of different factors. The achievement of really intensive multilateral connections is blocked by the *excessive size* of the Euroregions in the first place: the territory of the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion covers 77,000 km<sup>2</sup>-s, that of the Carpathians Euroregion is 161,000 km<sup>2</sup>-s, their population reaches six and sixteen million people, respectively. In addition to their too large size, especially in the territory of the Carpathians Euroregion, co-operation is hindered by historical–territorial– ethnic and other problems, inherited from the past. Having recognised these problems, the local actors were thinking about the establishment of smaller and thus more effective Euroregional organisations. The concepts were followed by actions and now three micro-regional type interregional organisations operate along the border (Interregio, Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar and the Bihar–Bihar Euroregional Organisation).

### 1.3 Political dimension

During the economic and political systemic change taking place at the end of the 1980s and concerning all East-Central European countries, the single party systems, typical of the socialist state construction, were replaced again by *parliamentary democracy*. Both in Hungary and in Romania the system of political control was reorganised, and public administration, also the role of the individual tiers within the power hierarchy gradually transformed as a part of the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

Another common feature is the fact that the former totally *centralised*, “top-down controlled” *system* was replaced by an effort for *decentralisation*, giving the *local self-governance*, above all the *municipal governments* a role much more important than before. Although the extent of decentralisation is not the same in the two countries (especially Romania has still a lot to do in this respect), the self-organising spatial units are present now in both countries.

The official cross-border relations are considerably set back by the fact that while in Hungary the *micro-regions*, compatible with the fourth tier of the NUTS

system (the statistical planning system of the European Union) have been created, in Romania there is no “official” spatial level at this level (apart from the different self-organising micro-regional associations). In Romania it is still the County Councils that represent the lowest tier above the municipal governments and the meso-tier in the national hierarchy. Although the NUTS 2 level regions were built in both countries on the still operating counties (NUTS 3 level), the role and independence of the latter is much more restricted in Romania than in Hungary, besides a strong central will.

Co-operations are made difficult not only by the *lack of* the certain *regional and administrative tiers*, because the competencies of the individual institutions can differ even at the same level of hierarchy. Also, in some cases the tasks have not been clearly defined, or the adequate financial or other background is missing. This comes from the fact that in both countries the system of regional development is still shaping. In Romania e.g. the financial and institutional frameworks were completely reformed in 2001 (a new ministry was created), and the amendment of the act on local administration gave the local leaders new responsibilities, also allocated a co-ordinating authority to the prefects, who are the local representatives of the central power.

The cross-border relations of the four NUTS 2 regions along the Hungarian–Romanian border (two in each country) can be significantly influenced by the organisational structure of the given regions. The situation in Hungary is quite simple, because the centre of both the *North Great Plain* and the *South Great Plain* (Hungarian – *Észak-alföldi* and *Dél-alföldi*) region is situated in the vicinity of the border, and four out of the six counties (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties) are adjacent to Romania. On the Romanian side, of the four counties of the *Western Region*, two have common borders with Hungary; in addition, the traditional western orientation of the regional centre (Temesvár) can be a guarantee for the deepening of the co-operations. On the other hand, the *North-western Region* has four counties that do not have common borders with Hungary, also, the regional centre is not in a county along the border. The decisions made in Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca in Romanian), farther from the border, may not necessarily serve the support of the cross-border initiatives, because of the other, inner tasks of the counties making the region; and the promotion of the cross-border co-operations will not be the most important development priority, either.

Since the regions are very young and primarily political formations without real administrative functions, self-governance content and character in both countries, they do not appear as independent executive power factors in the national political life of either country, not to mention the supranational level. This is well demonstrated by the fact that the Euroregions operating along the Hungarian–Romanian border were created not on regional but county grounds, and there are counties in Romania that are part of the border region but not of the Euroregional organisation

– and the opposite occurs, too. It is directly coming from the above-said that no regionalist parties emerged, the organisational–institutional frameworks of self-governance have not been built out, and although the border region experienced several internal and external conflicts deriving from ethnic oppositions in the past century, separatism has not become a typical effort.

The *dominant political parties* consist of those forces on both sides that play a leading role in the national politics, too. At the moment there are four parties in Hungary and five in Romania that have reached the threshold to get into the Parliament, and the representation of the individual regions is the responsibility of the MPs from the electoral districts and the county-level party lists.

When enumerating the possibilities of *interest representation*, the *organisations created on ethnic minority grounds* should always be mentioned. These play a significant role, despite the fact that they are not definitely regional in character, although the Romanian ethnic minority has a higher proportion in Hungary in the border regions. The Romanian ethnic minority, which is negligible in number in Hungary, has a national self-government but no parliamentary representation in Hungary.

The situation is different in *Romania*, because the Hungarian ethnic minority, making 7.1% of the population of Romania, has a representation in the Parliament by the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania; in fact, the Alliance was in the government during the 1996–2000 government cycle. This occurred despite the fact that the Alliance is not a political party but an organisation involved in active ethnic minority protection, working on national and democratic grounds, responsible for the public representation of the Hungarian ethnic group living in Romania at national and partly municipal level and for the co-ordination and promotion of the different forms of the self-organisation of the society. In the present government cycle, the Alliance is in the opposition but is supporting the government. Of its 12 senators (8.6% of the possible mandates) five persons, of its 27 representatives in the Lower House (7.8% of the mandates) 13 people are from one of the border regions. In addition to the representation in the Parliament, the Alliance has gained significant positions in the local administration: in four of the 42 Romanian counties (including Szatmár along the border) the president is Hungarian and the representatives of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania have several positions of national importance (Constitutional Court, Government Secretariat etc.)

As regards the participation in the parliamentary and municipal elections, we can say that the electoral activity of the population on both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border region lags behind the national averages. The data of the last parliamentary elections show that in Hungary Hajdú-Bihar county was the least active (68.4% participation in the elections, as opposed to the national average of 73.5%), in Romania it was Satu Mare (45.2% participation, as opposed to 56.5% on the national average). Both counties are situated right along the border.

## 1.4 Economic dimension

At the analysis of the economic conditions concerning the Hungarian–Romanian border region, in each case the data of the NUTS 2 level regions with a common border section were considered. This makes practically impossible the demonstration of the data at the direct, narrower border region; however, NUTS 4 level micro-regional data are only available in Hungary, this territorial tier has not been established yet in Romania.

In the countries of this region, no statistical data are published about the progress of the net regional product, and Hungary and Romania are not exceptions, either, thus we used the available national and regional GDP data for the analyses. After the economic decline following the systemic change, GDP started to grow in Hungary in the mid–1990s, increasing from 36.5 billion USD in 1996 to 64.9 billion in 2002. This is not true for Romania, however: during these six years, the amount of gross domestic product did not significantly change, in this field too there is a stagnation.

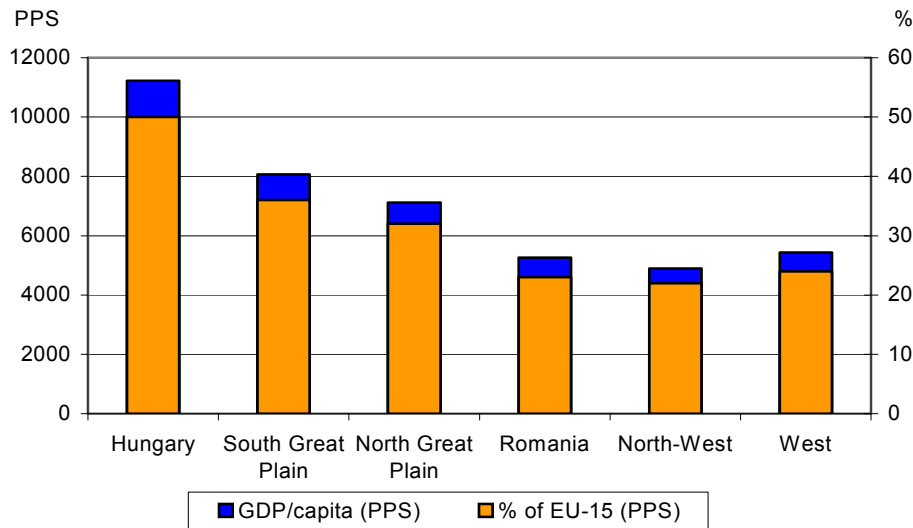
The difference between the two countries is well demonstrated by the figure of *GDP per capita*. As opposed to the figure of Hungary, just over 5,100 USD, there is only a 1,700–1,800 USD figure in Romania. The GDP per capita in the border regions well demonstrates the positions that these regions have within their countries. While in 2001 the GDP per capita was 7,953 and 8,498 Euros in the two Hungarian regions, respectively (as opposed to the national average of 12,018 Euros, in purchasing power parity), in Romania the two border regions had figures of 6,079 and 5,290 Euros, respectively, compared to the national average of 5,700 Euros (*Figure 3*).

The differences between Hungary and Romania can be clearly seen in the *breakdown of the employees by economic sectors*, as well. In the 1990s, the number of *agricultural* employees declined in both Hungarian regions. This decline was especially striking in the first few years of the decade, the process has slowed down since then. Although the share of agricultural earners is still higher in the two Hungarian regions in question than the Hungarian average, it is still significantly lower than in the two neighbouring Romanian border regions (*Table 1*).

As regards the number of *industrial employees*, the effects of the above-mentioned economic restructuring were visible in the labour market. The number of those employed in industry decreased fast, parallel to the decrease in the number of total employment (this is especially true for the South Great Plain region), then it started to rise again after 1998. The only difference in the field of construction industry and trade is that the growth started in these activities a year or two earlier. On the whole, on the Hungarian side of the border 6–7% of the employees work in agriculture, some 30–31% does industrial activities and more than 60% are employed in services.

Figure 3

*Gross domestic product, 2001*



Source: EUROSTAT.

Table 1

*Employment, by activity of national economy (end of year)*

Year	Total					
	Hungary	North Great Plain	South Great Plain	Romania	West	North-West
	thou persons					
1992	3,118.6	398.7	375.6	10,458	976.0	1,376.8
1993	2,835.9	348.9	337.2	10,062	942.2	1,337.2
1994	2,619.2	328.2	312.0	10,011	953.9	1,318.8
1995	2,508.3	311.6	308.1	9,493	940.1	1,234.5
1996	2,391.0	299.3	280.5	9,379	914.9	1,231.9
1997	2,337.1	294.3	273.8	9,023	881.4	1,173.9
1998	2,387.1	264.5	245.1	8,813	832.6	1,203.6
1999	2,678.7	295.8	281.8	8,420	780.4	1,147.7
2000	2,703.1	330.9	318.5	8,629	821.1	1,170.0
2001	2,698.1	330.3	311.4	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	2,739.2	339.7	313.3	9,234	803.0	1,164.0
2003	2,700.1	340.7	313.3	8,306	811.0	1,131.4



continuing Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Agriculture, sylviculture, forestry and hunting												
1992	311.2	10.0	62.3	15.6	63.3	16.9	3,443	32.9	296.2	30.3	510.2	37.1
1993	229.3	8.1	41.5	11.9	44.1	13.1	3,614	35.9	301.9	32.0	537.7	40.2
1994	188.2	7.2	31.8	9.7	36.3	11.6	3,647	36.4	304.6	31.9	527.5	40.0
1995	172.2	6.9	31.2	10.0	33.2	10.8	3,265	34.4	282.9	30.1	472.2	38.3
1996	159.2	6.7	28.2	9.4	31.7	11.3	3,320	35.4	284.0	31.0	487.2	39.5
1997	151.8	6.5	27.0	9.2	30.8	11.2	3,384	37.5	283.1	32.1	501.5	42.7
1998	144.7	6.1	27.8	10.5	29.0	11.8	3,349	38.0	282.7	34.0	502.2	41.7
1999	143.7	5.4	27.1	9.2	29.3	10.4	3,466	41.2	286.4	36.7	519.4	45.3
2000	131.4	4.9	23.9	7.2	27.3	8.6	3,570	41.4	294.9	35.9	537.3	45.9
2001	119.6	4.4	21.3	6.4	24.9	8.0	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	113.1	4.1	20.7	6.2	23.6	7.5	3,357	36.3	222.0	27.6	396.0	34.0
2003	106.6	3.9	20.2	5.9	21.9	7.0	2,888	34.8	237.2	29.2	434.2	38.4
Industry												
1992	997.1	32.0	124.0	31.1	125.6	33.5	3,301	31.6	333.0	34.1	421.4	30.6
1993	871.3	30.7	106.5	30.5	111.4	33.1	3,030	30.1	305.1	32.4	395.1	29.5
1994	798.3	30.5	104.0	31.7	103.5	33.2	2,882	28.8	301.2	31.6	363.4	27.6
1995	763.6	30.4	98.9	31.7	104.7	34.0	2,714	28.6	284.5	30.3	347.2	28.1
1996	737.4	30.8	95.5	31.9	93.9	33.5	2,741	29.2	280.8	30.7	350.3	28.4
1997	733.5	31.4	95.8	32.6	91.8	33.5	2,450	27.2	237.4	26.9	312.4	26.6
1998	750.9	31.5	88.1	33.3	83.6	34.1	2,317	26.3	231.5	27.8	317.1	26.3
1999	829.8	31.0	98.6	33.3	93.0	33.0	2,054	24.4	204.3	26.2	272.3	23.7
2000	832.4	30.8	106.5	32.2	106.8	33.6	2,004	23.2	218.9	26.7	259.7	22.2
2001	825.7	30.6	107.8	32.6	101.1	32.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	816.4	29.9	108.7	32.5	99.2	31.6	2,311	25.0	233.0	29.0	321.0	27.6
2003	789.2	29.2	107.1	31.4	96.2	30.7	2,059	24.8	235.1	29.0	287.1	25.4

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Construction												
1992	147.3	4.7	15.8	4.0	12.6	3.4	579	5.5	48.9	5.0	55.7	4.0
1993	125.9	4.4	12.6	3.6	11.2	3.3	574	5.7	43.1	4.6	51.1	3.8
1994	104.6	4.0	10.1	3.1	9.8	3.2	563	5.6	46.4	4.9	55.2	4.2
1995	92.2	3.7	8.9	2.8	9.7	3.2	479	5.0	44.8	4.8	47.0	3.8
1996	78.7	3.3	7.4	2.5	8.1	2.9	475	5.1	45.2	4.9	49.6	4.0
1997	71.2	3.0	6.7	2.3	7.9	2.9	439	4.9	38.5	4.4	43.8	3.7
1998	81.9	3.4	8.2	3.1	9.6	3.9	391	4.4	37.7	4.5	43.8	3.6
1999	107.3	4.0	11.0	3.7	12.2	4.4	338	4.0	33.5	4.3	38.9	3.4
2000	112.4	4.2	12.1	3.7	12.9	4.1	353	4.1	33.2	4.0	39.4	3.4
2001	116.7	4.3	12.8	3.9	14.0	4.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	118.9	4.3	13.3	4.0	14.5	4.6	413	4.5	43.0	5.4	53.0	4.6
2003	121.5	4.5	13.1	3.9	13.8	4.4	396	4.8	36.1	4.5	40.9	3.6
Trade												
1992	277.4	8.9	35.4	8.9	33.2	8.8	754	7.2	69.6	7.1	92.9	6.7
1993	227.9	8.0	29.0	8.3	26.6	7.9	585	5.8	70.8	7.5	76.9	5.8
1994	189.0	7.2	25.1	7.7	23.3	7.5	636	6.4	81.1	8.5	68.5	5.2
1995	177.8	7.1	20.9	6.7	22.0	7.2	865	9.1	101.8	10.8	95.6	7.7
1996	163.8	6.8	18.6	6.2	18.9	6.8	772	8.2	96.4	10.5	87.3	7.1
1997	154.4	6.6	18.3	6.2	18.0	6.6	802	8.9	129.0	14.6	81.9	7.0
1998	154.2	6.5	18.1	6.8	14.6	6.0	835	9.5	93.2	11.2	106.1	8.8
1999	267.4	10.0	29.6	10.0	28.9	10.3	756	9.0	79.5	10.2	96.1	8.4
2000	283.2	10.5	33.8	10.2	32.5	10.2	776	9.0	85.9	10.5	93.0	7.9
2001	292.3	10.8	34.8	10.5	33.0	10.6	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	306.9	11.2	33.9	10.1	35.0	11.2	859	9.3	90.0	11.2	102.0	8.8
2003	297.1	11.0	32.9	9.7	33.2	10.6	906	10.9	98.4	12.1	120.8	10.7

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Hotels and restaurants												
1992	64.8	2.1	5.4	1.4	6.4	1.7	175	1.7	15.7	1.6	21.8	1.6
1993	57.7	2.0	5.6	1.6	6.1	1.8	131	1.3	12.9	1.4	17.3	1.3
1994	52.9	2.0	5.3	1.6	5.4	1.7	136	1.4	11.1	1.2	28.2	2.1
1995	50.6	2.0	5.0	1.6	5.2	1.7	123	1.3	15.3	1.6	13.2	1.1
1996	48.5	2.0	4.5	1.5	4.7	1.7	116	1.2	16.5	1.8	13.2	1.1
1997	52.1	2.2	5.5	1.9	4.5	1.6	130	1.4	15.9	1.8	10.8	0.9
1998	53.4	2.2	5.9	2.2	4.4	1.8	98	1.1	11.0	1.3	11.9	1.0
1999	74.0	2.8	8.1	2.7	7.7	2.7	100	1.2	11.0	1.4	11.6	1.0
2000	77.4	2.9	8.6	2.6	8.4	2.6	93	1.1	11.2	1.4	12.1	1.0
2001	77.0	2.9	8.5	2.6	8.0	2.6	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	80.3	2.9	9.2	2.8	8.3	2.7	112	1.2	9.0	1.1	20.0	1.7
2003	76.3	2.8	9.0	2.6	8.0	2.6	105	1.3	11.7	1.4	12.6	1.1
Transport and storage, post and telecommunication												
1992	274.2	8.8	37.6	9.4	26.8	7.1	649	6.2	64.4	6.6	73.6	5.3
1993	266.0	9.4	37.2	10.7	26.7	7.9	592	5.9	59.9	6.4	66.7	5.0
1994	248.2	9.5	34.0	10.4	25.2	8.1	556	5.6	58.3	6.1	61.5	4.7
1995	239.9	9.6	32.3	10.4	25.5	8.3	556	5.9	58.7	6.2	62.4	5.1
1996	228.5	9.6	30.8	10.3	22.4	8.0	547	5.8	52.1	5.7	61.6	5.0
1997	215.5	9.2	29.1	9.9	20.9	7.6	505	5.6	47.7	5.4	55.0	4.7
1998	213.7	9.0	7.8	3.0	7.4	3.0	461	5.2	43.8	5.3	51.1	4.2
1999	226.4	8.5	8.4	2.8	10.2	3.6	405	4.8	39.0	5.0	48.3	4.2
2000	227.7	8.4	27.4	8.3	22.8	7.2	419	4.9	39.0	4.7	49.3	4.2
2001	224.6	8.3	27.1	8.2	27.1	8.7	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	228.9	8.4	28.1	8.4	23.6	7.5	458	5.0	47.0	5.9	56.0	4.8
2003	220.2	8.2	27.3	8.0	22.5	7.2	402	4.8	40.2	5.0	50.6	4.5

cont. Table 1

Year	Hungary		North Great Plain		South Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total	thou persons	% of total
Other activities of the national economy												
1992	1,046.7	33.6	118.2	29.6	107.7	28.7	1,557	14.9	148.2	15.2	201.2	14.6
1993	1,057.8	37.3	116.4	33.4	111.0	32.9	1,536	15.3	148.5	15.8	192.4	14.4
1994	1,038.0	39.6	117.9	35.9	108.5	34.8	1,591	15.9	151.2	15.9	214.5	16.3
1995	1,011.9	40.3	115.2	37.0	107.6	34.9	1,491	15.7	152.1	16.2	196.9	15.9
1996	974.9	40.8	109.1	36.4	100.9	36.0	1,408	15.0	139.9	15.3	182.7	14.8
1997	958.6	41.0	112.0	38.1	100.1	36.6	1,313	14.6	129.9	14.7	168.5	14.4
1998	988.5	41.4	108.5	41.0	96.5	39.4	1,362	15.5	132.7	15.9	171.4	14.2
1999	1,030.1	38.5	113.0	38.2	100.4	35.7	1,301	15.5	126.7	16.2	161.1	14.0
2000	1,038.7	38.4	118.7	35.9	107.7	33.8	1,414	16.4	138.0	16.8	179.2	15.3
2001	995.8	36.9	118.0	35.7	107.6	34.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	1,070.2	39.1	120.8	36.1	109.3	34.9	1,724	18.7	159.0	19.8	216.0	18.6
2003	1,089.3	40.3	131.1	38.5	117.8	37.6	1,550	18.7	152.3	18.8	185.2	16.4

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

The figures and the transitions since 1998 show a completely different picture in Romania. The proportions of those living from agriculture and forestry are much higher in both regions than in Hungary (in 2002 it was 27.6% in the *Western Region* and 34% in the *North-western Region*). These figures have not decreased considerably since 1990, in fact, in the North-western Region the share of agricultural employees has increased. The share of industrial employment, on the other hand, rapidly decreased, parallel to the decline of the Romanian industry. The number of those working in industry dropped from 30–34% in the early 1990s to 22–26% in 2000, but since that time it has increased again to 27–29% in 2002. Parallel to the decrease in the number of total employment, the number of tertiary employees decreased, too, their share is below 40% in both regions.

*Unemployment* was an unknown phenomenon in both countries before the systemic change (1989), but became one of the most important social problems within a few years. The comprehension of unemployment data are made difficult by the fact that sometimes there are different calculation methods within the same country, and there has been a discussion for a long time about the selection of the method most adequately reflecting the real situation. In Hungary, the national un-

employment figures reached their peak in 1993, at approximately 12%, since then this number has been continuously decreasing, making approximately 8% now (Table 2). The *North Great Plain Region* is also in an unfavourable situation, as opposed to the major part of Hungary, the decrease in the number of the unemployed did not start in 1993, the situation only improved after 1998. The present unemployment rate in the counties of the North Great Plain ranges from 6 to 9%. The South Great Plain region is in a better situation, as regards the unemployment rate, it followed the national tendencies. Now it has the best position along the eastern border, in Csongrád county the unemployment rate is even lower than the national average.

In *Romania*, unemployment appeared a little later than in Hungary, but the pace of the growth in the number of the unemployed was faster, the number of jobless people multiplied from 1991 to 1992. Looking at the western border region of Romania, it is more difficult to find evident tendencies. Following the peak in 1993, when unemployment rate was around 10%, a decrease could be seen for a few years, but a new and even stronger wave of unemployment hit the region after 1997. By 2003 the number of unemployed decreased again, the proportion of the registered unemployed is around 6% in the Western and the North-western Region (Figure 4).

Table 2

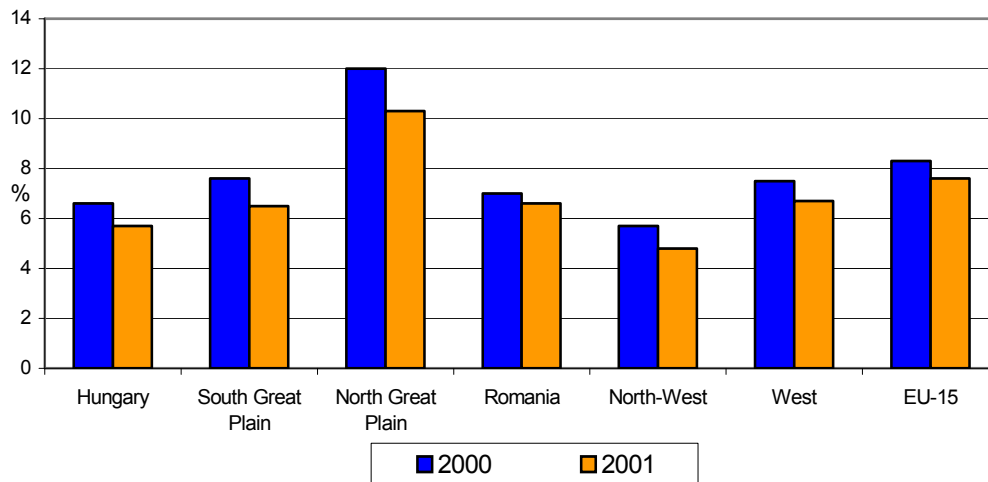
*Unemployment rate, based on the number of registered unemployed,  
1992–2003*

Year	Unemployment rate (%)					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1992	12.3	14.6	18.1	8.2	8.9	6.8
1993	12.1	13.7	17.1	10.4	9.8	8.8
1994	10.4	11.7	15.8	10.9	10.1	9.2
1995	10.4	10.6	15.7	9.5	8.6	7.5
1996	10.5	10.8	16.5	6.6	5.6	5.9
1997	10.4	11.1	16.5	8.9	8.1	8.3
1998	9.1	9.7	14.5	10.4	8.8	10.6
1999	9.6	10.5	16.3	11.8	10.0	12.6
2000	8.9	9.9	15.6	10.5	8.5	10.4
2001	8.0	9.2	13.7	8.8	6.6	5.6
2002	5.8	6.2	7.8	8.1	7.6	7.1
2003	5.9	6.5	6.8	7.2	6.0	5.9

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Agency for Employment (Romania).

Figure 4

*Unemployment rate (ILO standard, end of year)*



Source: EUROSTAT.

Figures regarding *foreign direct investments* are only available for the Hungarian regions. There are significant differences in this respect between the two Hungarian regions of the Great Hungarian Plain, the Northern Great Plain region attracted less investors during the 1990s than its southern counterpart. The differences almost completely vanished by 2001, moreover later the Northern Great Plain region attracted a lot more foreign capital. The amount of the registered capital of the businesses gradually increased over the last ten years, a stop in this growth only occurred in the recent years. The registered capital of the foreign-owned businesses amounted to approximately 434.7 billion Forints in the North Great Plain and some 203.7 billion in the South Great Plain region in 2003.

A relatively little volume of capital has arrived at the two regions from the neighbouring country, because the major part of the Romanian capital (a total of 30 million USD until the end of the year 2000, only one-sixth of the Hungarian capital export to Romania) went to Budapest. The main reason for this is the fact that there is no significant Romanian minority along the border (e.g. the language problems are already there), so the Romanian companies prefer the Hungarian capital city or the western part of Hungary, considering them as a good “springboard” towards the European Union.

In Romania, the *foreign direct investments* are characterised by a *spatial concentration* both as regards the number of the companies and their registered capital: the share of *Bucharest* is almost 60% in both respects. The lagging of the rest of the country is well indicated by the fact that in the four Romanian counties (Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș) adjacent to Hungary, which are otherwise among the most developed territories, the total volume of the investments is significantly lower than in the Hungarian counties (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád), which are peripheral territories by Hungarian standards. The *inflow of Hungarian capital into Romania* mostly favours the Hungarian-inhabited regions, the *four Romanian counties along the state border* and the *inner Transylvanian territories* (Cluj, Covasna, Mures and Harghita), and Bucharest, which stands out as an island with a high share from the investments. Understandably, several factors contribute to the promotion of the Hungarian investments, including the fostering of traditions, the use of Hungarian language and the assistance of the population torn from the mother country all explain why the Hungarian capital investments are implemented in the mostly or significantly Hungarian-inhabited regions, along the border and in the inner Transylvanian counties.

At the end of the year 2000, there were some 3,500 *Hungarian businesses* with a total capital of 180 million USD in Romania (this means that Hungary has the 7<sup>th</sup> position among the foreign investors in Romania and 12<sup>th</sup> position as regards the volume of the invested capital). The businesses *usually prefer the Hungarian-inhabited territories* instead of the Romanian-inhabited ones. The main reason for this, apart from the language problems, is the large distance and the backward infrastructure. The Hungarian businesses are mainly interested in the counties along the border (Szatmár, Bihar, Arad and Timiș) and the inner Transylvanian territories, including the ones in the Székely Land (Harghita, Covasna). It is also characteristic that while 33% of the companies operate in the border region, “only” 23.5% of them are located in the Székely Land, while their share from the amount of invested capital is 11.1% and 25.5%, respectively. The Hungarian companies investing in the direct border region are less capital-intensive: the average amount of their capital is not more than one-fourth of their non-Hungarian counterparts. When looking at these data, however, we cannot neglect the fact that the MOL (the Hungarian oil and gas company), which is responsible for almost a half of the total Hungarian investments in Romania, operates most of its filling stations in Bucharest and the Székely Land.

The borders opening up after the systemic change offered new possibilities for the citizens who wish to live on *tourism*, even if the biggest part of *Hungary's eastern border region* is not among the most popular tourist destinations. The rapid increase in the number of commercial accommodations shows that the local people are trying to use the new opportunities. Within a few years, the number of

beds in commercial accommodations increased by several thousand, reaching 39,500 in the *North Great Plain Region*.

On the other hand, in *Romania* the statistics show stagnation, in the case of the *Western Region* even a decline in the number of beds in commercial accommodations. Despite the growing number of beds in commercial accommodations, a decrease in the number of foreign guests can be seen on both sides of the border, which is more drastic in Romania and moderate in Hungary. Nevertheless the North Great Plain region can be qualified as definitely successful for being able to increase the number of guests nights since 1995, besides a decreasing number of guests. In the remaining part of the border region, however, the role of tourism in income-generation is decreasing.

The total *passenger traffic across the Hungarian–Romanian border* mostly adapted to the national trends over the last decade, although special characteristics could be seen as well. The systemic change resulted in the complete opening of the borders, amounting to a sudden growth in the traffic of all border sections. This reached its peak in 1995, after a gradual increase (in 1995, 115,138,000 border crossings were registered). Since then there has been a continuous decline, which is the result of a natural balancing process, and according to experts the traffic will stabilise around the present 80–90 million border crossings (*Figure 5*).

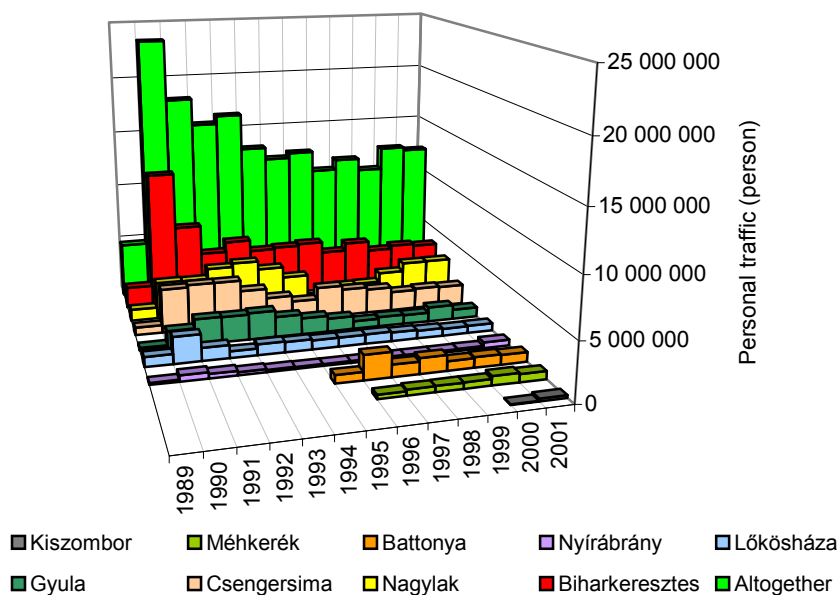
In addition to following the national trends, the most important regional characteristics is the fact that the *Hungarian–Romanian border* was the busiest in 1990 and not 1995, because of the inner political events in Romania. The average daily number of vehicles has been some 8–10% of the total figure for Hungary over the last few years, while this figure was 19.5% in 1990, due to the large number of refugees. In the following five years, however, the traffic continuously decreased and dropped by almost a half. Since then the size of the traffic has more or less stabilised, besides some ups and downs. If unpredictable political events or economic reasons do not occur, a similar traffic is expected in the coming years. The volume of passenger traffic is unlikely to decrease after the introduction of the Schengen norms of border defence, either, because the right of the Romanian citizens to travel without visa, gained not so long ago, will remain.

At the border crossing stations of the Hungarian–Romanian border, a total of 12,179,982 border crossings were registered in 2001. The majority of the traffic was managed by the Biharkeresztes–Ártánd, the Nagylak, the Csengersima and the Gyula border crossing stations. The temporarily working bilateral border crossings, although they have a great significance locally and in the time of holidays, did not produce a considerable traffic in 2001, similar to the years before: not more than 3,048 persons were registered crossing the border. The overwhelming majority of the total traffic was made by the journeys of the Romanian citizens, a lesser part by those of the Hungarians, while the citizens of other countries together did not reach 20%.



Figure 5

*Personal traffic across the checkpoints of the Hungarian–Romanian border, 1989–2001*



Source: Hungarian National Headquarters of the Hungarian Border Guard, 2001. Edited by the authors.

Similar to the previous years, the motivation of a significant part of the cross-border traffic was the *difference in some of the market prices* in the two countries. The main attraction for the Hungarian citizens living in the border region is still the cheap fuel in Romania (there are so-called “*petrol tourists*” specialised on this). The main motivation of the Romanian shopping tourism is the procurement of food, technical devices and other consumer goods. Some special sales promotions can thus significantly influence the number of tourists with shopping purposes. In the recent years, however, a gradual equalisation occurred in the price levels in the two countries, and although the “confirmed” marketers go on regularly visiting the neighbouring country, the number of border crossings with shopping purposes is gradually decreasing. Those living in the direct vicinity of the border still visit the other country with *shopping* intentions, but this makes an ever smaller share of the total traffic, due to the decreasing differences between the price levels in the two countries.

From March to October, i.e. the period of the seasonal agricultural, food processing and construction industry works and in the peak of the tourism season, the number of Romanian citizens arriving at Hungary for *employment reasons* is still high. Following the recent abolishment of the obligator visa for the Romanian citizens, a new phenomenon has appeared: more and more buses full of Romanian tourists cross the Hungarian–Romanian border, designating some European Union country as a destination, however, the motivation might as well be employment in Hungary – of course we do not have information about the real intentions.

On the whole we can say that practically the same problems have to be tackled on the two sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border, although there are *huge differences between the level of development of the Hungarian and the Romanian side* in many respects. Although the *most serious problems are the same* (outdated economic structure and infrastructure, little interest of the foreign capital, lack of capital), still the possibilities are completely different on the two sides of the border, because of the enormous development advance of Hungary. This makes co-operation difficult and at the same time inevitable. An interesting feature of the geographical location of *Satu Mare (Szatmár)*, *Bihor (Bihar)*, *Arad* and *Timiș (Temes)* counties on the Romanian side the Hungarian–Romanian border is the fact that they are twice as far from their own capital city as from Budapest, which is another factor calling for the development of the cross-border connections. Because of the common interests and the willingness of the Romanian party for a more intensive co-operation in order to achieve a successful socio-economic catching up and the Euro-Atlantic integration, there is a justified expectancy on both sides.

## 1.5 Social dimension

Similar to the general characteristics of the European *demographic trends*, the number of population has been continuously decreasing in Hungary since the census of 1980. As regards regional differences in this respect, we can say that the number of population in the South Great Plain has decreased, in accordance with the national tendencies, whereas it increased in the North Great Plain region until 1992 (due to the high natural increase) and the decrease only started in 1992. In Romania, including the Western and North-western Region neighbour to Hungary, the number of population reached its highest figure in 1990, since then the decrease has been continuous (*Table 3*).

In Hungary, the figures of *natural increase* have been negative since 1982, but there are significant differences in this respect between the two Hungarian regions in question: while the balance of births and deaths was positive in the North Great

TABLE 3

Population and population density, 1988–2003

Plain region until 1992, the South Great Plain has been characterised by a natural decrease for more than two decades now. In Romania natural decrease started in 1992, in the same year in the North-western Region and only one year earlier in the Western Region. The slowing down of the pace of natural increase started in 1996 in the Western Region and in 1998 in the North-western Region (*Table 4*).

Table 4

*Natural increase per 1,000 inhabitants, 1988–2003*

Year	Natural increase (‰)					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1988	-1.5	-2.48	1.24	5.5	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1989	-2.1	-2.59	0.61	5.3	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1990	-1.9	-3.03	1.08	3.0	3.13	0.09
1991	-1.7	-2.32	0.82	1.0	1.33	-1.19
1992	-2.6	-3.56	-0.12	-0.2	-0.33	-2.57
1993	-3.2	-3.91	-0.89	-0.6	-1.11	-2.71
1994	-3.0	-3.78	-0.69	-0.8	-1.09	-2.91
1995	-3.3	-4.37	-0.48	-1.6	-1.65	-3.57
1996	-3.7	-4.69	-1.00	-2.5	-2.09	-4.16
1997	-3.8	-5.14	-1.16	-1.9	-2.06	-3.50
1998	-4.3	-5.73	-1.89	-1.5	-1.57	-3.27
1999	-4.8	-6.05	-2.52	-1.4	-1.65	-3.24
2000	-3.8	-5.00	-1.78	-0.9	-1.30	-2.90
2001	-3.5	-4.51	-1.71	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	-3.5	-4.60	-1.98	-2.7	-2.80	-4.00
2003	-4.1	-5.38	-2.69	-2.5	-4.00	-2.40

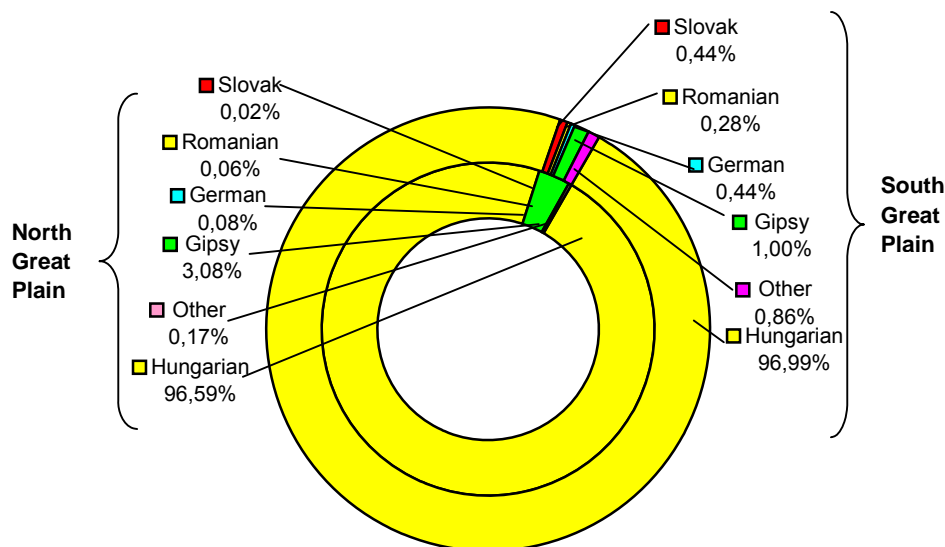
*Source:* Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Just like the whole of Hungary, the North Great Plain and the South Great Plain regions can be regarded as almost completely homogeneous as regards ethnic composition. The definition of the Gypsies from ethnic aspect is problematic, because the Gypsies do not make a single ethnic group, only estimated data are available about their number and the majority of them declare themselves as Hungarians. In both Hungarian border regions in question, a rather scattered Slovak, Romanian and German ethnic minority live in the largest number (*Figure 6*). The number of Romanians living in Hungary is approximately 15,000–25,000 people, some 60–75% of them live along the border, mostly in Békés and Hajdú-Bihar counties, and another significant group of them in Budapest. The village called Méhkerék (in

Békés county) is the only settlement in Hungary where the census data show a Romanian majority (80.7%). The Romanian minority has wide-ranging cultural autonomy in Hungary (minority self-government, newspaper and television programme in their mother tongue, cultural organisations, elementary and secondary education). Their most important organisation is the Cultural Alliance of Romanians in Hungary, but the Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches have a significant role in the preservation of the ethnic identity, too. In the border region, 19 Romanian Orthodox and three Greek Catholic parishes operate, together with one Romanian Orthodox episcopacy.

Figure 6

*Ethnic composition of population in North and South Great Plain, 2001*



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

In Romania, the share of the Romanian ethnic population from the total population was almost 90% both in 1992 and in 2001. The most significant ethnic minority are the Hungarians, whose proportion decreased from 7.1% to 6.6%, their number from 1,620,000 to 1,480,000 from 1992 to 2001. In addition to the Gypsies who are hard to classify, there is no other ethnic minority apart from the Hungarians in Romania whose share from the total population reaches 1%. A characteristic feature of the Hungarian ethnic group living in Romania is that only

a part of them concentrate in the proximity of the Hungarian–Romanian border. The biggest contiguous ethnic block can be found in the inner part of Romania, in the Székely Land. Another larger contiguous Hungarian-inhabited territory can be found in the northern part of the Hungarian–Romanian border, whereas the Hungarian population is only sporadic now along the southern part of the border (*Figure 7*).

In the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Hungarians living in Romania, the non-governmental organisations play an important role. Their number started to increase rapidly after the fall of the dictatorship in Romania: in 2002, as many as 1,500 Hungarian non-governmental organisations were registered in the country, whose main field of operation is education and culture, also the knowledge of Hungary and tourism. The number of associations of economic character is significant, too.

As regards *migration processes*, the Hungarian border regions have been characterised by a migration loss for decades, the major part of that being internal migration, towards to economically more advanced Hungarian territories, the number of those leaving Hungary is negligible. In the Hungarian regions along the Hungarian–Romanian border, the combined share of foreign citizens of any nationality is less than 1% from the total population. Most of them are immigrants (38%) and Hungarians moving back to Hungary (23%). In Romania there are only national level data, which show that the main actors in the international migrations, apart from the Romanians, have been the Hungarian and the German minority since 1990. As regards the destinations of the migrations, a considerable change occurred during the last decade, the emigration from political and ethnic reasons in the early 1990s was replaced by a migration because of economic reasons (*Table 5, 6*).

In *Hungary* the *density of the population* has been continuously decreasing, parallel to the decline of the number of population (the population density was 109.4 persons per km<sup>2</sup> in 2001). Both the North Great Plain and the South Great Plain regions are much less densely populated than Hungary as a whole (75 and 87.8 people per km<sup>2</sup>, respectively in 2001). The population density has been continuously decreasing in Romania, too, including the two border regions neighbour to Hungary, which are much more scarcely populated than the national average (*Table 3*). The *share of the urban population* was continuously increasing in Hungary until 1994, since then it has only grown moderately with some ups and downs, mostly due to the settlements newly awarded the town status. The North Great Plain region is less, while the South Great Plain more urbanised than the national average, and since 1988 the proportion of urban population has been continuously increasing in both regions. In Romania, the share of urban population increased by 5.2% in 1988–2000, with some ups and downs, but a moderate decrease has occurred since 1998. The share of urban population is stagnating in the border regions (*Table 7*).

FIGURE 7  
HUNGARIANS IN ROMANIA, 2001

Table 5

*Emigrants by nationality and country of destination in Romania,  
1990–2000*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Emigrants by nationality / ethnic group (number of persons)											
<i>Total</i>	96,929	44,160	31,152	18,446	17,146	25,675	21,526	19,945	17,536	12,594	14,753
Romanians	23,888	19,307	18,104	8,814	10,146	18,706	16,767	16,883	15,202	11,283	13,438
Germans	60,072	15,567	8,852	5,945	4,065	2,906	2,315	1,273	775	390	374
Hungarians	11,040	7,494	3,523	3,206	2,509	3,608	2,105	1,459	1,217	696	788
Jews	745	516	224	221	177	131	191	136	198	111	66
Other nationalities	1,184	1,276	449	260	249	324	148	194	144	114	87
Emigrants by country of destination (number of persons)											
Australia	611	301	297	236	220	136	165	207	206	124	143
Austria	3,459	4,630	3,282	1,296	1,256	2,276	915	1,551	941	468	270
Canada	1,894	1,661	1,591	1,926	1,523	2,286	2,123	2,331	1,945	1,626	2,518
France	1,626	1,512	1,235	937	787	1,438	2,181	1,143	846	696	809
Germany	66,121	20,001	13,813	6,874	6,890	9,010	6,467	5,807	3,899	2,370	2,216
Greece	576	354	143	80	87	193	274	232	316	214	328
Hungary	10,635	4,427	4,726	3,647	1,779	2,509	1,485	1,244	1,306	774	881
Israel	1,227	519	463	324	417	316	418	554	563	326	433
Italy	1,130	1,396	528	645	1,580	2,195	1,640	1,706	1,877	1,415	2,142
Sweden	996	381	686	199	176	520	310	468	129	98	90
U.S.A.	4,924	5,770	2,100	1,245	1,078	2,292	3,181	2,861	2,868	2,386	2,723
Other countries	3,730	3,208	2,288	1,010	1,363	2,504	2,367	1,841	2,640	2,097	2,200

*Source:* National Institute of Statistics (Romania).



Table 6

*Repatriated by nationality and country from where they repatriated in Romania,  
1990–2000*

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Repatriated by nationality / ethnic group (number of persons)											
<i>Total</i>	3,095	3,443	3,077	3,257	3,304	5,507	6,265	8,432	11,287	10,467	12,442
Romanians	2,139	2,544	2,255	2,296	2,428	4,604	5,332	7,288	10,289	9,823	12,138
Germans	177	116	106	139	146	196	225	268	248	141	40
Hungarians	290	283	185	284	267	259	311	361	355	202	176
Jews	172	154	198	200	129	76	0	144	85	72	42
Other nationalities	317	346	333	338	334	372	397	371	310	229	46
Repatriated by country from where they arrived (number of persons)											
Austria	160	142	121	215	323	569	567	455	198	113	20
France	164	240	191	229	137	670	1,075	1,159	328	139	111
Germany	531	556	579	606	673	853	764	692	422	273	242
Greece	162	182	106	150	101	256	117	396	394	235	178
Israel	264	254	273	259	165	162	211	151	300	83	61
Republic of Moldova	18	12	128	195	122	1,171	1,752	4,092	8,109	8,359	10,365
U.S.A.	409	433	448	348	329	487	420	441	259	255	172
Other countries	1,387	1,624	1,231	1,255	1,454	1,339	1,359	1,046	1,277	1,010	1,293

*Source:* National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Table 7

*Population by area, 1988–2003*

Year	Population by area (as percentage of total)											
	Hungary		South Great Plain		North Great Plain		Romania		North-West		West	
	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
1988	59.4	40.6	56.1	43.9	49.4	50.6	51.9	48.1	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1989	61.9	38.1	61.5	38.5	54.8	45.2	53.2	46.8	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1990	62.0	38.0	61.6	38.4	55.1	44.9	54.3	45.7	51.6	48.4	62.7	37.3
1991	62.3	37.7	61.8	38.2	55.9	44.1	54.1	45.9	51.6	48.4	62.4	37.6
1992	62.7	37.3	62.1	37.9	58.3	41.7	54.3	45.7	51.6	48.4	61.6	38.4
1993	63.2	36.8	62.2	37.8	60.0	40.0	54.5	45.5	51.9	48.1	61.8	38.2
1994	62.8	37.2	64.3	35.7	60.0	40.0	54.7	45.3	52.2	47.8	61.9	38.1
1995	62.6	37.4	64.2	35.8	60.0	40.0	54.9	45.1	52.5	47.5	62.6	37.4
1996	63.6	36.4	64.6	35.4	60.0	40.0	54.9	45.1	52.6	47.4	62.5	37.5
1997	62.9	37.1	65.0	35.0	60.2	39.8	55.0	45.0	52.7	47.3	62.6	37.4
1998	63.5	36.5	65.6	34.4	61.0	39.0	54.9	45.1	52.7	47.3	62.2	37.8
1999	63.3	36.7	65.6	34.4	60.9	39.1	54.8	45.2	52.7	47.3	62.3	37.7
2000	63.6	35.4	65.6	34.4	61.0	39.0	54.6	45.4	52.6	47.4	62.2	37.8
2001	64.1	35.9	66.8	33.2	61.9	38.1	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	65.0	35.0	67.7	33.3	62.9	37.1	53.3	46.7	51.1	48.9	61.7	38.3
2003	64.8	35.2	67.8	32.2	62.7	37.3	53.4	46.6	51.2	48.8	61.7	38.3

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

One of the most critical aspects of the judgement of the socio-political changes taking place in 1989–1990 is the *increase of the number of crimes* in the Eastern European societies. In each county the population was shocked by the fact that after the former relative security they had to get used to the relatively high number of crimes. Comparing the Hungarian and the Romania border regions, we can see that the number of crimes increased in both regions, but in Hungary the number of crimes almost doubled, slowly from an originally relatively high level, whereas in Romania the number of known crimes increased from an extremely low level (which was a “by-product” of the dictatorship) by almost fivefold within a short time.

It is difficult to compare the *school education* of the population, because of the differences in the collection of statistical data and in the educational systems (different length and forms of education). In general we can say that both nationally and in the border regions more than 90% of the population in the adequate age

have at least primary school education and the share of those with secondary or higher education is dynamically growing in both countries. In the Hungarian–Romanian border the number of secondary and higher education institutions is acceptable, several institutions with great traditions can be found here, but especially in Romania the equipment of the institutions and the subjects taught do not always meet the requirements.

The conditions of the use of *social and cultural services* changed a lot in the border regions during the 1990s. As a result of the detrimental effects of the economic transition, the inhabitants are only able to spend a smaller part of their incomes on culture, on the one hand; on the other, the institutions offering socio-cultural services themselves face financial problems (the physical condition of the buildings is bad, their technical equipment is outdated, some of them have been closed down). In addition, the expansion of the home entertainment facilities (television, VCR or DVD, Internet) contributes to the decreasing use of the capacity of the cultural institutions. Consequently, the popularity of these institutions has decreased in both countries.

Maybe the *health services* are the field where the most significant differences can be seen between the conditions in Hungary and Romania, as regards the social dimension. Looking at the number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants and the number of population per one general practitioner, a decline could be seen in the border regions of both countries after 1990, but these indices are still much higher in Romania than in Hungary (*Table 8*). This is due to the fact that in Romania the rationalisation of the health care system is still to be done (as an effect of the paternalistic supply system inherited from the socialism), the better quantitative indices hide considerable qualitative problems.

## **2 Hungarian–Ukrainian border region**

### **2.1 Historical–geographical dimension**

The *regions along the present Hungarian–Ukrainian border* made a single organic unit for centuries, as part of the historical Hungary. The Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, a loser of World War I, fell into pieces in 1918–1919, and the formerly born nationalist movements strengthened. All the borders of Hungary were designated by the peace treaty signed in France, in Trianon (nearby Versailles) on 4 June 1920. When designating the borders in the region, the ethnic, economic and catchment area aspects were completely neglected, the most important aspect of the designation of the borderlines was infrastructure, within that especially outer railway line running connecting the market towns. As a consequence of this, a signifi-

cant number of Hungarian minority remained in the Transcarpathia, and the hostile relations after the war made it impossible for the towns detached from Hungary (Ungvár, Beregszász, Munkács) and their hinterlands, which remained in Hungary and lost their gravity centres. This territory had always been a periphery from socio-economic aspect within the historical Hungary, and now it was cut by a border, which put it into an even more difficult situation, the new border regions became the “peripheries of the periphery”.

Table 8

*Hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, 1990–2003*

Year	Hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants					
	Hungary	South Great Plain	North Great Plain	Romania	North-West	West
1990	98.5	86.4	81.7	89.2	95.9	106.0
1991	100.7	86.1	81.1	89.2	96.0	107.0
1992	98.7	83.8	79.9	78.5	83.3	97.0
1993	97.7	84.5	79.5	78.7	83.5	96.6
1994	96.1	83.9	79.9	76.9	81.8	93.7
1995	90.7	83.0	74.2	76.7	82.7	94.8
1996	89.9	81.5	74.4	75.6	82.1	96.0
1997	82.4	75.0	73.0	73.8	81.3	94.1
1998	83.0	76.0	73.0	73.1	81.5	92.5
1999	84.0	76.0	75.0	73.1	81.2	92.5
2000	83.0	76.0	74.0	74.4	82.5	89.1
2001	79.1	71.8	74.3	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	79.2	72.3	71.8	75.0	84.4	82.7
2003	78.9	71.8	72.3	65.7	72.2	73.1

*Source:* Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Although the regional borders did not change considerably since they were designated, the territories cut from Hungary and now belonging to The Ukraine have experienced several changes. Due to the changes of the borders, the inhabitants of the Transcarpathia were the citizens of five states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century without moving from their birth of place. There is a frequently told anecdote in which an old man in the Transcarpathia is asked how many places he has visited in his life. He answers he has been to the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy, Czechoslovakia, the kingdom of Hungary, the Soviet Union and The Ukraine. When he is told that he must be a great traveller, he answers he has never moved out from his village.

*Transcarpathia county* on the Ukrainian side of the *Hungarian–Ukrainian border region* is situated in the south-western part of The Ukraine. It has a territory of 12,800 km<sup>2</sup>-s, the southern slopes of the so-called Forested Carpathians (Ukrainian Carpathians by their new name) are in this county, and the Great Plain begins at the foot of these hills. The neighbours of Transcarpathia are Lemberg (Lvov) and Ivano-Frankovsk counties from the north-east, Romania and Hungary on the south, Slovakia and Poland on the west. The official name of the Transcarpathia administrative area is the Trans-Carpathian Territory (Zakarpatskaya oblast), which is divided into 13 districts. The Transcarpathia region is not a separate geographical entity. The specification itself was used from the 1930s, until then the areas had been called the eastern part of Upper Northern Hungary, as Rusinsko or Podkarpat-skaya Rus. Transcarpathia in the present sense became a reality only in 1944, when during the Soviet occupation a part of almost 13,000 km<sup>2</sup>-s were cut from Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros counties, and this territory was named Zakarpatskaya Ukraina, a year later Trans-Carpathian Territory. We have to mention, however, that practically the same area also belonged to Czechoslovakia after World War I, under the name Podkarpastka Rus, as determined by the Treaty of Trianon.

The designation of the borders in Trianon also affected the administrative system of the Hungarian side, of course, because the mutilated counties remaining in Hungary without their gravity centres were not viable on their own. After a rather chaotic transitory period between the two world wars, the unification of the remaining parts of the former counties took place in 1949–1950. This reformed administrative system is still functioning, but the *planning and statistical regions* have also been designated, in accordance with the expectations of the European Union. The (NUTS 2 level) *North Great Plain (Hungarian – Észak-Alföldi) Region*, neighbour to The Ukraine, consists of three counties: *Hajdú-Bihar*, *Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok* and *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg*. The territory and number of population are of approximately the same magnitude as in the neighbouring Transcarpathia, although they are not the same administrative tier (*Figure 8*).

In the cross-border relations of two neighbouring states, the *permeability of the borders* plays a dominant role. It is important whether the border has a *connecting (bridge)* or the *separating (wall)* function. The Hungarian–Ukrainian (formerly Hungarian–Czechoslovakian, then Hungarian–Soviet) border has always been one of the most closed borders since it was designated in 1920. Following the division of Hungary after World War I, the relation between the successor states was rather hostile; the “wall” role was dominant. From 1944, this border section was the western gate of the Soviet Union, where the Soviets made their best not to let the tiniest part of the Western culture leak into the Soviet Union. In the socialist times, an alarm system was constructed on the Ukrainian side of the border. It is still there, although not used anymore. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990, the crossing of the border was simplified, but the approaching European Union membership of

Hungary and the concomitant introduction of the Schengen norms already raise a new problem. One thing seems to be certain: the Hungarian–Ukrainian border will be for a long time an external and strictly defended border of the European Union, which will restrict the everyday cross-border relations.

Figure 8

*The Hungarian–Ukrainian border region*



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

## 2.2 Legal dimensions

The Peace Treaty of Trianon of 1920 (Part 2., § 27.) designated the new borders of Hungary. The Transcarpathia region, now part of The Ukraine, belonged to Czechoslovakia then, then it became the part of Hungary again in 1939. As a conclusion of World War II, the line of the new state borders were designated by Hun-

gary and the Allied and Associated Powers in the Peace Treaty signed in Paris on 10 February 1947. This treaty was complemented by the different re-demarcation documents signed in 1949 by the Republic of Hungary and the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics and then by the decree of legal force on the order of the state border, which came into effect in 1962.

At the end of the 1980s, the political easing, the decreasing influence and then the disintegration of the Soviet Union had a fundamental effect on the borders and the border traffic. Hungary was one of the first countries to recognise the sovereignty of The Ukraine, gained in 1991 – before the disintegration of the Soviet Union –, but the establishment of the good neighbourhood and trustful relations had already started before that, and the diplomatic relations were officially established on 3 December 1991. The Hungarian consulate in Kyiv became an Embassy, and The Ukraine also opened its Embassy in Budapest on 26 March 1992. The Hungarian representative office opened in Ungvár on 8 August 1991 was given the chief consulate status on 2 June 1993. As one of the first steps in the establishment of the relations, the ministers of foreign affairs of Hungary and The Ukraine signed a declaration on 31 May 1991 on the protection of the rights of the minorities, followed later by the signing of border agreements (*Annex 1*).

#### Annex 1

##### *The agreements concerning the Hungarian–Ukrainian border*

- The agreement and its annexes between the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Hungary and the Ministry of Transport Affairs of the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the railway border traffic, signed in Moscow on 15 September 1947.
- The agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of Hungary and the Government of the Federation of the Soviet Socialist Republics on the common use and maintenance of the road bridge over the Tisza River at Záhony–Csop, signed in Budapest on 11 June 1963.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the border crossing stations on the border between the two states, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the handing over and reception of persons over the common state border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993 Act (No. XXIV. of 1995).
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the simplified state border crossing procedure of the inhabitants of the counties along the border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993.

- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on water management issues concerning the border rivers, signed in Budapest on 28 July 1993 [Government Decree No. 120/1994 (8 September)].
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the implementation of the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the handing over and reception of persons over the common state border, signed in Budapest on 26 February 1993 Act (No. XXIV. of 1995), signed in Kyiv on 27 October 1994.
- The agreement between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine on the order of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, the co-operation in issues concerning the border and mutual assistance, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the co-operation in fighting organised crime, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995.
- The Contract between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine on the order of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, the co-operation in issues concerning the border and mutual assistance, signed in Kyiv 19 on May 1995. Announced: Act No. LV of 1998.
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the rail traffic over the state border, signed in Kv on 19 May 1995. Announced: Government Decree No. 176/1996 (29 November).
- The agreement between the Government of the Republic of Hungary and the Government of The Ukraine on the reconstruction of the road bridge over the Tisza river at the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, signed in Budapest on 16 January 1996. Announced: Government Decree No. 132/1996 (28 August).

Apart from the concrete border contracts, the most important document concerning the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is the *Treaty* (whole name: “Treaty on the grounds of good neighbourhood and co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine”), signed by the two parties in Kyiv on 6 December 1991, ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament in 1992 and by the Hungarian Parliament in 1993. In the Treaty contract the parties declare, among other things, that the possible disputes between them will only be solved by peaceful means, they will never use their armed forces against each other in any case, they respect each other’s territorial integrity, and state that they do not and will not have territorial claims from the other party. The agreement also states that the parties will promote the cross-border co-operations in all fields, they do their best to create the conditions for the approach of their peoples on the ground of good neighbourhood and friendship,



they use all means to promote the expansion of the relationships among their citizens both at the level of the individuals and the level of the state, social and other organisations. They assist the establishment of the conditions for the expansion of the relationships and co-operation among the social organisations, trade unions, foundations, educational and cultural institutions, scientific institutes and mass communication, and for the intensification of the youth exchange programmes. They give a special attention to the development of the mutually advantageous bilateral economic relations.

In addition to the above-said, a number of interstate and intergovernmental agreements and contracts regulate the relations between the two countries. Agreements were signed, among other things, on the *co-operation in the field of trade and economy, technical and scientific issues, education and culture, the promotion and mutual protection of the investments between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine, plant sanitation and plant protection relations, international air, railway and road traffic*. Also, there are agreements on the co-operation in the field of energy management, the *avoidance of double taxation, the co-operation in the field of environmental protection and regional development, the assistance in customs affairs* etc. Also, a number of Hungarian–Ukrainian intergovernmental joint committees have been set up, which co-ordinate the bilateral co-operations in their fields, prepare and supervise the bilateral agreements. There is e.g. a joint committee on trade and economic issues, one on technical and scientific issues, on environmental protection and regional development co-operation, another on minority issues.

Although it is not a bilateral agreement, we have to mention the *Act No. LXII of 2001*, commonly known as the “*Status Law*”, on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries, which gives special (health care, travel, employment etc.) allowances to the Hungarians living outside Hungary.

The negotiations in connection with the EU accession are at a different level in Hungary and The Ukraine, consequently the *extent to which the community law, the *acquis communautaire* has been taken over* is different. In Hungary, legal harmonisation is practically complete, deficiencies only being in the field of the institutional network responsible for the reception of the resources from the Structural Funds. On 16 April 2003, Hungary signed in Athens the contract on the accession to the European Union, as a result of which Hungary became a full-right EU member state on 1 May 2004. To the opposite, The Ukraine is still at the first steps of the Euro-Atlantic integration; we cannot actually even talk about the taking over of the *acquis communautaire*. The objective of the Ukrainian government is the accession of the country to the European Union as soon as possible, but the preparation is only in its initial phase. One of the first steps in this process is that The Ukraine wishes to become a WTO member in 2003.

There are *no special administrative territories on either side of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border*, but there are *special business zones* on both sides, established in order to develop the economy and promote investments in the border region. In Hungary, the *Záhony and Region Business Zone* was established in 1996, involving 50 settlements of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, while in The Ukraine the Act on the *Special Economic Zone of the Transcarpathia* came into force in May 2001, providing tax allowances for a duration of 30 years for the investors (its total territory covers 737.9 hectares, of which 212 hectares are in Munkács and its neighbourhood and more than 500 hectares in the Ungvár and Csap area). The businesses settling down in the zones can receive different tax allowances, state supports and preferential credits. There is a well functioning everyday connection between the two organisations.

In the 1990s, the first *Euroregions* were established in East-Central Europe, too, aiming at the cross-border relations in the formerly isolated border regions. There is one such organisation in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, the Carpathians Euroregion, on whose establishment the contract was signed in Debrecen on *14 February 1993* by the representatives of the border regions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and The Ukraine. Simultaneously, the ministers of foreign affairs of Hungary, Poland and The Ukraine ratified this by the signing of a Common Declaration. The characteristic feature of this Euroregion is that its creation was influenced by politics, it was practically “top-down” created. Later on, Romanian counties joined the Euroregion. This was the first solely Eastern European Euroregional initiative, as its members only involve border regions from “post-communist” countries. The viability of the Euroregion is questionable, because of the different socio-economic development level and political systems of the participating member countries, the differences among their legal regulations and public administration systems, also because of the giant size of the Euroregion (the organisation has continuously grown since its creation, presently it covers an area in excess of **161,000** km<sup>2</sup>-s, its population is over 16 million people). Consequently, smaller bi- or trilateral organisations have been established within the Euroregion, including the Inter-regio along the Hungarian–Ukrainian–Romanian triple border (*Figure 9*).

The *visa regulations* are the same in Hungary and The Ukraine. Hungarian citizens can enter The Ukraine for duration of 30 days without a visa, in possession of a letter of invitation or a tourist voucher, with a valid return ticket, enough money, or in the case of official journeys, with a so-called delegation order of the sending organisation and the letter of invitation from the receiving party. The passport must be valid for at least half a year. The same rules apply to the Ukrainian citizens travelling to Hungary. Hungary became a full-right member of the European Union on 1 May 2004 and will have to introduce the Schengen norms in the defence of the borders. Consequently the freedom of travel without visa will probably cease to exist, probably from November 2003 on the Ukrainian citizens can only enter Hungary in possession of a visa.

## Figure 9

The Carpathian Euroregion with its existing euroregion-type  
interregional organisations

### 2.3 Political dimension

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, during the *socio-economic systemic change* affecting all East-Central European countries, the single party system typical of the socialist system was replaced again by parliamentary democracy. The system of political control was reorganised both in Hungary and The Ukraine on new grounds, and the administrative system, also the role of the individual tiers within the power hierarchy are gradually transformed as a part of the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

The formerly totally centralised, “top-down” control was replaced in *Hungary* by an effort for *decentralisation*. Local self-governance, especially of the municipalities, was given a role much more significant than before. This process has started in The Ukraine, too, but the public administration is still strongly concentrated and the socio-economic transformation slowly progresses. The acts and decrees concerning the self-governments have been changed and amended many times in The Ukraine. In July 1995, the county and local administration was centralised, by which the municipal and county government rights were taken over by the state administration.

The development of the cross-border relations is an important objective in both countries, but it is made difficult by the *different hierarchy* and independence of the *administrative tiers*. While the municipal governments have broad self-governance rights in Hungary, in The Ukraine their independence is rather restricted. In The Ukraine the *district level in public administration* exists (there are 13 districts in the Transcarpathia), while in Hungary the *micro-regions*, compatible with the NUTS 4 level of the regional statistical system of the European Union, have been established. These micro-regions, however, do not have administrative functions. In addition, there are *self-organising micro-regions* in both countries (they are only now established in the Transcarpathia), whose borders do not coincide with the borders of the statistical micro-regions and the districts. In both countries there are *counties* compatible with the NUTS 3 level, but while these are the highest sub-national administrative tiers in The Ukraine, in Hungary the NUTS 2 level regions consisting of counties have already been established.

The Ukraine has been an independent state since 24 August 1991. It is a *republic*, a presidential–parliamentary republic as stated by the Constitution, but much more of a presidential republic in reality. At the top of the executive power there is the Cabinet of the Ministers, the top organ of jurisdiction is the High Court, the Constitutional Court. The president is elected for five years, the now president, Viktor Yuschenko was elected in December 2004 for this position. The 21 November 2004 runoff determined whether Ukraine fulfils its quest for democracy and integration into the Euro-Atlantic community or maintains its corrupt status-quo drifting increasingly toward an authoritarian system along the Eurasian model. The result was what some have dubbed the “Chestnut Revolution” – named for the

chestnut trees that line the boulevards of Kyiv. Others called it the “Orange Revolution” – named for the opposition's campaign colour. The election results demonstrated deep regional divisions within the country. The people of 16 western regions of The Ukraine voted with one voice for Yuschenko, while 9 eastern regions give one's majority of votes to Viktor Yanukovich.

Its Parliament (the Highest Council of The Ukraine) is a single-chamber parliament, with 450 representatives in it. They are elected for four years, 225 of them from party lists and the other 225 in electoral districts. Party lists can be made up by parties registered at least one year prior to the elections, or their election alliances, but not by social organisations. In The Ukraine there are only national party lists, with not more than 250 names on it. The same representative can only run for the position either in an electoral district or from the party list. The parliamentary elections have only one round, there is no participation threshold for the validity of the elections, the representatives are elected by a simple majority. If two first representatives are given the same number of votes, the voting is held again.

At the latest *parliamentary elections* (31 March 2002), the distribution of the mandates changed significantly. The Ukrainian Communist Party received the most mandates (123), followed by the nationalist RUH (People's Movement of The Ukraine, 46 mandates), the Ukrainian Socialist Party–Ukrainian Peasants Party (34), the People's Democratic Party (28), also 114 independent representatives and 105 nominees representing other parties. The alliance called Our Ukraine (an alliance organised around the popular ex-president, Victor Yuschenko, consisting of 10 middle-right wing parties, including the nationalist RUH) and the movement For the Single Ukraine (led by the leader of the presidential administration, Volodimir Litvin) received the most mandates (110 and 101, respectively). On the other hand, the Ukrainian Communist Party lost a lot of mandates (now they have only 65). In the Highest Council, Transcarpathia county is represented by 6 MPs from party lists, including 4 independent ones and one Hungarian representative, (István Gajdos), who is member of the Ukrainian United Social Democratic Party.

In Hungary there were four parties at the elections of 2002 that reached the threshold to get into the Parliament (5%), the parties making the government coalition (Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats) received 51.29% of the mandates, while the FIDESZ (Alliance of Young Democrats) – MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum) coalition 48.71% of them.

Because the Hungarian regions are very young, on the one hand, and do not have administrative functions, on the other, they do not appear on their own in the national political life or at the supranational level. In The Ukraine the regional tier has not even been created. It is well demonstrated by the fact that the Euroregions established in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region (Carpathians Euroregion and Interregio) were organised on county and not regional grounds. It comes directly from the above facts that no regionalist parties have been founded, and although

this border region has already experienced several internal and external conflicts deriving from ethnic oppositions, separatism has not at all become a typical objective.

## 2.4 Economic dimension

At the analysis of the endowments of the Hungarian–Ukrainian borders, one of the biggest problems is caused by the *lack of comparable statistical data*. In addition to the different ways of data collection, another problem in connection with the time series is the fact that The Ukraine became independent only in 1991, and the former Soviet data do not always reflect the truth, or they are very hard or impossible to obtain. In The Ukraine there were no available statistical publications for a long time, because of the financial difficulties of the publication, in fact, several statistical data are still not public. The Ukraine is only planning the submission of the request for the European Union accession; consequently the national regional statistical planning system compatible with the EUROSTAT has not been created yet. Another problem in both countries is caused by the several changes in the data collection and systematisation over the recent decade and a half, so in many cases the data are not comparable with each other.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the independent Ukraine was born in 1991. Similarly to the other countries in the region, the Ukrainian economy fell into a crisis after the systemic change, from which the country is only starting to recover. The GDP per capita fell from 1991 to 1999 by more than 60% (calculated at purchasing power parity, from 5,180 USD to 2,200 USD), since then it has been rising again, the annual growth rate was 9.1% in 1991. The Hungary economy was affected by the systemic change, too, but the recession was not as serious as in The Ukraine. In 2001 the value of GDP calculated at purchasing power parity was still low compared to the European Union average, but it reached 13,400 USD (*Table 9*). GDP figures at regional level are only available in Hungary, which show that the GDP calculated at purchasing power parity is moderately increasing in the North Great Plain region, but it has the last position in the order of the Hungarian regions.

Because the Transcarpathia region situated at the western edge of the Soviet Union, it never was a target of large-scale industrial investments, the *dominant branch of the economy is agriculture*. The economy of the county – all branches of that – is of low efficiency, characterised by a low technical level and organisation. The former urban industry went bankrupt and was closed down. The volume of manufacturing in the county is less than half the national average. The decline of the production, lasting until 1999, affected 70.5% of the companies in the county,

influencing in a negative way the development of the real incomes of the population. The recovery of the economy started in Transcarpathia in 2000, the decline of agricultural production stopped, the output of industry grew by 12% in 2000 and 21% in 2001 compared to the previous year.

Table 9

*GDP per capita at current prices, in US dollars, 2001*

Countries	Based on current exchange rates		Based on current purchasing power parities	
	USD	EU15 = 100	USD	EU15 = 100
EU 15	20,800	100.0	25,500	100.0
Hungary	5,100	24.5	13,400	52.5
Ukraine	720	3.5	4,150	16.3

Source: www.oecd.org, Ukrainian data: www.worldbank.org.

The volume of *foreign direct investments* is ever increasing in The Ukraine too, reaching a total of 8.8 billion USD by April 1, 2005. Nevertheless the volume of foreign direct investment per capita is still the one of the lowest among the countries in the region. The USA as the largest investor has a 1,207.8 million USD share from the cumulative foreign direct investments in The Ukraine, which is 13.7% of all investments, followed by Cyprus with 1,115 million USD (12.7%). Great Britain has invested 938.6 million USD in The Ukraine (10.7%). The foreign investors usually prefer food processing and manufacturing industry, wholesale trade, financial sector and real estate. Among the regions, Kyiv has a 2 billion USD share from the foreign direct investments, followed by Kyiv region (462 million USD) and the *Dnipropetrovsk* region (484 million USD) until October 1, 2003. The number of businesses operating with the involvement of foreign capital is 9,161.

The *Hungarian–Ukrainian foreign trade relations* are characterised by a considerably negative balance on the Hungarian side, because of the large-scale import of energy and raw materials. Among the neighbouring countries, the Hungarian investors and business co-owners have the first position in the Transcarpathia and the ninth position in The Ukraine as a whole. The businesses registered in Hungary have invested some 30 million USD until now in their Ukrainian businesses. It is promising that the volume of Hungarian export to The Ukraine increased by 43% in 2003 compared to the previous year, and the balance of the foreign trade of the year exceeded one billion USD, for the first time after a long time. In The Ukraine there are approximately 260 successful Hungarian–Ukrainian joint ventures, making some 3,000 business contracts annually. The Ukrainian investors, who are usually short of capital, play a much less significant role in Hungary.

In the Transcarpathia region the data of January 2004 showed that the total amount of foreign direct investment was 244.3 million USD, which is less than 5% of the capital invested in The Ukraine. By the volume of investments drawn the region occupies 10th place among the regions of Ukraine, by the investments per capita it is at 6th position in Ukraine. Since The Ukraine became independent, Hungary has continuously been the largest foreign investor in the Transcarpathia. Hungary is the fifth in the county with a total of 25.9 million USD, i.e. 10.6% of the foreign direct investments registered in the Transcarpathia. The largest investor is the USA with 15.6% of total volume, followed by Japan with 14.1%, Germany is the third with 11.9% and Austria the fourth with 10.8%. Among the investments, 32 companies operate as joint ventures and 62 as completely foreign owned businesses. Among the neighbouring countries, the Hungarian investors and company co-owners have the first position in the Transcarpathia: there are more than 110 Ukrainian–Hungarian joint ventures here.

*Unemployment* is a serious problem in both border regions. In the North Great Plain the unemployment rate is constantly over the national average, and the proportion of unskilled and long-term unemployed is high (*Figure 10*). The unemployment indices of the Transcarpathia area were among the worst in The Ukraine, too till 2003. The official data reveal a very good situation as regards unemployment: according to them, in 2000 the number of registered unemployed was 11.6%, 13.1% in 2001, 11.9% in 2002 and at the end of 2003 only 7.0%. These official data do not reflect the real number of the unemployment, as only every tenth jobless person turns to the employment centres (thus the real share of the unemployed is at least ten times higher, according to the estimations). The social tensions are further exacerbated by the latent unemployment (involuntary holidays, decreased number of shifts, shorter working time).

The Hungarian–Ukrainian border is characterised by a large number of people living from *cross-border subsistence trade*. The most frequent activity is the export of cheap Ukrainian fuel and products falling within the Inland Revenues Act (mainly tobacco and spirits) to Hungary. The Transcarpathia mostly import food and technical devices from Hungary. The main actors in this process are primarily the Transcarpathia population living in difficult economic circumstances, but fuel tourism is done by many on the Hungarian side of the border, too. This process can mainly be seen in the traffic figures of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, which is affected to a large extent by the subsistence trade.

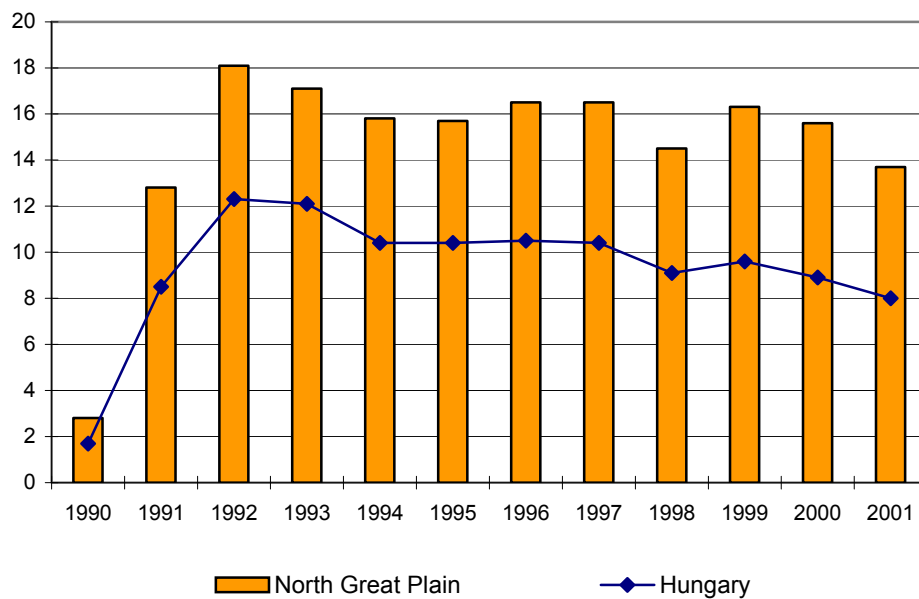
The *personal and vehicle traffic* of this *border section* has changed a lot since the opening of the border in 1989. The dominant element of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is the border crossing station at Záhony, the major part of the total traffic still occurs here. In 1988, when Záhony was the only border crossing station, 2,140,471 people crossed the border. The following political easing and the parallel opening of border crossing stations (four new stations: Lónya, Babarás,



Beregsurány, Tiszabecs) resulted in a travel fever never seen before, the Hungarian–Ukrainian border was crossed by *11,210,839 persons in 1989* (a more than fivefold increase!). We have to mention, however, that a significant part of the passengers in 1989 were transit passengers: the primary travel destination of the citizens in the Transcarpathia was Yugoslavia, very popular in the Transcarpathia, also, the transit traffic of Polish citizens “specialised” on small-scale retail trade and currency conversion was very intensive (more than 1 million people in 1989!). At that time the Soviet rouble could be officially converted. The increase of the traffic was followed by a decline until 1991: the bilateral border crossing station in Záhony ceased to exist, the number of transit journeys decreased, in 1991 the bilateral border crossing stations did not operate all year round.

Figure 10

*LFS-based unemployment rate, 1992–2003*



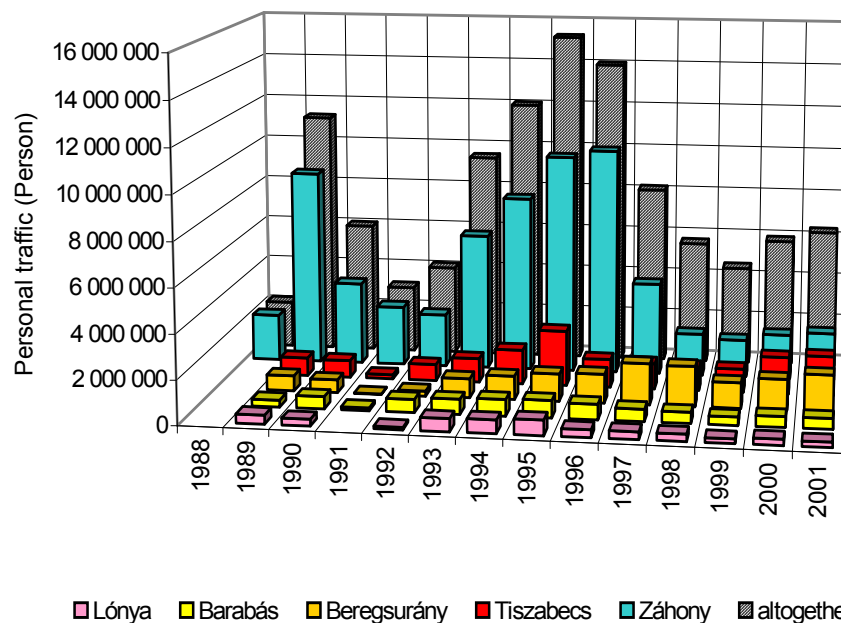
Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

Another rise could be seen again until the mid-1990s, at the peak of which, in 1995, more than 15 million border crossings were registered at this border section. In this period the main motivation of traffic was the so-called “Z-tourism”, i.e. the export of used cars to The Ukraine, because from 1993 to 1995 used cars of Soviet make could be exported to The Ukraine free of duty. These cars were given in Hungary a temporary licence plate starting with a letter “Z”. Also, it was possible to reclaim VAT on the cars exported from Hungary.

Since the introduction of the Ukrainian duty acts that came into force in 1996–1998 (restriction of the import of food and technical devices, introduction of high duties), the traffic decreased until 1999, since then it has been rising again. The major part of the goods of those involved in *subsistence trade* is less and less marketable because of the new strict laws and customs regulations; the most important, practically only viable way of subsistence trade remained fuel tourism (*Figure 11*).

Figure 11

*Personal traffic across the checkpoints of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border between 1988 and 2001*



Source: Hungarian National Headquarters of the Hungarian Border Guard, 2001. Edited by the authors.

## 2.5 Social dimension

The *population trends* were similar in the two neighbouring border regions. The number of population has been decreasing in both regions; since 1996 in the Transcarpathia and 1992 in the North Great Plain (in the case of the Hungarian region, the 2001 data are taken from the last census, while the previous ones are the calculated figures on the ground of the census before 1990, this is why we can see such a big difference between the data of 2000 and 2001). The indices of natural increase are far above the national average in both border regions (*Table 10*), which is especially true for the Transcarpathia, where natural decrease only occurred in 1999, and after 2001 in the surveyed period (while natural decrease has been a tendency in The Ukraine as a whole since 1991).

Since the late 1980s, *outmigration* has characterised both border regions. In the North Great Plain, the main destinations of the migrations are the western regions of Hungary and Budapest, only a few moves abroad. The biggest number of outmigrants has been from Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County for a long while. In the Transcarpathia, the direction of the migrations is to the east, but the number of those moving abroad is more significant, too. In 2000, the migration loss was 2,498 people in the Transcarpathia, and those moving abroad accounted for more than half of that (1,259 people). The main destinations of the emigrants were Germany (33.9%), Hungary (32.4%), also the USA (11.1%), the Czech Republic (9.9%) and Israel (8.9%).

The North Great Plain is not a densely populated region of Hungary, the *density of population* was 87.3 persons per km<sup>2</sup> according to the 2003 data; with this figure the region lags far behind the national average (108.7 people/km<sup>2</sup>). To the opposite, the Transcarpathia region is a densely populated one by Ukrainian standards, despite the decrease of the population in the recent years: the population density in the Transcarpathia is 97.7 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, as opposed to the national average The Ukraine that only reaches 78.9 persons/km<sup>2</sup> (*Table 10*). *Both border regions are less urbanised* than the average of their respective country. In the North Great Plain, the proportion of urban population has been increasing, like in Hungary on the whole, whereas the proportion of the urban population is lowest in Transcarpathia among all Ukrainian counties, in fact, this figure has been continuously decreasing since 1988 (*Table 11*). The main reason of the decrease is the worsening urban living conditions as a consequence of the economic crisis since the 1990s.

All the autochthonous *ethnic minorities* in the territory of the Republic of Hungary are characterised by a sporadic location, double identity, progressed assimilation and strong emotional and cultural affection to Hungary. The North Great Plain, similarly to the whole of Hungary, can be regarded as a homogeneous region from the ethnic point of view. If we do not consider the Gypsies as an ethnic minority (the Gypsies are not a single ethnic group, there are only estimated data of

Table 10

Inhabitants number, population density and natural increase,  
1998–2003

Table 11

*Urban population as percentage of total, 1988–2003*

Year	Hungary	North Great Plain	Ukraine	Transcarpathia
1988	59.4	49.4	n.d.a.	40.9
1989	61.9	54.8	n.d.a.	41.1
1990	62.0	55.1	67.5	41.5
1991	62.3	55.9	67.8	41.8
1992	62.7	58.3	67.9	42.1
1993	63.2	60.0	67.9	41.4
1994	62.8	60.0	67.9	41.1
1995	62.6	60.0	67.9	39.8
1996	63.6	60.0	67.8	39.1
1997	62.9	60.2	67.9	39.1
1998	63.5	61.0	67.9	39.0
1999	63.3	60.9	68.0	39.0
2000	63.6	61.0	68.0	39.0
2001	64.1	61.9	67.2	37.0
2002	65.0	62.9	67.2	37.0
2003	64.8	62.7	67.5	37.0

*Source:* Hungarian Central Statistical Office; The State Committee of Statistics of Ukraine.

their number and most of them declare themselves Hungarian), the combined proportion of all the minorities living here does not reach 1%. In the North Great Plain the Romanian ethnic minority is the most significant, although there are only three settlements in Hajdú-Bihar County where their proportion exceeds 1% from the total population. Besides them, a very small number of Slovaks, Germans and Ukrainians live here. At the same time, the proportion of those belonging to the Roma (Gypsy) ethnic group is significant, but there are no reliable data about their number. In Hungary the ethnic minorities have broad cultural autonomy, they have several local and national interest representation and cultural groups, in fact, they even have minority self-governments in several settlements of the North Great Plain. The ethnic minorities have a representation in the media, as well, they have newspapers published in their mother tongue and the National Television of Hungary regularly broadcasts their ethnic programmes.

The ethnic composition of the Transcarpathia region has always been mixed. According to the data of the census, its population was 600,000 people in 1910, when 59% of the population was Ruthene (Transcarpathian Ukrainian), 25% Hungarian, 11% Jewish, 3% German and 1.2% Romanian. A smaller number of Czechs, Slovaks and Gypsies lived here, too, but their combined share did not

exceed 1%. In 1910, the share of Ukrainians was negligible. Following World War II, Transcarpathia became part of the Soviet Union, and the new political situation had an effect on the ethnic composition of the population. The most striking change was that the proportion of the Ukrainian population suddenly grew to 82.3%, which of the Hungarians decreased to 8.7% and of the Jews to 3.1%. The high proportion of the Ukrainians is explained, besides immigration, by the fact that the data of 1944 considered the Ruthene population with a 61.2% share as Ukrainians. The population censuses have not published data about the Ruthenes since 1946, so it is almost impossible to estimate their present number. According to the census of 2001, besides the Ukrainians the most significant ethnic minority in the Transcarpathia is the Hungarian group forming a block along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, their proportion is 12.1% (*Table 12, Figure 12*). The ethnic composition of The Ukraine as a whole is quite different: besides the Ukrainians (77.8%), the most important minority are the Russians (17.3%), and there is no other ethnic group in the data of the census of 2001 whose share reaches 1% from the total of the population (*Table 13*).

Since the birth of the independent Ukrainian state, the situation of the ethnic minorities in the Transcarpathia has improved. The *act on the national minorities*, approved of in 1992, secures the right of the use of the mother tongue and the right to the education in the mother tongue, to own cultural institutional system and ethnic-cultural autonomy. The act allows the operation of organisations protecting the interests of the minorities, the use of national symbols, the use of names according to the rules of the mother tongue, and the free cross-border relations with the mother nation, but does not allow the minorities to establish territorial autonomy.

Table 12

*Ethnic composition of Transcarpathia, 2001*

Ethnic group	Inhabitants number (thousand)	% of total		2001 as % of the 1989
		2001	1989	
Ukrainian	1,010.1	80.5	78.4	103.4
Hungarian	151.5	12.1	12.5	97.3
Romanian	32.1	2.6	2.4	109.0
Russian	31.0	2.5	4.0	62.7
Gipsy	14.0	1.1	1.0	115.4
Slovak	5.6	0.5	0.6	77.7
German	3.5	0.3	0.3	103.0
Total	1,254.6	100.0	100.0	100.7

*Source:* National census of Ukraine, 2001.

FIGURE 12  
HUNGARIANS IN TRANSCARPATIA, 2001

Table 13

*Ethnic composition of Ukraine, 2001*

Ethnic group	Inhabitants number (thousand)	% of total		2001 as % of the 1989
		2001	1989	
Ukrainian	37,541.7	77.8	72.7	100.3
Russian	8,334.1	17.3	22.1	73.4
Belorussian	275.8	0.6	0.9	62.7
Moldavian	258.6	0.5	0.6	79.7
Crimean tatar	248.2	0.5	0.0	–
Bulgarian	204.6	0.4	0.5	87.5
Hungarian	156.6	0.3	0.4	96.0
Romanian	151.0	0.3	0.3	112.0
Polish	144.1	0.3	0.4	65.8
Jewish	103.6	0.2	0.9	21.3
Armenian	99.9	0.2	0.1	–
Greek	91.5	0.2	0.2	92.9
Tatar	73.3	0.2	0.2	84.4
Gipsy	47.6	0.1	0.1	99.3
Azerian	45.2	0.1	0.0	122.2
Georgian	34.2	0.1	0.0	145.3
German	33.3	0.1	0.1	88.0
Gagauzi	31.9	0.1	0.1	99.9
Other	177.1	0.4	0.4	83.9

Source: National census of Ukraine, 2001.

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s it was possible to found open minority interest representation organisations. The first and still the biggest interest representation organisation of the Hungarians living in the Transcarpathia is the *Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia*, founded in 1989. In addition, several other minority and professional bodies represent the Hungarians in The Ukraine (e.g. the *Democratic Alliance Hungarians in The Ukraine*, *Cultural Association of Hungarians in the Bereg region*, *Transcarpathia Community of Hungarian Intellectuals*, *Association of Hungarian Teachers in Transcarpathia* etc.). In several settlements of the Transcarpathia, where one of the national minorities make the majority of the population, the education takes place in their mother tongue (*Table 14*), in fact, there is an independent higher education institution working with the support of the Hungarian state (Teacher Training College for the Hungarians in Transcarpathia).



Table 14

*The distribution of schools in Transcarpathia according to the language of instruction, 1989–2001*

School year	Ukrainian	Russian	Hungarian	Romanian	Slovak
1989/1990	594	40	86	13	–
1990/1991	597	39	88	13	–
1991/1992	602	38	88	13	–
1992/1993	618	34	89	13	1
1993/1994	621	32	90	13	1
1994/1995	629	32	94	13	1
1995/1996	631	30	97	13	1
1996/1997	630	28	98	13	1
1997/1998	631	18	98	13	2
1998/1999	634	8	98	13	2
1999/2000	634	8	99	13	2
2000/2001	635	8	100	13	2

Source: [www.htmh.hu](http://www.htmh.hu).

In the North Great Plain region adjacent to The Ukraine, the *languages of the ethnic minorities* only play a role in the everyday connections with each other, in the field of culture and in keeping in touch with the mother nation. In Transcarpathia, according to the ethnic composition, Ukrainian (the state language) is the most frequently spoken language, but the number of those speaking Hungarian, Romanian and Russian language is also significant. Gypsy, Slovakian and German are also used.

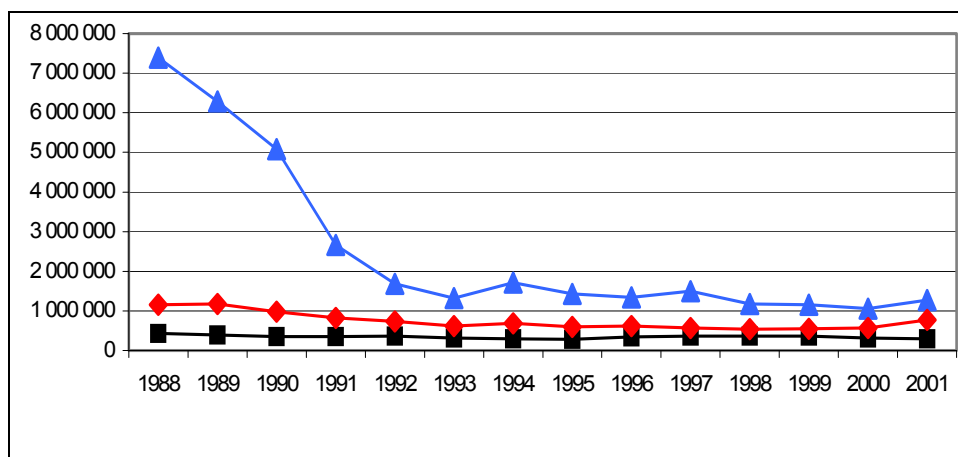
There are no comparable statistical data about *crime*, but in general it can be said that the number of known crimes has increased in both border regions since 1988, and the number of crimes connected to the border has also grown. In addition to the smuggling of goods and the violation of the Inland Revenue Act, the organised smuggling of persons is more and more important. The direction of the illegal migration across the Hungarian–Ukrainian border is from the east to the west, from The Ukraine usually Chinese, Afghan and Vietnamese citizens try to get to Western Europe through Hungary.

In both border regions, the *conditions of socio-cultural recreation* are given, but as an affect of the negative economic processes of the 1990s, the population had to spend a bigger and bigger share of their income on their living, consequently their expenditure on culture decreased. The number of visits to theatres, cinemas and museums significantly dropped in the North Great Plain (*Figure 13*). It is true for

both border regions, especially for the Transcarpathia, that because of maintenance and capacity utilisation problems, the physical state of the establishments – especially in the rural settlements – has deteriorated a lot, in fact, several institutions have been closed down.

Figure 13

*The number of museum visitors and the audience of theatres and cinemas in the North Great Plain Region, 1988–2003*



Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Edited by the authors.

Table 15

*Number of hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, 1995–2003*

Year	Ukraine	Transcarpathia	Hungary	North Great Plain
1995	125.1	114.9	90.7	74.8
1998	97.0	108.3	83.0	73.3
1999	96.5	83.4	83.6	74.6
2000	95.0	83.8	83.2	74.4
2001	96.6	84.4	79.0	74.3
2002	97.3	86.4	79.2	71.8
2003	96.6	84.8	78.9	72.3

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office; The State Committee of Statistic of Ukraine.

As regards *health care*, both border regions are in a worse situation than the average of their respective countries, but the differences between the North Great Plain and Transcarpathia are considerable. Because of the differences of the statistical data collection, comparable data are only available about the number of operating hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants, by which index the Transcarpathia area is in a better situation (*Table 15*). However, this is only a quantitative index, and the equipment, technical level and instruments used in the Transcarpathia are very poor. In addition, the number of medicines and therapeutic equipment supported by the social insurance is very low, which often occurs that the in-patients of the hospitals have to bring the medicines necessary for their treatment.

## **II HUNGARIAN–ROMANIAN AND HUNGARIAN–UKRAINIAN CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION**

### **1 National level**

Cross-border relations in the region of our study can only be examined since the enactment of the Peace Treaty of Trianon, designating the borders of Hungary in 1920. The hostile relations that emerged after World War I between Hungary and the neighbouring successor states (Czechoslovakia and Romania) did not allow the deepening of the cross-border co-operations. Following World War II, this region became the interest zone of the Soviet Union, which resulted in an even closer isolation. This was especially true for Transcarpathia, a region annexed to the Soviet Union in 1944, but the situation was not much better in the Hungarian–Romanian relation, either. The expression “friendship and brotherhood”, declared in the socialist era, only existed at the level of slogans, in reality borders functioned as walls in that period, making it practically impossible to co-operate or even cross the borders. In this period, the relations were practically only formal even at national level; at local level, nothing could happen without consent “from above”.

The possibilities for the establishment of real cross-border co-operations in the region were created by the political easement and the systemic change at the end of the 1980s. Borders became more open, everybody was eligible for a passport, no visa was necessary, new border crossing stations were opened, and even bilateral cross-border traffic could start. At the late 20th century a great step forward was thus made in the field of cross-border relations both towards Romania and the Soviet Union. Following the disintegration of the latter, the Ukraine gaining its sovereignty in 1991 became Hungary’s new eastern neighbour.

The Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian relations were regulated by a series of agreements at international level (for more details see the Background study). Of these, the so-called Treaties should be emphasised, which basically define the relationship between the Republic of Hungary to Romania and the Ukraine.

The inter-governmental special committees (e.g. Special Committee for Co-operation in Ethnic Minorities Issues; Special Committee for Co-operation in the Field of Economy, Trade and Tourism; Special Committee of Cross-border Issues and Inter-municipal Co-operation; Special Committee for the Co-operation in the Field of Infrastructure, Transport, Water Management and Environmental Protection etc.), set up in accordance with the Treaty between the Republic of Hungary

and Romania on Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourhood (Act No. XLIV of 1997), are to work out and supervise the co-operations concerning the “common issues” of Hungary and Romania.

In the Hungarian–Ukrainian relation, the Treaty (whole name: “Treaty on the Bases of Good Neighbourhood and Co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and The Ukraine”) was signed in Kiev in 1991 (then it was ratified by the Ukrainian Parliament in 1992 and by the Hungarian Parliament in 1993). The Treaty declares, among other things, that the parties will promote the cross-border co-operations in all fields, they do their best to create the conditions for the approach of their peoples on the ground of good neighbourhood and friendship, they use all means to promote the expansion of the relationships among their citizens both at the level of the individuals and the level of the state, social and other organisations. Similar to the Treaty between the Republic of Hungary and Romania, a number of special committees have been set up by the agreement, some of which still operate today.

In addition to the Treaties, several other Hungarian–Ukrainian and Hungarian–Romanian agreements are in effect, such as the ones on water management and environmental protection. A closer co-operation at national level is evidently justified in these fields. The importance of this issue is indicated by the huge floods and the cyanide pollutions killing an enormous mass of fish in the Tisza River and the tributaries: all three countries are affected by these issues.

Although it is not a bilateral agreement, we have to mention the *Act No. LXII of 2001*, commonly known as the *Status Act*, on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries, which gives special (health care, travel, employment etc.) allowances to the Hungarians living outside Hungary. This Act is very important because the borders drawn in the peace treaty concluding World War (when Hungary shrank to approximately one-third of its previous size in 1920) did not consider ethnic relations (either), and so a significant number of Hungarian ethnic minority live on the other sides of the Hungarian borders (both in the Ukraine and Romania). It is not surprising that in the relations of Hungary to the neighbouring states, the co-operations between the Hungarians living in Hungary and those in the respective countries always played an important role. The Act had a favourable reception in the Ukraine, whereas it led to fierce debates in Romania, and there are still debated details after a lengthy reconciliation process.

The cross-border co-operations are considerably affected at national level too by the changes in the Euro-Atlantic integration processes, as the situation of the three countries basically differ from each other in this respect. Hungary is in the best position, as it became a full-right member of the European Union as of 1 May 2004. Romania, on the other hand, was left out of the first round of enlargement, and the associate membership status (that Romania gained back in 1993) will remain at least until 2007. Although significant achievements have been made in Romania

too in the field of legal harmonisation, the country reports still regularly point out to the fact that in several fields (e.g. the application of the principle of partnership, monitoring-and evaluation system, system of regional statistics etc.) not much progress has been made. The Ukraine is at the very beginning of the Euro-Atlantic integration process, we cannot talk about the acquisition of the *acquis communautaire* in reality. The objective of the Ukrainian government is to integrate the Ukraine to the European Union as soon as possible, but this process is still in its infancy.

Because the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border sections are also EU external borders now, the conditions of the border crossings have become much more rigorous. As the Romanian citizens can travel without visa to the member states of the European Union since 2002, the main difficulty will be not the more strict legal regulations but the proof of the adequate financial means. The Republic of Hungary, in accordance with the expectations of the European Union, introduced a visa regime against the Ukraine on 1 November 2003, of which many had been afraid of in Transcarpathia. The fears did not come true, as the Ukrainian citizens intending to travel to Hungary are eligible for a visa free of charge, the long waiting time in the beginning (because of the large number of applications) is over, the main difficulty, as in the case of Romanian citizens, is the proof of the adequate financial means for the stay in Hungary. The control at the border crossing points, at the same time, have become much more strict, each vehicle heading for Hungary and each person are checked in details and thoroughly, the possibility of the smuggling of goods falling under the effect the Inland Revenue Act has become much weaker. Fuel tourism is still considerable, coming from the low fuel prices in the Ukraine, the difference being that formerly it was usually the Ukrainian citizens who “exported” petrol and diesel oil to Hungary, now, after the introduction of the visa regime it is the Hungarian citizens who visit the Ukraine in bigger number to fill up their cars (because they only need a valid passport and not any other document for a travel to the Ukraine).

Another problem is the elimination of the bilateral border crossing stations, used by the people of the two neighbouring countries, only, as they had to be closed after the introduction of the Schengen norms. An alleviation might be in the future that the European Parliament approved of a draft regulation in April 2004 that would make it easier for those living in the direct vicinity of the external border to cross. The point of the alleviation is the issue of special visas for those living in the 50-kilometre stripe along the border in both countries, a visa that allows several border crossings, is valid for at least one year and allows a stay up to 7–14 days each time. It would be free of charge or at least cheaper than the classic Schengen visa that costs 35 Euros. Those are eligible for this kind of visa who can prove that they have to cross the border regularly, because of family or business relations. In the given case it could even be used without a passport. The proposal

would also allow the opening of special bilateral border crossing stations by the neighbour states, only for those living in the border region. Such stations existed in the region before, but they should be eliminated after the accession in their old form. For the time being this is not more than a possibility, as the European Parliament only has a right of opinion in this issue.

## **2 Subnational level**

### **2.1 Regions (NUTS 2)**

In Hungary and Romania, the NUTS regions compatible with the practice of the European Union have been designated recently. This has not taken place in the Ukraine yet, which is not surprising, as the Ukraine does not even have an associate member status. Consequently, we can only talk about connections among *NUTS 2* level regions in the Hungarian–Romanian relation, although we have to remark that these regions have not been filled with a real administrative content yet. Because the regions are very young formations in both countries, also, they are not primarily political formations and do not have real administrative functions, self-governance content and character, they cannot appear as real factors of public power in national politics on either side or in the supra-national arena. Consequently, the cross-border relations at this level are still in their infancy, the co-operations are just being established and presently only the relations are taken up.

In the near future, in accordance with the reforms to be implemented in the European Union, NUTS 1 regions will be created in Hungary too. According to the preliminary concepts, three such regions will be in Hungary: West Hungary, Middle Hungary and East Hungary.

### **2.2 County level relations (NUTS 3)**

The *counties (NUTS 3 level)* that constitute NUTS 2 level regions have a much more limited role and independence in Romania and the Ukraine than in Hungary, coming from the strong central will in the two countries. Still the cross-border co-operations at county level – as these administrative units have existed for a long time in all three countries – are much more versatile than the relations among the young NUTS 3 regions. In Hungary the first twin or partner county relations were created before the systemic change, while they were created somewhat later in Romania and the Ukraine, because of their isolation and the more centralised attitudes.

The present partner county relations cannot be identified with the former twin county relations in their names, as these new co-operations are not always reinforced with official co-operation agreements. At the establishment of the partner county co-operations the counties tried to establish a wide range of relations not only with their counterparts in the neighbouring countries but also with overseas countries. Among the 15 partner counties of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county e.g. we find, in addition to the direct neighbour regions in Romania and the Ukraine, areas from Denmark, Russia, the Netherlands, Germany and even the United States of America. We can say thus that in most cases it is not the neighbourhood relations that represent the majority, although there are counter-examples: three of the six existing partner counties of Békés can be found in Romania.

It is typical of the cross-border relations of the county self-governments that they are more and more trying to raise the interest in their respective county and region. Although co-operations of economic character and connections among entrepreneurs and businessmen have increased in the partner county relations, it is still the cultural, educational, training and youth co-operations that are successful. The further expansion of some partner county relations is blocked by the great physical distance and the deriving high costs of keeping in touch (Japan, USA and China). The most active and best functioning co-operations have usually been established among neighbouring counties or counties in the vicinity of each other.

In addition to the bilateral co-operations in the region, some counties are also related as members of the same *Euroregions*, because the majority of the Euroregions created along the East Hungarian borders consist of counties. In the Hungarian–Romanian border region, there are two large Euroregions with different history and operational conditions: the Carpathians Euroregion and the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion (*Figure 2*). Of the two Euroregions, the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region is only part of the Carpathians Euroregion created in 1993 and now involving member regions from five countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and the Ukraine). The establishment of this huge interregional organisation – as opposed to the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion created in 1997 – was not an independent, bottom-up initiative; it started its operation within “top-down” defined frameworks, with higher political objectives. In addition, the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion re-connected regions along the southeast borders of Hungary that used to be situated in the relatively more developed part of one single country, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and they have centuries of common historical past, while the Carpathians Euroregion is an absolutely “multi-national” formation.

Although both Euroregions have had and still have indisputable role in the recognition of the advantages of partnership based on mutual benefits, they still have not been able to fulfil their objectives, for different reasons. These vast Euroregions have not been able yet to demonstrate significant results in the region in our sur-



vey, they have not been able to penetrate down to the level of the individuals living in the border regions (for more details of this, see Chapter 4). The establishment of really intensive multilateral relations is blocked by the excessive size of the Euroregions in the first place, as the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion covers a territory of 77,000 km<sup>2</sup>, that of the Carpathians Euroregion equals to 161,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and they are home to a population of 6 million and 16 million people, respectively. In addition to their too large territory, co-operation is blocked, especially in the Carpathians Euroregion, by historical–territorial–ethnic and other problems inherited from the past. Recognising this problem, the local stakeholders thought of establishing smaller and thus more effective euroregional organisations. The ideas were followed by action and now there are three interregional organisations of micro-regional character operating in the border region (Interregio, Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar Euroregion and the Bihar–Bihar euroregional Organisation).

One of the most important proofs of the development of the county level relations is the fact that cross-border planning documents going beyond protocol and cultural co-operations have been made over the recent years. We have to mention in this place the document finished in 2003, closing a work started in 2001, the *Common Development Concept of the Hungarian–Ukrainian Border Region*, which is not a county level document officially, but since the Hungarian–Ukrainian border section only involves Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county and Transcarpathia, it is actually a county level document in character, especially because the concept designates these two counties as the target area. The concept (that was made with the consideration of the planning and programming practice of the EU) is built on broad social reconciliations with the potential actors of the implementation of the programme (local governments, micro-regions, micro-regional managers, chambers, non-governmental organisations etc.) and is primarily meant to promote the socio-economic development and catching up of the border region, improve the living conditions of the population and exploit as much as possible the possibilities lying in cross-border co-operation. The concept categorises the implementation of the concrete goals and measures into five priorities: the development of economic co-operation; human resources development, cultural and innovation co-operation; transport and infrastructure development; environment and nature protection; and non-sector specific tasks.

For the Hungarian–Romanian border region, a development concept and programme was made back in September 2000, which was upgraded in 2003. The priorities of this document are similar to the ones in the document made for the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region. The document called *The Development Concept and Programme for the Hungarian–Romanian Border Region* concerns counties, like the previous document: Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád counties from Hungary, Satu Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timis from Romania are target areas.

### **2.3 Micro-regional co-operations (NUTS 4)**

The *system of the micro-regional relations* is rather complicated, because neither in Romania nor in the Ukraine can we find (unlike in Hungary) official self-organising *micro-regional associations* or *planning and statistical, micro-regional development* level. In the Ukraine there are active districts with specified administrative functions, while the institutional frameworks of the micro-regions and the micro-regional municipal associations are under construction both in Romania and the Ukraine. Given such circumstances, the Hungarian micro-regions with co-operation intentions (whether they self-organising or official CSO micro-regions) have to find partners at higher (county) or lower (municipal or local governmental) level in the neighbouring countries. In the majority of the cases it is thus difficult to decide whether the given relationship is of micro-regional, self-governmental or twin city character.

The Hungarian micro-regions were founded primarily for the representation of their interest in an organised form and for the co-ordination of regional and economic development programmes. These are the motivations of the establishment of the cross-border relations, too. Because of the above-mentioned reasons, from the Hungarian side only the micro-regional associations can build relationships and establish the frameworks of co-operation, in the lack of the “official” territorial level. The Hungarian micro-regional associations in the border region have versatile socio-economic, cultural, infrastructure development, environment and nature protection, twin city etc. partner relations in Romania (some two dozens of such relations exist), while the number of such co-operations is negligible along the Ukrainian border, even if we consider the different magnitudes of the two border sections. We have to remark, at the same time, that the Hungarian micro-regional system is in transition, too: according to the plans, the present 150 planning and statistical micro-regions will be replaced by such 168 such micro-regions, which would have administrative functions, too.

### **2.4 Cross-border co-operations at municipal level**

Following the systemic change, more and more settlements in the counties along the East Hungarian borders realised the possibilities lying in the development of the “twin city”-like relationships and the development of the cross-border co-operations. Of course the county seats are the settlements that have the largest number and most versatile co-operations (e.g. Debrecen has fourteen, Nyíregyháza eleven twin or partner cities, from the neighbouring Nagyvárad and Ungvár to the Israeli Rishon Le-Zion), but several other municipal governments have twin relations, too.

The deepening of the municipal relations is not easy in this region, either, because while the municipal self-governments have broad autonomy in Hungary, their counterparts have strongly restricted independence in Romania and the Ukraine, because of the highly centralised administrative systems. In addition, the municipalities representing the lowest level of local administrative level in Romania often involve 5 to 10 settlements, and it is problematic to establish official relations with a municipality. A very important factor heavily blocking the deepening of the relations is the general poverty in the settlements in the border region, and the limited own resources restrict their possibilities for joint tenders, too.

The cross-border co-operations of the municipal governments are very much similar to the partner county co-operations, as it is cultural relations that prevail most of the time, too. This is supported by the data of a questionnaire survey done by the colleagues of the Debrecen Department of the CfRS of the HAS, interviewing the mayors of 119 settlements of the Northeast Great Plain (*Figure 14*). The questionnaire survey was conducted in 1999 and repeated in 2002. According to the findings, one-third of the villages and towns in the border region had partner settlements abroad, most of them with a – usually Hungary-inhabited – settlement in the neighbouring country, both in 1999 and 2002. No fundamental change occurred in the character of the relations, either, between the two surveys, although there was some positive change in the field of trade and economic relations and the different co-operations became more intensive: in the more recent survey, the number of reported co-operations increased, with the exception of the twin settlement co-operations (*Figure 15*).

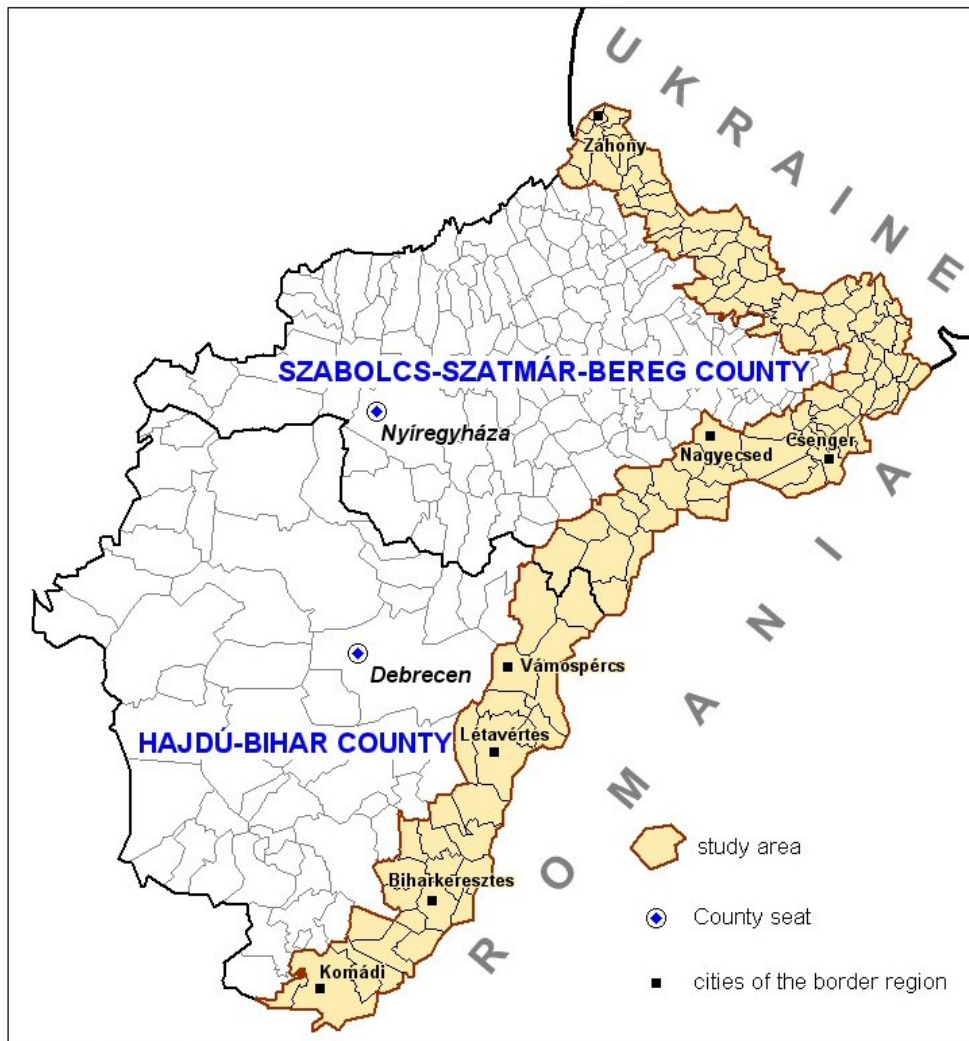
## **2.5 Other institutional relations**

Irrespective of the territorial levels, there is a range of institutions and economic organisations that have cross-border relations, including the University of Debrecen and the closely related College of Nyíregyháza that have a wide range of relations in the Ukraine and Romania (*Figure 16*). The most typical form of the relations are educational co-operations, including lecturer-, researcher and student exchange programmes and joint applications, but e.g. the College of Nyíregyháza provided a substantial support (financial support, a commuting staff of lecturers etc.) to the start of certain majors at the Teacher Training College for the Hungarians in Transcarpathia.

Many of the actors of the economic life of the region have cross-border interests, especially the Hungarian investors have a stronger capital base, so it is not surprising that in both the Romanian counties in the border region and in Transcarpathia the Hungarian foreign direct investments are among the most significant ones. Important assistant organisations of the economic relations are the chambers

Figure 14

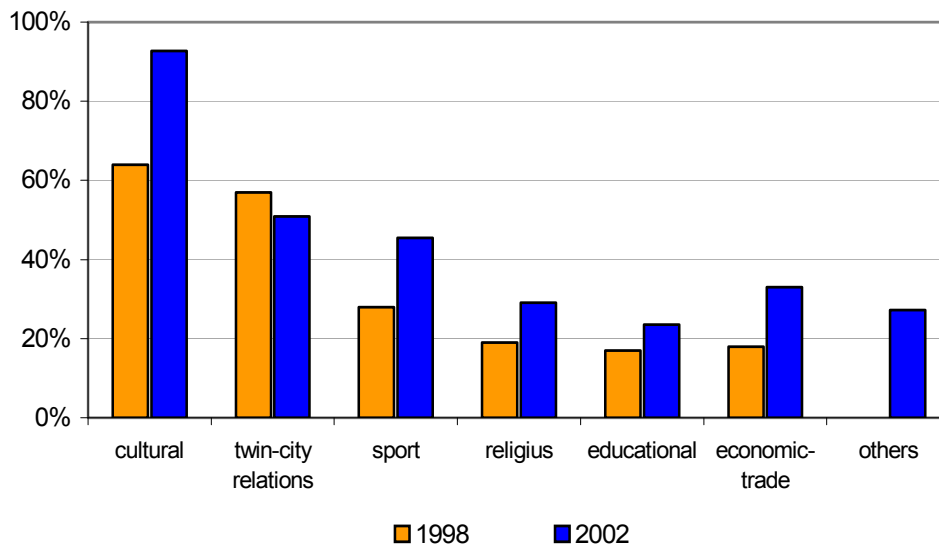
*The position of borderland settlements in Hajdú-Bihar and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties*



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

Figure 15

*The characteristics of cross-border relations in the settlements situated near the border in the North-Eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain (based on frequency of mentioning), 1998; 2002, %*



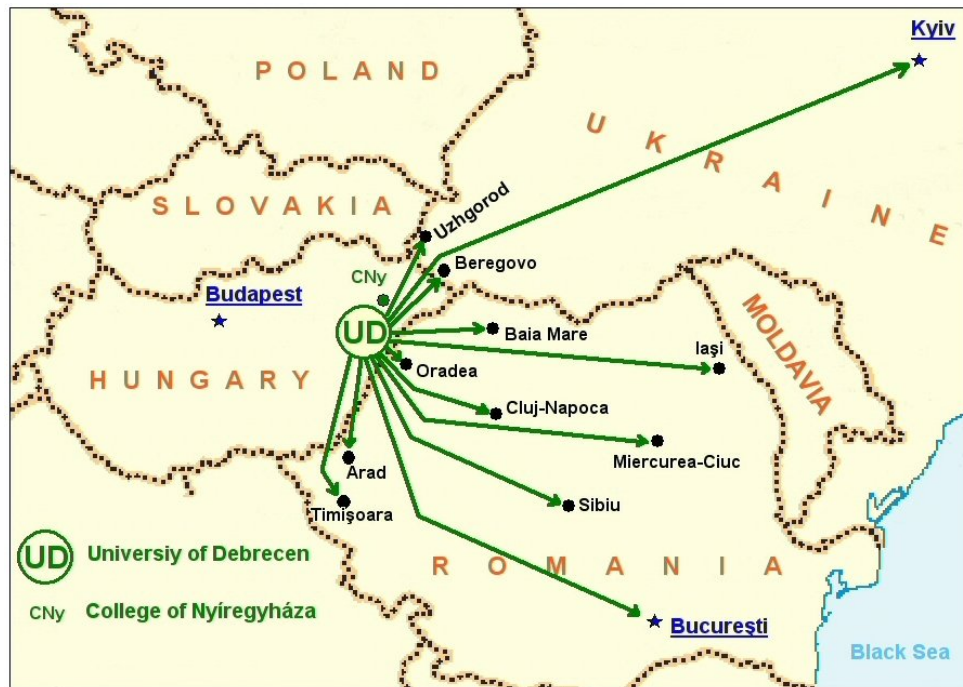
Source: Questionnaire survey 1999; 2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

that exploit every possibility to promote the cross-border economic relations. The important role of the Romanian and the Ukrainian economic co-operations in the region is indicated by the fact that the Ukraine Department of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry operates in Nyíregyháza, the Romanian division in Békéscsaba. In these places the Hungarian entrepreneurs can get detailed information on the investment opportunities in the neighbour countries, on the trade partners, taxation, registration of firms etc. Of course it is possible in the Ukraine and Romania too to get information on the possibilities in Hungary.

In addition to the above-mentioned examples, several other organisations (churches, charity and non-governmental organisations, cultural organisations and societies etc.) have cross-border relations in the region in our survey. The detailed analysis of these relations is not allowed by the limited scale of this study.

Figure 16

*The official relations of the University of Debrecen in Ukraine and Romania*



Source: University of Debrecen. Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.

### **3 Border region location and cross-border relation – as seen by the inhabitants**

The Debrecen Department of the CfRS of the HAS conducted a questionnaire survey in 2001–2002, in which we asked the opinions of the population of 18 settlements (9 pairs of settlements) about border region location and the cross-border relations. The findings of the survey are comparable with the data of a survey conducted in the summer of 1998 along the Austrian–Hungarian border, allowing this way the comparison of the opinions of the citizens living in the western and the eastern border regions about borders, border region location and the cross-border relations.

When selecting the pairs of settlements, settlements of similar size, in the direct proximity of the borders and neighbour to each other were designated, in a balanced distribution along the border section. This is how the following pairs of settlements along the Hungarian–Romanian border, from north to south, were selected: Vállaj and Csanáros (Urziceni), where a bilateral railway border crossing and a temporary (seasonal) road border crossing operate; Létavértes and Székelyhíd (Săcueni), that are neighbour to each other but do not have a border crossing station at the moment. The next group of settlements was made of Biharkeresztes and Ártánd in Hungary and Bors on the Romanian side. The reason why two settlements were selected in this case on the Hungarian side is the division of the functions of the border crossing station of international importance, implementing rail and road personal and cargo traffic; also, the population of Ártánd directly neighbour to Bors is far below that of its Romanian counterpart. In the southern part of the border section, the settlement pairs are Elek and Otlaka (Grăniceri) with a temporary border crossing station, and Kiszombor and Nagycsanád (Cenad), recently qualified as international road border crossing station (*Figure 17*).

Along the Ukrainian border, Záhony and Csap (Csop) were in the sample, for a long time the only international rail and road border crossing implementing both personal and cargo traffic; Barabás and Mezőkaszony (Koszini) operating as a bilateral border crossing station; Tiszabecs and Tiszaújlak (Vilok), with an international border crossing station. The fourth pair of settlements is made by two peripheral, isolated villages, Kispalád and Nagypalád (Velika Palagy), where no border crossing station operates, but the two villages had close relationships before the designation of the border (*Figure 17*).

The questionnaire survey took place with the help of interviewers and a random sample selection in each case. There was no person younger than 18 of age among those filling out the questionnaires. In the Hungarian–Romanian border region, 600 questionnaires were filled out on each side of the border,<sup>4</sup> while in the settlements along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border there were 509 questionnaires processed from Hungary and 566 from the Ukrainian side.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On the Hungarian and the Romanian side of the Hungarian–Romanian border, a total of 1200 questionnaires were filled out (600 on both sides). In Hungary, the following settlements with the following numbers of questionnaires were part of the sample: Ártánd 50, Biharkeresztes, Elek, Kiszombor and Vállaj 100 each, Létavértes 150 samples. The respective figures on the Romanian side are as follows: Bors and Székelyhíd (Săcueni) 150 questionnaires each, Csanáros (Urziceni), Nagycsanád (Cenad) and Otlaka (Grăniceri) 100 questionnaires each.

<sup>5</sup> On the Hungarian side of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, 509 questionnaires were filled out (Barabás 109, Kispalád 100, Tiszabecs 100 and Záhony 200), and 566 questionnaires in the Ukrainian settlements (Csap 192, Mezőkaszony 104, Nagypalád 100 and Tiszaújlak 170).

Figure 17

*The settlements involved in the survey in the Hungarian–Romanian and Hungarian–Ukrainian border region*



Source: Edited by the authors. CRS of HAS Debrecen Department.



### 3.1 The impressions of the population of the border region about the border and the neighbour country

In order to get a more subtle picture, we examined the associations concerning the neighbour country with open questions, the respondents had to list three concepts that first came to their mind in connection with the neighbour country. At the subsequent definition of the categories we naturally strove for the comparability of the answers received, nevertheless we also found categories specific of the respective countries, only.

As regards the Romanian respondents along the Hungarian–Romanian border, most people associated Hungary with *sights of interest, landscape features and concrete places* (nice landscapes, concrete settlement names, Lake Balaton) and also with the notions of *richness and welfare*. More than 37% of the responses are in these two categories (*Table 16*).

Table 16

*Associations of ideas in Romania related to Hungary, 2002*

Categories	Cumulative rates (%)	Rates according to settlement (%)				
		Borş (Bors)	Urziceni (Csanáros)	Cenad (Nagycsanád)	Grăniceri (Otlaka)	Săcueni (Székelyhid)
Landscape, spectaculars, characteristics, concrete places	18.8	3.7	21.5	19.9	15.0	25.1
Well-doing, prosperity	18.7	18.0	9.7	22.0	32.4	16.0
Motherland, Hungarian identity, mother language	11.3	22.9	17.2	3.7	0.4	11.5
Personal connections	8.8	12.2	6.7	14.5	4.5	8.0
Positive mentality, culture	6.6	6.5	2.7	7.1	17.0	3.5
Concrete object, person	6.5	2.5	13.8	3.3	1.2	8.7
Border, border traffic	5.5	2.9	4.7	8.7	10.1	3.3
History	5.1	1.2	10.1	1.2	1.6	8.2
No association (!)	3.0	13.1	-	1.7	2.0	0.7
Purchasing, leisure time activities	2.8	2.4	2.7	2.1	1.6	4.2
Free jobs, employment	2.4	2.0	1.7	2.1	2.0	2.4
Negative mentality, culture	1.7	1.6	0.0	0.8	4.0	2.3
Subsistence	1.6	0.4	2.4	2.1	0.4	2.4
Europe, West	1.1	2.0	0.7	1.7	1.2	1.6
Other	6.1	8.6	6.1	9.1	6.6	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2002.

Among the associations relating to Romania, responses in the categories *landscape, countryside, sights of interest and concrete places* were most frequent, closely followed by the category of *poverty, derelict places and lagging behind*. The proportions of the responses in the first two groups are similar to that of the associations concerning Hungary: 36.3%. It is striking but not surprising that on the Romanian side people think of Hungary as a rich place, a welfare state, while just the opposite is typical in connection with the associations concerning Romania: poverty and lagging behind appear in the mind of the Hungarian respondents (*Table 17*).

Table 17

*Associations of ideas in Hungary related to Romania, 2002*

Categories	Cumulative rates (%)	Rates according to settlement (%)					
		Ártánd	Bihar-keresztes	Elek	Kis-zombor	Léta-vértes	Vállaj
Landscape, spectaculars, characteristics, concrete places	19.6	13.0	20.9	20.4	14.3	26.3	14.70
Poverty, desolateness, underdevelopment	16.7	9.1	13.0	22.0	17.9	16.3	17.5
Negative mentality, culture	9.7	10.4	10.2	9.1	13.3	8.7	7.3
Neighbours, neighbouring country	9.2	7.8	10.2	7.5	10.2	9.0	10.2
History	6.4	2.6	3.9	4.8	6.1	7.0	11.3
Personal connections	6.1	10.4	4.5	3.2	4.6	5.0	12.4
Subsistence (fuel)	5.5	6.5	8.5	8.6	7.6	2.7	1.1
Hungarian identity, Hungarians live there	4.8	6.5	3.9	3.8	6.1	4.0	6.2
Positive mentality, culture	4.4	5.2	2.8	1.6	5.1	5.0	6.8
Border, border traffic	3.9	10.4	2.8	3.8	1.5	4.0	4.5
No association (!)	3.5	7.8	2.8	3.8	3.6	3.3	2.3
Concrete object, person	3.0	0.0	4.5	3.2	4.1	3.3	1.1
Purchasing, leisure time activities	1.4	2.6	2.3	2.2	1.0	0.3	1.1
Emigration	1.3	2.6	1.1	0.5	1.5	2.0	0.0
Other	4.5	5.1	8.6	5.5	3.1	3.1	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Questionnaire survey, 2002.

Among the associations, the proportion of responses in the *mentality and culture* category has an important position. They were divided into two groups in the evaluation (positive and negative). On the basis of the associations, the attitudes towards Hungary and the people living there can be seen as positive: although their proportion is not very high (6.6%), still it is almost four times higher than the proportion of the negative responses. On the other hand, the associations concerning Romania are definitely negative, according to the responses: the category called negative mentality and culture has the third position with a 9.7% proportion in the order of the associations, surpassing the positive assessments more than twice.

On both sides, *personal relationships* are relatively important (friends, acquaintances, relatives), but the memories of the common *historical past* are also present in the mind of the people. The importance of the latter and the significant number of Hungarian ethnic group living in Romania are indicated by the fact that among the associations relating to Hungary, the category called *home, Hungarian nationality, mother tongue* had the third position. On the Hungarian side, the respondents did not completely forget about the Hungarians living in Romania, either, as 4.8% of the associations concerning the neighbour country are connected to them. Also, there were respondents, in largely the same proportion in both countries, who could not associate any notion to the neighbour country.

According to the findings of the survey conducted in the settlements in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian border region*, the associations of the population concerning the neighbour country are different than the experiences in the Hungarian–Romanian border region. The associations related to the Ukraine reflect the hard economic situation of the country and the general tendencies typical of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region (subsistence trade, refugees), also the historical past. Most of the respondents ranked the characteristic landscape features (hills, Tisza River etc.) and concrete areas. Within this category, the names of the ex-Hungarian towns were mentioned in the first place (Ungvár, Munkács, Beregszász), but the association to the Ukraine also means Transcarpathia for 9.1% of the Hungarian respondents. Transcarpathia made a separate category in the survey (*Table 18*).

The second position is occupied by negative mentality and culture, generally associated to the Russians and the Ukrainians, to which the behaviour of the Ukrainian citizens at the border crossing stations definitely contribute (they do not stand in the queue, they are elbowing, they litter). In the recent years, the wave of refugees coming from the Ukraine has increased. The refugees, who arrive almost exclusively from Asia (e.g. Afghanistan and China) try to get to Hungary without official documents, with the help of smugglers. This process is experienced each day by the people living along the border, so it is not surprising that they associate the Ukraine to the refugees.

Table 18

*Associations of ideas in Hungary related to Ukraine, 2002*

Categories	Cumulative rates (%)	Rates according to settlement (%)			
		Barabás	Kispalád	Tiszabecs	Záhony
Landscape, spectaculars, characteristics, concrete places	16.9	15.3	20.1	22.0	13.7
Negative mentality, culture	16.1	15.0	16.7	9.0	20.0
Refugees	14.1	18.6	18.1	15.3	9.0
Poverty, desolateness, underdevelopment	12.8	17.4	10.7	10.0	12.7
Trans-Carpathia	9.1	10.1	9.0	7.7	9.2
Border, border traffic	7.9	8.3	10.4	15.7	2.8
Military power, army	7.7	0.3	2.0	4.7	16.0
Subsistence (fuel)	3.3	7.6	2.3	3.3	1.5
History (the Soviet Union)	1.4	3.1	0.7	2.0	0.5
Personal connections	1.0	0.9	0.3	1.7	1.0
Hungarian identity, Hungarians live there	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.7	1.5
Other	8.8	3.1	9.4	7.9	12.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Questionnaire survey, 2002.

As a consequence of the difficult economic situation, many think of the Ukraine as an impoverished, underdeveloped country. In addition, the decades of socialism are very much alive in the memory of the people, at least this is what the associations relating to military force (in some cases nuclear weapons) and the former Soviet Union indicate. It is surprising, on the other hand, how few people associated the Ukraine to the Hungarian ethnic group living there. This probably comes from the fact that Hungarian ethnic group living in the Ukraine is practically concentrated in Transcarpathia, and in Hungary they are usually referred to as the Transcarpathian Hungarians.

The *Ukrainian associations relating to Hungary* are different from those seen along the Romanian border, too. Because of the bad economic situation in the Ukraine (delayed wages, high unemployment rate), Hungary for most of the Transcarpathian respondents means (besides the features of the landscape) cross-border trade and the source of employment and living. Knowing this it is not surprising that Hungary is associated with richness and welfare. In the Transcarpathian settlements involved in the sample, the proportion of Hungarian ethnic population is quite high (Mezőkaszony and Nagypalád are practically totally Hungarian-inhabited villages), many see Hungary as their homeland and mother nation (*Table 19*).

As opposed to the Romanian settlements, the categories positive and negative mentality related to Hungary have almost the same weight, but the proportion of historical associations is much lower. The proportion of those thinking of Hungary as a destination of shopping or recreation is higher in the Transcarpathian settlements than on the Romanian side, but the proportion of those who cannot associate any notion to Hungary is not significant.

Table 19

*Associations of ideas in Ukraine related to Hungary, 2002*

Categories	Cumulative rates (%)	Rates according to settlement (%)			
		Chop (Csap)	Kosini (Mezőkaszony)	Velika Palad (Nagypalád)	Vilok (Tiszaujlak)
Landscape, spectaculars, characteristics, concrete places	15.3	23.6	12.0	10.7	5.8
Subsistence	12.1	10.7	11.5	7.6	17.3
Motherland, Hungarian identity, mother language	9.8	4.7	12.3	6.3	16.7
Well-doing, prosperity	8.8	7.6	11.2	16.6	4.1
Purchasing, leisure time activities	6.7	11.3	6.0	8.5	0.5
Personal connections	5.7	10.2	9.0	3.6	3.3
Negative mentality, culture	5.6	6.6	3.0	7.6	4.9
Concrete object, person	5.6	1.3	3.4	5.4	12.1
Free jobs, employment	5.2	3.0	7.8	9.9	4.9
Positive mentality, culture	4.7	2.4	7.8	5.4	4.9
Border, border traffic	4.2	4.5	3.4	-	6.3
History	3.0	1.7	1.1	0.5	6.6
No association (!)	2.5	3.6	0.4	1.8	3.3
Other	10.8	8.8	10.7	16.1	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Questionnaire survey, 2002.

### 3.2 Border region as the scene of everyday life

Naturally each border region has their advantages and disadvantages, which may be different for those living on one or the other side of the border and which may also change in time. For those living along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border e.g., living in the border region was a definite disadvantage for a long time, as this region was the westernmost fringe of the Soviet Union. There were times when those living here needed licences and documents even for leaving or approaching their

own settlements. After the opening up of the borders and the worsening of the conditions of living, the location in the vicinity of the border became an advantage, the proximity of Hungary is a source of living for the Ukrainian people struggling with subsistence problems. However, while this situation is presently advantageous on the Ukrainian side of the border, living in the border region is often seen as a disadvantage on the Hungarian side now, for several reasons (increased traffic, number of marketers, bad accessibility, lack of an adequate number of investors with a strong financial base etc.).

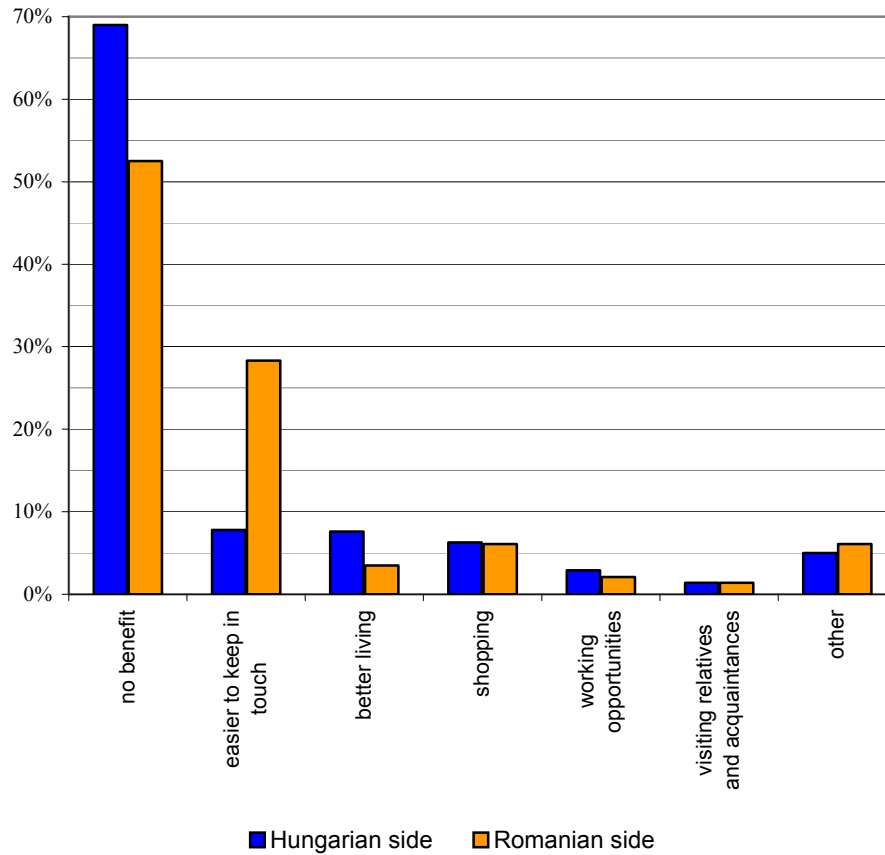
The *advantages of the border region location* are very similar on the two sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border. On both sides, those respondents had the highest the proportion who did not sense any advantage of this situation (this figure was 16.5% higher on the Hungarian side). As regards the assessment of the advantages, however, there are differences between those living on the two sides of the border. On the Hungarian side, the better living (primarily because of the lower fuel prices in Romania) is more frequently mentioned, while in Romania the respondents more often talked about the easier keeping in touch with the neighbour country (i.e. with the mother country in the case of Hungarian ethnic citizens). Also, the number of respondents mentioning shopping is significant in both countries. It is interesting that the possibility of cross-border employment was more often seen as an advantage on the Hungarian side (*Figure 18*).

On the Hungarian side of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, the proportion of responses not identifying the border region location as a living space with any advantage was the highest (62%). The mentioning of the possibilities of visiting relatives and friends (12.5%) and of tourism (6.2%) was much less frequent, as were the mentions of the easy touch with the neighbour country (3.8%) and the better living (3.3%). In the Transcarpathian settlements, however, the most often indicated association was the easy keeping in touch with the neighbour country (the mother country in most of the cases), followed by those who did not associate any advantage to living in the border region. The third category on the Ukrainian side in the order of the mentions was better living, in a proportion much higher than in the case of the responses given in Hungary, in excess of 15% (*Figure 19*).

The opinions about the *disadvantages of the border region location* are divided in the Hungarian–Romanian border region. On the Hungarian side, almost two-thirds of the responses fall into the “no disadvantage” category, while this proportion reaches 73.5% in the Romanian settlements. In the Hungarian settlements the other most frequently given responses were backward position and underdevelopment and the rise of crime, while the Romanian respondents mentioned increased traffic, the existence of the borderline and the difficult border crossing (in the case of Székelyhíd, the lack of a border crossing station) most often (*Figure 20*).

Figure 18

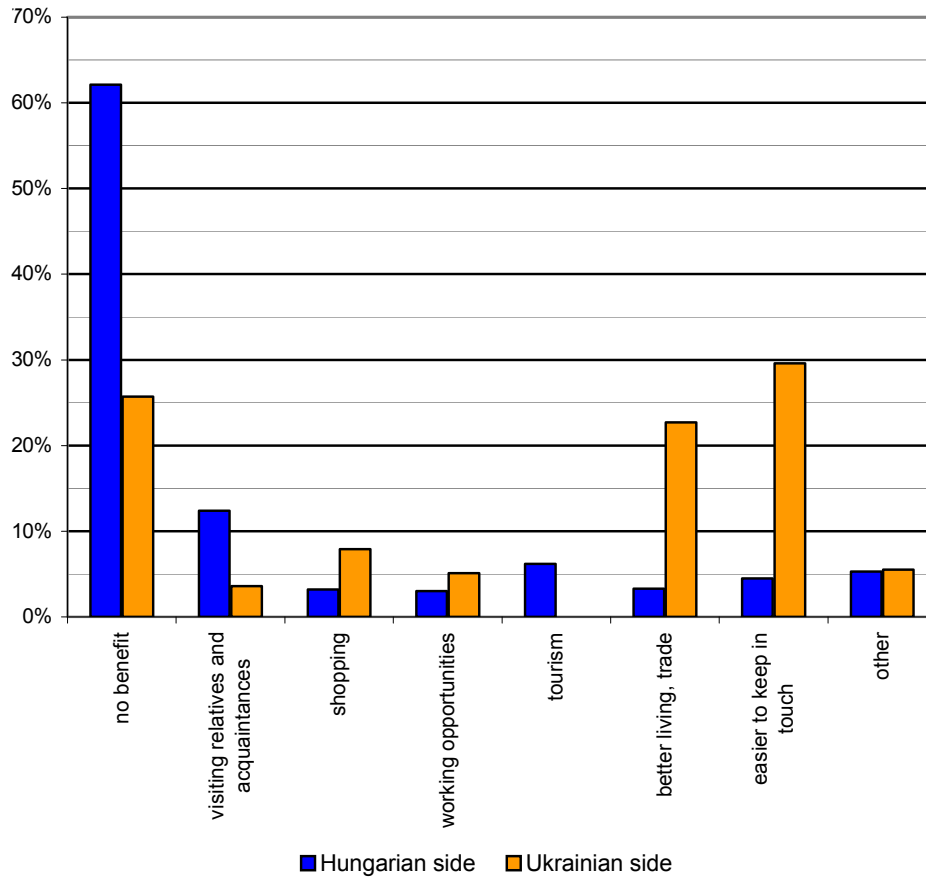
*The benefits of border situation in the settlements along the Hungarian–Romanian border involved in the survey, 2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

Figure 19

*The benefits of border situation in the settlements along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border involved in the survey, 2001–2002*

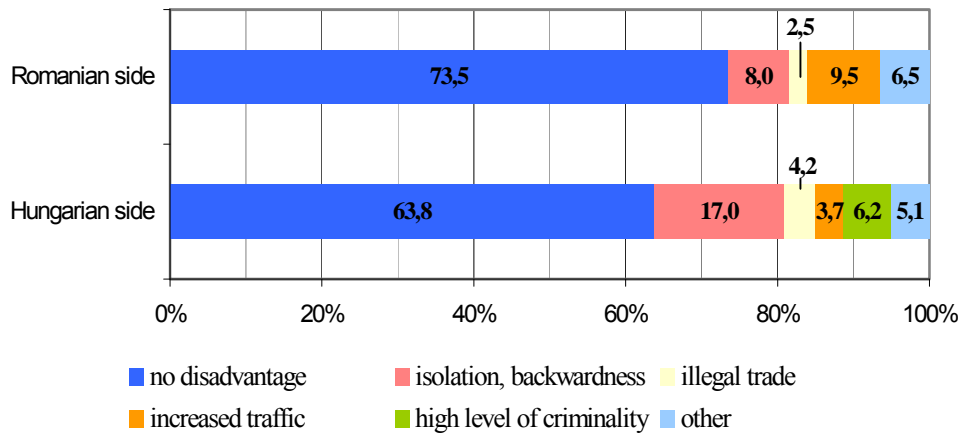


Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors 2004.



Figure 20

*The disadvantages of border situation in the surveyed settlements in the Hungarian–Romanian border region, 2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

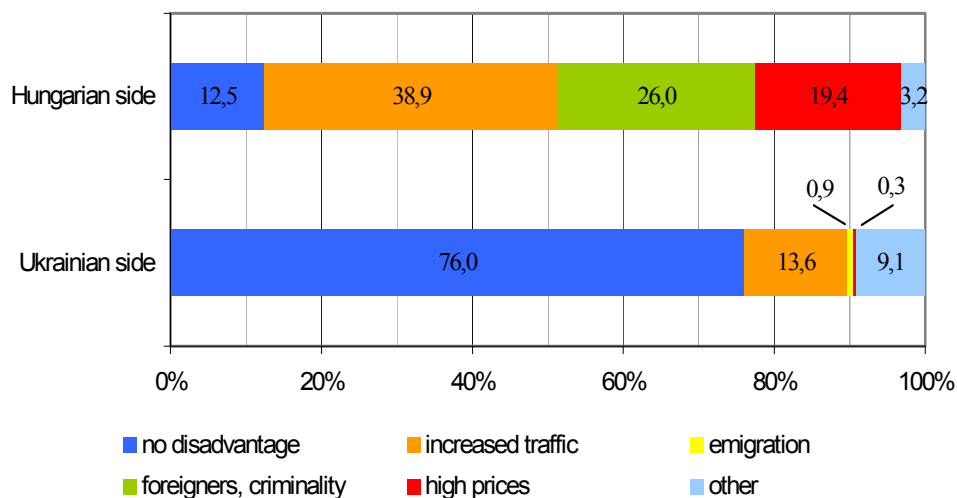
Along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, very significant differences can be seen among the responses given on the two sides of the border. In Transcarpathia, where the people are forced by the bad economic situation to be engaged in subsistence trade in Hungary, more than three-quarters of the respondents said that the border region location was not any disadvantage, as opposed to the 12.5% proportion of the Hungarian responses in this category. As regards disadvantages, the highest number of mentions in Transcarpathia concerned increased traffic and the concomitant environmental stress (13.6% of all responses). In the Hungarian settlements, in addition to increased traffic (38.9% of all responses), the wave of refugees coming from the Ukraine (26.0%) and the high prices induced by the foreign shoppers (19.4%) were the categories most frequently mentioned (Figure 21).

Because of isolation, increasing crime rates, the high number of refugees, the scarce job opportunities and other problems one can ask with right *whether the citizens of the border region would like to move out from their present place of residence*. On the whole, the proportions of those who would move if they could are largely the same on the two sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border (32% each), but there are considerable differences among the individual settlements in this respect. While more than half of the citizens of Székelyhíd in Romania would happily move, this proportion is just over 13% in Bors. On the Hungarian side, the

people of Biharkeresztes are the most willing to move out (49%), while less than one-quarter of the respondents living in Kiszombor would choose a new place of residence.

Figure 21

*The disadvantages of border situation in the surveyed settlements in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, 2001–2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors, 2004

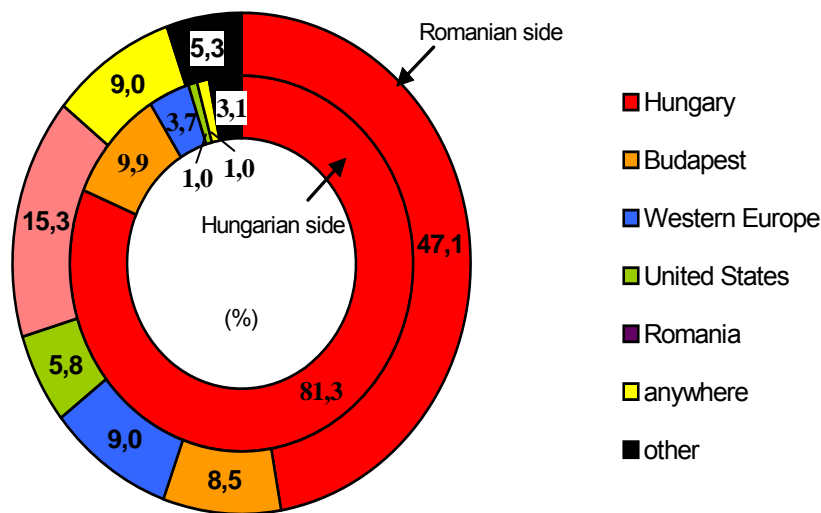
As regards the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, 41.9% of the respondents on the Hungarian side would choose a new place of residence, as opposed to the 35.7% proportion in the Ukrainian settlements. The higher proportion of the Hungarian side is not a surprise, as two-thirds of the respondents said they did not feel any advantage of living in the border region. There are differences among the settlements here too, the proportion of those wishing to move exceeds 50% in Záhony in Hungary and Mezőkaszony in Transcarpathia (67% and 51.9% of the respondents, respectively).

Both in the Romanian and the Ukrainian border region, Hungary is the most popular destination as a *potential new place of residence*. A Romanian destination was only indicated in Romania, and similarly, only Transcarpathian respondents mentioned a potential destination in the Ukraine. In each settlement, with the exception of Otlaka, Budapest was mentioned among the destinations as a city where those wishing to move out would happily go.

On the Romanian side of the Hungarian–Romanian border region, the proportion of Western European countries and the United States as potential new places of residence is higher, also, more people indicated here that they would happily move anywhere (Figure 22). Among the settlements in the sample it was only Biharkeresztes where these two destinations were not mentioned by the respondents. On the Romanian side, the proportion of the category called “other”, involving all other countries, is also higher (although the respondents in the sample only indicated some of the neighbour countries, and Canada in some cases).

Figure 22

*The distribution of potential new habitations of local people along the Hungarian–Romanian border, 2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

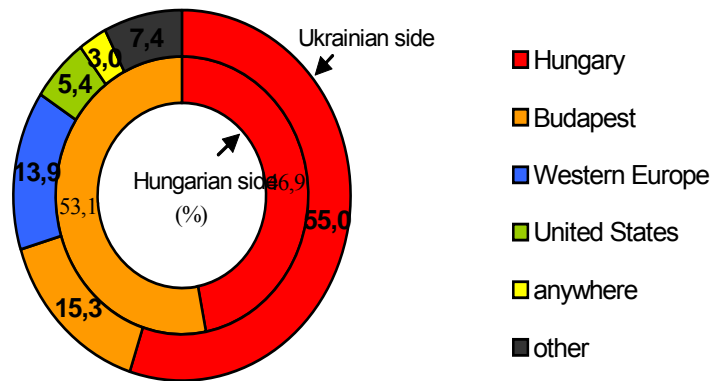
In the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region too Hungary and Budapest are the two most frequently mentioned potential places of residence, in fact, the Hungarian respondents did not indicate a single foreign country among the responses; the proportion of the Hungarian capital city (52.8%) exceeded the share of all other settlements and regions (Figure 23).

This situation will probable change after the EU accession of Hungary, as the possibility of freer migration will probably attract more people from this region to the other countries of the European Union. The survey of the migration tendencies

in the new member states of the EU and along the external borders of the Union may be a research topic of outstanding importance in the near future, either from security policy or criminal geographical aspect.

Figure 23

*The distribution of potential new habitations of local people along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, 2001–2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors, 2004.

### 3.3 Relations of the citizens of the border region to the neighbour country

A considerable part of the population in the Hungarian–Romanian border region has relations to the neighbour country. While almost two-thirds (64%) of those living on the Romanian side have contacts in Hungary, this proportion is much lower in the settlements on the Hungarian side, where only 42.3% of the population have relations in Romania. Among the Hungarian settlements in the sample, Ártánd and Vállaj stand out, they are the only settlements on the Hungarian side where the proportion of those with relations in Romania exceeds 50%. The proportion of those with Romanian contacts is lower along the southern stripe of the border (33% in Elek, 38% in Kiszombor) and in Létavértes, lacking a border crossing station (36.7%). As regards the Romanian settlements, Székelyhíd and Csanáros have the highest proportion of those with contacts in Hungary (90% and 86%, re-

spectively). The findings reveal that in the Romanian settlements along the border, the proportion of those with contacts in Hungary is closely related to the ethnic composition of the settlements. Accordingly, both in Nagycsanád and Otlaka, where the proportion of the Hungarian ethnic population is the lowest, the respective figures of those with contacts in Hungary are 37%.

As regards the proportion of those with contacts in the neighbour country, there are significant differences between the two sides of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region. While not more than 22.8% of the Hungarian respondents have any contact with the neighbour country, this proportion is 71.2% among the Ukrainian respondents. On the Hungarian side, the proportions of those with Ukrainian contacts in some settlements are as follows: 35% in Záhony, 19% in Tiszabecs, 17% in Kispalád and only 9.2% in Barabás. Among the Transcarpathian settlements, most people have Hungarian relations in Mezőkaszony and Nagypalád (97.1% and 90%, respectively), while this proportion is 70.8% in Csap and only 44.7% in Tiszaújlak. The case of Csap–Záhony and Tiszaújlak–Tiszabecs is interesting: of these settlement pairs, the Hungarian counterparts have the highest and the Transcarpathian ones the lowest proportion of contacts to the neighbour country.

### *3.3.1 The development of the relations in time*

During the decades of socialism, the closed borders were a great obstacle blocking the crossing of the borders and the establishment and deepening of the cross-border relations. This statement was also true for the eastern border regions of Hungary, although the circumstances of border crossing were different in the Hungarian, Romanian and the Ukrainian (then Soviet) side of the border. On the whole, the Hungarian citizens could cross the border relatively more easily, unlike in the case of the Austrian–Hungarian border where it was the Austrian citizens who could travel more freely. Following the political transformation of Central Europe, the situation changed from 1989, the borders became more open, new border crossing stations were established, the visa regime ceased to exist, in fact, bilateral border crossing became possible. Within the new circumstances, Romanian and Ukrainian citizens could travel abroad easier, too.

On the Hungarian side of the Hungarian–Romanian border, almost two-thirds of the relations had been established before 1989, only Ártánd is an exception from this: the majority of its contacts to Romania have been established since 1989. On the Romanian side too, most of the relations of the inhabitants to Hungary had been born before 1989, and the proportions measured in the respective settlements are not very far from the average. The only exception is Nagycsanád (there had not been a border crossing station here, then the temporary border crossing station cre-

ated in the 1990s was reconstructed and opened for the international traffic in 2002) where more than two-thirds of the relations were established after 1989.

Unlike along the Hungarian–Romanian border, there are significant differences between the two sides of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border. On the Hungarian side, 67% of the relations go back to before 1989 (i.e. the Soviet era), while 62.8% of the Ukrainian relations have been established since 1989. There is one exception from this rule on both sides: in Barabás, 60% of the contacts have been established since 1989 (the year when the bilateral border crossing station was opened), while in the Transcarpathian Nagypalád, still lacking a border crossing station, 51.1% of the relations go back to the years before 1989.

### ***3.3.2 Character of the cross-border citizen relations***

As regards the character of the cross-border relations to the neighbour countries, relations of personal type (visits to relatives, friends and acquaintances) were most frequently mentioned among the respondents in all three countries, Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine. On all sides of the borders, the categories of recreation and holidaymaking and also of shopping appear quite frequently (*Figure 24*).

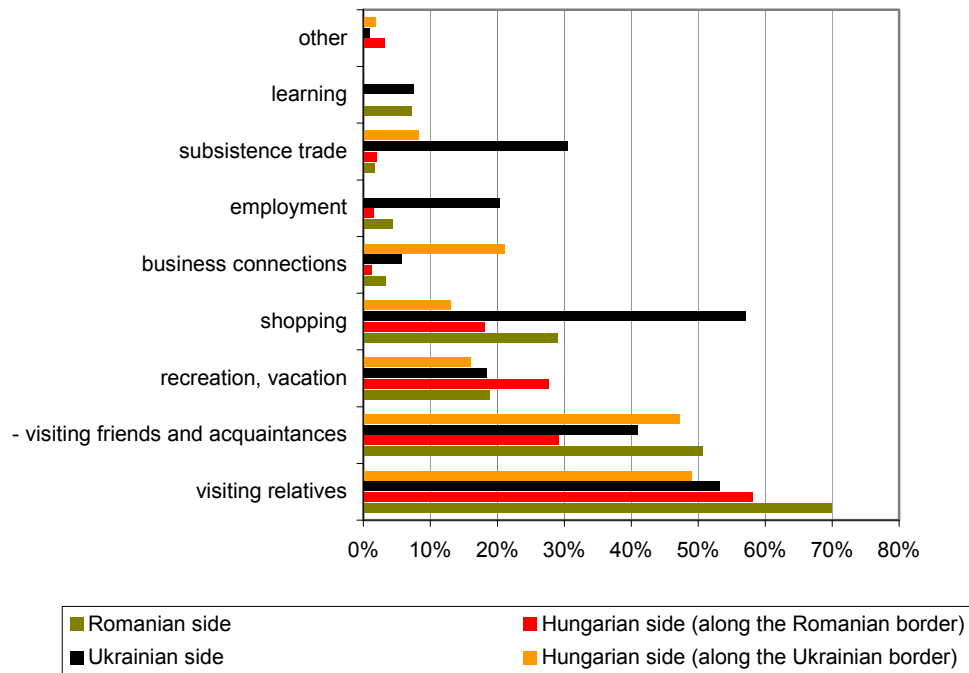
Since the opening up of the borders, the proportion of business relations has still not become significant, only the Hungarian respondents living in the vicinity of the Ukrainian border indicated this category in a higher proportion (but this only means 24 persons, due to the low number of Hungarian citizens with Ukrainian contacts). The economic hardships and the problems of subsistence typical in Transcarpathia are indicated by the fact that all three categories connected to subsistence (sopping, subsistence trade and employment) are dominated by the Ukrainian respondents.

## **3.4 The issues of the EU accession as seen by the population living in the border region**

The cross-border relations and the everyday life of those living along the eastern borders of Hungary will certainly be influenced to a great extent by the EU accession of Hungary and the neighbouring countries. The level of the preparation for the EU accession is rather different in the two neighbouring eastern countries: Romania is already an associate member and has a chance to be involved in the next round of enlargement, while the Ukraine does not have a chance to become an EU member in the near future. Consequently, the Ukrainian–Hungarian border section will probably remain an external EU border guarded by the strict Schengen norms.

Figure 24

*Characteristics of connections between the neighbouring countries  
(based on frequency of mentioning), 2001–2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors, 2004.

It is worth looking at how the population in the Romanian and the Ukrainian border regions relate to this situation and *what they expect of the EU accession of Hungary*, becoming an EU-member in the first round of the enlargement. The Hungarian citizens along the Hungarian–Romanian border primarily expect better living standards, more jobs and higher salaries after the EU accession (46.4%). In addition, a significant proportion of them expect a general economic development and agricultural supports (9.5% each), there are less who do not expect anything (7.1%) or hope for an easier border crossing (6.7%) and the development of the economic relations (3.1%).

On the Romanian side, the highest proportion goes to those who do not expect anything of the Hungarian accession (36.7%), while the proportions of the two following categories, those expecting a more intensive assistance of the Hungarians living in Romania and the development of the economic relations are almost the

same (14.1% and 13.8%, respectively). One-fifth of the respondents expect better conditions of life and the expansion of job opportunities.

Both on the Hungarian and the Romanian side there are people who expect negative consequences after Hungary's accession to the European Union (4.5% and 6.8%, respectively). In Romania, the biggest concern is the introduction of the visa regime, in Hungary it is the "bankruptcy" of agriculture and the rising prices.

On the Hungarian side of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border, the proportion of responses expecting more jobs and better living conditions prevail (68.6%), many expect the conditions for a cleaner environment (9.2%), the decrease of the wave of refugees coming from the Ukraine (8.4%) and the development of the economy and the catching up of the region (5.1%) after the Hungarian EU accession. Those not indicating any expectation make only 4%, and even less expect easier border crossing and the intensifying of the economic and trade relations (3.8% and 0.9%, respectively).

On the Ukrainian side, like along the Romanian border, in most cases there are no specific expectations (44.8%), but the second most frequently mentioned category is the expectation that the visa regime will not be introduced despite the Schengen norms (28%). As the majority of the settlements in the Ukrainian sample are Hungarian-inhabited, it is not surprising that 13.5% of the respondents expect a more effective support of the Hungarians living in Transcarpathia (13.5%). The proportion of those indicating the expectation of the intensifying of the economic relations is low in this case, too (5.2%).

It is visible that the expectations of the EU accession are different along the respective sections of the border region in our survey. On the other hand, the *majority approved of Hungary's accession on all sides of the borders*. On both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border, those in favour of the accession are in excess of 80%, without significant differences across the individual settlements. It is interesting, though, that the support of the accession is higher on the Romanian side than in the Hungarian settlements. On the Ukrainian side of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border, on the other hand, the number of those approving of the accession is much lower and that of those who are uncertain is higher, as less than half of the respondents said that they approved of Hungary's accession to the European Union (*Figure 25*). The Ukrainian border region is a source of living for many, so it is understandable that people are afraid of the introduction of the strict EU norms of border crossing (especially the visa regime).

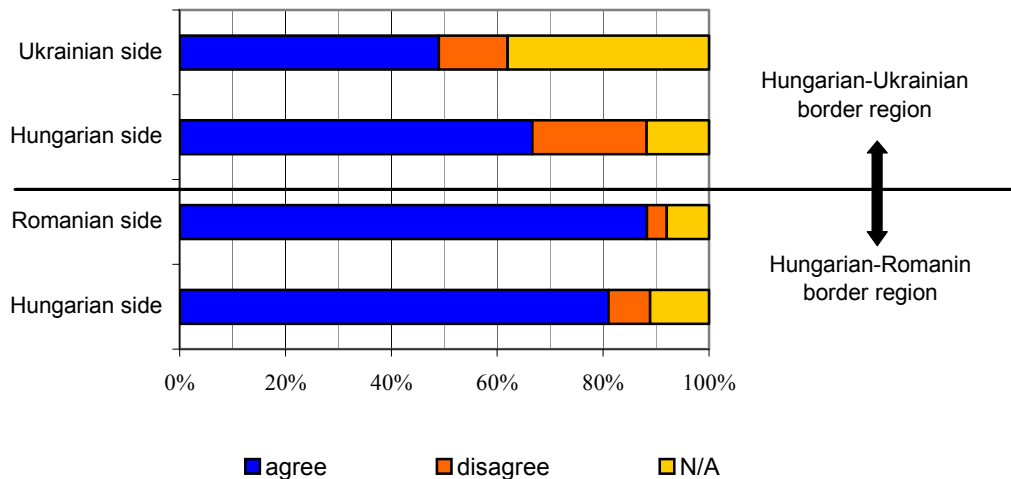
We also asked the population on the Ukrainian and the Romanian side of the borders *whether their personal living conditions were influenced by Hungary's EU accession*. Among the Romanian respondents, 36.2% said yes, this figure was 28.4% among the Ukrainian respondents. Among the *favourable effects*, mostly better living conditions (27.4%), employment opportunities (12.8%) and some allowances connected to the Hungarians living in Romania (10.7%) were mentioned



on the Romanian side, but 33.8% of the respondents were unable to tell what positive effects the accession of the neighbouring country would have. On the Ukrainian side, three-quarters of the respondents could not indicate any positive effect, while 7.8% of them expect the more substantial support of the Hungarians living in Transcarpathia (e.g. free medical service) and 5.4% hope for better employment opportunities.

Figure 25

*The opinions of local inhabitants about Hungary's accession to the European Union in the surveyed area, 2001–2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

In the case of *negative effects*, the situation is the opposite: while 69.3% of the respondents on the Romanian side were unable to indicate a concrete negative consequence, this was only 30.1% on the Ukrainian side. Both in the Ukraine and Romania, the biggest concern is the introduction of the visa regime and the more rigorous border crossing conditions (52.8% and 17.1%, respectively), while the worsening of the employment opportunities as an unfavourable factor was much less frequently mentioned (10.2% in Transcarpathia and 2.6% in the Romanian settlements).

We can conclude that the Hungarian EU accession is seen as a factor positively affecting the living conditions on the Romanian side, while the perception is the opposite in settlements of the border region of Transcarpathia.

The Hungarian respondents in the border region in our survey had to answer *whether their personal living conditions would be influenced by the potential European Union membership of the Eastern European countries*. It comes from the very much different preparation levels of Romania and the Ukraine and the great differences in the progress of the accession process that this answer was yes at 52.1% of the Hungarian respondents along the Romanian border and only 20.2% in the settlements neighbour to the Ukraine. Among the *positive factors*, the expansion of the job opportunities was most frequently mentioned in the territories neighbouring the Ukraine (46.6%), together with the better living and the higher wages (44.7%), but easier border crossing (3.4%) and the birth of the conditions of a cleaner environment (2.8%) are also worth mentioning. The population on the settlements neighbour to Romania considers the better income conditions and the rising living standards as the most useful consequence of Hungary's EU integration (56.3%), followed by the expanding job opportunities (19.9%), easier border crossing (6.7%) and the economic prosperity of the region (8.7%).

As regards the *expected negative effects*, those living in the vicinity of the Ukrainian border mostly mentioned the high number of guest workers and foreigners (31.7%), the rising consumer prices (40%) and the potential unfavourable economic and agricultural tendencies coming from the competition (24.4%). In the settlements neighbour to Romania, it is the worsening of the economic and agricultural tendencies again that prevails among the responses (30.5%), followed by the rising prices (20.0%) and the more rigorous border crossing (17.9%); also, 8.4% of the respondents believe that the Hungarian peripheries will receive less support after the accession.

### **3.5 The role of Euroregions along the East Hungarian borders**

In the 1990s, the first euroregional organisations were founded along the eastern borders of Hungary, following Western European patterns. Their most important objective was the promotion of the cross-border relations and the catching up of the border regions. Of the Euroregions involving border regions from several countries, two can be found in the area in our survey: the Carpathians Euroregion created in 1993 and the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion (DKMT) founded in 1997. During the questionnaire survey we tried to assess the level of the presence of these Euroregions in the everyday lives of the population in the border regions. In the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region and the northern part of the Hungarian–Romanian border, the counties are members in the Carpathians Euroregion, while Békés and Csongrád in Hungary, and also Arad and Temes counties in Romania are participants in the DKMT co-operation. Accordingly, in the case of the

Kiszombor–Nagycsanád and the Elek–Ottlaka settlement pairs we asked the citizens about how much they knew about the DKMT Euroregion, while we tried to map the level of information on the Carpathians Euroregion in the other settlements.

The findings revealed that in the examined settlements along the Hungarian–Romanian border, usually less than half of the respondents had heard about the Euroregion working in the area. On the Romanian side, more respondents had already heard of a euroregional organisation competent in their region, this proportion remained below 50% in Bors, only. On the other hand, the Euroregions are less known on the Hungarian side, the proportion of positive answers exceeded 60% in only one settlement, Biharkeresztes.

Among the Hungarian respondents in the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region, the proportion of positive answers was similar (45.8%), while only 28.4% of the Ukrainian respondents had heard of the Carpathians Euroregion before. At settlement level, the citizens of Csap knew in the highest proportion (two-thirds of them) of the Carpathians Euroregion, while this figure was the lowest in Nagypalád (20%).

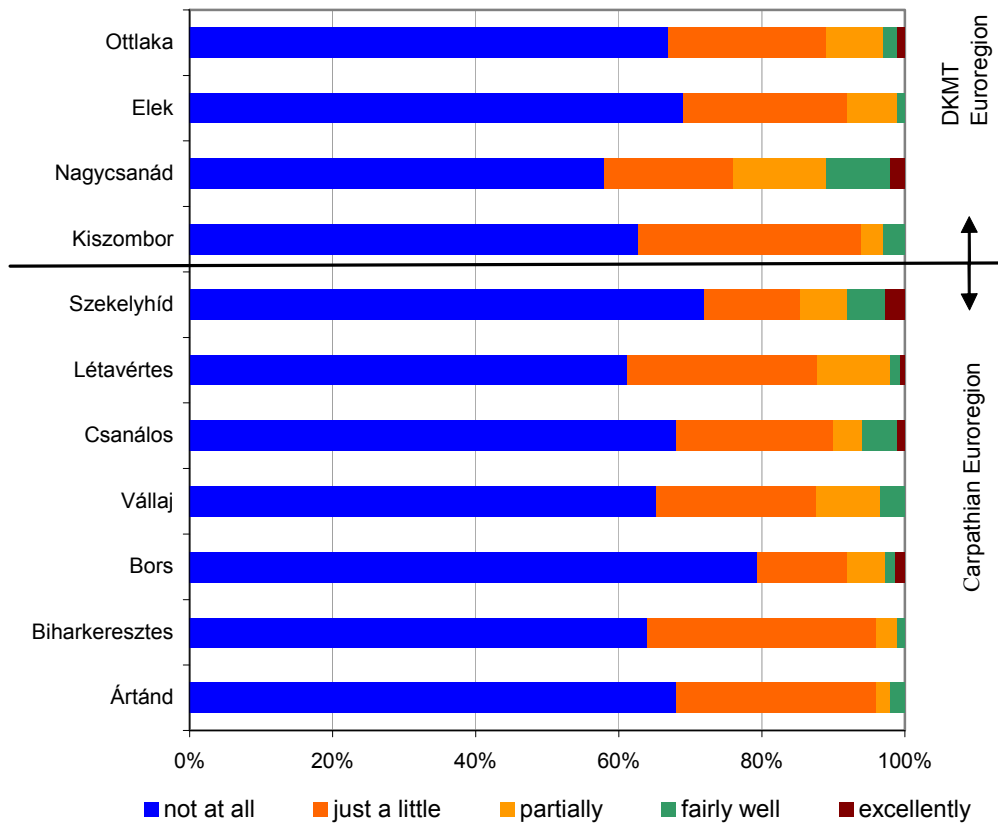
In the Romanian–Hungarian border region, the *population of only a few settlements thinks that their county is part of the respective interregional organisation*, the proportion of those who are uncertain is much higher. In this case too, the proportion of positive answers was higher in the Romanian settlements; in Ottlaka, Nagycsanád and Csanálos the “yes” answers exceeded half of all responses. On the Hungarian side of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border, 33.4% of the respondents think that their county participates in the work of Carpathians Euroregion; this figure is 27.3% in Transcarpathia. Most people are uncertain here too, i.e. they do not know whether or not their counties are members of the organisation. The proportion of “yes” answers is the lowest in Kispalád on the Hungarian side (20%) and the highest is in Záhony (46%). In the Ukrainian part, only the citizens of Tiszaújlak believe in a lower proportion (17.1%) that Transcarpathia is part of the Euroregion.

Knowing all this it is not surprising that the *proportion of those informed about the objectives and mission of the Euroregions is very low*, more than 60% of those living in the Hungarian–Romanian border region are not aware of them at all (only in Nagycsanád remained the proportion of those without any information on the objectives under 60%). With the exception of Létavértes, there was no Hungarian settlement in the sample where there was one respondent completely competent on the mission of the Euroregions (*Figure 26*).

In the Hungarian settlements along the Ukrainian–Hungarian border, the knowledge on the mission of the Carpathians Euroregion is similar to that along the Romanian border (*Figure 27*). Exactly two-thirds of the respondents did not know the objectives of the organisation at all, 15.3% had some information, 12.8% had more information and only 2.9% knew well and another 2.9% perfectly the goals of

Figure 26

*Knowledge of the goals and functions of the Carpathian/DKMT Euroregion in the settlements near the Hungarian–Romanian border, 2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2002. Edited by the authors 2004.

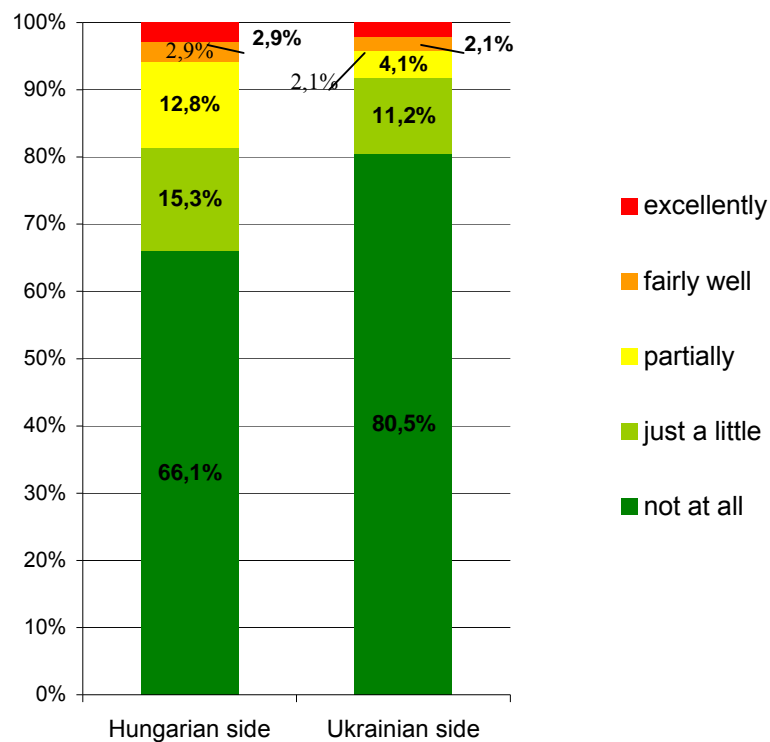
Carpathians Euroregion. The proportion of those without any information on the mission of the organisation is lower in the northern part of the border region (57.5% in Záhony and 59.6% in Barabás), and higher in the southern settlements (75% in Tiszabecs, 81% in Kispalád). On the Ukrainian side, even less people are aware of the mission of the Carpathians Euroregion: 80.5% of the responses fell into the “not at all” category, 11.2% of the respondents had little information, 4.1% of them some information and only 2.1% were well enough and another 2.1% completely informed. Among the settlements, the citizens of Tiszaújlak are least

informed (93.5% have no information at all), while the information level about this issue is the highest in Csap (of the 12 people in the Ukrainian area knowing perfectly the objectives of the Carpathians Euroregion, 11 are from Csap).

The responses of the citizens reveal that neither the Carpathians Euroregion nor the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion has been able to become fully operational yet in the region. The majority of the people living in the border region do not know at all the reasons for the creation of these organisations, their mission and objectives. Really significant achievements cannot be made without an adequate level of awareness. In the future, the currently shaping two- and trilateral cross-border co-operations in the area (Interregio, Bihar–Bihor Euroregion etc.) may become more important than the large interregional organisations.

Figure 27

*Knowledge of the goals and functions of the Carpathian Euroregion in the settlements near the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, 2001–2002*



Source: Questionnaire survey 2001–2002. Edited by the authors, 2004.

### **III RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL WORK IN THE HUNGARIAN–ROMANIAN AND THE HUNGARIAN–UKRAINIAN BORDER REGIONS**

#### **1 Results of the questionnaire survey carried out in the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region**

##### **1.1 Short description of the research**

In 2004/2005 within the framework of the EXLINEA research project the Debrecen Department of the Centre for Regional Studies of HAS carried out a questionnaire survey along the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border. Our interviewees were leaders of institutions, administrative bodies, NGOs and enterprises which are involved in cross-border cooperation and have considerable experience in this field. The final sample consisted of 105 persons, 41 persons from Romania, 35 persons from Hungary and 29 persons from the Ukraine. We sorted the respondents on the Hungarian side into two groups, according to the geographical field of activity, as the Hungarian border region consists of 2 sections, the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian part. From the Romanian section 24 actors were asked and 11 from the significantly shorter Ukrainian section.

##### **1.2 Types and levels of economic interaction**

According to our investigation in the field of cross-border exports in the *Hungarian–Romanian* border region it is clearly identifiable that the respondents from the Romanian side take the level of exports from their side to the Hungarian side for higher than the exports to the opposite direction. The dissimilarity between the two mean values differs conditionally on the territory where the export is directed (larger regional city, other regional market etc.). The difference is relatively slight if our question referred to the nearest city on the other side or the larger regional city: the respondents considered the export into these areas relatively high.

The disparity between the estimations in the two sides was much bigger if we asked for the exports into the capital city of the neighbouring country: the inter-

viewees in Hungary said that there is actually no export into Bucharest from the Hungarian border region, while the Romanian respondents reported relatively high level of exports to the Hungarian capital city. Probable reasons of this difference can be the relative closeness of Budapest to the eastern borders of Hungary. Its good accessibility and the fact that on the Romanian side of the border – as further results of this questionnaire will show – the rate of direct investments from Hungary is high and the majority of the products manufactured in Romania are transported to Budapest or to the other destinations through Budapest.

The export to other countries is considered as more significant than the export to the other side of the border in both Hungary and Romania, which shows that according to the opinions the neighbouring border regions are not the most important partners for the local firms. The answers, especially on the Hungarian side reflect the peripheral situation of the border region, the economic problems and the low level of direct investments, since the results show that the respondents absolutely do not consider the actual level of export as satisfying. The more optimistic estimation of the Romanian side is presumably ascribable to the significant foreign (mostly Italian) investments in the southern areas of the Hungarian–Romanian border region, in Timis and Arad counties, but export from this area is directed to Western-Europe for the most part, and not to Hungary.

The answers in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region concerning the cross-border exports are very similar to the answers already presented in connection with the Hungarian–Romanian border. In this area the Ukrainian respondents assumed that the level of exports from the Ukraine is higher than the export from the Hungarian side, and the difference between the results in the two countries is bigger than in the Romanian case. The level of export to the larger regional city on the Hungarian side is considered prominently high, but the other, more distant regions are target areas for the export as well.

Another point where the answers significantly differ is the role of the capital cities in cross-border export. It results from the geographic position of Kiev, this city cannot become an essential element of cross-border economic relations, but Budapest seems to be an important target for the Ukrainian export. Finally it can be told in this border region too that according to the respondents the level of exports into other countries exceeds the level of exports to the neighbouring country both in the Ukraine and in Hungary.

Our results based on the questionnaire survey in relation to the cross-border import were very similar to the results of the previous group of questions on cross-border export *in both border regions*. It is noticeable in this case as well that the respondents from the Romanian and Ukrainian side take the level of cross-border imports for larger than the respondents from Hungary. The most significant difference can be observed between the questions concerning the role of the capital cities

again, Budapest has a considerable role according to the respondents, while the role of Bucharest and Kiev is considered as insignificant in cross-border imports.

In relation to cross-border investments by local firms sharp contrast can be observed between the *Hungarian and Romanian* sides of the border. The interviewees on both sides realised the different activity of the investors of the two countries, and they totally agreed that Hungarian firms are much more active in this field. It is also noticeable that in reference to capital exports the larger regional city on the other side are considered as the most important target of investments on both sides and they are followed by other nearby regional markets. As regards capital imports, the difference between the two border regions is even more conspicuous, while respondents from Romania think that investments from Hungary reach a satisfactory level, the respondents from Hungary submitted that there are no investments from the Romanian side at all. On the other hand, all respondents agreed that the level of investments in the local economy by firms originating in other countries is much higher than by firms of the neighbouring country, although Hungary is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest investor in Romania. It is interesting that on the Romanian side the level of foreign investments in general was considered higher than on the Hungarian side – if we take the earlier mentioned investments in Timis and Arad counties into consideration, this opinion seems to be rather realistic than unreasonably optimistic.

In this group of questions it is observable that Bucharest is clearly not among the most popular targets of the Hungarian investors, they preferably choose the border region and other regions with ethnic Hungarian population for their investments. The position of Budapest is not as bad; the respondents think that for the Romanian investors – even if there are not many of them – the Hungarian capital city is almost as attracting as the border region. As regards the capital imports, the results are alike, Budapest has an essential target for the investors from Romania, but Bucharest has an absolutely insignificant role in this respect.

In the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region the answers in reference to cross-border investments were slightly different. Remarkably the respondents in the Ukraine consider the level of investments by local firms in the neighbouring country almost as high as the Hungarian respondents, moreover in the larger regional cities on the other side and in the more distant markets they take the firms from their side more active than the Hungarians. The role of the capital cities seems to be very similar to the other case study region, only Budapest can be considered as a target area for the investors from the Ukraine, the local firms in the Hungarian border region do not esteem Kiev as a possible target for investments. Even more similarities with the Hungarian–Romanian border can be observed in the case of investments in the local economy by firms originating on the other side. In this case the Ukrainian respondents unequivocally submitted that the level of invest-



ment by Hungarian firms is relatively high, while the Hungarian respondents did not consider the investments from the Ukraine for significant.

Neither in the Hungarian–Romanian nor in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region was the de-localisation of activities considered as a typical characteristic of the last 15 years, most respondents assured that no de-localisation activities could be observed. The simplest and probably feasible explanation for this result is the peripheral situation of the border region – there were no considerable investments in these regions before 1989, so they did not have the industrial capacity which could have been de-localised to the other side.

### **1.3 Immigration and social interaction**

If we analyse the answers concerning the immigration either in the *Hungarian–Romanian*, or the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region, we will find that the means are significantly different between the Hungarian and the other side. According to the opinions of the respondents in Hungary a large number of immigrants arrive from the neighbouring countries, especially from the nearby regions, but from other, farther regions as well. The main reason of this phenomenon is the existence of the Hungarian minority in the Romanian and Ukrainian side of the border; for the most part they leave their countries to settle down in Hungary. Migration in the opposite direction is rare; it is reflected by the results of our research project too. The number of immigrants from other countries to Romania and the Ukraine is slightly higher, primarily from Moldavia to Romania and from the east to the Ukraine.

Only in Hungary is it worth-while to analyse the answers concerning the occupational composition of immigrants, as the number of immigrants in the other two countries is too low. According to the respondents' opinion the majority of the immigrants work in the fields. These opinions may be influenced by the fact that during the most important field works a large number of guest workers arrive at this region from the other sides, who are welcomed by the Hungarian farmers since they are ready to perform the same work for significantly lower wages. The image of these guest workers from Romania and the Ukraine can be confused with the immigrants although the two groups are naturally not identical. The respondents take those who work in the services for the second biggest group of the immigrants. One possible explanation for this view is that the rate of intellectuals among immigrants is very high, a large number of them conclude to settle down in Hungary. Finally we can refer to the peripheral situation of these border regions and the lack of industrial estates again, when we try to explain why the rate of those immigrants who work in the industry is so low. The questions concerning

emigration reflect the same trends from the other side, the respondents in Hungary think that there is no emigration at all to the two neighbouring countries and the emigration to other countries is also insignificant in comparison with the same rates in Romania and the Ukraine.

The means of the answers concerning labour commuting clearly show that both in the *Hungarian–Romanian* and the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border regions the target area is the Hungarian side. Not only the respondents from the Hungarian but from both other countries agreed that the flow of commuters is unidirectional at the moment, in the direction of Hungary. If we compare the situation in the labour markets and the rate of wages in Romania and Transcarpathia, it is understandable that for many people it is worth engaging themselves to work in Hungary even for a short period and even if it is illegal. However, a significant dissimilarity can be found between the situation in Romania and the Ukraine as well, since the results in Transcarpathia show that the level of commuting is much higher there than in Romania, although this level is rather high too. In view of the economic situation and the living standards in the Ukraine it is not surprising. If we compare the result of the questionnaire from another point of view, it is perceivable that from permanent and occasional commuting the latter is considered to be more typical in all three countries, simply because this form of commuting usually means short term illegal employment in the other country.

In connection with the questions concerning the one-day trade, respondents from the Hungarian side considered this form of trade very typical, more typical than either the Romanian or the Ukrainian respondents. After comparing the two case study regions it is clear that this form of cross-border cooperation has the most significant role in Transcarpathia. This may be led back to the extremely difficult economic situation of the border region, where in many instances one-day trade is the only source of income. On the other hand the difference between the price levels in Hungary and the Ukraine is significantly higher than in the case of Hungary and Romania, and this difference keeps cross-border trade going.

The questions concerning social interaction showed that interviewees on both sides of the *Hungarian–Romanian* and the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* borders consider the level of personal connections of local inhabitants as really high, they frequently visit friends and relatives or do the shopping etc. on the other side. Most inhabitants of the Hungarian border region have relatives on the other side; this is one of the main reasons of the high level of social interactions in this area. Another reason can be the shopping tourism, in the last few years Hungarians who live near the border “discovered” this opportunity. While earlier mostly Romanian and Ukrainian citizens travelled to Hungary to do some shopping, by now the situation changed radically. Clearly in most of the cases cities near the border and the nearby regions are affected by this process; it is rare that these people visit farther areas.

Similarly to other questions analyzed earlier, the most significant differences between the three countries can be observed in case of cross-border visits of local residents to the capital of the other side, and the explanation is very similar too: the role of Budapest for the inhabitants of the border regions (partly because of the Hungarian minority in Romania and the Ukraine) is much more significant than the role of Bucharest and Kiev.

#### **1.4 Identifying barriers to interaction and cross-border co-operation**

Along the *Hungarian–Romanian* border, Romanian respondents were more satisfied with the infrastructural conditions of creating cross-border connections than Hungarian respondents. We can highlight telecommunication, which is – according to the answers from both sides – not a severe barrier of cross-border cooperation any more. The condition of railways and roads is a more significant, but still not insuperable barrier in the way of connection-building – although large scale investments are needed in the field of infrastructure, this is not the main barrier of cooperation between the two border regions. On the Hungarian side the respondents were a bit more critical; the only exception is the already mentioned telecommunication. Much more problems were caused by the condition of railways and the roads, although they are not severe barriers either.

The answers in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region were slightly different. As regards the train service, Hungarian respondents mentioned fewer problems than Ukrainian respondents, which is presumably caused by the fact that railways play a relatively limited role in transport of passengers between Hungary and Ukraine and the capacity of the transfer station in Záhony is more than enough to fulfil all demands that comes up in the field of transport of goods. In case of public roads respondents were more displeased, while the Ukrainian respondents – and that can be a bit surprising – did not take the condition of the roads as a serious problem, at least not in terms of cross-border cooperation. Another significant difference between the two case study regions is that in the Ukrainian border region the existence of a satisfactory telecommunication network is not self-evident, that is why the improvement of it is considered as one of the most important goals on both sides.

In the eyes of the respondents crossing the *Hungarian–Romanian* border is not a severe barrier of the cooperation any more, but there are several problems which should be solved as soon as possible to reach a higher level of cooperation. The most serious of these problems is the behaviour of border guards and customs officers, which is the weak point of border control in most respondents' opinion. Even so this problem was not considered as a severe barrier either, according to our re-

search result the harassment of the travellers is not as frequent as it was before 1989, when the representatives of the authorities permanently humiliated those who crossed the border.

On the other hand the closeness of check points and the number of check points does not raise a problem for the respondents in Romania. In Hungary the approach of both questions was more critical, but since in the last years, as a result of different development programmes several border crossing points were opened in the border section, most of the respondents do not regard this problem as a severe handicap for transboundary cooperation.

Along the *Hungarian-Ukrainian* border the closeness and the number of check points are the least significant difficulties, but the situation in this field seems to be less problematic only in comparison with the other problems. Especially the number of border crossing points was considered as a barrier by the Hungarian respondents, even if a number of new check points were established in the last few years, and as a result of this the confinement of the border region – which was the main characteristic of this area – remarkably decreased. Probably because of these measures, which brought a number of positive changes for the local inhabitants, the respondents on the Ukrainian side did not consider border crossing as a barrier.

Nevertheless visa procedures were mentioned by the respondents as a restrictive factor, but it is surprising that interviewees from the Hungarian side, who do not need a visa for border crossing considered the visa regime a bigger problem than the Ukrainian respondents who need the visa, although the difference is not significant. The attitude of the passport officers and the customs officers was considered as a restrictive factor to the same extent, so it is – in comparison with the results in the Hungarian-Romanian border region – a considerable barrier of the cooperation.

As we analysed the trade conditions and their barriers in the *Hungarian-Romanian* border region, we received very similar answers. The respondents from both countries denied that tariffs or duties imposed by the other side on exports or quotas on exports would detain trade between Hungary and Romania. The CEFTA agreements and since May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004 the agreements between the EU and Romania regulate trade connections between the two countries and all these agreements are based on the principle of free trade and intend to strengthen this principle. Further results prove that in this border region the technical requirements concerning exports and imports are taken to be satisfying. The only barrier worth mentioning is bureaucracy; especially the respondents from Hungary mentioned that administration is still more complicated than it should be.

Respondents from the *Hungarian-Ukrainian* border region considered the barriers of commercial connections as serious problems. The immoderately bureaucratic attitude of the administration is the most serious problem in this case study region as well, but the insufficient technical equipments cause almost as many problems. Tariffs and quotas are not taken for really considerable barriers on the

Hungarian side any longer, but on the Ukrainian side they are considered almost as serious problem as bureaucracy.

The role of different levels of administration, business associations and agencies in cross-border cooperation was estimated differently by the respondents in *Hungary* and *Romania*. The respondents from the Hungarian side were more satisfied with the work of these establishments in every respect than the Romanian respondents. If we compare the judgements concerning the local, regional and national levels we can learn that in case of every type of the above mentioned institutions the local level was considered as the most effective level, which encumbers the cooperation the least, although significant differences can be observed in case of the administrative bodies. The estimation of local governments is definitely positive, in Hungary local governments were – in addition to the above mentioned establishments – the most reputable in reference to their assistance for cross-border cooperation. This is not surprising if we take the fact into consideration that the most active forms of cooperation with the longest tradition are managed by the local authorities and the network of twin settlements connect a number of villages and towns in the border region.

The respondents from Hungary were far less satisfied with the effectiveness of the assistance of the business associations, although we cannot say that they are seen as severe barriers. The most appropriate explanation is that many of the respondents take these associations among others for responsible for the insufficient level of economic cooperation between the two countries.

The answers from Romania show that in this country the respondents encountered more problems as they tried to work together with these institutions, but the difference between the estimation of the institutions was insignificant. We could only point out that the local administration was the most acknowledged actor and the national government was considered as the least helpful partner in the course of cross-border cooperation projects.

The answers from the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region almost totally coincide with the answers from the other case study. Hungarian respondents perceptibly trusted these institutions more than the Ukrainians in every account. The results were very similar here to those in the Hungarian–Romanian border region in reference to the estimation of the government assistance: the local level is usually not considered as a barrier but as we approach the national level the level of confidence is decreasing.

We can choose several factors from the general conditions listed in the questionnaire which do not hinder cross-border cooperation at all, and others where essential changes should be made to enhance cooperation. Respondents on both sides of the *Hungarian–Romanian* border agreed that different languages do not delay the common work significantly. This result reflects the special characteristic of these case study regions again, namely that a significant part of cross-border

cooperation in these areas means cooperation between Hungarian communities on both sides of the border, and in this case the intermediary language is certainly Hungarian. But interethnic Hungarian–Romanian cooperation is encouraged by the fact that ethnic minorities live on both sides of the border and language problems can be solved relative easily by the help of these people.

In the respondents' opinion different cultures do not hinder the cooperation either; the explanation is similar to the interpretation presented in case of language problems. As regards the religion in this area, there is a sharp borderline between Hungarians and Romanians, but in spite of the different religions, religion was not considered as severe barriers. To sum it up we can say that for Hungarian and Romanian communities which live together in this area for centuries, different cultures, religions and other elements connected to ethnicity do not discourage cooperation perceptibly.

On the other hand, some other answers of the questionnaire survey seem to be inconsistent with these results, as Hungarian respondents think that historical events considerably hinder cooperation. We should refer here to the Trianon Peace Treaty after World War I and the events of the last few decades, when the relations between the two countries were usually hostile (sometimes openly, but in most cases impliedly) mostly because of the situation of the Hungarian minority in Romania.

Nevertheless the impedimental effect of the historical events is clearly not as important as the consequences of some present-day phenomena, like corruption that was mentioned among the most severe barriers of successful economic cooperation on both sides. Some other elements are also connected to the economic interaction: the frequent changing of the rules in business, the instability of the exchange rates and the inflation were considered as barriers by the Romanian respondents. The latter was a serious problem for both countries for years, but in the last years successful steps were taken to decrease inflation.

The questions concerning general conditions as barriers of CBC generated significantly different results in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region. Hungarian respondents for example considered political instability in the Ukraine as a severe barrier. This judgement may have been affected by the events of December 2004 in the Ukraine, the so called “Orange Revolution”, when political instability reached such a high level that it endangered not only cross-border cooperation but the operation of the state itself. Similarly to the Romanian border section corruption was taken for the most dangerous hindering factor, but the level and the dangerousness of it far exceeds the mean values measured in Romania.

It can be stated in reference to this border region as well that different religions, cultures and languages are not considered as barriers on either side of the border. Although the religious borderline between the Hungarians and Ukrainians is just as sharp as in the other case study area, this borderline lost its importance during the

century-long living together and it does not endanger cross-border connections. The fact that in spite of the Hungarian–Romanian border region in this region historical events were not considered as threats for the cooperation proves that the coexistence was peaceful here in the last centuries.

As regards economic geography, the respondents in the *Hungarian–Romanian* border region agreed that the geographical conditions do not affect negatively the connections between the two sides of the border, as it cannot be stated either that distance of large cities from the border would have a negative effect on cooperation. On the other hand, the respondents criticised the productivity of local firms and the quality of their products as well as the limited product differentiation of local economy. All these factors especially delay greater economic interaction just as low purchasing power of the nearby markets on the other side. Stressing of the latter factor was naturally more characteristic of respondents on the Hungarian side.

In the *Ukraine* insufficient size of the market cannot be a problem, rather the low purchasing power, which is a barrier that almost cannot be overcome in the respondents' opinion. In Hungary the situation is reverse; the relatively small market has a relatively high purchasing power (especially in comparison with the Ukraine). Geographical factors are not considered as a severe barrier in any side, but the low productivity and the limited product differentiation was mentioned by most of the respondents as a problem.

## **1.5 Perceptions and images of the others**

With reference to the images of the others we were eager to see which conditions and traditions are considered as an advantage or disadvantage by the actors of cross-border cooperation in course of their activity. On the Hungarian side of the *Hungarian–Romanian* border the effect of the historical events was regarded as a hindering factor again. On the contrary, on the Romanian side history does not seem to play a significant role in the cooperation, the respondents did not take it for an advantage, but it was surely not a serious problem either. The answers of the Hungarian respondents show that besides history only linguistic differences were considered as a problem, although not an insolvable problem. The other elements listed in this group of questions were regarded as an asset rather than a problem in CBC.

The positive effect of the existence of an ethnic minority on the other side was particularly emphasised by the Hungarian and Romanian respondents as well. The judgement on the current relations among local and regional authorities was also positive; especially the respondents in Romania considered these connections as

very useful. The role of current relations between governments in CBC was not regarded as positive as local connections, but it was still rather an asset than a problem.

Respondents in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region also emphasised the essential role of national minorities in encouraging cross-border cooperation. The Current relations between the Hungarian and Ukrainian governments may have a positive effect on transboundary connections as well, but joining local forces have the most important role. Respondents in this region do not think that cultural and religious differences have positive or negative effect on cross-border connections. Conversely linguistic differences were considered as problem, especially on the Hungarian side. Interviewees from the Ukrainian side take historical events between the two countries rather for an asset than a problem, while Hungarian respondents considered it neither an asset nor a problem.

As regards the image of the others, the answers received from the respondents in the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border regions were rather similar, most of them agreed with the mostly positive statements listed in this group of questions. There were a few questions where the respondents did not differ in opinion, the results were alike on both sides of the border, e.g. in case of the statements that people on the other side are honest, peaceful, open minded, have “European” culture and have good feelings towards us. It is to be remarked that last of the statements, which refers to the feelings of the other side, was accepted by the respondents the least. If we take the history of the Hungary and Romania and the centuries-old mistrust into consideration, this finding cannot surprise us.

In case of the other questions of point 4.2 the answers were significantly different. Respondents from Hungary agreed upon the statements that people on the other side are hard working, friendly and similar to them much more than the Romanian and Ukrainian respondents. On the other hand, the judgement of the respondents from these two countries was more positive when they were asked about some characteristics of the Hungarians in connection with labour and their economic situation. Thus a relatively great number of the respondents agreed that the Hungarians were wealthy, productive and disciplined.

As the respondents from the *Hungarian–Romanian* border region expressed their opinion on the impacts of greater interaction, their estimations were surprisingly similar. According to the answers, collaboration among universities, research institutes and more active cultural interaction may have positive impact on local economy and society. This is probably a reflection of the conception according to which most respondents think that at present cultural interaction is the most effective and viable part of cross-border cooperations, as it is also verified by other parts of our research. Besides the totally open borders within a wider Europe, encour-



agement of cross-border investment and local exports to the other side of the borders could have positive impact as well.

In the respondents' eye the increasing number of immigrants from the other side working in the local economy and emigrants from this side working on the other side of the borders would not be a really positive effect of greater interaction, although these effects are not considered as a problem either. Most respondents would not take it for a positive result either if the number of mixed marriages with immigrants or local imports from the other side of the borders grew.

The results in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region are similar; the growing number of cultural and scientific cooperation project would have the most positive effects on local economy and society considered. The increasing number of immigrants from the other side who would like to find a job and mixed marriages are not welcomed by the respondents. In some cases the difference between the two sides of the border was bigger, for example the concept of totally open borders within a wider Europe was more popular on the Ukrainian side than in Hungary, and the emigration in order to find a job on the other side was considered as a positive outcome for their own community preferably on the Ukrainian side.

## **1.6 Evaluation of policies of cross-border co-operation**

The implementation of cross-border cooperation policies was estimated positively by most of the respondents in the *Hungarian–Romanian* border region; in their opinion in the fields listed in the questionnaire, policies of cross-border cooperation were implemented frequently to strengthen transboundary connection. It is clear at first sight that more respondents in Hungary assume that these policies were implemented purposefully than in Romania. For example interviewees on the Hungarian side think that trust building policies are used very often by the Hungarian partners, whereas on the other side of the border only a few respondents recognised the signs of the implementation or even the existence of a deliberate trust building policy. The difference was similarly significant in the field of education, research and culture. The active role of the Hungarian side is understandable as for the Hungarian minority in Romania the aid coming from the “mother country” for educational and cultural institutions is essential. On the other hand, respondents on both sides had very similar opinions in connection with the local policies of cross-border cooperation. Here respondents from Hungary and Romania clearly stated again that local connections have a determinant role in cross-border cooperation.

The results in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region also show that Hungarian partners implement most of the various cross-border cooperation policies more often, although the difference between the two sides is not as big as in the other

case study region. On the Hungarian side an accentuated role was attributed to local authorities, but the opinions on the Ukrainian side are not as unambiguous – here we can refer to the centralised characteristic of the Ukrainian administrative system, which does not ensure as large scope for action for the local authorities as in Hungary. Besides cultural and educational cooperation, cooperations in the case of natural disasters are the fields where CBC policies can have an important role and these policies are implemented frequently in the respondents' opinion. On the other hand, most respondent on both sides think that implementation of cross-border policies of cooperation in migration issues and in development of infrastructure is not frequent enough. In contrast with the Hungarian–Romanian border, significant differences can be observed here in reference to the implementation of European Union policies of cross-border cooperation and the application of European financial resources, which is clearly a consequence of the Ukraine's situation, since this country can count on much less support from the Union than Hungary or Romania.

As we tried to examine the effectiveness of the policies listed in the questionnaire, we discovered that for the most part the opinions were very similar to the results found in case of the previous group of questions. Regarding to the effectiveness of cooperation, the local level was considered as the most successful field of cross-border cooperation by the *Hungarian* and *Romanian* respondents as well. Another prominently effective field of cooperation is culture and Hungarian interviewees also took trust building policies and the implementation of policies of scientific cooperation for an extraordinarily flourishing area of connections. It can be also mentioned that the respondents seem to be remarkably unsatisfied with two issues: in the field of cooperation towards organised crime and the development of infrastructure Hungarian respondents deem it necessary to elaborate policies of greater interaction.

Respondents in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region expect more effective implementation of policies in the field of fight against organised crime and coordinated development of infrastructure, but a more effective migration policy and environmental policy are among the requirements as well, especially on the Hungarian side. It can be stated as a general principle that the respondents in Hungary are less satisfied with the effectiveness of policies than in Transcarpathia, there are only a few exceptions, like the local policies of cross-border cooperation and the allocation of financial resources from the European Union.

As we analysed the group of local actors active in cross-border interaction, we received fundamentally similar results in both case study regions. A group of actors was outlined which was considered to play an essential role in cross-border cooperation by respondents in all three countries. First of all the ethnic minorities must be mentioned, respondents in the Romanian and Ukrainian side of the border also think that the role of this group is all-important. Local authorities are among the

most important actors again just as NGOs, universities and research institutes. At the other end of the scale there are the Labour Unions and the political parties, most of the respondents agreed that the role of these organisations is negligible in cross-border interaction, only in the Ukraine were there a few people who submitted that Labour Unions show some activity in this field.

There is a group of possible participants of interaction about which only Hungarian respondents said that they were especially active. Principally cultural organisations belong to this group as they play a very important role in the preservation of national identity of ethnic Hungarians in Romania and the Ukraine as well. But also local and regional chambers just as private citizens, development agencies and partly private firms are included in this group.

### **1.7 Expected effects of greater cross-border interaction and co-operation**

As regards the benefits of cross-border cooperation, respondents in *Hungary* and *Romania* equally designated the national level as the greatest winner of interaction. The national level is followed by the border regions and then (slightly lagging behind) rural areas and the capital cities. Respondents in both countries agreed that the rich and wealthy are the real winners of cross-border interaction, not the poor.

Nevertheless in a few cases remarkably large differences can be observed between the answers in Hungary and Romania. We can highlight the fight against organised crime, where respondents in Hungary were very pessimistic in reference to the possible success of more active cross-border cooperation, while respondents on the Romanian side were rather optimistic. On the other hand the situation is just the opposite in case of the large cities near the border, the respondents in Hungary saw great opportunities for making the best of the cooperation, while the judgement of interviewees in Romania was much more restrained.

The findings described above are mainly relevant for the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region as well, only one difference must be pointed out. In this case study area Ukrainian respondents did not consider it as self-evident that the rich benefit more from greater cross-border interaction, or to be more precise they think that the poor have almost as much chance to utilise the opportunities.

In the *Hungarian–Romanian* border region the respondents almost fully agreed on the statement that both countries gain from greater interaction. On the other hand, respondents on the Hungarian side were certain that the other country and not Hungary would gain more as a result of more intense interaction. Answers to this question on the Romanian side were more balanced, which shows that opinions

were more divided there. The questionnaire survey showed the same results in case of the border zones as well.

Both sides were of the same mind that the concerned border regions gain considerably more from greater interaction than the countries, although this opinion was outlined more definitely in Hungary. The centralised character of the Romanian administrative system may have a determinant role in this respect. Finally the majority of the respondents in both countries agreed that the expectable benefit of greater interaction is much bigger than the possible losses, although the respondents in the Romanian border region tended to take these possible losses into consideration much more than the Hungarians.

Respondents in the *Ukraine* and *Hungary* also agreed that both countries and both border regions may benefit from more active interaction and that gains could be greater than losses. On the Hungarian side, just like in the other case study area, the other side of the border was considered as the real winner of greater interaction. On the other hand, the standpoint of the Ukrainian respondents is not absolutely clear since almost as many respondents said that their country/border region gained more as many stated that the benefits in the other country/border region are greater.

## **1.8 Expected effects of EU enlargement on the region**

The answers in the Hungarian–Romanian border region to the questions related to the impacts of the EU enlargement were very similar to the answers received in the previous group of questions. Everyone considered the EU itself, the countries and the border regions as winners. Respondents from Hungary said again that the other country and the other border region would benefit more from the accession than their own country or region. When they had to make a choice between the country and the region, they chose the region as the main winner, while in Romania respondents took the country and the border region for winners of the enlargement almost in the same measure.

The picture outlined in the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border region is largely similar to the description of the other case study area, so the border regions and both countries were placed among the sure winners. Although most respondents acknowledged that EU enlargement causes both winners and losers, the benefits were considered greater than the losses, especially in Transcarpathia.

The last group of questions in the questionnaire tried to find an answer to the question what impacts the EU enlargement will have on cross-border cooperation. In no other group of questions can be observed such a unity of answers in the *Hungarian–Romanian* and the *Hungarian–Ukrainian* border regions as in this case, and the dominance of positive answers is convincing. We can highlight only a few

questions where the answers from the Hungarian side were not as optimistic as from the other two sides. In conformity with several previous questions, respondents in Hungary expect less positive changes in the field of migration issues, the fight against organised crime and cooperation in the case of natural disasters than the respondents in Romania. Hungarian interviewees in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region were similarly restrained when they answered the questions in reference to the migration policy and the fight against organised crime, while the Ukrainian respondents’ opinion was more pessimistic when they were asked about the impacts of the enlargement on the national policies of cross-border cooperation.

## **1.9 Summary**

We can highlight a few special characteristics from the results of the questionnaire survey carried out in the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border regions. One of these characteristics is that the existence of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries has a significant influence on the cross-border connections of Hungary and on several aspects of cross-border interaction in this region in general. As regards cross-border migration, the fact that they do not arrive at an unfamiliar cultural and linguistic environment if they leave their land of birth may have an encouraging effect on those ethnic Hungarians who live in Romania or the Ukraine. The large number of ethnic Hungarians may also be an explanation for the great importance of cultural and educational cooperation on behalf of Hungary, since the aid coming from the “mother country” is essential for the Hungarian national minority in Romania and the Ukraine. On the other hand, the questionnaire results also showed that the Hungarian, Romanian and Ukrainian ethnic minorities in the neighbouring countries are considered as one of the main connecting links between the three countries.

The development of more active cross-border cooperation is hindered by different factors in case of the two case study regions, in the Ukraine for example the role of the visa regime and the slowness of border crossing. On the other hand there are factors which raise problems in all three countries. The differences of self-governmental system, primarily the limited scope for action of the Romanian and Ukrainian local governments and the centralised character of the administrative system in these countries make cooperation more difficult. Bureaucratic procedures and frequent and unforeseeable changing of the laws also hinder the development of deeper connections. Finally the behaviour of passport and customs officers must be mentioned as a barrier of cooperation.

## **2 Cross-border relations - perceptions of the border and the cross-border co-operations**

In accordance with the preliminary research plan of the EXLINEA programme, interviews were made with prominent persons playing an active role in and having a good overview of the cross-border relations (the number of interviews made was 25 on the Hungarian, 25 on the Romanian and 21 of the Ukrainian side). Due to the experiences, local skills, personal contacts and special skills (reaching beyond the statistical data) of the questioned persons, these talks were a source of information unavailable elsewhere; also, the information give us a clear picture of the situation and problems of the area in question and of the opportunities of cross-border co-operations.

The interviewees were selected from a preliminarily defined target group in each country, including a wide range of local government leaders skilled and competent in cross-border relations, dominant persons of higher education institutions and research places, and also economic, ethnic minority and non-governmental organisations. Their common feature is that they are all active in cross-border co-operations, and all of them have a sound knowledge of both the local and the national level problems.

### **2.1 Present situation, internal and external factors determining co-operations**

#### ***2.1.1 Local problems***

During the interviews we first wanted to know where the interviewees saw the biggest problems and the future prospects of the respective border section. Most of the *Hungarian* answerers referred to the peripheral situation of the region, emphasising the presence of significant unemployment and serious outmigration. The agricultural character of the region was also often mentioned, together with the formerly missing industrialisation which has resulted in an almost hopeless situation by now, as many respondents said. This is accompanied by the fear often mentioned in connection with foreign direct investment, i.e. that foreign capital can easily skip this region and locate on the other side of the border, because of the much lower wage costs in the neighbour countries. In this respect the selected role of the cross-border co-operations was mentioned, as these investments mean jobs not only for one side of the border; both sides can profit from the investments, as the separating role of the border weakens and the historically existing relations between the centres and

the hinterlands can be utilised again. However, investments are often blocked by the underdeveloped and backward infrastructure (an example that was raised: the county seat at a distance of only 60 kilometres is accessible within the same time from the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region as Budapest from the county seat – 270 kilometres away).

Especially the representatives of the institutions working at regional level mentioned the ad-hoc character and occasionally the total lack of the co-operations among the institution operating on the Hungarian side of the border; e.g. the internal cohesion among the counties making the NUTS 2 level regions is completely absent. Any kind of resource has to be divided equally among the counties, so the principle of concentration, supported by the European Union, cannot be realised. Problems related to innovation were also raised – the innovation potential of the North Great Plain regions is among the worst ones in Hungary, which is exacerbated by circumstances such as the already mentioned rivalry among the counties.

In *Romania* almost each of the interviewees mentioned the underdeveloped nature of infrastructure, as one of the most serious problems of the border region. Without the development of transport infrastructure it is impossible to reach a long term and well-established development of the economy. It is a general opinion that if the condition of the roads and the railways is significantly improved, the quantity of the invested capital can considerably increase, new jobs can be created and this process can lead to the alleviation of several other problems (unemployment in the first place). It is not only the deficiencies of transport infrastructure that cause a problem: canalisation is also missing, as is tap water and sometimes even electricity. This is not only detrimental for the local inhabitants but also puts off investors.

Another problem very often mentioned was the bureaucratic, centralised administration system, leaving very little independence for the lower levels of administration. One consequence of the centralising policy is the lopsided realisation of the NUTS 2 level regions. The interviewees often mentioned as a problem the excessively influential bureaucracy, which is a natural consequence of strong centralisation; the negligence of the act on local administration; but first of all the lack of the decentralisation of the state budget. Based on the interviews we can see that the problems arising in connection with centralisation are especially serious in the border regions. The respondents often complained about their peripheral situation and the fact that their share from the central supports is far from being proportionate either to their population or their needs. In many cases the suboptimal efficiency of the economic management and legislation was mentioned as a problem, together with the not transparent enough and excessive tax and excise regulations. A factor that makes the picture described above even worse is that many respondents said it was possible to reach everything in Romania for a certain amount of money, i.e. the fact corruption is present at each level of the power.

The social problems were connected by many to the bad economic situation of Romania – in the lack of adequate financial resources, social protection network is an almost unknown phenomenon. Many said that the quality of the health services was unacceptable. The low purchasing power of the pensions is another source of serious social tensions.

Fewer respondents mentioned the deficiencies of making applications and of project management, but they think it is a very serious problem of cross-border co-operations. They consider their lagging behind considerable, even compared to Hungary; the reasons for this are the lack of information, i.e. the fact that the information channels that could transfer the important news for those interested have not been created yet. Also, even in the presence of good information flow, the skills necessary for the preparation and management of tenders are often missing. Presently the special trainings of this type are not efficient enough.

In *Transcarpathia* the biggest problems seen by the interviewees are the *heritage of the Soviet system*. The problems are of *political* nature, on the one hand, following the very strongly centralised system: the local levels do not have adequate independence and resources that could promote among other things the development of cross-border relations and projects. In addition, the halos of the different political parties have emerged in Transcarpathia too, and the different non-governmental organisations and economic actors have to manoeuvre among them in order to get better opportunities. As a matter of fact, the economic and social backwardness is a consequence of this.

Many said that in Transcarpathia the biggest problem was the lack of intellectuals and young experts with adequate skills. Using the easement that started in 1985 after Gorbachev's "Perestroika", the outmigration of the intellectuals unable to make ends meet in Transcarpathia started and this process is still going on. However, the "beheading" of the local intellectuals has much longer historical traditions. The peace treaty signed in Trianon cut in two several counties that had made economic, cultural and political units for centuries (Ung, Bereg, Ugocsa and Máramaros). As a consequence of the peace treaty, not only cities lost their hinterlands but also a number of state formations succeeded each other in Transcarpathia in a relatively short time (Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Czechoslovakia, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Soviet Union and the Ukraine). Each new state brought their new public administration, the region lost the former public administration and also the intellectual elite (either because they did not know the new language or they were considered as politically untrustworthy, or they did not find adequate conditions for living in the changing circumstances). We can say that *Transcarpathia has been practically continuously suffering from a loss of intellectuals since 1920*. The problems of the local Hungarian intellectuals are even worse, as they, together with other ethnic minorities, had lost practically all that they had after the Soviet nationalisation, but they were not able to participate in the creation of the new



Ukrainian state, where privatisation did occur but not re-privatisation; or even if re-privatisation took place, the Hungarians could not take part in it. The winners of the privatisation were those people in high positions that had worked many years in the Soviet system, and such positions were unavailable for the Hungarians, because in the Stalinist era the Hungarian intellectuals and men were taken to the Gulag where they either died or were released as political prisoners. Consequently they and their children could not be party members, they could not study in higher education institutions and have high positions (as they were politically untrustworthy). As a consequence of this, in the last 15 years many of them have emigrated to Hungary.

The majority of the problems in Transcarpathia are related to *economic difficulties*. The economy, after its deep crisis in the 1990s (the major part of the factories were closed down, resulting in mass unemployment) is now developing, but the respondents said it was important to shape the economic policy of the country and the region, together with its too often bureaucratic and not transparent regulatory mechanisms, in a way that growth should be sustainable. It would be good to introduce as many as possible of the European norms, as it would attract investors. Another problem is the *general lack of resources* at each budgetary institution (especially in the sector of health and social care). The non-governmental organisations practically do not get any state support. *Agriculture too struggles with serious problems*, as large-scale farming has ceased to exist, the lands have been privatised, but the private farmers cultivating small pieces of land cannot make a living from agriculture, because they have no access to modern machinery, technologies, chemicals, fertilisers and above all expertise. A sort of consulting system is just being created, with Hungarian assistance (following the patterns of the Hungarian network of village managers), also, rural tourism offers possibilities, but the chances of this activity are seriously limited by the infrastructure deficiencies.

Partly because of the economic problems, a huge burden is carried by the *social care system* that is very outdated, seriously underfinanced and not effective at all (either from infrastructure or professional aspect). The international aid organisations and the churches try to alleviate these problems, but they do not get support from the state for their activity, despite the fact that they have state responsibilities. In fact, the state blocks their work. Another serious problem is the *low quality level of education*, including the technical and infrastructure conditions of education, but the biggest problem is the lack of up-to-date methods and competitive professions. In the opinion of the prominent persons asked, it is especially vocational training that is unable to keep up with the expectations of the time.

Transcarpathia is not free either from *corruption* present all over the country and *in every field* of life. In practice it means that practically anything can be achieved with good connections and financial background, or anything can be bought – from university degree to driving licence and different permissions etc.

A serious problem is the *underdeveloped infrastructure*, including not only transport infrastructure but also the communal provision, mainly healthy drinking water supply (or any kind of supply in some villages), health care system, gas pipes, telecommunication, and also waste and sewage treatment. The latter results in the *pollution of rivers* (mostly by communal but to a smaller extent also industrial waste water), which is accompanied by *serious floods* occurring in the catchment area of the Upper Tisza River more and more often as a consequence of the deforestations accelerating over the last 15 years. The latter problem is not only a local but also international problem, due to the fact that the catchment area of the Tisza River belongs to several different countries.

### **2.1.2 National level problems**

The problems of the national level in *Hungary* were by and large the same as the problems mentioned in connection with the local communities and the regions. They include unemployment, impoverishment, the ageing of the population. Less often a few concrete problems were mentioned, such as the issue of centralisation and decentralisation: although there are decentralisation efforts in Hungary, the devolution of the powers and the resources from the ministries to the regions and the counties is not fast enough. The building out of the institutional system necessary for this is a very slow process too; meanwhile the respective elements of the existing administrative structure try to keep their positions.

The replies to questions relating to the national level problems were very similar to this in *Romania*, too. The deficiencies of infrastructure were among the most frequently mentioned difficulties, but the problem of the centralised public administration and the unfair distribution of the resources are problems too, not only in the border region. The shortcomings of the legal system, the labyrinth of laws and decrees leads to instability all over Romania, as does corruption. Probably the only new element in the answers given to this question was the unfinished privatisation. The privatisation of the former large state-owned companies has not even started in many cases, although it would be an indispensable condition for the acceleration of the economic development.

The respondents said that the national level problems in the *Ukraine* were partly similar to the ones in Transcarpathia. These include the *low level of the efficiency of the economy*, and the concomitant problems of living that is the main reason for the *outmigration of the intellectual elite*: the state is not able to offer them acceptable conditions of living. These problems are very important for the future of the Ukraine, because they have other induced effects, as does the decrease of the number of population (lack of resources, social, educational and health care system etc.), which can significantly set back the development of the economy.

Another problem of the national level is the already mentioned *corruption* and the fact that the mafia-type habits have become integral parts of state administration, which affects all fields of the economic and civil life. We also have to mention the *low level of the efficiency of legislation*, which definitely has to be changed and the laws should be harmonised with those of the European countries. Parallel to this, the security and transparency of the *bank and taxation system* should be improved, because the present regulations are not clear and comprehensible even for the local companies, let alone the foreign investors. Another very serious problem at state level that affects all other fields is *bureaucracy and political instability*. The other problems listed by the interviewees (outdated and underdeveloped infrastructure, the deficiencies of education, worrying conditions of the human resources) are practically the same as the problems mentioned in connection with Transcarpathia.

### **2.1.3 Judgement of foreign policy**

While the answers given to the questions concerning the local and national level problems were very similar in many cases on the two sides of the border, the responses given to the question in connection with foreign policy were significantly different. When evaluating the *Hungarian foreign policy*, several complaints were stated by the respondents, especially regarding the most topical issue, the accession to the European Union. According to the respondents' view, Hungarian foreign policy was much more characterised by a *subduing behaviour* than by interest representation, so the Union considered Hungary as an inferior partner. In addition, Hungarian foreign policy and the Hungarian representatives of the Union have a lot to learn about the decision-making mechanisms of Brussels, and the importance of continuous negotiations. Many compared the Hungarian diplomacy to the foreign policy of the neighbouring states, almost always saying that the *Hungarian interest representation is not effective enough*, especially when compared to the Romanian foreign policy that is considered as especially efficient.

As opposed to the Hungarian respondents, almost all the *Romanian* answerers agreed that the *foreign policy* of the country is *one of the most successful sectors*; some said Romania had the most successful foreign policy in the whole of East-Central Europe. One of the biggest virtues of the Romanian foreign policy is that it subordinates all political issues to the priorities defined – the most important of which is the accession to the European Union – and sometimes they can be surprisingly effective and determined in order to reach their goals. The *other key to success that the respondents stated was the unity* that Romania was able to reach – as opposed to Hungary –, in issues of national interest. This unity that the different political parties are able to demonstrate to the world outside helps a lot to achieve

the political objectives, even if the unity is only a seeming one in many cases. Last but not least an ability was emphasised that is considered as a traditional virtue of Romanian foreign policy: the leaders of Romania are able to manoeuvre among the different national interest groups. Although the primary objective of Romania, as we have already mentioned, is the EU accession, they do not neglect the other goals, either, so they can successfully meet the expectations of the United States, the NATO and Russia as well.

The majority of the interviewees divided the *Ukrainian foreign policy* into two parts: the period hallmarked by the name of Leonid Kuchma and the period following the adventurous election victory of Victor Yushenko.

The *former foreign policy* of the Ukraine was characterised by a duality: on the surface it wanted to meet both the right wing and the left wing expectations, tried to appeal to the West (especially when it expected money) but *in reality it was the lengthened arm of Moscow*. The relations to the neighbouring countries were only superficial, at least as regards the national and regional level.

The *new foreign policy* has made a turn since the “Orange revolution”; Yushenko’s new leadership has made definite declarations of *accepting the European norms*. It is too early at this point to evaluate the new foreign policy, but it seems certain that the *Ukraine cannot be isolated from Russia in the future, either*, so the duality probably remains, albeit the western orientation will be much stronger than before.

An opinion was stated that *in the foreign policy of the Ukraine the neighbour states have a special position* between the Western countries and Russia. The policy towards the Central European states, who are especially important for the cross-border relations, can be divided into three parts. The first group contains those countries with whom the *economic and other relations are dynamically developing* (Hungary and Poland are in this group). The Ukraine has not hostile but compared to the previous years definitely *passive* foreign policy towards Slovakia. The economic relations are not developing at a high speed, and the personal and cultural co-operations were practically eliminated by the visa regime. We have to remark, on the other hand, that the Ukraine has introduced visa free entry for the EU member states for the summer of 2005, and this can be extended if the travels of the Ukrainian citizens to Europe are also made easier. This places the relationship to the neighbour states on new grounds. The relationship between the Ukraine and Romania is *very cold*, not even a treaty has been signed by the two states so far, the economic co-operations are very scarce, in fact, some territorial disputes have remained unsettled below the surface.

## 2.2 Cross-border co-operations and regional correlations

### 2.2.1 *The role of the border and the cross-border relations in the everyday lives of the interviewees*

As the interviewees have links to the border coming from their work, it is not surprising that the *border and cross-border co-operations play an important role in the life and work of all respondents*. The leaders at the different tiers of public administration (region, county, district and municipality) have their official and personal relationships to their counterparts, the organisations and local governments on the other side of the border. In Romania and the Ukraine it is especially the municipalities with Hungarian majority that are active in foreign connections, a twin settlement system is working that is reaching beyond the protocol level now (not only local governmental leaders meet and exchange their experiences, like formerly; local entrepreneurs, experts, non-governmental organisations are also contacting each other).

For the actors of the economy, the proximity of the border and the co-operation are already factors basically influencing business opportunities. This is field where the strengthening of the relationship has been going on for years and where the opportunities offered by the border are more and more appreciated. A similarly practical approach to the issue of cross-border relation is used by the non-governmental organisations, several of whom have already established relationships on the other side of the border and are actively trying to utilise the tender possibilities lying in this field.

On the *Hungarian side* of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, especially in Záhony, the town with the biggest border crossing station, many interviewees said that the border had been the most important source for living of the respective settlement for decades, and it still is. Formerly the freight transport crossing the border here, now it is more and more shopping tourism that plays a dominant role in the everyday life of the local population.

For the *Romanian interviewees* too the border and the cross-border relations are organic part of the everyday life, during their work they have regular contacts with the population on the other side of the border. They continuously feel the disadvantages and in some cases also the advantages of this. The border has a huge importance for the population living here, as on the Romanian side they are just a few kilometres away from an EU member state, and this gateway role between the European Union and Romania is an enormous opportunity both in economic, political and social sense. Accordingly, several forms of co-operation have already been established among the representatives of public administration, the economic sector or the non-governmental organisations, although the intensity of the relationships varies across the different sectors.

In addition to the above-mentioned, on the *Ukrainian* side the non-governmental organisations have to be emphasised, some of which (e.g. charity organisations, Hungarian ethnic minority organisations) have very intensive relationships to Hungary, as the majority of them do not expect any resource from the Ukrainian state even if they are responsible for tasks (e.g. orphanages, education) that are state tasks anyway. The cross-border co-operations and resources are especially important for the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College, as the college does not get any state support, despite the fact that they play an outstanding role in the region with their constantly expanding number of graduate trainings and -growing number of students. They can only rely on Hungarian and tender resources, practically, so both in the field of training and supports the college has relationships with several Hungarian higher educations and municipalities (e.g. Hungarian towns renovate or equip rooms in the buildings – of bad conditions – given to the college).

### ***2.2.2 Common tasks, problems that require cross-border co-operation***

In *Hungary* the well functioning cultural relationships that are especially successful at the local level were mentioned by several respondents, as a dominant element in the cross-border relations. These relations were rated as especially important because they play a traditionally significant role in preserving the identity of the Hungarians living on the Romanian and Ukrainian side of the border. As regards *regional development issues*, a co-operation much more effective than today would be welcome by the interviewees, although the conditions for that are still to be created, as there are significant differences between Hungary and the two neighbour states in matters of the administrative system, regional development policy and living standards. Many interviewees said that those living on the Romanian and especially the Ukrainian side of the border have to get to know a few issues of regional development policy in more depth, and if they want to become EU members, they have to apply these regulations in course of time.

The *development of infrastructure* was mentioned in the first place by those living on the Hungarian side of the Ukrainian borders, where even the technical conditions of smooth border crossing are absent. Even the existing border crossing stations are inadequately built out, e.g. at the border crossing station of Beregsurány there are four lanes on each side of the border, but the two sides are connected by one single lane, as nobody bothered to build the other lanes on “no man’s land” – this is a good example for the lack of joint action and adequate communication. The importance of *environmental co-operation* was mentioned both at the Romanian and the Ukrainian border, but it is considered as a very im-

portant objective especially in Romania, after the cyanide poisoning that occurred a few years ago.

On the *Romanian side* of the border, the almost equivocal opinion of the interviewees was that *economic co-operations* should be developed in the first place. The reason for this is that Romania means a huge market, and the opportunities in this field are not utilised yet, on the one hand; on the other, the demand was stated that the Romanian party should learn as much as possible from the Hungarians, as Hungary has much more experiences in this respect. Several people mentioned the results of the Hungarian–Austrian cross-border co-operation, and it seems from the interviews that the respondents think that the transfer of these experiences could be one of the most important achievements of the cross-border relations. The need for *infrastructure developments* is partly connected to the issue of economic development, and the Romanian respondents said the cross-border relations might play a significant role in this. Among the possible joint projects, the acceleration of motorway constructions was mentioned on both sides, the restoration of the railway connections that were eliminated by the Trianon treaty, including the re-opening of the Debrecen–Oradea (Nagyvárad) line. The tender resources can play an important role in the future in increasing the number of border crossing stations, too.

A special field of economic development ideas can be the *development of tourism*, because the Romanian side has excellent endowments, but the capital is missing there in an adequate amount. According to the ideas, the Hungarian side can contribute to the boom of tourism by investments, on the one hand; on the other hand, the natural assets of the two sides can well complement each other, which offers a good opportunity to organise joint programmes. One prerequisite for successful tourism is the preservation of the natural landscape, so the *environmental projects* have a high priority among the plans. Finally, for the realisation of all these objectives it is necessary to *include tender resources from the European Union*, in which cross-border co-operations can play a selected role. The already mentioned, missing information on the tenders and the experiences of project management are things that some of the Romanian interviewees wish to gain from the Hungarian partners.

On the basis of the opinions stated on the *Ukrainian side*, the cross-border relations are in their initial phase and need to be developed in each sector. Nevertheless, similarly to the Romanian interviewees, the respondents mentioned the need to intensively develop the *economic relations* in the first place, as this has the biggest effect on the other sectors. In addition, *training and education* would be very important (transfer of up-to-date curricula, educational tools and methods), but the co-operations in the field of *agriculture* (mainly import of expertise and trainings), *flood prevention and sewage treatment*, and *waste management* should also be made more intensive.

### 2.2.3 *The dominant actors of cross-border relations*

In addition to the potential objectives of cross-border co-operations, the identification of the possible actors was also our research aim. The most important partners are different, according to the *Hungarian respondents*, in the case of the different co-operation forms, e.g. municipal relations are the most active in the field of cultural co-operations, but the activity has considerably increased in the Hungarian–Romanian relation in infrastructure investments, too. Besides these, in Phare CBC the universities and higher education, municipal governments, and the institutions dealing with EU resources play a dominant role. What is really missing is the establishment of social relations; social embeddedness is extremely weak on both sides of the border, the participation of NGOs in decision-making or even the mere expression of their opinion is very casual.

During the interviews, in *Romania* each respondent defined the different levels of public administration as the presently most active levels of co-operation. Within this, the cross-border relations of the local and county self-governments deserve a special attention, because in most respondents' views they can create the frameworks for the economic and non-governmental organisations, and a part of the necessary financial resources is also expected from the local governments by the interviewees. The national level was only mentioned in a few cases, as the national politics is responsible for the legal regulation and sets the budgetary frameworks for cross-border co-operations.

Although the respondents said that in cross-border co-operations it is still politics that has the dominant role, the relations of the economic actors are continuously strengthening. Today the co-operation among the different chambers can be a starting point. We cannot forget, however, that in the everyday life it is the personal relations that make the biggest share of the cross-border relations. The role of shopping tourism has not decreased in the recent years, but its direction has turned round: a few years ago mostly the Romanian citizens crossed the border with shopping intentions, now it is usually the Hungarians who travel to Romania with the same purposes.

In accordance with the responses we got in *Transcarpathia*, in the cross-border relations of the region *it is still personal relations that prevail* (in addition to keeping in touch with relatives and friends, making a living is dominant here, as they said, they “live from the border”). The most typical activity and source of income is *fuel tourism* (not only for own consumption but also for sale in Hungary), *shopping* (the direction of which turned round after 2000, now the Hungarian citizens cross the border with shopping purposes more often, to buy cheap and recently good quality Ukrainian goods) and different *illegal activities* (smuggling of tobacco, spirits and humans, illegal employment). A positive change of the last few years is that economic actors and joint ventures play a more and more important



role in cross-border relations, together with the increasing activity of municipal governments and non-governmental organisations.

#### ***2.2.4 The motivations of the relations***

Finally we tried to discover what motivates the actors of the co-operations, what are the driving forces in the establishment and development of the relationships. We can see that the motivations depend on the activity of the actors of the co-operations, but the motivations also vary across the different countries. Least dependant on the border and the place of residence of the individuals are the motivations of the cross-border co-operation of citizens. The interviewees reinforced that the most active level of the relations was the personal level. In this case, in addition to maintaining relatives relations and friendships, the already mentioned factors (fuel tourism, shopping, different illegal activities) are the main driving forces. As regards the economic actors, it is relationship building and of course the profit that can be realised that are on the top of the list of motivations.

The researches of the cross-border relations had already demonstrated before that the traditionally most common and still most functioning types of contacts are the different cultural co-operations. This kind of co-operation is especially alive where a population very keen on their traditions live on both sides of the border. The Hungarian ethnic respondents in Romania and the Ukraine, and the respondents in Hungary very often mentioned the common historical past, the common historical roots, as in many cases relatives live on the two sides of the border and the need to keep in touch is natural.

The respondents on the *Hungarian side* of the border often said that money, the acquisition of supports is often dominant in cross-border relations, but this is not necessarily negative, as money is an indispensable element for these programmes. If no EU or national resource is available, usually there is no co-operation, either. The main objective of the cross-border co-operations should be job creation, given the rapidly worsening conditions after the systemic change, and the prevention of outmigration, in close relation with job creation. An important benefit of the establishment of the relations could be the creation of regional cohesion. As regards developments, the restoration of the formerly disintegrated settlement development correlations and regional hinterlands should be achieved – thinking in a way as if the border were not even there. The interviews often mentioned the Hungarian to Hungarian relationship as a motivation of the co-operations, which is very important for co-operations especially for the Hungarians living on the Romanian and Ukrainian side of the border.

In *Romania* and *Transcarpathia*, the acquisition of the resources of the European Union is not among the main motivations yet, but its importance is definitely

increasing. The interviewees in Romania and Transcarpathia are aware of the fact that significant amounts of money will be available for such purposes in the future and several respondents also said they would happily use for the acquisition and effective use of these resources the help of the Hungarian partners who have some experiences in this respect.

## 2.3 Perceptions

### 2.3.1 Associations relating to the border and the border region

When making the interviews we tried to find out what image the respondents had of the border and those who live on the other side. The *Hungarian* responses revealed that everybody knows: theoretically the border does not separate but connects, but we cannot forget the fact that it is a Schengen border, a border that definitely separates now. *This is not a serious obstacle of personal relations any more*; there is a network of personal contacts that is a good framework of the relations. On the other hand, *in cross-border relations, in regional development and spatial planning the separating functions are still much stronger*, but this is due not so much to the border itself, rather to the completely different administration systems, the altering administrative practices on the two sides of the border. The synchronisation of these is a significant task; today it is often difficult to find cooperating partners and get the necessary licences.

In *Romania*, the responses were divided, the interviews stated *three very much different opinions*. For the first group, the border is still an obstacle in the first place. The customs control, the concomitant bureaucracy and the humiliating behaviour of the customs officers and frontier guards to the passengers is a kind of “historical heritage”, a remnant mostly from the Ceausescu era that unfortunately still lives on. On the other hand, the border is a possibility for the economic actors questioned, a possibility for trade, although it is still an obstacle for them too, because of the occasionally several hours of waiting in freight traffic. Finally there were respondents who said the Hungarian–Romanian border had always been a bridge and the situation had improved a lot since 1989, today the presence of the border is not a serious obstacle.

In *Transcarpathia* the associations relating the border are definitely negative, the border reminds everyone of being kept waiting, corruption and humiliation in the first place. Many respondents said that people are treated in a rude and humiliating way at the border, and the sad thing is that the Hungarian side had taken over this style; in the early 1990s the Hungarian side was typically polite. It was also mentioned that it is not the physical permeability of the border crossing stations that causes a problem; it is much more the attitude (bad work ethics and corrup-

tion). In many people the border evoked a thought of lagging behind, they are especially afraid of the Schengen “wall” that separates them from the more advanced world, from which Transcarpathia is pushed farther again. Others see an opportunity in the border, due to the Hungarian EU membership and the available resources in accordance with this.

### **2.3.2 *The border region as a separate region?***

Another important element of the cross-border relations can be how much the citizens can identify themselves with the idea of a region reaching beyond the national boundaries and whether there is such a regional identity in the people – or if such an identity can be born in the future. The equivocal opinion of the respondents in Hungary, Romania and Transcarpathia was that the *border region can already definitely be seen as a separate region*; some elements of the common identity can be seen, mostly due to the common historical past, but also because of the common problems – and now because of the intensity of the cross-border co-operations. From the economic perspective, however, the relationships should be strengthened, so that this territory can be treated as a really single region. A sort of common identity of the people living here can be created by the formerly mentioned peripheral situation, as the difficulties are the same, as are the attempts for the solution of these problems. Outside the border region it is difficult to imagine anywhere else shopping tourism and fuel smuggling as a source of living for many. This also strengthens the birth of a common mentality, world view on the two sides of the border, even if the roles occasionally change: formerly those living on the Romanian and Ukrainian side of the border came to Hungary for shopping; now the direction of shopping tourism is just the opposite.

The issue of the identity of the inhabitants with their region, regional identity was more difficult to measure, as there is no sense of identity whatsoever with the development regions created in Hungary so far. On both sides of the Hungarian–Romanian border, it is much more the spatial units of the historical past, i.e. with the counties that people identify themselves with (e.g. there is a Szatmár identity, and even more so a Bihar identity), as are the respective settlements. At the same time, the people are much more capable of the reception and creation of such an identity in issues related to their everyday lives and problems: the people living here are mostly interested in whether they can cross the border to visit their relatives and friends or to do some shopping; if these relationships are established, the people can identify themselves with the notion of a cross-border region. Such a region would resemble in many respects initiatives started in Hungary where some especially important tourism areas are identified as separate regions, such as the Lake Balaton and the Tisza Lake region. People usually know the physical bounda-

ries of such regions, this is by and large the area where their personal relationships are, let them be family or friendly relationships or even economic co-operations.

Because of the several hundred years of common history and Hungarian public administration, in Transcarpathia too there is a kind of regional (Bereg or Ung) identity connected to some historical counties, but the *border that has been there for 85 years now also created a special “us” identity*, which was further strengthened by politics (e.g. the recent referendum on the Hungarian citizenship of the Hungarians living in the neighbour countries), separating the formerly single sense of identity of the Hungarian ethnic group. This statement, however, is not only valid for the Hungarians but also for the other nations living in Transcarpathia, from the Rusins registered as Ukrainians to the Slovaks (e.g. many people in Transcarpathia set their clocks according to the Central European time that they call local time – “our time” –, although the official time is the Kiev time zone, one hour ahead).

### ***2.3.3 “Us” and “others” – similarities and differences between those on the two sides of the border***

In Hungary most interviewees emphasised that the *people on the other side of the border are “just like us”*. A basic factor from this aspect is the fact that both sides of the border are peripheries, which bears a socio-economic backwardness; in addition, the mentality of the people, their responses to the challenges of the world are similar, so we cannot really differentiate between the two sides. Of course, when asking opinions about the economic situation, in connection with the Ukrainian side everybody said that the huge poverty was the biggest difference, whereas this was less typical in connection with Romania. Cultural differences were only mentioned in a few interviews, especially because the people on the other sides usually meant the Hungarians living in the neighbour countries for most answerers. As regards the Ukraine, the major part of the answerers emphasised the political differences, too.

According to the findings of the survey, the image of the people on the side of the border is not single in the Romanian respondents. *The majority said that the people on the Hungarian side of the border were just like them*. They (and not only the Hungarians) usually referred to the formerly mentioned common historical roots, the difference, according to the respondents, is more among the individual people, whichever country they live in. A smaller part of the interviewees said that there were *tangible differences between the inhabitants of the two countries*. They too admitted that there were many similarities, but they saw differences in a few aspects. It was usually the better financial situation of those living on the Hungarian side of the border that was mentioned, but some respondent considered the

Hungarians more disciplined, more open, referring in the first place to the differences between the two socialist systems before 1989.

Given the fact that the regions had been deeply integrated for centuries, the majority of the respondents in *Transcarpathia* thought that *from cultural and mental aspect there was no real difference between the people on the two sides of the border*, they live from each other and they depend on each other. Nevertheless it was stated that the Transcarpathian people are more hospitable and less material than those living in Hungary. The rejection of the issue raised at the referendum of 5 December 2000 (whether the Hungarians living outside the borders should be given a Hungarian citizenship) – especially by the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg inhabitants, many of whom “live from Transcarpathia” – was a great shock for the Transcarpathians, they feel now that they are not welcome on the other side, consequently the *judgement of the Hungarians of the mother country worsened*.

#### **2.3.4 Assessment of the economic situation on the other side of the border**

An important element of the image of the other nation is how the economic situation of the neighbouring country is seen. As we have already seen, this affects cross-border relations as well; the price level in the neighbour country influences the personal relation in the first place, and shopping tourism. The *Hungarian* respondents, not surprisingly, *consider the economic situation on the other side of the border much worse than in their own country*. As regards the Ukraine, many respondents not only saw the present situation depressing but could not be optimistic about the future prospects, either. The reasons for the bad economic situation, as most respondents said, were the deteriorated infrastructure and the inadequate production structure. As regards Romania, the interviewees were much less pessimistic. Although they did not consider the present situation in Romania as comparable with the circumstances in Hungary, either, many said that the catching up period had already started by which Romania could go through a spectacular development in the middle or even the short run. The assessment of the situation is not the same, however, along the whole border section. On the southern part of the border section, in the Romanian West region a much more striking development was emphasised, palpable in Hungary as well – in harmony with the responses we got in Hungary –, while in the northern part of the border region the Romanian respondents thought that the changes were much slower and the amount of capital invested much more modest.

The major part of the *Romanian interviewees definitely considered Hungary and the Hungarian side more developed*, although the development differences are not the same in each area. The responses in the Northwest region revealed that the differences are seen much bigger here than in the West region. In the latter, over the

last few years a significant amount of foreign direct investment has been realised, the spectacular results of which made the respondents see the differences in the development level much smaller. Among the reasons for the differences, in the first place the better economic management and policy was mentioned, but the Romanian economy was really set back by the Ceausescu regime, as the shift to the market economy started in Romania with a significant delay.

The assessment of the mode developed side of the border is varied in *Transcarpathia*, it cannot always be clearly seen where people have a better living. We can say that *in matters of infrastructure the Hungarian side is in a much better position* than Transcarpathia, but if we look at the pace of the development of the economy right next to the border, the situation is different. Usually people live better on the Hungarian side, but not everywhere: while Nyíregyháza definitely offers better possibilities for its area, the small Hungarian villages in the direct vicinity of the border struggle with a host of problems. As the historical centres were in Transcarpathia, the living standards are higher in the villages in their neighbourhood than in the small villages of their hinterlands now in Hungary (although the Soviet Union deteriorated to a large extent the conditions of living, some people in Transcarpathia nevertheless have the notion in their minds that their settlements used to be richer).

### ***2.3.5 Visa-free border traffic and open borders***

One possible effect of the open borders, in the view of the *Hungarian* respondents, can be of migration character, the immigration to the otherwise gradually depopulating villages from the other side of the border is already frequent. The open borders have an effect on the labour market in the first place; when employing people from the other side of the border, the employers can always calculate lower wage costs. This potential source of danger was raised in a few interviews, but the majority of the respondents said it would not be a real danger in the foreseeable future.

Apart from this, practically no interviewee had bad feelings about the more open borders. If they had some reservations, this was usually the consequence of the fact that they did not consider the guarding of the border adequate even in the present regulation. Most respondents mentioned the potential growth of crime in connection with the Ukraine, but the general opinion was that anybody wishing to enter Hungary can do so now, despite the visa regime, so the visa-free border traffic would not worsen the situation. In some cases the opinion was stressed – also in connection of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border section in the first place – that Hungary has the obligation to assist the Hungarians on the other side of the border. A Hungarian passport or other possibilities could help them cross the border more easily, work abroad and keep their family this way.

As regards the more open borders and visa-free border crossing, the *Romanian* and the *Ukrainian* respondents had no bad feelings, either. This is due on the one hand to the fact that the visa regime is not valid for the Romanian citizens travelling to Hungary; on the other hand, the majority of the interviewees favoured visa-free travel on theoretical grounds too, they said the visa-free travel would be very important at other borders too, being the basis of the deepening of cross-border co-operations, but also leading to the acceptance of the regions along the border. There are no fears in connection with the more open borders, this would cause some difficulties (e.g. stronger competition in the field of the economy and services), but on the whole it is good for the market, the positive effects will dominate. In some cases we found that the respondent usually thought this way about the western borders (of Romania and the Ukraine), they do not welcome the opening of their eastern borders; in fact, they would like to strengthen their protection, afraid of the emigrants from there. In Transcarpathia it was said that the small-scale cross-border traffic should be re-introduced, because in addition to visa exemption, it would provide much cheaper travel possibilities to Hungary, because international passport is very expensive in the Ukraine (more than a monthly wage for many people) and its preparation is very bureaucratic.

## **2.4 Cross-border co-operations in practice**

### ***2.4.1 Ongoing and finished projects, the financial grounds of co-operations***

During the interviews made in *Hungary*, the respondents mentioned *many projects*. When classifying these, we find that the programmes with concrete economic objectives are very few. On the other hand, there are a significant number of *further trainings* and *workshops* organised for the partners on the other side, including trainings of tendering skills for the preparation of the EU accession. There are also a large number of *environmental projects*, mostly with support from the Union, and cultural programmes. The planned projects are of similar character to the ones already implemented. In the future plans the INTERREG programmes have a more significant role than before, the larger-scale plans include infrastructure investments and projects simplifying border crossing and improving traffic conditions.

In *Romania* each respondent had information on some PHARE CBC project; the majority even had personal experiences about such co-operations. Most frequently mentioned were the *environmental and river regulation developments* and *cultural co-operations* (especially in the Hungarian to Hungarian relation: Day of Hungarian Culture, Day of Hungarian Science), the ones considered as most important were the opening of *new road border crossing stations*. As regards the

economy, the training of small and medium sized enterprises and the preparation of tourism manuals were mentioned. Among the planned projects, tourism and environmental protection were the main fields of co-operation. It was mentioned several times that a strategic co-operation had been established between Debrecen and Oradea (e.g. among the development priorities of Oradea, the investments in connection with the potential award of the title “European Capital of Culture” to Debrecen for the year 2010 have an outstanding significance).

The majority of the interviewees in *Transcarpathia* have no information about major county level projects; if the newspapers mention some successful applications, there is no information on the implementation of the projects. Some say that the county level projects are only operational on the paper; they have no practical use, apart from the mutual visits. Most people mentioned the project aiming at the establishment and operation of a *flood and water quality monitoring network* on the Tisza River and its tributaries. In addition, the *building out of a network of village managers* in Transcarpathia is underway, with the assistance of the agriculture department of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county government; also, in the co-operation of the two counties trainings are organised and implemented for local governments and non-governmental organisations (the latter is part of the TACIS).

The organisations interviewed were able to mention several projects, but these rarely involved EU resources, because they (TACIS) only support the democratic transition in the region for the time being and there are few fields where they can be applied. Today it is usually the Hungarian resources that can be applied (Apáczai and Illyés Foundation, ministerial resources), the Ukrainian resources are rather few, and there is no information for their acquisition, the tender system is not open enough. Such a project is the maintenance of the Hungarian college in Beregovo (Beregszász) that does not receive Ukrainian support at all; its operation is almost exclusively financed from Hungarian resources. In addition, e.g. the Dorcas Transcarpathia support organisation operates significant, self-financed programmes (e.g. orphanages, the renovation and support of medical surgeries, training of computer skills, leper mission, drinking water programme with the inclusion of Hungarian resources), which can also be seen as cross-border programmes, as the majority of the money is collected by the organisation in Hungary and Western Europe.

#### ***2.4.2 Partnership, conflicts, and communication strategies***

It is of basic importance for the efficiency of cross-border relations what partners the respective organisation or institution has relationships with and how they communicate to each other. The *Hungarian* interviewees naturally have contacts with similar organisations on the other side, so the partners of local governments are



usually local governments, whereas the chambers establish contacts with the chambers, and the non-governmental organisations also make contacts with their counterparts on the other side of the border. Along the Hungarian–Romanian border, each respondent had a positive opinion about their own partners, but it is a factor supporting understanding that a significant part of the partners abroad are Hungarians living in Romania, which alleviates keeping in touch – among other things from the language aspect. The situation is slightly different along the Hungarian–Ukrainian border, but the complaints here about the lack of co-operation willingness did not concern the partners outside Hungary, much more the official organs that often blocked co-operations.

Most of the concerned *Romanian* and *Ukrainian* organisations have their counterparts on the Hungarian side of the border – county governments, local governments of town with county rank, universities, research institutes, non-governmental organisations, economic organisations, professional organisations and institutions. The technical conditions of communication are usually given (e-mail, telephone, fax) and utilised (maybe Transcarpathia is an exception where the use of internet and e-mail is not so widespread yet). During personal talks, the language used in communication is usually Hungarian, as the majority of the negotiating partners speak Hungarian, otherwise English is also frequently used (in Transcarpathia occasionally Russian too). Romanian and Ukrainian language is less typical, because very few speak these languages on the Hungarian side. At meetings at higher level, hiring translators is no problem, either. Conflicts of interest, as we have seen, can appear only among the economic actors (competition), who try to handle their conflicting interests in different ways, using their personal relations (but they were reluctant to talk about exactly how). Some neighbouring towns are also competitors for each other (e.g. Záhony and Csap compete with each other for railway reloads and freight traffic). They try to hide the conflicts of interests (at least on the surface); they strive for co-operation and consensus rather than open confrontation.

#### ***2.4.3 Efficiency or opportunities missed?***

In Hungary relatively few interviewees wanted to evaluate the efficiency of the financing possibilities, as the major part of the programmes only aim at supporting the establishment of relations among the institutions on the two sides and the definition of common development ideas. The economic effect of these programmes cannot be felt directly, so their efficiency cannot be measured from this aspect, either. The effects are much more tangible in social relations and in the connections among the institutions, the efficiency of which was considered good by the majority of respondents, remarking of course that the efficiency could be further increased.

In *Romania* the opinions were much more determined, *not one interviewee considered the use of the resources as satisfactory*. In their opinion, only a fragment of the available resources has been used, the reasons for which in their opinion are strong centralisation, and the lack of money and information at local level. The efficiency is not good enough in an international comparison, although significant improvements have been made over the last two years in this respect. In a comparison with other regions in Romania, on the other hand, the Hungarian–Romanian border region has a good position. The practice is insufficient yet, there are too few competent applicants (who, on the other hand, have good results) and in the tenders the objectives set are not always realised. There was a case when the money was used for private purposes. Some groups considered the number of protocol events too high and the tangible results too weak. It is frequent that the cooperating parties look for partners not in the border region but in a farther, Western European country, although they have more interests in common with those living on the other side of the border.

According to what the majority of the interviewees said, in *Transcarpathia* we cannot talk about an efficient use of resources in practically any sector. One important obstacle of the efficient use of the resources in the region is the *lack of information*; the calls for tenders do not reach wide layers of potential users. The EU resources do not play a dominant role in the region yet, but their larger scale use in the future is blocked by the *lack of experts* necessary for the preparation of the tenders and then the management of the projects. Some of the financial resources provided by the Hungarian state gets where it should and is used efficiently (e.g. education in Hungarian language, non-governmental minority organisations, newspapers etc.), but another part simply disappears, as it is practically *impossible to control in Transcarpathia the distribution and use of the resources now*, the money is often embezzled. Organisations not interested in “stealing” the money should be involved in the distribution; these amounts are not so big that they are significant for a larger company, for example. Many respondents stated that the use of resources should take place with assistance from Hungary, in the form of information and expertise transfer, preferably in trainings organised in Transcarpathia.

#### 2.4.4 Relations that can be expanded, actors who can be involved

The interviewees agreed that the range of the actors of cross-border co-operations should be expanded in the future, which could promote the intensification of the relations. The *more intensive co-operation of the economic actors* was raised by almost all respondents in Hungary, they see a big opportunity especially in the strengthening of the relations of small and medium size enterprises. It was often mentioned that the Hungarian investors should use the new opportunities that emerged on the other side of the border, and they should participate in the privati-

sation in Romania. The interviewees said that the Hungarian investors might even be late now in Romania, but in the case of the Ukraine, the investments in the businesses there, that are in a shortage of capital, may offer a high profit. In addition to the economic actors, the *non-governmental organisations should be more intensively involved* in co-operations, as the civil relations are in their infancy now, but they can provide the mainstream of the co-operations in the future.

The respondents in *Romania* thought that the number of participants in cross-border co-operations should be increased in all social groups, although there are groups, such as the aged people, where major results are rather unlikely to achieve. The majority thought that the *inclusion of the younger generations* is very important, as it can establish the more intensive relations of the future. In addition, the youth are the group that seems to be most receptive – in addition to the non-governmental organisations – to such co-operations. Also, *non-Hungarian speaking Romanian partners should be involved in larger numbers*, as the majority of the relations are Hungarian to Hungarian co-operations now.

The majority of the interviewees in *Transcarpathia* agreed that the *economic relations should be strengthened* in the region *in the first place*, as it would have effects radiating to other sectors, as well. Besides the economic actors, the inclusion of *young intellectuals* is of special importance, as they are the ones that can be relied on in the future (e.g. at the use of EU resources). In addition, the role of *cultural relations* is very important, because Hungarians live on both sides of the border. *Education, twin settlement co-operations in the broader sense* (not only local governments but also NGOs, economic and educational actors etc.) need further development too. In order to achieve all these, it would be very important in *Transcarpathia* to strengthen the trust among the ethnic minorities living here, as they too can profit from the Hungarian to Hungarian relations.

#### **2.4.5 Initiators and beneficiaries**

The *Hungarian interviewees* made marked difference between Romania and the Ukraine when we asked which party was more initiative in the co-operation projects. In the Romanian-Hungarian relations, the majority said that the *Hungarian party was more active initiating* projects, although the situation is rapidly changing in the recent years, and *the other party is showing an increasing activity*. Nevertheless today it is more typical that the initiative comes from Hungary and the other half would only like to see the document ready for signing in many cases, leaving the preparation to the Hungarian side.

In the Ukrainian-Hungarian relations the situation is even clearer, the *Hungarian side is more initiative*, especially because the Ukraine followed a policy of isolation and was not active in practically any field. Those questioned at a latter stage

of the survey, the ones who already knew the events going on in the Ukraine in late 2004, were more optimistic, although only the possibility was born for more active participation in cross-border co-operations, it is questionable to what extent this opportunity will be used.

According to most of the *Romanian respondents*, the two parties showed by and large the same activity in initiatives. Several interviewees mentioned that formerly the Romanian side had been more active, while the Hungarians are more active now, after the appearance of EU resources, and they seek partners much more consciously. The fact that the Hungarian partners have access to much more financial resources and have more experience in participating in competitions makes the position of the Hungarian side better. That is why in many cases Romanian participants can only assist their Hungarian partners in the achievement of the goals which were determined in Hungary. On the other hand many interviewees said that the poorer partner – in this case Romania – would necessarily profit more. Presently the co-operation is promoted by the fact that the relations are created mainly among the Hungarian communities on the two sides of the border, but this can be an obstacle in the future, so the initiatives should be gradually taken over by the Romanian actors. In the field of economic co-operations, it is the Hungarian party that is more initiative, the reason for this, according to the interviewees, is that the entrepreneurs bring their products from a more saturated market, hoping for better sales prospects in Romania.

The *opinions* stated in *Transcarpathia* were that the *Hungarian party* initiates cross-border projects *more often*, having access to resources available for this purpose in larger amounts. The key of the process is that partners have to be found on the other side, as the resources are only available in this case. Due to the rather limited financial means, it is not typical of the Ukrainian party to initiate projects.

In the view of the majority of the interviewees, the beneficiaries of the project-based cross-border co-operations it is definitely the EU member, i.e. in this case the *Hungarian side* that *profits more*, having access to much larger resources, allowing good investments and the acquisition of markets. The example to be followed can be that of Burgenland and West Hungary – although everybody agrees that is only a theoretical possibility along the eastern borders of Hungary, as this border region is peripheral itself and has limited chances to utilise the opportunities. In course of time, as the Romanian and Ukrainian side can become more and more active in initiating projects, an increasing share of the results will be realised in Romania and the Ukraine. Presently the Romanian and Ukrainian partners only assist the projects generated in Hungary many times, often they are only needed so that the Hungarian party should be eligible for support, the Romanian and Ukrainian partners cannot directly profit much from the relations. The transfer of skills, however, can be of help to the Romanian and Ukrainian partners as well, but the direct financial benefit is not tangible yet. In the case of *Transcarpathia* the situation is “wors-

ened” by the fact that the presently available EU resources do not support investments directly, only assist the democratic transition process.

#### **2.4.6 The limits to co-operation**

Among the main obstacles to cross-border relations, in *Hungary* the interviewees mentioned very frequently the *differences of the institutional systems*. The Hungarian respondents consider the Hungarian institutions more flexible than their Romanian counterparts, in Romania it sometimes happens that the deadline of the tender expires by the time all the necessary permissions are given by the authorities at different levels. It also happens on the other side of the border that the authorities deny to give the permission to start a project; it never happens in Hungary.

The Hungarian respondents also attributed an important role in the slow development of the relations to the *special feature of the Romanian self-governance system*. Actually this and not the evident poverty is the main reason; this was a statement often repeated in the interviews. The essence of the problem is that in Romania the local governments have very limited authorities, in all important issues decisions are made at the central government level. This is not necessarily good for cross-border co-operations. Even if there are such initiatives, they usually do not have the chance to get to the Hungarian party, the higher levels of politics and public administration usually prevent this. The signing of the founding document of the Bihar–Bihor Euroregion is a good example for the conditions in Romania. The signing of the document was blocked by the leaders of the municipalities on the Romanian side of the border for a long time; but this is not the main point of this issue. It is much more typical that when Biharkeresztes asked the Hungarian government for help in order to accelerate the process, the Hungarian government did not turn to the Romanian local governments concerned but to the central government of Romania. With the help of the Bucharest politicians it was possible to finally settle this absolutely local issue.

The Hungarian interviewees did not always find the co-operation willingness of the Transcarpathian partners strong enough, either; *on the Ukrainian side the administrative system and the mentality are serious barriers*. According to the Hungarian partners, the co-operation would be assisted to a large extent by the establishment of the system of micro-regions in Romania and the Ukraine, and by the creation of the development agencies, as in many cases there is nobody to initiate projects. This basically determines the possibility to launch joint projects: according to the respondents, if there is no bottom-up initiative, it is difficult to start projects. In addition, on the Ukrainian side the *infrastructure possibilities of border crossing are absent*, the businesses cannot stand waiting for several hours. The elimination of the small-scale border traffic is the consequence of the acquisition of

the Union regulations, which in many places worsened the possibilities of the local population to keep in touch with the other side. Also, there are other, seemingly unimportant measures that prevent the deepening of the relations, as the interviewees said. (E.g. the Hungarian government, parallel to the EU accession, terminated the possibility for entrepreneurs, and those having important positions in the border region – including mayors or academics – to cross the border without queuing up. This possibility was eliminated referring to the fact that it could lead to corruption. The situation now is that practically everybody has to bribe the border guards on both sides of the border.)

Among the factors holding back the co-operations, the special social and economic situation of the border region was often mentioned, as was the *lack of government measures aiming at the alleviation of the problems*. The interviewees felt that the Hungarian government did not pay enough attention to the problems of the eastern part of the country, the people living here feel they are still “stepchildren” of the country. The Hungarian respondents often complained about the not thoroughly worked out and with the other side *not well enough reconciled development concepts*. An example mentioned was that on both sides of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border a huge truck terminal was built, the building of which was promoted by the respective governments, but nobody uses them today, as the Hungarian customs authority decided that the trucks still have to queue up at the border.

Although not typical, there are still fears on the other side of the border, as the interviewees said, especially in Romania, that Hungary wants to regain its former territories now outside the border. This leads to the lack of trust, blocking the cross-border co-operation.

In *Romania*, in addition to the already mentioned many problems, the respondent emphasised *bureaucracy* and *excessive centralisation* again as factors that have already made the launch of joint projects difficult many times. All respondents agreed that the administrative mechanisms have a very slow reaction time, and often its expertise is below the level it should be. The situation of public administration is further worsened by the fact that the Romanian legal regulations do not favour cross-border co-operation. The regulation differs from that typical in the European Union in many respects, and needs serious transformation, which seems to be more and more probably as the EU accession of Romania approaches. Similarly to the previous answers, many mentioned here too the centralisation of the Romanian public administration, remarking that the EU accession might bring a change in this respect too.

In addition to the deficiencies of the administrative system, the participants of the co-operations mentioned the *displeasing features of the Romanian politics*. Many said that the mentality of the Romanian politicians is unsuitable for an effective co-operation in European projects with people from the other side of the border. Also, a well-established and long term strategy is missing that could make the

basis of any co-operation agreement in economic development or the field of infrastructure investments. In this relation many respondents mentioned the responsibility of the professional organisations, which have not been able to take over the working methods usual in the Union, they work slowly and not efficiently enough and thus they do not help the establishment of relations.

In the *Ukraine*, among the major obstacles of cross-border relations, the *difficulties of crossing the border* were mentioned in the first place. This involves the low permeability of the border crossing stations, the visa regime against the EU and Hungary, the customs system, and not last the depressing work ethics typical at the border crossing stations. Another serious obstacle to co-operations is the *omnipresent corruption*. A further problem is the *not efficient and excessively bureaucratic Ukrainian economic management system* (taxation system, banking services, legal regulations, other fiscal tools blocking the flow of capital). A bottleneck concerning regional development is the fact that the Ukrainian public administration is slow and bureaucratic; it is anything but EU conform.

It is not surprising then that all respondents agreed that the *economic relations in the region in question cannot be considered satisfactory* and they can never be; there will always be room for development. The separating role of the border is still a problem, as are excessive bureaucracy, corruption and the lack of central support. The political decisions should have opened the way for the economy, and not economy should have played a pioneer role. Presently there is still a transition process going on, nevertheless the Hungarian investors have achieved significant results for to their economic power both on the Romanian and the Ukrainian side. There are very few really large-scale investments. It means that are still enormous reserves in economic relations, only a small share of the opportunities have been used so far.

## **2.5 Cross-border co-operation strategies, guidelines**

### ***2.5.1 Bottom-up building or central influence, or which level is more active?***

There was a consensus of the respondents in the three countries in our survey that the most effectively operating level of the relations is the local level. In most cases these are daily relations, especially where technical obstacles (especially the lack of a nearby border crossing station) do not prevent them. The most spectacular part of the co-operations is connected to this level; the cultural and sports events of the settlements in the vicinity of the border can be mentioned in this place. The respondents often mentioned the municipal associations in the border region that have been successful in the last few years and make one of the most important pil-

lars of cross-border relations now. Many respondents mentioned that the local level is the most interested in the promotion of co-operation, the motivation is the strongest here, as everybody would like to build and develop their own settlement in the first place. Also, several advantages are provided by the physical proximity, either in matters of social or economic problems. Finally, the possibilities are biggest at this level, relationships are the best here, and the existence of personal contacts is an important asset. In the most recent times, in cross-border co-operations not only local governments but also inhabitants, the economic and non-governmental organisations have played an initiating role.

In addition to the local level, the respondents mentioned the county level; in their opinion this is the level of co-operation where a regular personal touch can still be kept. In addition, the traditions of the co-operations have the longest history at this level, some counties kept in touch with their counterparts already in the decades before the systemic change, even if these relations did not go beyond the formal, protocol level. Several counties are trying to build on these existing foundations, in many cases successfully. The interviewees also agreed that the state level has been the least active in this respect so far (especially in Transcarpathia many respondents criticised the Hungarian economic policy for not concentrating on the Ukraine seriously enough, as opposed to Slovakia e.g.).

### ***2.5.2 The organisational background of co-operations – Euroregions and their partners***

Most respondents had already heard about the Euroregions working in their territory, but they usually could not inform us about much personal experience. In many cases we heard that the territory these organisations involved was too large, both in the geographical and the professional sense. They are considered as political organisations, operating in territories too large to be integrated. Also, they involve territories that have nothing in common with the other side, which makes practical co-operation impossible. Many respondents accepted that the Euroregions can be useful for political purposes, they can contribute to the strengthening of trust, but no concrete achievement is expected of them.

The majority of the respondents in *Romania* could not inform us about any continuously existing organisation, despite the fact that there are two large Euroregional organisations along the western part of the country, the Carpathians Euroregion and the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion. These are two organisations that the interviewees almost never mentioned; when they did, they usually emphasised their excessive size, the dominance of the formal elements and the low level of social embeddedness. In addition to those directly involved in the work of the Euroregions, it was only the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion to which



some Romanian respondents attributed a positive role; the assessment of the Carpathians Euroregion was even more negative. Also rarely were mentioned the smaller- scale, county level co-operation organisations, such as the Hajdú-Bihar-Bihar Euroregion or the Bihar-Bihar Euroregion, but the evaluation of these was much better. Many respondents were optimistic about the future of the county level co-operations; on the basis of the experiences of the recent past they thought it might be a breakout possibility to stimulate the presently not enough effective cross-border co-operations.

In *Transcarpathia* the majority of the interviewees had already heard about the Carpathians Euroregion, in fact, some had even applied to the Carpathians Foundation operating in its territory. Nevertheless, similarly to the Hungarian and Romanian respondents, they too thought that this organisation was too large to be effective; in the future, smaller organisations will become more important. In addition to the Euroregion, several organisations were mentioned that are active in developing cross-border relations: e.g. the Transcarpathian Business Development Centre, The Four Borders Entrepreneurs Association (in Beregovo), the Upper Tisza Business Club, and the Transcarpathian Hungarian Farmers Association. Furthermore, the non-governmental organisations with the mission to promote the development of cross-border relations are just being established, and they wish to have access to EU resources.

The interviews revealed that in all three countries it was the larger-scale organisations, i.e. the Euroregions operating at higher administrative levels where the use of the previous experiences and models was possible, but the interviewees do not attribute great significance even in this case to the following of the patterns. In their opinion it was much more important to have sound local background knowledge, the better information on the special local needs at county level or maybe micro-regional level co-operations. As regards the models taken over, in *Transcarpathia* only those who were directly involved in the Carpathians Euroregion had information. They said that at the creation of the Carpathians Euroregion, Western European patterns had been followed, but many respondents knew it was not a real cross-border initiative; the establishment of the Carpathians Euroregion and the joining of some members were decided by central political will. At local level co-operations the role of the Western models was considered even less important, these co-operations had almost exclusively been built on own initiatives and own experiences, both in Hungary, and in Romania and the Ukraine. It is typical, on the other hand, that in Romania many respondent raised Western European patterns when we asked where these models could be imported from. The experiences of Hungary (e.g. the utilisation of the Hungarian–Austrian cross-border co-operation) were only mentioned by the interviewees of Hungarian nationality.

### ***2.5.3 Local resources, or external assistance?***

Despite the deficiencies described above, the *Hungarian respondents usually have a positive view of the attitude of the Hungarian and the European authorities*. They said that according to their experiences their request were usually positively accepted, if they turned to these authorities with well established requests and recommendations. A successful lobbying activity is nevertheless inevitable, but not everybody is capable of this; usually the lower the administrative level, the less opportunities they have for lobbying. In their view especially the EU level could assist much more efficiently the establishment of cross-border relations, but they are far from the everyday practice, so they have a “hunger” for information on the programmes financed by them and place a great emphasis on feedbacks in each case.

In *Romania* the representatives of organisations that do not operate from central state budget had a rather *pessimistic opinion about the assistance they got from the central level*, some said that the Bucharest government definitely held back information or was only willing to assist them in return for little “services”. The local level is much more supportive, although the level of this support is far from the desirable, as the respondents said. The situation is similar in *Transcarpathia*, where *nobody gets state support apart from the municipalities and other budgetary organisations*.

As regards the financial resources of the European Union, the situation in Romania and the Ukraine is significantly different from that of Hungary, already being an EU member. In Romania the EU resources are only partially available; the order of magnitude of the money is too little in the respondents’ view to have a real effect on cross-border co-operations. This statement is even more valid for Transcarpathia. The respondents working for the organisations maintained by the trans-border Hungarians usually mentioned the help coming from Hungary, the scale of which is less than desirable; nevertheless it is indispensable in some cases for the maintenance of the organisation.

### ***2.5.4 Principles and procedures to be changed***

At the end of the interviews we asked the respondents to briefly summarise what official principles, policies should be changed in order to increase the efficiency of the cross-border co-operations. In *Hungary* – similarly to the other two countries – the *excessive bureaucracy* was mentioned in most cases, many said that the unnecessary paperwork was one of the most serious obstacles to the success of the projects. It is not only the amount of bureaucracy that causes a problem; the interviewees said that the *organisations responsible for the control of application resources*

often had a rather poor performance. An example for that is the INTERREG III/A programme, for which the call for tenders was originally planned by September 2004, but was finally announced no sooner than in the spring of 2005.

In the case of *Romania*, in addition to the *bureaucratic obstacles*, the malfunctions of the *calls for and evaluation of tenders* were criticised by most respondents. According to the general belief, the calls for tenders are not elaborated precisely enough, it would be much more appropriate to define them by special sectors, so that the potential applicants should have a much better chance to find the tenders important for them. The interviewees were not satisfied with the events after the submission of the applications; the criteria system of project evaluation should be fundamentally changed. More objective aspects of evaluation are necessary and the whole process should become more transparent.

Apart from the tenders, the *quality of the already existing development documents* is a serious problem in Romania, both at national or lower levels. These documents usually do not reach the necessary quality; as one respondent said, they are usually made in offices, research institutions, without sound knowledge of the real life. One of the conditions for successful projects would thus be the clear definition of priorities. The majority of the respondents said that among the priorities, economic development should be a selected one, together with the connected fields, e.g. the development of transport infrastructure. Finally, as several times before, the *excessive centralisation* typical of Romania was mentioned several times. Decentralisation is one of the most urgent tasks; in the absence of decentralisation most respondents do not see the point in a change of strategy.

According to the respondents it would be very important in Transcarpathia to *change the system of financial means and the support and distribution systems* (especially in the case of the supports from Hungary), because the major part of the resources is non-refundable and of aid character, of which only a narrow circle has information; also, the distribution of these resources takes place in this narrow circle, which leads to the establishment of a clientele. The *calls for tenders should be given a bigger publicity* and more fair and transparent mechanisms for the distribution, and the use and control of resources should be built into the process, taking the local characteristics in consideration. Instead of aid type support, it is expertise and technology that should be transferred (“give people a fishing net, and not fish”, so that they should be able to get along on their own on the market). It would also be very important to *eliminate corruption, change the bureaucratic economic management administration and increase the financial and investment safety*.

### 3 Summary of the research findings

#### 3.1 Findings of the preliminary research

The eastern state borders of Hungary were actually created by the Trianon Peace Treaty, tearing apart organically integrated areas coexisting for centuries, and organically developing regional initiatives. This too contributed to the fact that significant differences evolved among the regions on the different sides of the borders in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it was also proved by the findings of the preliminary background study that preceded the empirical surveys conducted in the framework of the EXLINEA programme. One of the most important findings is that the respective area struggles with a number of common problems, despite the evident differences among the Hungarian and Ukrainian, and the Hungarian and Romanian sides of the border (e.g. administrative and legal system, differences in the living standards, different economic performance etc.). Along the states borders we find adjacent regions that are peripheral or semi-peripheral compared to the other regions of their respective countries, with a low level of solvent demand, shortage of capital in the businesses, low capital attracting capacity of the economy, few jobs and a general poverty; the typical demographical processes are outmigration and the increase of the social disparities.

The Hungarian–Ukrainian and the Hungarian–Romanian border regions are *burdened by problems of historical origin*, coming from the distant past; the new state borders designated in 1920 totally disregarded the ethnic relations, consequently there are still large ethnic Hungarian blocks on the Romanian and the Ukrainian sides of the border. This is an advantage for cross-border relations, on the one hand, because of the common language, similar mentality, common traditions and culture; on the other hand, nationalism reviving in the neighbour countries after the systemic changes brought to the surface formerly hidden problems, which naturally crystallised in the strengthening of fears of the amendments of the borders. Although the situation has normalised by now, it is very difficult to annihilate overnight prejudices gathered during several decades.

The Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian relations are regulated by a large number of international agreements at the national level. Most important are the so-called Treaties that basically define the relationship of Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine. Among the bilateral agreements made at national level, the water management and environmental agreements are of special importance. As a consequence of the arbitrary delineation of the border in the Trianon peace treaty, a large part of the catchment area of the Tisza river is now in Romania and the Ukraine, and in want of harmonised actions and due to the large-scale deforestations, floods occur more and more frequently, against which there is an urgent need

for joint action. The cyanide pollution in the Tisza River system not so long ago, resulting in a mass destruction of fish, drew attention to the importance of cross-border environmental co-operations. Nevertheless it was the floods and the environmental disasters of the last decade, together with the EU supports, that deepened the co-operations in the field of protection against and the prevention of risks.

Another consequence of the inconsiderate designation of the borders and the subsequent isolation for decades is the narrowing of the traffic connections between the two sides of the Hungarian–Ukrainian and the Hungarian–Romanian borders, which is a serious bottleneck of the cross-border co-operations. After the designation of the Trianon borders several railway and road connections were eliminated and have not been restored since then. It is true that several new border crossing stations were opened after the systemic change that took place at the turn of the years 1989/1990, but these are still too few to meet the demand. According to our experiences – which were reinforced both by empirical studies and the local seminars – one of the main bottlenecks of the cross-border relations in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region is still the length of waiting necessary to cross the border. Especially the economic actors are put off by the several hours of waiting, but it also makes educational relations and the other personal relations very difficult. The situation was further exacerbated by Hungary’s accession to the EU in 2004, after which it is impossible to use those special border crossing permission in the possession of which those with business travel purposes could cross the border out of turn. The small-scale cross-border traffic is also temporarily stopped. Due to the increasing shopping and fuel tourism, the number of those who wish to cross the border has increased to a large extent. This considerably increases waiting time and makes the time of border crossing unpredictable, making it impossible e.g. for the guest lecturers to reach the educational institutions on the other side of the border in time. The difficult conditions of border crossing also discourage the actors of the economic sector and other actors active in cross-border relations, when they have to wait for hours to get a signature necessary for a project proposal or to manage any other business affairs in a settlement only a few kilometres away on the other side of the border. Formerly there was a significant shopping and fuel tourism in the Hungarian–Romania border region too, due to the different price levels, but the equalisation of the price levels and the strict Hungarian customs regulation resulted in a new situation where it is not typical to have to queue up at the border.

Our experiences suggest that at the Hungarian–Ukrainian border it is not the physical permeability of the border crossing stations that causes a problem (although this too could be improved, especially the capacity Záhony-Csap border crossing stations is inadequate, because of the narrow bridge over the Tisza river); the speed of the border crossing procedure is also slow. As the Hungarian–Ukrainian border became an external EU border, customs regulations have become extremely strict. On the Ukrainian side, on the other hand, it is the control and ad-

ministration of the passports and the documents of the vehicles that takes too much time (in case of cars with foreign licence plates it is necessary in each case to show the licences and environmental certificate, “green card” of the car; each passport is stamped, and even the registration number of the car driven is written in the passport of the driver). The computer system necessary for the management of the border traffic is not free of occasional problems, either. Our survey suggests that all these problems are exacerbated by the slow pace of work, bureaucracy and corruption that are present at the border crossing stations.

The findings of the empirical researches also revealed that the economic co-operations have also appeared very slowly in the cross-border relations. One of the reasons for this is the economic crisis taking place after the disintegration of the COMECON and the systemic change, another reason is that during the socialist decades no significant industry was located in the border region, for economic policy and military policy considerations; i.e. there were no large-scale investments that could have boosted the economy. The economic crisis following the systemic change had very serious effects on the border regions, because the business plants operating here were usually subsidiaries or suppliers of large companies operating far away, consequently these remote units were liquidated first. This generated rather serious employment problems in the border region, also contributing to the unfavourable demographic processes (outmigration of the young and highly skilled population).

On the basis of the summary report we can say of the cross-border relations that the co-operations at subnational levels (of regions, counties and micro-region) are usually of protocol and formal character, despite the fact that a decade and a half have passed since the systemic change. This circumstance is visible in both the quantity and the character and depth of the co-operations. Within the co-operations the proportion and weight of economic and trading relations is still relatively low. However, in the recent years we can witness some positive changes, the relationships have developed towards concrete, operational and often project-based co-operations in several cases. In all probabilities this is partly due to the EU resources (e.g. Phare, Interreg) available in an application system.

In the Hungarian–Romanian and Hungarian–Ukrainian border regions the personal relations, very much limited before the systemic change, play a very important role. In these relations, in addition to friendships and family ties and also shopping, subsistence tourism plays a very significant role – especially on the Romanian and Ukrainian sides –, the most lucrative activity of which is illegal fuel and cigarette trade. Now more and more institutions, non-governmental organisations and businesses use the opportunities offered by the cross-border co-operations. There are more and more Hungarian investments planned in the Ukraine and even more in Romania, together with an increasing number of business supports,

expanding investments, and in general, the favourable effects of the improving business environment are more and more visible.

The empirical survey conducted in the framework of the EXLINEA programme underlined the findings of the previous researches and also supplied important new information among other things about the role of the European Union in the region (for more details see Chapters 1–4).

### **3.2 The presence of the border region and the cross-border relations in planning documents**

When outlining the problems and the possible future development directions of the Hungarian–Ukrainian and the Hungarian–Romanian border region, in addition to *inter-state agreements* and the *programming and planning preliminaries at national level* and in the *NUTS 2 areas* including the border regions it is the *joint development documents* worked out for the border regions that give us information (such documents are the “Joint development concept of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region”, “Development concept and programme of the Hungarian–Romanian border region”). Also, we have the *Euroregional planning documents* of the respective areas (“Strategic development programme of the Carpathians Euroregion Interregional Alliance”, and the Strategic plan of the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Co-operation”; also the Hajdú–Bihar–Bihar Euroregion at county level and development documents of the Bihar–Bihor and the Interregio areas at micro-regional level).

Following the systemic change, a relatively long time passed until the Hungarian–Romanian Treaty was signed (in 1997), which is primarily due to the special situation of the Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. The Treaty set up international professional committees (for minority affairs, economic co-operations, co-operation of municipalities, environmental protection), which work out the co-operations concerning the “common issues” of the two countries and revise the factors blocking their implementation, assisting this way the development of cross-border co-operations also at the local level. The treaty between Hungary and the Ukraine was signed as soon as in 1991 (“Treaty on the grounds of good neighbourhood and co-operation between the Republic of Hungary and the Ukraine”), which included the improvement of the conditions of cross-border co-operations both at national and individual level. Several of the professional committees created by the Treaty still operate.

In addition to the treaties, there are several valid bilateral agreements in several fields. As regards the connections at state level, the water management and environmental protection co-operations are the most important both in the Hungarian–

Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian relation. The necessity of such co-operations was demonstrated by the huge floods in the Tisza river system, affecting all three counties, and the cyanide pollution resulting in the mass destruction of fish.

As regards the relationship of Hungary to its eastern neighbours, the *Act LXII. of 2001* on Hungarians living in neighbouring countries (commonly known as the *Status Act*) received the biggest attention, together with the connected so-called “*Hungarian–Romanian Agreement Declaration*”. As regards the implementation of the act providing the Hungarians living in neighbouring countries with special benefits (in health care, travel, employment), no final solution has been found to date, despite the several negotiations.

In Hungary the long-term objectives of regional development are set by the National Regional Development Concept. In this concept, being located in a border region is mentioned as an influencing factor mainly in connection with the extended and contiguous regions with low competitiveness in the eastern part of Hungary. On the other hand, a positive sign mentioned by the document is that a significant part of the sporadic areas in good environmental condition can be found in the border region. The document treats as a cornerstone of cross-border co-operations the fields of water management and environmental protection, because the pollutions occurring in the catchment areas of the Tisza River are problems for Hungary as a “country downstream” that can only be solved together with the neighbouring countries. The positive effect of the local initiatives supported by the Phare CBC programmes is underlined in the document, but it is also mentioned that despite these the catching up of the eastern part of Hungary still has not started. Among the factors influencing co-operations the concept mentions the date of the EU accession of the neighbouring countries and the presence of a large number of Hungarian ethnic group living in the Carpathian Basin – considering common culture and language as a catalyst for co-operations.

An objective to be reached is the establishment of integrated border regions intensively connected at several levels within the framework of an effective and successful co-operation, by which the development of the regions on the other side of the border can greatly contribute to the catching up of the border regions of Hungary as well. The basic objective of the cross-border co-operations is the creation of integrated cross-border regions, for the realisation of which the following are important: establishment of a coordinated system of tourism products; building out cross-border nature and environmental protection systems; revitalisation/creation of cross-border centre and hinterland relations; utilisation of special benefits in trade; building out logistic services related to transit and border traffic; joint investment promotion and economic development; joint physical planning and regional programmes; transfer of experiences and further development of the joint institutional structure with the countries involved in joint programming; improvement of accessibility by cross-border trunk and side road developments and the



launch of cross-border public transport, and also by the establishment of new border crossing stations.

In the Hungarian National Development Plan made for the 2004–2006 period, the eastern border regions of Hungary are mentioned as peripheries in whose catching up the accession of Hungary to the European Union may play a significant role, by the increasing economic relations. The document underlines the important logistic role of the rail border crossing stations and projects considerable future developments.

The Romanian regional development documents, similarly to the Hungarian ones, have been made in accordance with the planning schedule of the European Union and the expectations of the EU. In the Hungarian National Development Plan made for the 2004–2006 period, the issue of the borders and the cross-border co-operations is not seen as a major priority. The document mentions the effects of being located in a border region mainly as a factor influencing the development level of the regions. In the West Romanian regions adjacent to Hungary, border location does not have as negative consequences as in the peripheries in the eastern part of Romania. The development of the cross-border transport corridors is seen as a chance to promote economic relations. As opposed to this document, the development plan made for the 2000–2005 period dealt in much more depth with the cross-border co-operations, indicating them as some of the most important tasks of the development regions, with special regard to economic co-operations. The document deals in a separate chapter with the catalytic effect of the PHARE programme in deepening relations, together with the gradual adaptation of the practices of the Union.

In the Ukraine several development documents deal with the border regions and cross-border co-operations. The act defining the basic principles of regional development is the *National Regional Policy Concept*, which describes the tasks of the regional actors and the main directions of development. The concept also includes the institutional and practical tools designed for developments at local and regional level. The Act on *National Regional Economic Policy Concept* contains the definition of the border region and expresses the importance of assisting them. Among the successor states of the Soviet Union the Ukraine was the first to sign a *Partnership and co-operation agreement*, after whose ratification president Leonid Kuchma issued a regulation on the EU accession strategy of the Ukraine, including the establishment of relations between the Ukrainian regions and the regions in the member states and the candidate countries. An integral part of the Ukrainian development policy is the socio-economic development strategy called “Ukraine 2010”, which projects an administrative reform; as regards the directions of the contacts, the development of the economic zones along the western regions of the Ukraine is mentioned as a priority. After the “Orange Revolution” that took place in the Ukraine in late 2004, significant changes are expected in the Ukrainian regional

policy; the European relations and the western neighbours have become much more important, which projects the evaluation of the role of the border regions and the strengthening of the cross-border co-operations.

In Hungary the preparation of the development documents for the 2007–2013 planning period is underway. In the North Great Plain region, the development of logistic services, built on the location along the border and the cross-border transport corridors, is a strategic objective in the so-called gateway cities with favourable endowments. According to the document, the cross-border economic co-operations may receive more attention in the period starting in 2007 (following the EU policy), especially those peripheral border regions where these opportunities are underutilised at the moment. In this the business zones may have a dominant role. The makers of the concept only saw a possibility for the catching up of the backward regions along the Romanian and the Ukrainian border after the elimination of the “heritage of Trianon”.

Along the border areas of the South Great Plain region, the backward territories mentioned above as “external peripheries” continue with some interruptions. These areas are mentioned selectively by the development documents of the region. The development documents of South Great Plain deal in more depth and detail with the issues related to the state border, analysing the possibilities of the respective tiers (county, micro-region, municipality) separately. A problem mentioned is the uncertainty of the conditions for co-operation and the serious bottlenecks of co-operation (inadequate infrastructure connections, lack of information, and in some cases mistrust). A strategic development objective of the region is to “become a dynamic and open, easily permeable border region of Europe”, serving as a gateway to Southeast-Europe. This is why the development of cross-border relation is emphasised, whose spatial frameworks are set by the *Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion*. The solution of the problems of water management is also of special importance, like in the case of the national level development documents.

Among the development regions created in Romania, two are neighbour to Hungary, the “Nord-Vest” and the “Vest” regions. In the current development documents of both regions (for the 2004–2006 programming period), the development of the border regions and the cross-border relations are important elements. Both development documents see the respective regions as gateway regions, which is not surprising given the fact that these two regions are neighbour to the European Union; on the other hand, the development of the co-operations with Serbia and the Ukraine is also seen as a priority. It is clearly expressed, however, that the membership of Hungary in the European Union entails the increase of the number of co-operations. The surveys on the Romanian side have found that the cross-border economic relations and cultural contacts have an increasingly positive effect in the development of the border regions.

The largest-scale developments (presently underway or planned in the future) are the investments of the cross-border transport networks – given the inadequate capacity of the present cross-border transport corridors –, and the connection of the dominant urban centres on the two sides of the border. In connection with the river pollutions occurring in the last years, the decrease of the cross-border effect of environmental accidents is of outstanding importance, especially in metallurgy and petrochemistry, as is the increasing the level of canalisation. The development documents mention that several towns have strong and traditional cross-border relations, the revitalisation of which has good chances and can be a considerable opportunity for the future co-operations. The document mentions the active participation of the member counties in the work of the Euroregional organisations as an important opportunity. In the Vest region the strengthening of the economic effects of the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion is expected, and a great significance is attributed to the development opportunities opened by the Phare CBC programmes.

In the Ukraine the administrative units equal to the counties (NUTS 3 level territorial units) have development ideas and concepts. The socio-economic development programme of Transcarpathia, directly neighbouring Hungary, titled “*Transcarpathia – 2004. Entering 21<sup>st</sup> century*”, was created in 2001. The development priorities are grouped into nine major chapters, among which it is primarily the Foreign Economic Relations and the development of the Transcarpathian Special Economic Zone that mostly influence the development of cross-border relations. The development of the foreign economic relations concentrates on the transport infrastructure providing access to the border crossing stations, the improvement of the infrastructure of the customs office, and the increase of the volume of the economic relations, with an active participation in the Euroregional organisation called Interregio. The Transcarpathian Special Economic Zone is scattered in the logistic hubs of the border region, offering good opportunities for foreign investors. Since its foundation the economic zone has made several successful co-operation agreements with the *Záhony and Its Region Business Zone* on the other side of the border.

Both for the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region development concepts have been made with the contribution of experts living on the two sides of the borders, in order to harmonise the concepts and utilise the resources more efficiently. The *Development concept and programme of the Hungarian–Romanian border region* was made in 2000, with Phare support. The development document analysed the socio-economic conditions in the border region, the common features of the areas on the two sides of the border (which may provide a basis for further co-operations), the development of the cross-border relations (with special regard to the economic relations), the factors influencing them and the role of the institutions most active in cross-border co-operations. On the

basis of the European practice, the concept defined the basic principles of co-operation, and on the basis of the development priorities of the spatial units it also set the development objectives and strategy of the border region. The development programme defined five main directions of co-operations: permeability and accessibility of the border; environmental and nature protection and water management; human resources; the strengthening of economic relations; the institutionalisation of the co-operations.

As a result of the joint efforts of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Transcarpathia counties, the *Joint development concept of the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region* was made in 2003. The objective of the document is to promote the catching up of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region and improve the quality of life of the population living there by the maximum use of the opportunities lying in cross-border co-operations. Among the five strategic priorities, the first is the creation of a competitive economic structure, as the economic indices of the region are bad from all aspects, the reasons for which are the relative homogeneity and inflexibility of the economic structures. The development of the human resources can be a catalyst for the development of the border region, but today it is the outmigration of the skilled people that is typical. Another basic precondition for the increase of investments is the improvement of the accessibility of the border region. The co-operations in the field of environmental and nature protection are basically determined by the role of the Tisza as a border river, which, as a joint asset, requires co-operation. The maximum use of the opportunities offered by the EU accession of Hungary can be seen as a non-sector specific field of development, which may entail the transfer of very important experiences, assisting this way the integration efforts of the Ukraine.

Each of the Euroregions in the respective border regions have defined their strategic development concepts, which, with a full consideration of the interests of the cross-border relations, try to find the most effective fields of co-operation on the basis of the development documents of the individual member regions. The Regional Development Working Committee of the Carpathians Euroregion worked out the *Strategic Development Programme* of the Euroregion in 2004. The analysis of the existing situation revealed that the organisation founded in 1993 had not been really successful by the copying of the Western European examples in the region, due to the lack of adequate conditions and the significant development differences among the member regions. Accordingly the strategy makes several proposals for the organisational and operational renewal of the Euroregion. The regional development strategic programme processed the planning preliminaries and analysed the success of the previous projects, on the ground of which the following main development fields were identified: transport relations; creation of a competitive economy; coordinated development of human resources; a complex approach

to tourism; nature and environmental protection; and strengthening the foreign relations of the Euroregion.

The other Euroregional organisation, the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion involving the Hungarian–Romanian border region created its first strategic development plan in 2000, which was renewed in 2005. In the analysis of the existing situation the document mentions among the weaknesses the usually missing harmonisation of the objectives on the two sides of the border and the low number of joint programmes and projects. Among the strategic objectives we find the harmonisation of public administration, the improvement of the physical infrastructure, the diversification of the economy and the strengthening of the resource acquisition capacity. A programme of outstanding importance is the development of the communication and PR strategy of the formerly less known region, in order to introduce the activity of the region to as wide an audience as possible, make the Euroregion accepted for the wide public and allow the organisation to apply for application resources with better chances.

In order to reach a more operational co-operation, within the Carpathians Euroregion the Hungarian Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, the Romanian Szatmár (Satu Mare) county and Transcarpathia county in the Ukraine founded *Interregio* on 6 October 2000. In 2003 a development concept was made for the Interregio (on a Hungarian initiative and with active Hungarian participation), the basis of which was the development concept of the Ukrainian–Hungarian border region. The range of development priorities built on the common possibilities is basically the same as the objectives of the Carpathians Euroregion, placing even more emphasis on the strengthening of the economic relations at the level of concrete projects.

The *Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar Euroregion* was also founded within the territory of the Carpathians Euroregion, on 11 October 2002 (since then these two member counties have left the Carpathians Euroregion), in order to establish a closer, project based and operational co-operation. The basic objective of the Euroregion is to contribute to the birth of good neighbourhood and promote the EU integration of the border regions of Romania by joint programmes and the acquisition of development resources. The founding document defined eight main development directions, including the strengthening of the economic relations, the improvement of the permeability of the border, the management of the often common cultural heritage, but also the establishment of the institutionalised relationships of the different professional organisations (e.g. in the field of environmental protection, education, health care) of the two counties, mainly because of the less advanced decentralisation processes of the Romanian public administration. The first results are realised in the field of tourism, implemented in the form of organising common events and making a joint marketing strategy.

A separate development document was made for the Bihar–Bihar Euroregion, the only micro-regional level Euroregional organisation in the Hungarian–Ukrain-

ian and the Hungarian–Romanian border region. The Bihar–Bihar Euroregion was established on 12 April 2002 in Biharkeresztes, it involves 19 Hungarian settlements and 17 municipalities (with a total of 40 settlements) in Romania. The centre of the organisation is Bors. The objective of the co-operation is the implementation of harmonised sustainable developments coordinated from social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects, as well as the preparation for and participation in the European integration processes.

Looking at the planning documents concerning the border region at different levels we can say that they well reflect the problems of the border region and have identified the breakout point concentrated on the most important dilemmas. An important step forward is that now there are efforts for the harmonisation of the strategies at least at the level of the planning documents, even if this is not always successful during the implementation in practice.

#### **4 Conclusions, good practices, recommendations**

The role of the European Union in the local co-operation mechanisms is not really significant yet, but its importance is expected to considerably increase parallel to the expansion of the European integration processes, above all due to the regional support and security policy of the Union. In the future the European Union can have a catalytic role. The EU policies and financial means promote the single operation of the formerly integrated areas, divided by the borders. Along the Hungarian–Romanian border, where some EU resources for cross-border relations were available as soon as in the middle of the 1990s, the effect of these supports is naturally stronger than in the Hungarian–Ukrainian border area where the Union resources for such purposes have only been available for a year or two.

During the interviews conducted and the local seminars, several actors complained about the fact that very few of the resources coming from the European Union are available for concrete economic co-operations, there are much less resources available for this purpose than for bilateral discussions, conferences and exchanges of experience. Since the resources are rather scarce in the region, those projects are the most popular for the implementation of which resources can be acquired in an application system. This is especially true for projects with large investment needs (e.g. transport infrastructure, environmental investments). A problem is that the calls for tenders are often announced with a significant delay, which is a fault of the national level. In Transcarpathia it was mentioned too that it is very difficult to get information necessary for applying for EU money, and that there are too few experts with adequate professional and language skills who can write successful applications and can also successfully manage and administer the

implementation of the projects. It was raised also on the Ukrainian side that since there are significant EU resources only on the Hungarian side at the moment, the Transcarpathian partners are only needed for their Hungarian counterparts to make them eligible for supports; accordingly the real benefits are too few on the Ukrainian side. It is also true, on the other hand, that the acquisition of financial means by tendering, available for the development of cross-border co-operations, has been a strong motivating factor since Hungary's accession to the European Union.

In the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian cross-border co-operations a bottom-up approach is most typical, i.e. personal relations play a significant role not only in the personal but also in the economic and other co-operations. We can see that the municipalities and the municipal associations are much more active in the initiation and organisation of cross-border relations than the regional or national level, although the opinion of the citizens and the private sector is rarely asked. Today it is not typical but formerly the state level was rather an obstacle of the relations in Romania and the Ukraine, they often refused the establishment of cross-border co-operation organisations. A traditionally active administrative level in the countries in question is the county level; the counties are the leaders in the establishment of cross-border co-operation strategies. In addition, different professional bodies with competence in the respective areas (environment and water management directorates, chambers of commerce, national parks etc.) are active in the development of the relations, involving the actors of the economic and the civil sector and the municipalities. Although the reason behind the establishment of the large-scale Euroregions (Carpathians Euroregion, Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion), organised on committee basis and often not free from politics, was definitely the development of the cross-border co-operation and the improvement of the population living here, they have not been able to achieve considerable results in the region. The future lies much more in the smaller, “project type” organisations (as opposed to the “committee type” ones), more suitable for an operational co-operation (e.g. the Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar Euroregion operating in the Hungarian–Romanian border region, involving two neighbour counties, is a good example; in this Euroregion a number of projects have been successfully implemented from tourism through training to the different conferences).

As regards cross-border relations, both in the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region positive changes have taken place over the last few years, *structures and practices to be followed and further developed* have been made to which the resources of the European Union made a significant contribution:

- The *joint development concepts* of the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region have been made with the use of EU supports; parallel to this the *ad-hoc character of the co-operations has decreased*, the

participants continuously communicate to each other and think more and more in project-oriented concrete developments.

- An *institutional network of experts* have been created, is expanding and continuously developing *that can receive EU resources available in a tender system* and also to coordinate the implementation of the different projects.
- From EU resources *trainings are organised* for Hungarian, Ukrainian and Romanian experts, entrepreneurs, local governments, non-governmental organisations etc., by which they get an insight to the policy and tender systems of the European Union; also, the transfer of practical experiences and methods takes place in several fields.
- It is a very good practice that the *Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry* has established its Romanian and Ukrainian sections in Hungary (in Békéscsaba and Nyíregyháza, respectively), and they naturally have their partner organisations in the neighbour countries. This way the entrepreneurs, companies and those with investment goals can get very important information on the investment possibilities in the neighbour countries and they can also get assistance as regards the legal regulations, taxation, banks etc. in the respective country. In this respect we also have to mention the *business development centres* operated by the Hungarian state in the primarily Hungarian inhabited regions of the neighbour countries; these centres also play a very important role (e.g. tender information, partner mediation for businesses etc.).
- The *more and more intensive relationships* (especially due to the cultural, sports, educational, religious etc. events) *have brought the people on the two sides of the border closer to each other*, these relations have helped them to get to know each other's culture and contributed to the decrease of the conflicts on ethnic grounds.
- In the last decade the *infrastructure conditions of the border crossing stations have significantly improved*, but this has not improved the speed of border crossing to the necessary extent – due to the increased traffic and strict border control (especially at the Hungarian–Ukrainian border). In addition, the accessibility of the border crossing stations has slightly improved.
- The floods and environmental pollutions of the recent years have made the three neighbouring countries realise the importance of the prevention of disasters, and accordingly they have built out close everyday connections to each other. One of the most striking features of this may be the *monitoring system established along the Tisza River* that provides very useful information for the prevention of disasters.
- In the last decade and a half, the *inter-municipal relations* operating in a declared, institutional form have developed in the border regions in question, now reaching beyond the level of protocol; more and more concrete joint programmes are implemented (mostly cultural and sports events). In addition



to the twin municipality relations, *micro-regional and municipal associations* are becoming more and more important. These, co-operating with their counterparts on the other side of the border, have already implemented several projects (e.g. the Bihar–Bihor Euroregion was founded on the basis of the municipal associations in the Bihar border region along the Hungarian–Romanian border).

- The different *Euroregions* created in the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region (above all the smaller, bi- and trilateral organisations, e.g. the Hajdú-Bihar–Bihor) intensively encourage the institutions operating in their territories to take up the relations with their counterparts on the other side of the border, because the adaptation of the EU methods and practices is both a common interest and a requirement).
- Over the last five years, in the field of *tourism* too, more intensive co-operations are unfurling, one or two practical results of which can already be seen (e.g. in the Hajdú-Bihar–Bihor Euroregion the member county of Hungary and that of Romania participate together on the international market; also, the tourism map of the Upper Tisza Region was published in a Ukrainian–Hungarian co-operation).

The findings of the survey conducted within the EXLINEA programme clearly demonstrate that the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border regions have similar problems and deficiencies, so the future development directions are more or less the same, too. However, there is a significant difference in the situation of the two border regions, namely that Romania is becoming a full right member of the European Union soon, whereas for the Ukraine even the associate membership is wishful thinking at the moment. Consequently the Hungarian–Romanian border region can actually function as a single region free from borders in the near future, where, due to the acquisition of the EU legal harmonisation practices, the cross-border relations will have less and less obstacles. On the other hand, the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region has a Schengen border, less resources and other obstacles, due to which it evidently has a longer path of development.

Mostly in accordance with the joint development documents made for the Hungarian–Romanian and the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region, in our opinion the *most important development priorities of the future* are as follows:

- *Speeding up of border crossing and improvement of the accessibility of the border region.* In order to achieve this, infrastructure developments are needed, on the one hand (expansion of the permeability of the border crossing stations and their linking to the speedway network in as many places as possible); on the other hand, the re-introduction of small-scale cross-border traffic should be achieved, because international passport is extremely expen-

sive in the Ukraine and not everybody can afford to have one (contrary to the preliminary expectations this is much more of a problem than the acquisition of the necessary visa). In addition, the restoration of a former practice should be considered: those who had to cross the border because of their work were allowed to pass through the border out of turn (e.g. with a special licence).

- The *promotion of economic relations*; the favourable spillover effects of this can be seen in other areas, as well. Within the economic sector, the joint development of business services and the business poles (industrial parks, business zones) should be a priority, together with joint tourism development programmes based on the complementary endowments; joint marketing; small and medium size enterprises; and the agricultural co-operations.
- For the catching up of the region, *transport and infrastructure developments* are of a selective importance, mainly the development of the roads and railways connected to the cross-border trans-European network running through the region, but also of the logistic hubs and services.
- The further development of *co-operations* in the field of *environmental and nature protection*, and also *water management* is an important task too. Joint efforts should be made for the preservation of the environment in the border region (flood and high groundwater prevention, waste and sewage management etc) and also for the preservation of the natural assets, as they are also the basis of tourism developments.
- As the border region in question is stricken by a significant outmigration, one selected task of the future can be the *development of the cross-border relations of human resources*. We should emphasise in this place the further expansion of the educational, training and research co-operations, the establishment of labour market relations, the development of social and health care co-operations, but the non-governmental organisations, the cultural and sports relations and language trainings can also be included here.
- Apart from these, there are *non-sector specific fields* that play a very important role in the relations. These include the development of long term institutional co-operations in the first place. Within this, of selected importance is the quality and preparation of the regional development institutional system for the use of the resources coming from the European Union, i.e. a significant emphasis should be placed on co-operations, exchanges of experience and trainings in this field, and also on the harmonisation of the development ideas in all of these areas. Also it is very important to improve the level of information and communication, together with the creation of a joint and mutual regional marketing activity.

## IV ANNEXES

### 1 Main publications prepared within the framework of the EXLINEA program and forthcoming publications 2003–2005

- BALCSÓK, I. 2003: A munkanélküliség jellemző adatainak alakulása Kelet-Magyarország határ menti településein 1992–2001 között [Progress of the typical figures of unemployment in the settlements of the border regions of East Hungary]. In: SÜLI-ZAKAR, I. (ed.): *Társadalomföldrajz, területfejlesztés II.* Debrecen, Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, pp. 571–584.
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- BALCSÓK, I. – DANCS, L. 2003: Munkaerőpiaci kapcsolatok az Északkelet-Alföldön, különös tekintettel a magyar–ukrán határ mentére [Labour market relations in the northeast Great Hungarian Plain, with special regard to the Hungarian–Ukrainian border region]. – *Alföldi tanulmányok*. 19. pp. 51–65.
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- BARANYI, B. 2003: Schengenre várva: határregiók és az euroregionális szervezetek-szerveződések Magyarország keleti államhatárai mentén [Waiting for Schengen: Border regions and Euroregional organisations along the Eastern borders of Hungary]. In: SZÓNOKYNE ANCSIN, G. (ed.): *Határok és az Európai Unió* [Borders and the European Union, international geographical conference]. Szeged, 29 November – 1 December 2002. Szeged, Szegedi Egyetem, pp. 356–365.
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Table 3

*Population and population density, 1988–2003*

Year	Hungary		South Great Plain		North Great Plain		Romania		West		North-West	
	Inhabi- tants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabi- tants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabi- tants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabi- tants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabitants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabi- tants number (thousand)	Popula- tion density (persons /km <sup>2</sup> )
1988	10,588.6	113.8	1,420.9	77.7	1,539.8	86.6	23,053.6	96.7	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1989	10,374.8	111.5	1,395.6	76.3	1,547.3	87.0	23,151.6	97.1	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
1990 <sup>HUN</sup>	10,354.8	111.3	1,395.5	76.3	1,547.4	87.0	23,206.7	97.3	2,201.7	68.7	2,978.2	87.2
1991	10,337.2	111.1	1,395.5	76.3	1,547.5	87.0	23,185.1	97.3	2,180.6	68.1	2,978.1	87.2
1992 <sup>RO</sup>	10,310.2	110.8	1,387.6	75.9	1,538.6	86.5	22,810.0	95.7	2,102.9	65.6	2,905.5	85.1
1993	10,276.9	110.5	1,382.4	75.6	1,534.2	86.3	22,755.3	95.5	2,095.0	65.4	2,898.9	84.9
1994	10,245.7	110.1	1,376.5	75.3	1,528.7	86.0	22,730.6	95.4	2,091.2	65.3	2,892.0	84.7
1995	10,212.3	109.8	1,369.3	74.9	1,545.4	86.9	22,600.0	94.8	2,085.5	65.1	2,883.2	84.4
1996	10,174.4	109.4	1,364.4	74.6	1,542.9	86.8	22,607.6	94.8	2,076.7	64.8	2,872.9	84.1
1997	10,135.3	108.9	1,357.9	74.1	1,535.1	86.5	22,545.9	94.6	2,073.7	64.7	2,861.5	83.8
1998	10,091.8	108.5	1,349.7	73.7	1,529.9	86.2	22,502.8	94.4	2,051.0	64.0	2,857.6	83.7
1999	10,043.2	108.0	1,341.8	73.3	1,522.0	85.7	22,458.0	94.2	2,046.5	63.9	2,849.9	83.4
2000	10,043.2	108.0	1,341.8	73.3	1,522.0	85.7	22,435.2	94.1	2,041.1	63.7	2,844.0	83.3
2001 <sup>HUN,RO</sup>	10,174.8	109.4	1,373.2	75.0	1,559.0	87.8	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.
2002	10,142.4	109.2	1,367.1	74.5	1,554.2	87.6	21,681.0	90.9	1,958.6	61.1	2,740.1	80.2
2003	10,116.7	108.7	1,360.2	74.2	1,547.0	87.3	21,733.6	91.2	1,946.6	60.8	2,744.9	80.4

<sup>HUN</sup> Data of National Census, Hungary.

<sup>RO</sup> Data of National Census, Romania.

*Source:* Hungarian Central Statistical Office, National Institute of Statistics (Romania).

Table 10

*Inhabitants number, population density and natural increase, 1998–2003*

Year	Hungary			North Great Plain			Ukraine			Transcarpathia		
	Inhabitants number (thousand)	Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	Natural increase (‰)	Inhabitants number (thousand)	Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	Natural increase (‰)	Inhabitants number (thousand)	Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	Natural increase (‰)	Inhabitants number (thousand)	Population density (persons/km <sup>2</sup> )	Natural increase (‰)
1988	10,588.6	113.8	-1.5	1,539.8	86.6	1.2	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	1,237.3	96.7	8.8
1989 <sup>UA</sup>	10,374.8	111.5	-2.1	1,547.3	87.0	0.6	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	n.d.a.	1,252.3	97.8	8.0
1990 <sup>HUN</sup>	10,354.8	111.3	-1.9	1,547.4	87.0	1.1	51,944.4	86.0	0.5	1,258.1	98.3	7.5
1991	10,337.2	111.1	-1.7	1,547.5	87.0	0.8	52,056.6	86.2	-0.8	1,265.9	98.9	6.4
1992	10,310.2	110.8	-2.6	1,538.6	86.5	-0.1	52,244.1	86.5	-1.9	1,271.6	99.3	5.8
1993	10,276.9	110.5	-3.2	1,534.2	86.3	-0.9	52,114.4	86.3	-3.5	1,281.4	100.1	4.3
1994	10,245.7	110.1	-3.0	1,528.7	86.0	-0.7	51,728.4	85.7	-4.7	1,286.7	100.5	2.9
1995	10,212.3	109.8	-3.3	1,545.4	86.9	-0.5	51,334.1	85.0	-5.8	1,288.1	100.6	1.7
1996	10,174.4	109.4	-3.7	1,542.9	86.8	-1.0	50,893.5	84.3	-6.1	1,288.1	100.6	1.8
1997	10,135.3	108.9	-3.8	1,535.1	86.5	-1.2	50,499.9	83.7	-6.2	1,288.6	100.7	1.4
1998	10,091.8	108.5	-4.3	1,529.9	86.2	-1.9	50,105.6	83.0	-6.0	1,288.2	100.6	1.1
1999	10,043.2	108.0	-4.8	1,522.0	85.7	-2.5	49,710.8	82.3	-7.0	1,287.4	100.6	-0.4
2000	10,043.2	108.0	-3.8	1,522.0	85.7	-1.8	49,291.2	81.6	-7.6	1,284.0	100.3	0.4
2001 <sup>HUN,UA</sup>	10,174.8	109.4	-3.5	1,559.0	87.8	-1.7	48,457.1	80.3	-7.6	1,254.6	98.0	-0.6
2002	10,142.4	109.0	-3.5	1,554.2	87.7	-2.0	48,396.5	80.2	-7.6	1,249.9	97.6	-0.7
2003	10,116.7	108.7	-4.1	1,547.0	87.3	-2.7	47,442.1	78.9	-7.5	1,248.3	97.5	-0.1

<sup>HUN</sup> Data of national census, Hungary.

<sup>UA</sup> Data of national census, Ukraine.

*Source:* Hungarian Central Statistical Office; The State Committee of Statistic of Ukraine.