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**Cross-Border Co-operation in the
Border Region of the
Southern Great Plain of Hungary**

**by
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Introduction

After the political opening in the early 1990s, the emphasis of regional background research closely related to the process of EU accession shifted from the examination of inner border region to that of cross-border co-operation, whose impact on region-shaping is now a topical subject to be researched.¹

Border regions have been the topic of research for over one decade. With the EU accession at hand, the study of cross-border co-operation has become a top priority. A milestone in the research of border regions, the first major conference was held in 1988. The 1996 and 1999 conferences in Szeged ('This Side of the Border and Across from Here' and 'Borders and Regions', respectively) as well as the regional one in Pécs focused on East Central European regions with an eye on the EU enlargement.

Now that borders are open in every direction, studying the border regions of the Southern Great Plain, we try to find possible areas of joint development. What we are experiencing in both the Yugoslavian and Romanian border regions foreshadows the problems of social, political and regional (development) transition, which is different and rather bumpy in either country.

It was *Ivancsics, Fodor and Zala* in 1988, *Pál and Nagy* in 1998 and 2000 as well as *Mrs Szónoky* in 1999, who drew attention to the significance of cross-border co-operation. With the commencement of EU accession, cross-border co-operation as top priority and the establishment of the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion, studies dealing with this border region either directly or indirectly started cropping up (*Hajdú, Z.* 1997, 1999; *Mirnic, K.* 1996; *Nagy, I.* 1998, 1999, 2000; *Pál, Á.–Csordás, L.–Nagy, I.* 2000; *Mrs Szörényi et al.* 2000). Geography in Yugoslavia giving priority to border region issues since the 1980s has produced studies on the Geography of border regions rather than cross-border relations (*Bugarški, D.* 1980; *Lukic, B.* 1995; *Djurdjev, B.–Krajko, Gy.–Vert, C.* 1996; *Ocokoljic, M.* 1996). This may be accounted for by the isolation brought about by the civil war going on since the 1990s and the embargo that followed, as a result of which Yugoslavia has also drifted from the process of EU integration. The relationship between universities and research institutes is still very loose. Consequently, no joint research has been feasible so far.

¹ No authentic statistical data are available in Yugoslavia due to the autocracy in power for 10 years. The data available have been obtained from the 1991 census, 1996 statistical data (1995 incomes, GDP and the number of refugees), partial statistical surveys and studies in print. As the statistical system in Romania is at present unsuitable for the collection and classification of detailed regional and county data, comparison based on identical indices is impossible.

The change of regime taking place almost simultaneously in Romania and Hungary has resulted in burgeoning Romanian-Hungarian relations. Initial relief has turned into commercial and (cross-border) economic co-operation still in embryo. Fast opening following the years of oppression has also been beneficial to both culture and science. Those living in the border regions have also forged closer links with one another as a result of daily contact and economic growth. Quite a few geographers, sociologists and economists have evaluated the processes in this region: the Hungarian side of the Romanian–Hungarian border region was studied by *Baranyi* 1996, 1998, 2000, *Baukó–Gurzó* 1996 and *Timár* 1996, the shared border region by *Lengyel* 1996, *Mrs Szónoky* 1999, and *Pál–Nagy* 1999 and *Mrs Szónoky–Pál* 1994, whereas the Romanian side and cross-border co-operation by *Olaru* 1999, *Popa* 1999, *Dobraca* 1999, *Munteanu* 1999 and *Pascariu* 2000.

1 The history of border formation

Like the rest of Hungary's borderline, the Yugoslavian section, too, was the result of the Peace Treaty of Trianon closing World War I. The border region between the Serbo–Croatian–Slovenian Kingdom and Hungary lay between the Mura Region and the River Tisza, stretching as far as the former County Torontál (the River Rába) approximately 20 km east of the Tisza. Despite the stipulations of the peace treaty, the environs of Baja and Pécs remained occupied by the Serbian army until as late as the summer of 1921.

With regard to the new Hungarian–Yugoslavian border, the peace treaty did not follow the principle of ethnic self-determination as large areas with a Hungarian majority in the immediate neighbourhood of the new frontier were annexed by Yugoslavia. The new border was only partially neutral (Mura, Dráva); the zone separating the two countries was designated by the victors mainly along the line of railways constructed in the second half of the 19th century (see the case of Subotica with its predominantly Hungarian-Catholic Serb population, a railway junction where the Szeged–Subotica–Zombor–Fiume, the Baja–Subotica–Szeged, the Budapest–Beograd and Senta–Subotica lines met).

Between 1941 and 1944 the frontier was temporarily modified in Hungary's favour: the Mura region (Murska Sobota and environs), the settlements between the Rivers Dráva and Mura (Čakovec and environs), the Baranya triangle (Beli Monastir and environs) as well as Bácska (Northern Vojvodina) returned to Hungary and the frontier ran along the line of the Rivers Danube and Tisza. Thus, Hungary's southern natural borders stretched from the Mura to the Tisza.

Frequent modifications of the frontier led to mutual grievances in both ethnicities. In 1941, the Yugoslav population was subject to unfair treatment, whereas in 1919–20 and especially in the autumn of 1944 Hungarians had to suffer at the hands of Tito's guerrillas taking retaliatory actions against Hungarians.

From the Cominform decisions in 1948–49, the border region descended to a zone of antagonistic clashes between the two states following different roads to socialism. The complete sealing-off of the border was backed up on the Hungarian side by a full suspension of communication.

For a short time (a few months) after the revolution of 1956 the border opened to Hungarian refugees fleeing retaliation, then relations froze again until the end of the 60s when political antagonism began to melt. From the 1970s co-operation between border zone settlements was resumed (Baja–Zombor 1966).

In the late 1980s the political upheaval in East Central Europe did not spare Yugoslavia, either. In fact, political frictions among the federal member states deteriorated so sharply that with the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 and Bosnia and Macedonia following suit the Yugoslav federation of Serbia and Crna Gora (JSZK)² attempted to act as the legal successor of the one-time JSZSK (Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic), but its claim has been ignored internationally so far. Following these changes the border of Hungary and the Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic fell to its constituent pieces: Hungarian–Slovenian, Hungarian–Croat and Hungarian–Serb sections. At present, the length of the Hungarian–Serb (Yugoslav Federal Republic) frontier is only 174 km in the Vojvodina.

The new frontiers of Romania changing sides in World War I and going over to the Entente were laid down in the secret pact of 1916, which envisioned to place under Romanian control all the territories where Romanians lived regardless even of their minority position. The border drawn in 1920 (432 km) again did not reflect the principle of ethnic self-determination. The population of the border zone was either Hungarian or mixed (Hungarian, Romanian, German), whereas in the cities of this area (Satu Mare, Oradea, Arad) Hungarian ethnicity was clearly dominant. When the new borders were being designated, it was the interests of the newly aggrandised Romania that were primarily considered including the railways connecting the above-mentioned border zone cities.

Some of the more populous Romanian cities and administrative centres in the border zone lost part of their hinterland while on the Hungarian side large areas remained without a centre.

² Serb–Croat–Slovenian Kingdom 1920–1941, Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic 1945–1992, Yugoslav Federal Republic 1992.

Talking of neutral borders is again out of the question as there is only a 20-km stretch (Makó–Nagylak) where the two countries are separated by the River Maros.

The Second Vienna Decree of 1940 enabled Hungary to reannex Northern Transylvania thus rendering the Hungarian–Romania border ‘natural’ again for it ran along the ridges of the East Carpathian Mountains. However, the peace treaty of 1947 restored the 1920 border.

In the year immediately following World War II the Romanian political leadership showed some willingness to ‘spiritualise’ borders. It did not last long. In the 1950s and 60s both countries as members of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon conformed to the Soviet model of centralisation and standardised co-operation.

Because of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the fear of ‘Hungarian revisionism’ intensified again in Romanian political thinking. The Romanian side began to raise difficulties in the way of cross-border relations. The artificial aggravation of travelling discouraged people in the border zone from visiting neighbouring Hungary.

The change of regime in 1989–90 took place simultaneously in the two countries: in Romania, it took the form of a gory revolution, whereas in Hungary transition was peaceful. This time open, less centralised co-operation could no longer be hindered though ethnic tensions fuelled mainly by Romanian nationalist politicians are present in some areas.

2 The definition and designation of the term ‘border region’

The definition of the area to be studied is a complex process, as we have to decide what we mean by ‘border region’. We also have to decide whether we want to study the border region inside a given country or the one right across from the state frontier defined as symmetrical border region co-operation (transboundary co-operation) or perhaps cross-border co-operation with an undefined neighbouring region (cross border co-operation).

Provided that we define the term ‘border region’ as a contiguous area of settlements along the state frontier, we may exclude areas which, though a long way away from the frontier, influence cross-border relations significantly or which either flourish or stagnate due to the proximity of the state frontier. The designation of border regions, which seems to overlap that of today’s micro-regions, was first proposed by Erdősi (1988).

Pál's and Mrs Szónoky's (1994) is based on traffic and transport. They exclude the settlements already playing an important role in cross-border co-operation (Baja, Kiskunhalas, and Békéscsaba). There was an attempt in the 70s to the spatial designation of Hungarian–Yugoslavian cross-border relations. 'Cross-border communication between cross-border settlements'³ referred to the 20-km wide (administrative) swath east and south of the state frontier (*Ivancsics, I.* 1988). However, to achieve common goals here was far from being plain sailing.

Though different in several aspects, the definition of the North-eastern Great Plain complies with Erdősi's designation. It takes into account quite a number of local, historical, economic and attraction zone characteristics (*Baranyi, B.* et al. 1999). The width of this border region is 15–20 km.

One of the shortcomings of county-level analyses involving counties in border regions is that they encompass too large an area. It is often the case that remote areas do not influence cross-border relations directly. This holds true of the relations of the Carpathian Euroregion and, apparently, of the initiatives of the DKTM Euroregion.

The definition of micro-regions, a category between that of settlements and counties, respectively, sounds somewhat more acceptable though it raises problems similar to those experienced in the case of settlements. Literary definitions support these findings. Hansen (1977) defines the border region as part of natural space, where economic and social life is directly and heavily influenced by the very existence of an international frontier. According to Rechnitzer (1999), the term 'border region' applies to the zones around cities, which either has direct contact of the state frontier (round-the-year, temporary or former frontier stations) or are themselves on the borderline (*Rechnitzer, J.* 1999). Analysing regional and micro-regional development documents with respect to the 'inner' and 'outer' border settlements of the Southern Great Plain, we came upon a great number of examples supporting the above statement. It is in the micro-regions that demand and potential for development, beneficially influenced by cross-border relations, are present. Though this method inherently carries the danger of including border regions 'reaching deep' into inner areas, it may serve as the basis for the definition of symmetrical (often trilateral) border regions as well.

The micro-region based approach cannot, of course, disregard the processes of development and co-operation, which only affect micro-regions indirectly. This can be aptly illustrated by the joint development strategy of the townships in North Vojvodina (Yugoslavia) and the Association of Upper Vojvodina Self-Governments also aiming at the development of non-border self-governments

³ It was meant to serve neighbourly relations, mutually facilitate the travelling of those living in the region and strengthen economic ties.

with Hungarian majority on the Vojvodina side (B. Topola, M. Idjoš, Senta, Ada and Bečej).

In the Hungarian–Romanian border region it is only either counties or townships (cities) that are the pillars of cross-border co-operation. Nevertheless, the theory of the still unofficial term ‘micro-region’ (group of settlements) has already become practice in Salonta (Romania) and the neighbouring settlements. Moreover, the multi-functional cross-border co-operation with the Sarkad micro-region is in the making as well. As, however, no other micro-regions have been designated as yet, we refer to the 44 townships designated by Pál and Mrs Szónoky (1994) as a symmetrical Romanian border region.

Although neither J. Rechnitzer nor Hansen refers to shared border regions in their definitions, practice (the international integration of West-Hungarian border regions) reveals the potential hidden in the co-operation of ‘symmetrical border zones’⁴ carrying the possibility of becoming regions. The establishment of cross-border co-operation as a new form of regional co-operation is boosted by the need for catching-up in the following fields: the transfer of technology, environment protection, area planning and transport. Consequently, these areas are ancillary to integration on the one hand, and the target areas of pro-integration subsidies coming from structural and cohesion funds on the other.

When it comes to studying these ‘mirror regions’ and their operation, it is the definition of the inner boundaries of neighbouring regions that is a big headache. If their administrative system is either the same or similar, the problem is less acutely felt. The Carpathian Euroregion comprises counties (‘oblaszty’), whereas the DKTM Euroregion is made up of border counties as well as the Autonomous Territory of Vojvodina; the latter is a mid-level administrative unit not equivalent to counties.

Unfortunately, the Southern Great Plain and the neighbouring regions on the other side of the state frontier are not symmetrical either economically or administratively for the pace of the change of regime and of the emergence of market economy was strikingly different. On the contrary, they can be described as ‘asymmetrical’.

⁴ Symmetry here means the symmetry from the perspective of market economy.

3 The general characteristics of border regions

The territory⁵ of the border region is 11,677 km² with a population of approximately 650,000.

The largest part of the border region is characterised by the presence of the Danube, the River Tisza and its tributaries (Rivers Körös and Maros) and protected areas lending themselves to the establishment of ecological networks (the so-called 'green corridors') on the one hand, and carrying recreational potential, on the other (*Figure 1*).

The traces of natural flora can only be found in few places for intensive land cultivation has turned into homogenous steppes under human cultivation with vineyards and orchards in the West and arable in the East. Pristine flora used to be parkland steppes. In sandy regions grassland and saline oak forests are rather common, but there are also long stretches of sandy meadows and pastures. Drainage systems constructed as part of complex melioration inflicted huge damage to saline grassland rich in nature treasures; grassland dried out due to decreasing precipitation; patches of forests, alleys and strips of forests were up-rooted. All this contributed to the degradation of ecological corridors.

The protected treasures forming a relatively small part of the region can be found in three ecologically different areas: the Danube (1), Subotica–Kiskunság (Cumenia) (2) and Tisza–Maros–Köröses (3) nature reserves. Despite homogenous nature potentialities, opinions of the condition of protected areas depending on the differing aspects of land cultivation, the activity of nature conservation authorities as well as nature protection investments diverge.

Forming a contiguous area, *the nature reserve along the Danube* is made up of the Danube–Dráva National Park (Gemenc Forest) on the Hungarian side and the areas along the Upper Danube on the Yugoslavian side. The areas on the right bank of the latter, together with Kopácsi Meadow belonging to Croatia, are top priorities of nature protection. The region boasts precious oak, white and black poplar and hornbeam forests.

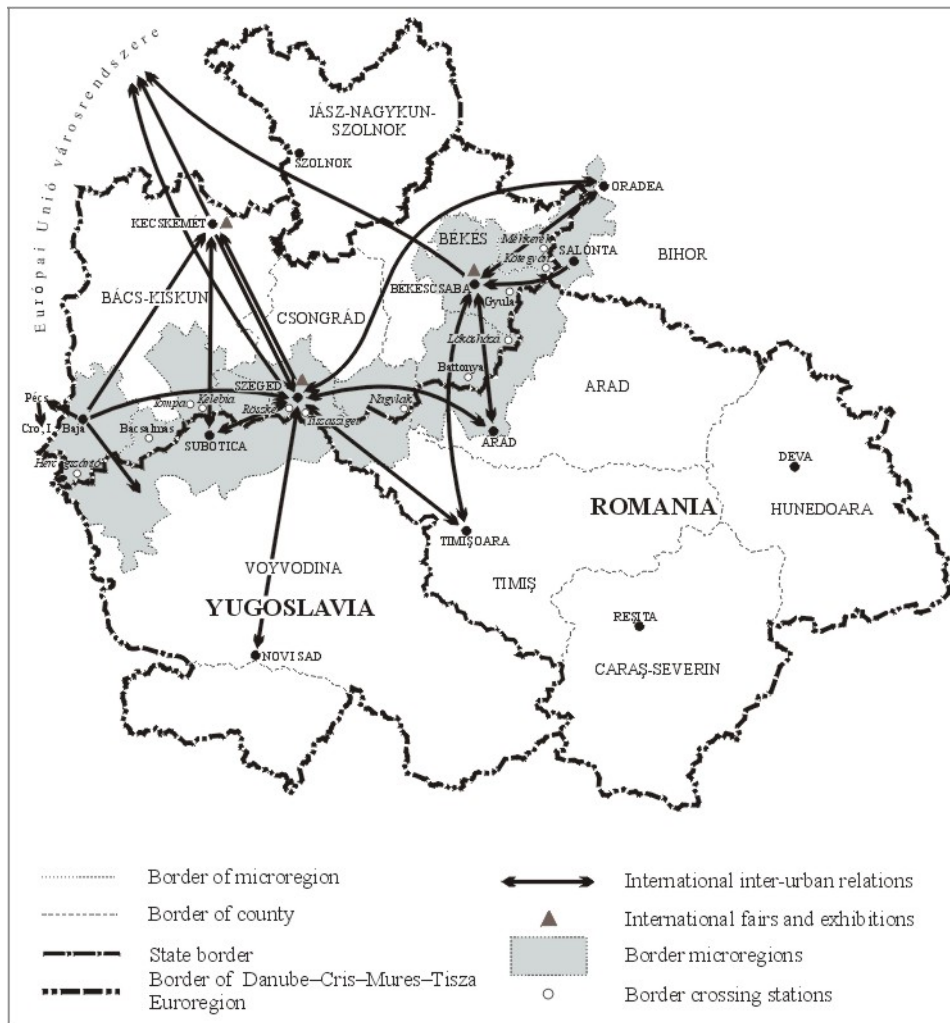
The *Subotica-Kiskunság (Cumenia) Protected Territory* comprises the Subotica Regional Park right next to the Yugoslavian-Hungarian state frontier, the forests of Kelebia, Ásotthalom, Öttömös, Ruzsa, Kiskunhalas and Kiskunmajsa forming contiguous woodland with Subotica Regional Park, the area of the Körös Creak recommended for the status of nature reserve, Palics–Ludas

⁵ The size of the area is computed from that of the small regions on the Hungarian side, the townships on the Yugoslavian one and 44 Romanian border settlements. We relied on Á. Pál and Mrs A. G. Szónoki's designation of the border zone while including the 44 Romanian settlements.

National Park and Szelevény grassland. Unique geomorphology, the role of forests in binding sand and recreational potential outside cities combine to justify the need for this area to be declared protected.

Figure 1

Situation of the border region of the Southern Great Plain within the DKTM Euroregion



Source: Regional Development of the Southern Great Plain.

Table 1

*The structure and categories of protected areas in the border regions
of Hungary–Yugoslavia and Hungary–Romania, respectively*

Categories protected	Name	Number	Size
Protected treasures of nature in Hungary			
National parks (total)			17,653.0
Danube–Dráva NP	Béda-Karapanca		1,290.0
Körös–Maros NP	Csanádi puszta ('grassland')		3,270.0
Körös–Maros NP	the floodland of the River Maros		421.0
Körös–Maros NP	Biharugra NP		7,899.0
Körös–Maros NP	Szabadkígyós NP		4,773.0
Nature reserves			
Directorate of Kiskunság NP	Ásotthalom fen		94.9
Directorate of Kiskunság NP	Thimble habitat in Bácsalmás		4.0
Bogárzói meadow	Ásotthalom		460.0
Fehérnyáras (white poplar) Forest	Ásotthalom		17.0
Süveg–Magyari Forest	Ásotthalom		17.4
Rívó Forest	Ásotthalom		9.5
Plantation forest	Ásotthalom		2.0
Protected areas (total)			18,257.8
Protected areas in Yugoslavia (total)		42	91,574.0
National parks		1	25,393.0
Regional parks		8	28,375.0
Special nature reserves		1	29,352.0
Reserves for scientific research		4	1,815.0
Heavily protected areas		25	17,827.0
Parkland, look-out towers		3	511.0
Protected areas in Romania (total)			9,322.2
Bihar County			966.2
Arad County			8,356.0
Protected areas (total)			119,154.0

Source: Priroda Vojvodine, PZZP, and Directorate of Körös–Maros National Park and Directorate of Kiskunság National Park.

The extensive, patchwork-like yet contiguous protected area of *Rivers Tisza–Maros–Körös* in the Hungarian–Romanian border region in the Southern Great Plain consists of the island-like areas of the ecological (green) corridors between the Rivers Tisza and Körös (Körös–Maros National Park) and the protected

contiguous area along the River Maros (Arad Nature Conservation Agency). In addition, we also have to include the area along the Tisza in Vojvodina (Nature Conservation Institute of Serbia) (see Table 1). The dendrological parks in the settlements along the Romanian border and the protected areas of swamp-oak woodland are important from the aspect of preserving biological diversity. The creation of shared habitats in the Biharugra–Körösszeg area is being planned the Nature Conservation Agency of Nagyvárad (Oradea) and the Directorate of Körös–Maros National Park.

In terms of percentage Hungary's protected areas account for 15%, Yugoslavia's 77.2% and Romania's 7.8% in the territorial structure of the border region.

3.1 Demography

Demographic data show that the majority of border regions were the core regions of considerable emigration until the 1990s. Therefore, we are now facing the general ageing of the population as well as falling birth and rising death rates.

In the micro-regions in the border zones of the Southern Great Plain the period between 1990 and 1999 saw falling birth and rising deaths rates, with an average – 3.0% in Sarkad and – 9.4% in Mezőkovácsháza. These figures were computed from the rate of migration accounting for a 0.2‰ compared to the number of the population in the Southern Great Plain, the –0.6‰ decrease in the small regions of Sarkad and Mezőkovácsháza as well as the + 4.5 ‰ increase in the small region of Mórahalom. Though the small regions of Mórahalom, Szeged, Baja and Békéscsaba show migration surplus, demographic fall could not be stopped there, either.

Relying on the results of *Bajmóczy–Kovács* (1999), we might be surprised at the fact that there is no significant correlation between the distance from the frontier and the balance of migration. The balance of migration in the zones immediately on the border was better in the 1990s thanks to County Csongrád, where the balance of the border zone was in the black. It is the settlements here, which have the largest annual migration gain (8.5‰ per year) (Table 2).

The pace of sub-urbanization on the *Yugoslavian side* was moderate in all the four settlements until the 1980s. The cities along the state frontier were only able to increase their population in the late 70s. Before that, they had been in a disadvantageous situation resulting from the proximity of the frontier. Since the 1990s, owing to war migration and settlement, the process has changed considerably, so much so that it is now hard to keep track of it. Because of the negative trends in population growth, population has been decreasing. It was 1‰ in Vojvodina and much higher than that in the townships of Northern Vojvodina in 1991.

Table 2

The general characteristics of the territorial units of the border regions

Small regions (H) Townships (Yu) Cities (R)	Size	Number of settle- ments	Number of cities	Population 1999	Number of refugees ⁶ 1991–1995	Density of population person/km ²
Bajai H	1,911	20	1	76,387		63
Bácsalmási H	381	8	1	18,098		47
Kiskunhalasi H	826	9	1	46,678		56
Mórahalmi H	412	6	1	16,829		41
Szegedi H	876	15	1	202,794		231
Makói H	704	17	1	50,035		71
Mezőkovácsh. H	934	19	1	47,398		51
Békéscsabai H	1,416	17	1	164,248		116
Sarkadi H	547	11	1	26,419		48
Zombor Yu	1,178	16	1	96,105*	25,311	83
Szabadka Yu	1,007	19	1	1,50,534*	4,091	149
Magyarkanizsa Yu	401	13	1	30,668*	905	77
Törökkanizsa Yu	305	9	1	13,816*	986	45
Sinnicolau Mare R	200		1	13,083		65
Nadlac R	160		1	8,458		52
Curtici R	100		1	8,146		81
Chişineu-Criş R	117		1	15,000		128
Salonta R	170		1	26,600		156

Source: Communities in Republic of Serbia 1997, Hungary's small regions – Southern Great Plain (Central Bureau of Statistics).

* 1991 census figures.

After 1991, however, inner migration resulted in an increase in the population of Vojvodina though its spatial structure has not yet been accurately described owing to lack of available data. The number of ethnic Hungarians has, however, been decreasing both in proportion and by absolute standards: the present number (335,000) will hardly reach 200,000 in 2001 (*Mirnic, K. 1996*). This fact can be further illustrated by the decrease in the number of ethnic Hungarian students going to primary school in Vojvodina. The number of those enrolling was 1,550

⁶ The number of the refugees shown in Table 2 must be taken with a pinch of salt, for these figures do not include the number of temporary emigrants.

less in the academic year of 2000/2001 than in 1999/2000. This tendency can mainly be seen in the townships in the vicinity of the state frontier (Subotica: 564 students) (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Changes in the population of the townships in the Yugoslavian and Romanian border regions

Year	Voyvodina	Townships in Sombor	Townships in Subotica	Townships in Kanjiža	Township in Novi Kneževac
1971	1,950 mill.	98,008	146,773	33,817	16,509
1981	2,034 mill.	99,168	154,611	32,709	15,026
1991	2,013 mill.	96,105	150,534	30,688	13,816
1971/81 (‰)	4,1	1,1	5,2	-3,3	-9,4
1981/91 (‰)	-1,0	-3,1	-2,7	-6,4	-8,4

Source: Opstine u Republici Srbiji 1997.

Ethnic Hungarians in Voyvodina have kept their cultural identity though, due to assimilation, it has been slightly affected by Southern Slavic influences. Literary trends in Voyvodina are complementary with that of the mainland ones. Unfortunately, the number of Hungarian departments and lecturers⁷ at colleges and universities decreased in the 1990s. Only the colleges and universities in Subotica have a few Hungarian departments.⁸

The number of ethnic Serbs in Hungary dropped from 7,031 in 1930 to 2,953 in 1990. The majority (1,300 persons) of ethnic Serbs live on the boundary of the counties in the Southern Great Plain (e.g. Deszk, Battonya), the rest in Pest and Baranya Counties.

The density of the population of mixed ethnicity and with a high proportion of ethnic Hungarians in the *Romanian counties* bordering on the Southern Great Plain region is higher than the national average. However, out of the border zone settlements inhabited by Romanians, it is only in Salonta and its environs, Variasu Mare, Iratosu, Dobornati, Pordenau and Cherestur that ethnic Hungarians form a majority. Mixed marriages, too, are the most common here. Unfavourable demographic tendencies (high infant mortality and decrease of population) are

⁷ In the 70s students were allowed to take their examinations in Hungarian if their Serb-speaking tutors spoke Hungarian.

⁸ Faculties of Economics, Architecture and Pedagogy of Subotica University.

offset with a high number of immigrants, as this area is the most popular destination of migration in the country.

The rapid depopulation of small villages, especially the ones in the mountains, was further hastened by the industrial policy of the previous regime. Therefore, the county seats in the vicinity of the state frontier concentrate 90% of industrial production and 80% of the tertiary sector (health care, culture and higher education). Centres of development, they are also the destination of long-distance migration.

3.2 The economic problems of the border zone

The region presents mainly uniform features with a homogenous climate and flat lands with excellent potentials for agricultural cultivation. The homogeneity of nature and geography – an inheritance from the past – and the divided identity and regional consciousness has always defined the necessity of regional co-operation.

The micro-regions of Baja and Bácsalmás in the west of the Great Plain have a favourite climate and outstanding agricultural productivity while the small region of Kiskunhalas with its dominant sandy topsoil is endangered by the constant sinking of the groundwater table (the eastern part of the small region of Baja and Kiskunhalas). The transformation of the structure of land ownership has not been completed yet. There are a great number of ‘mock’ enterprises (small-time businesses set up to avoid unemployment) struggling with a shortage of capital, which hinders the productivity of farming. The partial lack of processing industries and inadequacies in marketing and sales can also be mentioned here as drawbacks in the west of the border zone.

Along with agriculture the region is possessed of several resources (oil, food processing, timber, metal processing, engineering and what remained of textile industry) now being gradually replaced by the growth of the tertiary sector as well as the so-called quaternary sector (universities and colleges, research and information technology). These new industries may kick-start a new boom in the region.

The transformation following the change of regime was fast, thoroughgoing and extensive, comprehending the whole of economy. The reorganisation and restructuring of economy led to an increased number of economic players, new enterprises, joint ventures and foreign investments. On the other hand, however, job losses created mass unemployment (*Table 4*).

Table 4

Foreign investments in the micro-regions

Micro-regions	Number of businesses	Number of employees	Subscribed capital (in million HUF)	Share of foreign investments (in million HUF)
Bajai	186	2,957	4,891	4,336
Bácsalmási	10	94	46	45
Kiskunhalasi	66	516	642	302
Mórahalmi	16	20	17	16
Szegedi	1,069	13,361	74,190	57,438
Makói	27	651	734	705
Mezőkovácsházai	10	251	179	144
Békéscsabai	164	4,304	8,564	6,131
Sarkadi	4	5	6	6

Sources: Hungary's micro-regions, South Plain (Central Bureau of Statistics).

Between 1990 and 1997 the number of industrial employees per 1,000 inhabitants fell by over 50% in the micro-regions of Kiskunhalas, Mórahalom and Sarkad. In 1997, the least industrialised of all the micro-regions in the South Plain were those of Mórahalom, Mezőkovácsháza and Sarkad.

As regards the *density of businesses* in the South Plain, the average number of enterprises per 1,000 inhabitants is 70, 9 less than the national average. This value in County Csongrád (81) exceeds the regional average and it is only the micro-region that transcends the regional average. That of Baja can only approximate it.

The comparison of the density of businesses and *the incomes forming the basis of income taxes* clearly shows that the frequency of enterprises does not necessarily entail the growth of economic strength. Though Szeged takes first place on the strength of both indices, some regions have fallen back (Baja from 3rd to 8th place, Kiskunhalas from 5th to 6th and Mórahalom from 19th to 21st), while others have risen (Békéscsaba from 4th to 3rd, Makó from 17th to 14th, Mezőkovácsháza from 20th to 17th, Bácsalmás from 20th to 18th and Sarkad from the last place to 20th).

In the area we studied, the rate of the registered unemployed among active earners was 12.2% in the micro-region of Szeghalom in December 1998 and 4.5% in the Kiskunhalas region. In the majority of micro-regions, however, unemployment was diminishing compared to January 1997.

Industrial parks along the borders examined here (Mórahalom, Szeged, Makó and Gyula) are meant to mitigate ill-proportioned territorial development and unemployment as well as industrial restructuring and production and export growth. The Agrarian-Industrial Park of Mórahalom attempted to attract Yugoslavian businesses too through immediate marketing activity. Restricted economic communication has, however, so far hindered the appearance of Yugoslavian firms in the Industrial Park. (Only two applicants have presented themselves, one from Szabadka and another from Čačak in Serbia.)

The inhabitants of small regions have naturally attached high hopes to *tourism* as an alternative source of living. Owing to restrictive measures, however, visitors from neighbouring Yugoslavian areas cannot be counted on (*Table 5*). Only Szeged's shopping centres seem to draw a certain circle of Yugoslav customers. The good news is that recently the natural, cultural and folkloristic treasures of the region, not to speak of its gastronomy and wines, have been discovered and charted, exciting not only the interest of transit visitors but also laying the foundation of target tourism (the aquatic potentials of Baja and Szeged, thermal and medicinal tourism in Gyula, Dávod and Kiskunhalas, the open-air theatre of Szeged). The development of basic infrastructure of tourism (accommodation) may back up the development of small regions as is shown by the excellent examples of Puztamérges and Ruzsa. In addition, a frontier station serves every small region, except Mórahalom. (Mórahalom is 14 km from the frontier station of Rösztke.)

Table 5

Indicators of tourism in border zone micro-regions

Micro-regions	Accommodation	Duration of stay in days per 1,000 inhabitants
Bajai	1823	680
Bácsalmási	23	43
Kiskunhalasi	1427	509
Mórahalomi	70	111
Szegedi	5617	1305
Makói	554	111
Mezőkovácsházai	61	95
Békéscsabai	3628	1630
Sarkadi	38	29

Sources: Hungary's small regions, South Plain CBS 2000.

3.3 Public utilities

The rate of households supplied with gas heating is lowest in the small regions of Mórahalom (42.9%) and Bácsalmás (51.4% whereas that of sanitation, waste disposal, exceeds 50 only in the small region of Szeged. The unfavourable condition of public utilities therefore indicates a definitely underdeveloped infrastructure of waste disposal and treatment⁹ (Table 6). The network of built roads in the inner areas of settlements is of middling length and this deficiency coupled with the scarcity of green areas may adversely affect air pollution or may indirectly lead to increased noise pollution.

Table 6

Indicators of public utilities in micro-regions (1999)

Micro-regions	Public utilities		Number of passenger cars per 1,000 inhabitants	Number of telephones per 1,000 inhabitants (1998)
	Percentage of flats with water supply	Percentage of flats with sewerage		
Baja	95,7	29,4	232	306
Bácsalmás	88,4	2,4	207	266
Kiskunhalas	85,1	23,7	231	255
Mórahalom	53,2	16,4	232	188
Szeged	94,3	55,7	244	400
Makó	93,3	9,5	178	282
Mezőkovácsháza	80,3	9,5	152	237
Békéscsaba	90,1	37,8	217	300
Sarkad	81,6	28,5	151	210

Sources: Hungary's micro-regions, South Plain, CBS, 2000.

In terms of the *development* of micro regions¹⁰ it is only the region of Szeged that shows dynamic growth. Baja and Kiskunhalas are catching up whereas Bácsalmás and Mórahalom are stagnating.

The border zone of Vojvodina has always been an advanced area of Yugoslavia, even in the time of Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic.¹¹ The best indicators of its development are those of different industries until the end of the 1980s:

⁹ The rate of flats with water supply and sewerage.

¹⁰ Based on the data and different methodologies of the Hungarian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

¹¹ Vojvodina was the third most advanced administrative unit after Slovenia and Croatia. Today the most advanced administrative unit with lower unemployment and higher gross national product.

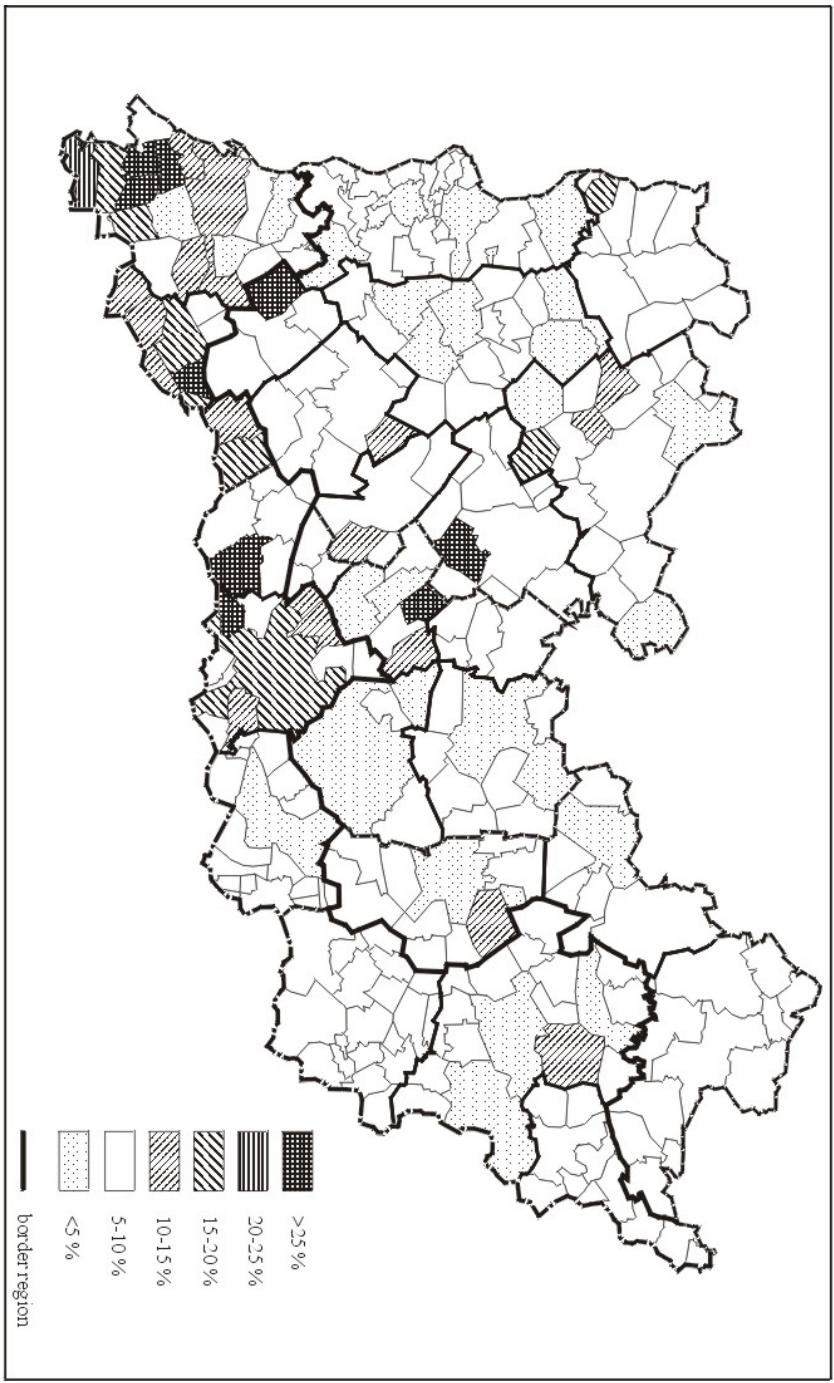
Subotica with its concentration of chemicals, electric engineering and food processing, Sombor with food processing and Kanjiža as a focus of ceramics and building materials. Kanjiža was noted for its paper and cardboard manufacturing. In the circumstances of present-day economic slump these industries are now just vegetating and only the ones granted government subsidies could claim some kind of success. On the other hand, the number of private enterprises has increased in the tertiary sector and their significant numerical growth can already be felt in cities, especially Subotica.

Thanks to the change of regime facilitating the setting up of foreign businesses 2.6% of all the foreign enterprises in Hungary were registered in Szeged with an astonishingly high percentage of such businesses established by Hungarian-speaking Yugoslav citizens constituting a 34.3% share of Yugoslav interests here (*Mrs Szónoky, 1999*). The majority of the founders arrived from nearby cities in Vojvodina, mainly from Subotica, Senta, Sombor, Kanjiža, Ada and Novi Sad (*Figure 2*). The surprisingly high number of these enterprises can be explained partly by the escape of capital from wartime Serbia and partly by the opportunity of thus obtaining permit of residency. Small businesses with a minimal seed capital ceased to exist after the lifting of embargo and the resolution of military conflict. The founders, draft dodger in Serbia, were granted amnesty and mostly returned to Vojvodina. However, as the economic situation remained discouraging even after the lifting of the embargo, emigration continued and more and more Yugoslav citizens purchased real estate, especially in Szeged. High school students 'trickled' into Szeged and Baja hoping for safer education. This process culminated in the months of NATO air strikes. The latest changes apparently guiding Yugoslavia back into the European organisations and the lifting of the embargo on the Hungarian side may presumably result in the improvement of co-operation between the border zone areas.

There have been considerable changes on the Yugoslavian side of the border zone. Local residents usually visited the Palics and Ludas Lakes, the recreational areas of the population of Subotica and Kanjiža. People, however, who used to spend their summer holidays on the Adriatic, now settle for the modest tourist capacities of their home country. Target tourism avoided this region owing to the protracted war. With the construction of Subotica–Beograd, motorway 'tourism' generated by guest workers in transit from West Europe races on towards Belgrade. Tourism along the Danube (Sombor and environs) also fell drastically because of the nearness of the Croat–Yugoslav border.

As for public utilities, the gas supply project initiated in the 1980s has considerably diminished communal air pollution (Subotica, Kanjiža and Horgoš). Sewage systems can be found in the cities but waste treatment leaves a lot to be desired.

Figure 2
Yugoslav enterprises in the settlements of the Southern Great Plain
(number of Yugoslav enterprises/number of local enterprises), 1999



Source: Mrs. Szonolc, 1999.

Symmetrical border zones (small regions and settlements) present a varied picture from the point of view of development. Although Vojvodina is still the most advanced territory of Serbia, every comparison is illusory, as it should set side by side the market economy of the Hungarian border zone and Serbian economy still in its infancy and devastated by war.

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia (1991), there was a downturn in economy. The GDP per capita was around 1,200 USD in 1996, 1,000 USD in 1997 and fell to 900 USD later (Lower than the Albanian average.)

Recent statistical survey put the GDP per capita at 1,275 USD.¹² Other sources suggest a drastic shrinking of production in Serbia: in 1999 GDP amounted to only 10 billion US, half of that of Slovenia or Croatia. Income from foreign trade was below 3 billion USD compared to Slovenia's six fold and Croatia's fourfold incomes (*Table 7*).

Table 7

GDP per capita (in thousand dinars/USD)

Gross national product	Voyvodina	Sombor	Subotica	Kanjiža	Novi Kneževac
	1,275 USD (28/7/2000 data)				
1989					
1995		4,707.0	4,970.0	5,755	6,302.0
1996		8,480.0	8,751.0	10,759	10,309.0
Compared to Serb average/1996 Serbia = 100		159.7	164.8	206	194.2
Net earnings 1,000 din		616.0	653.0	807	708.0

Sources: Magyar Szó (Hungarian Voice), 28 July 2000.

Unemployment figures exceeding 30% can be accounted for by the impact of the Yugoslav war on economy as well as the backwardness of Yugoslav economy. These figures may even be higher as surveys are unreliable and superficial. According to 1996, statistics employment figures are under 20% in Vojvodina (Sombor 9.2%, Subotica 12.9%, Kanjiža 11% and Novi Kneževac 6.3%).

The townships on the Yugoslavian side could be *ranked* according to GDP per capita. Yugoslavian dinar (JUD) has been inflated continuously. Its pegged official rate of exchange does not reflect true fluctuation; thus, its actual purchasing power is hard to follow even if it is expressed in terms of USD. Out of the 190

¹² Magyar Szó (Hungarian Voice), July 27, 2000 referring to the data of the Office of Economy.

township falling into one of the following three categories, 'backward', 'less developed' and 'developed', 4 along the state are high above Serb average (Kanjiža ranked as 10, Novi Kneževac as 12, Subotica township as 19 and Sombor township as 22 in 1997).

Rich in various *natural resources*, the 85% of the *Romanian border region* are fit for agricultural use. Crude oil, natural gas and mineral and thermal water are the most important subterranean resources. Mountainous areas are ideal for fruit production and wine growing. Forestry is of great importance, too. Bauxite, non-ferrous and precious metal, building materials and, to a lesser extent, brown coal are mined in the mountains.

The area is rich in watercourses, which, following the slopes of the terrain, reach their catchments river, the River Tisza in Hungary. The management of the watercourses intersecting the state frontier has been top priority in border relations for decades.

Good as it is compared to the national average, *employment structures* exhibit negative tendencies. The majority of active earners work in agriculture, the rest either in the industry or in the tertiary sector. Family farming gaining ground, it is the privatisation of agriculture, which is the most advanced. However, this has led to a lower lever of productivity. The most important agricultural products are grain, industrial plants, pig and cattle.

The decreasing production of capital-intensive plants like sunflower, sugar beet and hemp, which can only be grown cost-effectively on a large-scale, has led to the decline of certain branches of food and light industry (e.g. textile industry, sugar beet processing industry, confectionery, etc).

Industrial production is rather varied in the region: several important industries like engineering industry, electronics, textile and shoe industry, food industry and the production of building materials are present. As we have already remarked, industrial production can be characterised by a high degree of concentration. As a result of the protracted restructuring of industrial production and uncertainties about privatisation, we are witnessing very low industrial productivity further aggravated by unused capacities.

The development of the *tertiary sector*, especially that of banking and financing, legal and commercial services, is very dynamic.

Business services operate within a newly decentralised network; however, owing to urban concentration, their accessibility varies within the region.

Romania's GDP compared to Hungary's (+ 5.1%) is decreasing (- 7.3 %). After manifold economic restructuring the GDP per capita in 1999 stood at \$1, 540, three times less than in Hungary (\$ 4,542). Inflation is three times higher there (40.6%) than in Hungary (14.1%), and there is a considerable difference between the two countries in terms of industrial growth, too. The period between

1992 and 1997 saw a + 12 % rise in Hungary and a – 17 % fall in Romania. The lack of adequate legislation, underdeveloped banking and the serious economic situation as well as the economic and financial crises in the neighbouring countries (e. g in Russia) combine to result in the situation outlined above.

After the change of regime living standards in Romania increased conspicuously in terms of the quality of life. The parity of purchasing power from the aspect of GDP per capita changed favourably in both Romania and Hungary: \$ 6,600 and \$ 9,300, respectively (1996). Though the difference is slight, remarkable shopping tourism efficiently handled by the Hungarian commercial network can be seen in the border region settlements.

Unemployment figures here are well below the national average (10.3%). Both the unemployed and those in employment are more business-minded and more interested in retraining programmes here than anywhere else is.

The *privatisation* trends of the border region are similar to the national ones, i.e. import and industry mostly remain a state monopoly. Privatisation in other sectors is more advanced. Private capital is mainly present in small businesses.

Foreign investment targets domestic and foreign trade, the tertiary sector and construction industry. They are followed by mining and processing industry. Hungary ranks fifth among the countries investing in the border region. Like other countries, it mainly invests in commerce, too (*Table 8–9*).

Mountainous areas and historical cities in the regions are favourite tourist destinations becoming increasingly popular. The expertise of those working in tourist industry and the quality of services they provide must be raised to ensure further development.

Public utilities still leave a lot to be desired. The quality of communication infrastructure is worse than in Hungary and well below European standards. The accessibility of the main lines from rural areas is extremely bad.

Table 8

Romanian investors in Hungary

Territorial distribution	Number of Romanian companies	%
Total	1 954	100
Budapest	1 125	57,6
Békés	33	1,7
Csongrád	69	3,5
Hajdú-Bihar	55	2,8
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	23	1,2
The 4 counties combined	180	9,2

Source: Terra Stúdió Kft.

Table 9

Hungarian investors in Romania

	Hungarian investors			
	Number of companies		Capital investment	
	Number	%	Million USD	%
Total/ Romania	2712	100.00	84.5	100.00
Total/ without Bucharest	2581	95.20	43.3	51.30
Total/the 4 border region counties	894	33.00	9.4	11.20
Arad County	164	6.00	1.42	1,70
Bihar County	492	18.10	5.29	6.27
Satu Mare County	147	5.40	1.13	1.34
Timis County	91	3.40	1.56	1.85

Source: Terra Stúdió Kft.

4 Co-operation along the border between the South Plain and the border-zone regions of the neighbouring countries

4.1 Spatial relations in the border region

The 16 cities in the border zone are practically evenly spread over the territory although their attractions are significantly varied and complex owing to their different roles in administrative hierarchies. The Hungarian side is divided between the attraction zones of Baja, Szeged, Kiskunhalas, Makó, Gyula, Békéscsaba and Sarkad.

Baja's attraction zone spreads to three small regions: its own and that of Bácsalmás and Croatian Baranya, respectively. Sombor with its shopping tourism further extends this attraction zone.

In the middle of the region Szeged is dominant spreading out its attraction zone well into Yugoslavia and Romania. It has encompassed the Subotica–Kanjiza–Becej–Novi Knezevac area (2,500 km² in Northern Vojvodina) evidenced not only by the daily shuttling of shoppers and the number of joint ventures but also by its role as the educational and medical centre of the region for high school and university students as well as patients coming over from

Yugoslavia for education and treatment, respectively. Thus the bilateral spatial relations of the border zone are determined by the attraction of city functions, the communication lines and the availability of frontier crossing stations (*Figure 1*).

The southern part of Romania's border region (Arad, Timișoara [Temesvár] and environs) also belong to the gravitation zone of Szeged attested by ever increasing tourism despite the fact that there is only one international frontier station between Szeged. Counties Arad and Timis has no direct connection with County Csongrád.

4.2 Border traffic

Road traffic is served by 6 international, 1 temporary and 5 'micro region' frontier stations.¹³

In road traffic along the border passenger cars are dominant. The number of scheduled bus connections with Szeged is the highest. Subotica and Szeged are connected by 4 long-distance buses a day. Also, Tisza Bus Company maintains a 5-bus service between Szeged and the frontier station of Rösztke. Becej and Szeged are connected by 2, Senta and Szeged 3, Zrenjanin and Szeged 1 buses per day, to and back. Between Sombor and Baja 2 buses run every day, to and back. In addition, there is a busline connecting Budapest and Subotica via Kecskemét and a twice-weekly between Békéscsaba and Subotica. As to Romania, there are only two buses per day from Szeged to Arad, a twice weekly to Timișoara (Temesvár) and another scheduled twice-weekly connecting Békéscsaba and Arad. Those living in these areas can also use long-distance buses not immediately serving border zones. (Budapest–Targu Mures [Marosvásárhely], Szeged–Miercurea Ciuc [Csíkszereda], Szeged–Gheorgheni [Gyergyószentmiklós], Szeged–Targu Mures, etc.).

Railroad traffic on the border (*Table 10*) is served on the Budapest–Beograd line (frontier station Subotica–Kelebia) by 6 trains a day, to and back. Traffic on the Subotica–Szeged railroad line is at present limited to 2 trains a day, to and back, owing to the reconstruction of tracks.¹⁴ As regards Romania, 7 trains a day run between Budapest and Bucharest,¹⁵ which can be used by those living in the border zone (Békéscsaba–Lökösháza–Curtici).

¹³ Frontier stations with limited passage (only for Hungarian and Yugoslav citizens between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.).

¹⁴ Reconstruction is under way on the Yugoslavian side.

¹⁵ The scheduled Ister Euronight EuroCity between Bucharest and Budapest made up of sleeping cars only stops the frontier.

Table 10

Types of frontier stations in the South Plain region

Frontier stations	State frontier	Type of communication
Hercegszántó– Backi Breg [Béreg]	H–YU	International, road, without freightage
Bácsalmás–Bajmok	H–YU	Bilateral, road, 8.00–16.00 (18.00)*
Tompa–Kelebija [Kelebia]	H–YU	International, road
Kelebia–Szabadka	H–YU	International, railroad
Röszke–Horgoš [Horgos],	H–YU	International, road
Röszke–Horgoš [Horgos],	H–YU	Railroad
Tiszaziget–Djula [Gyála],	H–YU	Bilateral, road, 8.00–16.00 (18.00)*
Kiszombor–Cenad [Csanád],	H–YU	Bilateral, road
Nagylak–[Nádlac]	H–RO	International, road
Battonya–Turnu [Tornya]	H–RO	International, road, without freightage
Lökosháza–Curtici [Kürtös]	H–RO	International, railroad
Dombegyház–Variașu Mic [Kisvarjas]	H–RO	Restricted communication, road
Gyula–Vârșand [Gyulavarsánd]	H–RO	International, road
Méhkerék–Salonta [Nagyszalonta]	H–RO	Micro-region, railroad
Méhkerék–Salonta [Nagyszalonta]	H–RO	International, road
Körösnagyharsány–Cheresig [Körösszeg]	H–RO	Restricted communication, road
Elek–Graniceri [Ottlaka]	H–RO	Restricted communication, road

Source: Directorates of Frontier Guards of Kiskunhalas and Orosháza,

Before the establishment of the Trianon borders some other railroad lines (Sombor-Backi Breg, Szeged–Subotica–Bácsalmás–Baja, Szeged-Banatsko Arandjelovo–Kikinda–Timișoara) too played an important part in traffic. Some stretches of the near-the-border tracks were, however, destroyed and their renewed use would require their revitalisation.

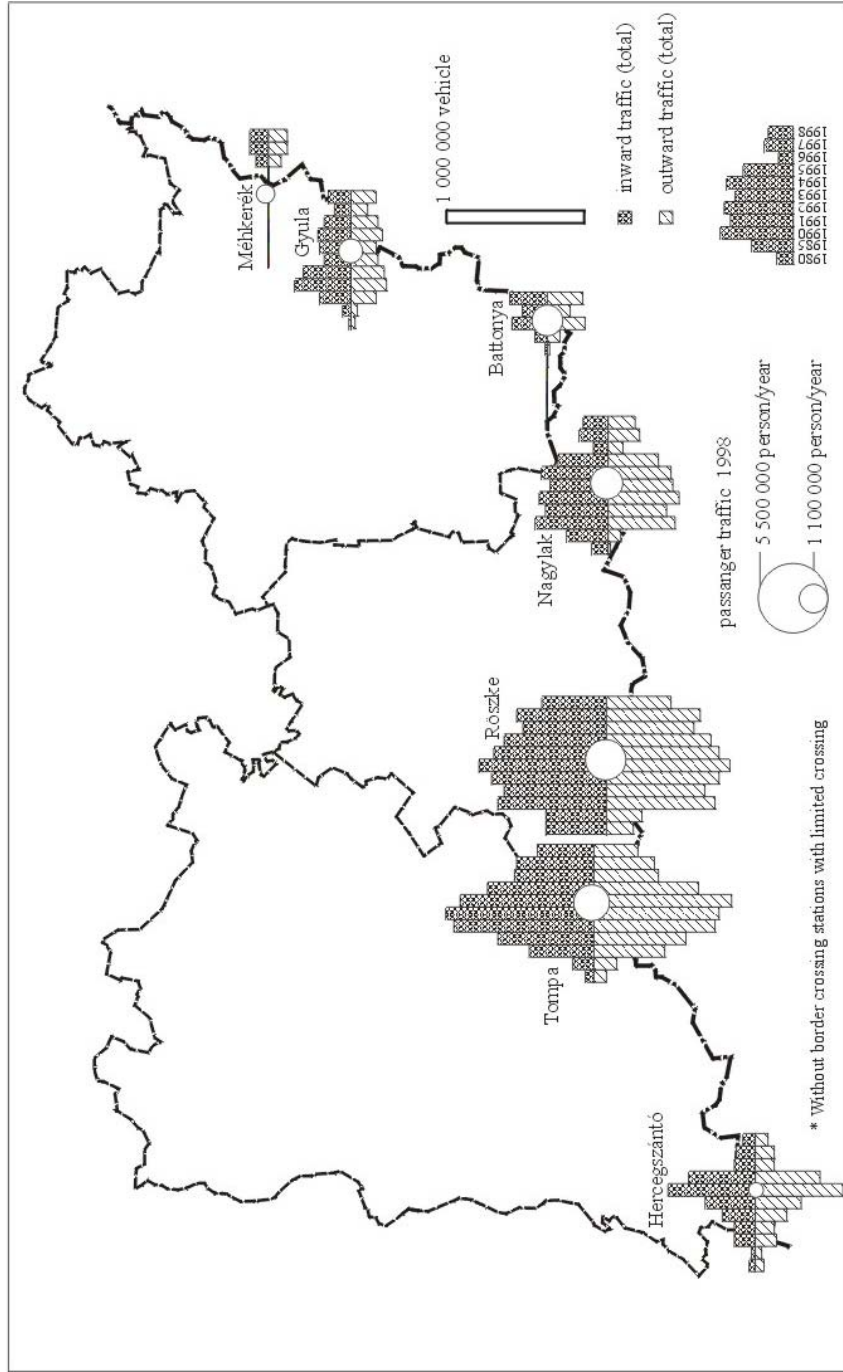
Bezdan (YU) on the Danube and Szeged and Kanjiža (YU) on the Tisza serve as river frontier stations for steamers, but the traffic they handle is insignificant.

The Bezdan–Batina Bridge ensures the immediate connection between North Bácska and Croatian Baranya thereby shortening transportation between Vojvodina and County Baranya (Pécs, Mohács) as well. Since the establishment of the new borders (Republic of Croatia) it has been doubling as a frontier station as well.

From the 60s, the intensity of traffic has been increasing. In some cases, however, restrictions resulting from the uncertainties in the domestic and economies of the two countries limit the crossing of the border (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3

Changes in the motorcar traffic between 1980 and 1999



Source: author edited by ROAD-TECH data.

In the composition of passenger traffic, the rate of Yugoslav citizens is around 65–70% that of Hungarians 15–20% while other foreign citizens account for the rest (10–15%). The majority of Yugoslav citizens are guest workers in Western Europe. At the frontier stations of Bácsalmás and Tiszaliget the composition of passenger traffic may be put at 50–50%.

80–90% of Hungarian visitors crossing the border go to Yugoslavia to buy fuel, cigarettes and drinks. The rate of Yugoslav citizens living in the border zone and coming to Hungary makes up 10–15% of the total Yugoslavian passenger traffic (owing to the ‘border-crossing duty’ they have to pay).

The traffic of all the frontier stations is determined by Yugoslav guest workers in the West travelling home (and back) at weekends. Hungarian citizens cross the border daily to fill their tanks with cheap Yugoslavian petrol. On the other hand, Yugoslavian citizens regularly visit our country on workdays in order to purchase food, durables and electric goods. The most important centres of shopping are Szeged and Baja in Hungary and Subotica and Sombor on the other side of the border.

An additional special feature Szeged is the large number of college and university students from Yugoslavia travelling home and back and the numerous ethnic Hungarian immigrants from Serbia visiting relatives at home.

There is no temporary border-crossing station on land. In 1995 a temporary station was opened between Gara and Ridjica where passenger traffic ran to 300–400 per day at the time. Since then new applications for opening additional frontier stations have been handed in.

In the history of frontier crossing several restrictive measures are known to have been taken, which affected – and still affect – free entry to the other country.

As a member state of the Warsaw Pact Hungary restricted entry to Yugoslavia for its citizens until the 1980s. Although this regulation was more liberal than in the case of travelling to the West, but certainly stricter than in passenger traffic with other East European countries.

The fast liberalisation of travel in Yugoslavia (the introduction of ‘world passport’) encouraged shopping tourism and launched an unprecedented shopping offensive toward Hungary thereby endangering the (public) supply of Hungarian citizens in the border zone with the consequence that Yugoslavian (later West European) citizens were compelled to peg their currencies. There was a period when entries to Hungary were also limited except for persons possessed of exemption (around 1983).

As part of their restrictions in economic policy, Yugoslav authorities introduced the system of collecting ‘border-crossing duty’ (1994-October, 2000)

amounting to 200 YUD (cca 870 HUF)¹⁶ per car. The duty was rather severe compared to average earnings in Yugoslavia and depended on the black market exchange rate of YUD to DEM. This restriction hindered the entry of Yugoslav citizens to Hungary. While in 1993 passenger traffic stood at 20 million at the crossing stations of Kiskunhalas Directorate of Frontier Guards, the number has fallen back to a yearly average of 4.5–5.5% million since then. With recent changes in Yugoslavia, these regulations have been abolished.

The Kiskunhalas Directorate of Frontier Guards has established organised connections with the corresponding Yugoslav authorities working in joint committees. Monthly talks are held on border traffic and other related issues.

Schengen norms at present do not yet affect travel in the border zones. One thing is, however, certain: with Hungary's accession to EU the Hungarian-Yugoslav border section will be one of the most heavily guarded outer borders of Schengen countries. Yugoslav citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, will not be allowed to enter Hungary's territory without a Schengen visa. Then the so-called 'small-border traffic' may again come into prominence allowing entry without visa in a limited border zone.

The introduction of compulsory visas may influence transit tourism thus adversely affecting area development. In our opinion, if Yugoslavia takes political and economic steps in the right direction and seeks good relationships with West Europe, it may ensure unprecedented opportunities for the development of economic relations between the two countries.

Though these restrictions and custom regulations may temporarily restrict border traffic, the black market of currencies will presumably find a way to warrant a living or income supplement for those living off cross-border trade.

With the change of regime in Hungary and the liberalisation of trade, smuggling became a profitable 'business'. The main form of 'export' from here is getting cars stolen in Hungary out of the country either at the frontier stations or avoiding them ('green border'). As this section of the border became the gate of 'East and West', 'import' takes the form of smuggling humans (illegal migration from the Near, Middle and Far East and from Kosovo), narcotics (Bulgarian and Turkish citizens) and products in which excise duty is levied (cigarettes and spirits). This presents a serious challenge to border security.

¹⁶ Computed on the basis of the black market rate of exchange of YUD and DEM on September 1, 2000 (1 DEM = 30 dinars) per person and 400 YUD (1,740 HUF).

4.3 Relations between county self-governments

Along with the working teams of DKMT Euroregion *County Bács-Kiskun*'s self government maintains contact with the municipalities of Sombor and Subotica. During the 1990s, these connections were no more than mere formality. However, connections have already been resumed between the new leadership of Vovvodina and the self-governments of Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád Counties.

The *General Assembly of County Csongrád* has entered into an agreement with counties Timis and Arad concerning co-operation in the areas of economy, science, engineering, culture, education, healthcare, tourism and area development. The agreement aims at satisfying the real needs of the Hungarian minority in County Timis and the Romanian ethnicity in County Csongrád in the fields of culture, education, etc.

Table 11

Trans-border projects between Csongrád and Timis Counties

Name of project	Associated counties	Supported by	Target areas
"Ecos/Ouverture" Programme	Csongrád, Timis (Romania), Cuneo (Italy), Mazara del Vallo (Italy), Principado de Asturias (Spain), Turku and Pori (Finland)		Development of tourism in villages and the provinces; strengthening and popularising their institutions; exploration of local products and specialities
Democracy – Co-operation	Csongrád, Timis	PHARE CBC	Development of a common strategy; advancing dialogues between civil organisations, administration and citizens; establishing forums for local experts and politicians so that they can expound their views on current issues; shaping shared views
AGRINET Area planning based on spatial IT; implementation of an information system and transborder exchange of information	Csongrád, Timis	PHARE CBC	The aim of the transborder project is to create concord in the border area and to co-ordinate area planning systems, development decisions and, in the long run, information systems

Continuing Table 11

Name of project	Associated counties	Supported by	Target areas
Advisory Centre for Agrarian and Rural Development	Csongrád, Timis		Information exchange in accordance with European practice; establishing an adequate centre for the co-ordination of partners, resources and projects
Area planning and information system based on spatial IT, plus East Central European Business Information Centre, 2 nd phase	Csongrád, Timis	PHARE CBC	Enlarging regional co-operation through the integration of developing information systems; promoting EU accession (linking area development planning and commercial-economic information bases as well as their improvement; ensuring mutual accessibility; elaboration and implementation of the technological linking of the two systems)
DAMUDEC	Csongrád, Timis	PHARE Credo	Embraces co-operation between the theatres, museums and libraries of the two counties; also extends to the areas of minority ethno cultural studies, bio topic and environmental research and the investigation of prehistoric settlements in the Tisza-Maros region

Source: Terra Stúdió Kft.

In County *Békés* co-operation between the self-government and certain Romanian counties (Arad, Bihar, Kovászna, Hargita and Krassó-Szörény) is targeted on the exploitation of opportunities offered by regional relationships in economy. It is also aimed at fostering, conserving and, if possible, advancing Hungarian-language education, culture and traditions of the Hungarian ethnicity living in diaspora. (Co-operation is confirmed by so-called twin-county agreements promoting joint actions in border zone settlements.)

In the case of County Arad co-operation is envisaged as a long-range project, as tasks to be performed in accordance with the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Regional Co-operation and the PHARE–CBC co-operation.

The relations with County Bihar centre around the major issues of the shared water base protection, the water output of the River Fekete-Körös, sewage treatment, culture, education, economy, the business sector and trade relations.

4.4 Sister/twin settlements (municipalities)

In the years following the change of regime in Hungary, *border zone co-operation* along the Yugoslav–Hungarian frontier was limited to intercity relation as there is no corresponding ‘middle level’ in the Yugoslavian administration. In regional co-operation the connection between Subotica and Szeged was dominant, but the Sombor–Baja relation also proved fruitful. Later more remote Hungarian settlements on the Yugoslav side of the border also fell into the attraction zone of Szeged (*Table 12*).

Table 12

Twin municipalities

Hungarian Municipalities	Twin municipalities	Country
Gyula	Arad	Romania
Zsadány	Tenke	Romania
Körösnagyharsány	Körösgyéres	Romania
Geszt	Cséffa	Romania
<i>Baja</i>	Sombor, Subotica	Yugoslavia
Bácsalmás	Bezdán	Yugoslavia
Kiskunhalas	Kanizsa	Yugoslavia
Nagybaracska	Szilágyi	Yugoslavia
Kiskunmajsa	Topolya	Yugoslavia
Nemesnádudvar	Ada, Mohol	Yugoslavia
Mélykút	Moravica [Ómoravica]	Yugoslavia
Tiszaalpár	Torda	Yugoslavia
Miske	Temerin	Yugoslavia
Szeged	Subotica	Yugoslavia
Hódmezővásárhely	Zenta	Yugoslavia
	Arad	Romania
Csongrád	Törökkanizsa	Yugoslavia
Szentes	Topolya	Yugoslavia
	Újszentes	Romania
Makó	Ada	Yugoslavia
	Mircea Ciuc	Romania
Deszk	Kovilj	Yugoslavia
Ásotthalom	Királyhalma (Bácsszőlős)	Yugoslavia
Hercegszántó	Backi Breg	Yugoslavia

Source: Local Government Office of Counties Bács-Kiskun, Csongrád and Békés.

The civil war and the NATO war interrupted these *relations* and it is to be feared that they will reach rock bottom. At present either there are no official, institutional relations in the border zone or the Yugoslav central leadership regulates their development.

Although twin settlement co-operation between minor settlements is mainly restricted to sports and cultural events, sessions of panels of experts are also held if required.

In what is to follow, we highlight a few typical examples of maintaining relations.

In its cross-border relations the *Board of Councillors of the city of Subotica* mainly relies on Szeged, though it also maintains links with Kiskunhalas, Baja and Bácsalmás, which used to belong to Subotica's catchments area, and which is now the twin settlement of Bajmok, part of the township of Subotica.

The co-operation between the two cities is of long standing, rather diverse and stable. Economic relations established in the 1990s have by now reached rock bottom. As to their volume, we can only rely on the data of small and medium-sized businesses. Cultural co-operation (between the Municipal Library of Subotica and the Somogyi Library in Szeged as well as the museums in the two cities) has, however, remained unaffected.

A unique example of co-operation is the agreement between Subotica, Szeged and Acron (USA). Playing a significant role in European Stability Pact, Szeged co-ordinates, in agreement with the stipulations of a development project, the relief programme coming from Acron and intended for Subotica. The tripolar co-operation is meant to handle waste treatment and disposal, improve water supply and introduce recycling technologies.

Self-governmental relations immediately affect civil organisations.

Unlike other twin settlement co-operation, that of Baja and Sombor is rather active involving economy, communication, tourism and education. Reaching the peak in the 1970s and 1980s, the co-operation established in 1966 has only been temporarily disturbed by the civil war in Croatia. Co-operation involving economic and non-economic areas and affecting the whole population entails a monthly average of 15 meetings between March and November. Part of the 1997 co-operation was a businessperson's meeting, which proved to be a success. During and after the war co-operation took the form of humanitarian aid (medical and educational) and relief shipments.

Although the twin city agreement between Kiskunhalas and Kanjiža mainly involves cultural and sports events, it is worth mentioning that Kanjiža has been granted free of charge participation in Halas Industrial Fair and that companies from Kanjiža have been registered in the Halas Yellow Pages.

The township of Kanjiža have been nurturing relations with the Homokhát small region (Mórahalom) since December 1999, the major areas of co-operation being economy, culture and nature conservation. Joint application for different funds is also among the goals. Öttömös and Horgos are the most recent twin settlements, though their relationship goes back far in history.¹⁷ The declaration signed on 2nd September, 2000 was not only an agreement between the self-governments of the two settlements, but also a framework of co-operation in which Horgos with long agricultural traditions and Öttömös famous for its asparagus and wanting to meet EU expectations can exchange information.

It was the ethnic composition of Deszk's population, which prompted us to study the town's Yugoslav connections. One-fifth of the population are of Serb nationality, which is striving to keep their ethnic identity. Primary education provides Serb-language teaching for 1st to 3rd graders. The 10–14 families settling down here in the 1990s turned out to be very resourceful: they started anew, set up businesses and fitted in.

Lying a mere 20 km apart, Deszk and Novi Knežac are twin cities. The relationship is further facilitated by the fact that the Tiszasziget–Djala frontier station is nearby. Both cities are hoping to set up business relations. During the NATO air strikes Deszk sent humanitarian aid to Novi Knežac seeing to it that was ethnic considerations were not overemphasized in distribution.

Fostered completely one-sidedly today, *cultural ties*, beyond formal bilateral relations, mean the occasional (1–2 joint events per year) visits of the Subotica Folk Theatre and the Amateur Theatre in Hungary and neighbourly, inter-settlement sports events.

Bilateral information exchange and inter-school cultural presentations are also of long standing, though it is not always a walk in the park to make them work in bilingual schools on the Yugoslav side. It was often the case that even politically unbiased gift books did not reach their destination.

Librarians from the ethnic Hungarian self-governments of Vojvodina (Senta, Subotica and B. Topola) visit Hungarian cities (Szeged, Békéscsaba and Orosháza) and take part in post-gradual courses there on a regular basis.

The possibility of education in Hungary for the young from North Bácska and their participation in summer camps assume larger and larger proportion. Organised summer courses for in-service teachers attract more and more teachers from Vojvodina.

Asymmetry of such large proportions, uncharacteristic during the 1970s and 1980s, can be attributed to the economic situation in Vojvodina. At the time it

¹⁷ Öttömös belonged to the District of Horgos at the end of the 19th century.

was through participation in cultural and sports events in Yugoslavia that people from Hungarian townships gained insight into the outside world.

As far as Romania is concerned, a milestone in Romanian–Hungarian relations is what is called ‘The Mayoral Meeting of Border Zone Settlements’¹⁸ held for the seventh time this year. Mayors from 11 settlements in County Békés (Hungary) and 12 from County Arad (Romania) have been attending the meeting since June 1995.

The co-operation of the *self-government* of the City of Gyula and the City of Arad as twin cities takes shape as joint exchange programme consultations (journalists, mayors, doctors, agricultural experts, etc.) with additional exchange programmes for the young. In terms of culture, the most notable areas of co-operation are the operation of the Gyula–Arad art colony and that of the ‘János Arany Society’ in Gyula and Szalonta, respectively. Furthering co-operation, the self-government of Gyula has recently submitted a project aiming at aiding the sister society in Salonta.

Officials responsible for maintaining contact agree that having already become contrived, co-operation should be redirected to more ‘practical’ (= economic) areas.

The co-operation between the twin cities of Lökösháza and Curtici include economic (commercial) relations becoming increasingly vigorous and student exchange holidays. According to the mayor, much is expected from PHARE projects and from the establishment of commerce and of the infrastructure (shopping centres and road crossing stations) accompanying it. It is also hoped that EU membership might also result in Lökösháza becoming a shopping destination for those living in Romanian settlements. The Curtici bonded warehouse is often referred to as the Hungarian counterpart of the one in Constanța.

The twin city agreement between Szeged and Timișoara (1990) mainly covers culture, arts and education. Under the aegis of this co-operation the following events took place: the joint performance of the Timișoara and Szeged National Theatres, an international folkdance festival welcoming Romanian dancers as well, the establishment of co-operation between the libraries of the two cities and the exhibition of Romanian artists in the ‘European Café’ housed in the ‘Small’ Gallery of Szeged. Crowning event of the twin city agreement, the opening of the Romanian Consulate General in Szeged took place on 27th January 1998.

¹⁸ Project proposals include the extension of the Budapest–Békéscsaba Intercity line as far as Arad and the construction of further road crossing stations (Elek–Grániceri, Dombegyház–Kisiratos, Lökösháza–Kürtös [the establishment of a joint bonded warehouse], Gyula–Gyulavári–Feketegyarmat–Zerind [a crossing station for cyclists] and Mezőhegyes–Nagypereg).

4.5 Economic relations

Small region border communication¹⁹ made possible by a bilateral agreement and flourishing in the 1980s increased both import and export its primary aim being to increase the choice of goods available.

Within the framework of food industry co-operation in the 1970s and 1980s, part of the sugar beet and soybean produced in Hungary was processed in Vojvodina. Co-operation also included dairy production, meat production, plant improvement and seed corn production. The relations of agricultural experts paved the way for information exchange in higher education and at institutions supplying seed corn (e.g. the one in Bácsalmás). Relations in water-management revived in 1955 resulted in increasingly wider co-operation. Water protection has always been good on either side of the border. Co-operation between water-management authorities seems to be gathering momentum in more and more areas.

What was left of the effect of labour division in food industry in pre-Trianon Hungary had been felt until the 1990s? The fact that technology and product development commenced earlier in Vojvodina in the 70s than in Hungary due to the better access to the world market of Yugoslav companies was also a real challenge.

“Unfortunately, owing to suspicion on either side and socialist economy fetishizing borders and economic self-sufficiency, these relations are confined to the management of a few canals. However, shopping tourism, visiting relatives and the twin city agreements and the establishment of associations of the 1990s have paved the way for information exchange between and informal brainstorming sessions for farmers and experts from both sides of the border. Though barter (that of seed corn and seedlings) is feasible within such framework, new lasting relations relying on the same framework can hardly be created, owing to the present Yugoslav internal situation. It is only fair to say, however, that, within this framework, some businesses on the other side of the border can find their way of moving to business operations to Hungary”.²⁰

Cross-border economic relations in the 1990s were further strengthened by foundations for business development, co-operation between companies and chambers of commerce as well as exhibitions, fairs and businesspersons’ meetings organised by the self-governments of counties and settlements.²¹

¹⁹ Border communication between two neighbouring countries only.

²⁰ Operative Project for the Development of the Border Zones in the Southern Plain Region – Preliminary Project.

²¹ ‘East West Expo’, ‘Farmers’ Expo: International Fair of Agriculture and Food Industry’, ‘Csaba Expo’.

The Business Development Foundation for County Bács-Kiskun and Magnotron Ltd, Subotica struck a deal in 1995 to promote SMEs, the results of which were as follows: the joint organisation of the Subotica Fair, successful businesspersons' meetings, a conference on privatisation and business potentials in Yugoslavia as well as the participation of Yugoslav companies and entrepreneurs at the Halas Expo.

The Foundation also takes part in the activity of the Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion. Its Baja and Kiskunhalas offices provide information for entrepreneurs from Yugoslavia. The Foundation used to have an agency in Subotica. Having exerted an increasingly weaker impact on the relationship between Zombor and Baja, the agency was closed down due to the changes in the political situation.

As far as the network of economic relations is concerned, it is chamber connections that are the most vigorous and that have yielded results. The ongoing transformation of the Chambers of Commerce of Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád Counties will adversely affect and hamper the maintenance of existing ties. Though having differing functions, the chambers mentioned and the ones on the Yugoslavian side (the Chambers of Commerce of Subotica and Sombor and the Regional Chamber of Commerce of Vojvodina) pursue common goals: expansion of immediate business relations, joint participation in fairs and exhibitions, business meetings in the border zones and information exchange (on the economies, legal systems and market characteristics of the neighbouring countries).

The target areas of co-operation are commerce, timber industry, food industry, garment industry, furniture industry and business counselling. Responsible for joint participation in fairs, organising regular chamber meetings and the co-ordination of the schedules of businesspersons' meetings, the Border Zone Work Committee for Co-ordination was set up in 1996 (County Csongrád KIK).

Economic uncertainty in Yugoslavia commencing in the 1980s and the emergence of market economy in Hungary as a result of the change of regime in the late 1980s are major indicators of border zone economic relations. The two combined resulted in the complete asymmetry of commercial links (even in black economy it is Hungarian export that is more dominant).

The transformation of agriculture, the effect of land privatisation on farming conditions and weakening food industry in Vojvodina have also impaired existing ties in processing industry. However, similar problems have also highlighted the possibilities of new forms of co-operation in new areas. Unfortunately, these possibilities could not be opened up due to, first and foremost, the insolvency of Yugoslavian companies and also to the wars in and the embargo imposed on Yugoslavia.

The appearance of disparate and unrealistic expectations concerning future co-operation also led to glitches in the development of co-operation. For example, despite financially sound demand in Yugoslavia, it is food industry marketing that is in the foreground on the Hungarian side. This can be explained by the fact that, because of operational hitches, food industry in Vojvodina cannot satisfy the needs of even the segments of decreased demand while struggling with sales problems and idle capacity.

As regards *Romania*, economic relations are determined by commerce between Romania and Hungary and the activity generated by chambers of commerce.

As well as providing their members with reliable and updated information, chambers of commerce set up and maintain purposeful communication with one another thus ensuring efficient and reliable contact for their members all over the world. The larger a company is, the more it can afford to employ experts of its own in different areas of operation (foreign trade, contacting business partners from abroad, marketing, PR, innovation, quality control, corporate law and taxation) and to make initiatives. The major users of the services of chambers are micro-, small and medium-sized companies. For larger businesses it is macro- and meso-level analyses that are very useful. Also, the fact that chambers have the right to voice their opinion in economic legislation carries the possibility of direct argument and leverage. It is true that large corporations have their own professional interest groups. Still, as experience shows, they can considerably strengthen their clout through chambers. They are represented in the work committees and panels of chambers, too.

As regards foreign relations, international chamber movement manifests itself as a network of communication. In terms of two geographical and administrative units, it works as a channel between the individual members of the two chambers entering into and maintaining communication.

4.6 The Romanian system of chambers of commerce

In contrast with their Hungarian counterparts, chambers of commerce in Romanian counties are the amalgamation of county chambers of commerce drawing their membership from all business sectors; i.e. there is only one chamber of commerce representing industry, commerce and agriculture alike. As membership is voluntary, county chambers only have a few hundred strong memberships.

Another difference lies in the area of public law: Romanian chambers keep a register of commercial companies, and only legal entities registered with them are allowed to carry out commercial activity. This scope of activity roughly cor-

responds with the purview of registry courts in Hungary. Romanian chambers perform traditional duties stipulated by public law, e. g. they issue certificates of origin and customs documents, and they also operate courts of arbitration, etc.

The third difference is that Hungarian chambers had not been allowed to carry out commercial activity until 1st November 2000. As a consequence, they had not had business shares or capital revenue. Therefore, the basis of their budgets was membership fees, which is insignificant in the budgets of Romanian chambers relying on the income from services. They also own companies and foundations.

As Romanian chambers provide services similar to those of courts of registry, they obtain a 30% share of registration fee. This source of income amounts to 50% of the overall income of chambers. The remaining 50% is from the recompense for services rendered to businessmen.

4.7 The Hungarian system of chambers

The Hungarian system of chambers based on the Law of Association was created through the establishment of the federation of regional chambers. Operating branches in several county seats, the Szeged-based the Southern Great Plain Chamber of Commerce was set up in 1990. The membership of neither regional chamber exceeded a three-figure order of magnitude.

Pursuant to Section 22 Article III of Act XVI of 1994, though not as legal successors, three types of county chambers based on compulsory membership replaced private-law chambers based on voluntary membership. Based on the type of their activity, business organisations were assigned to the chambers of handicrafts, agriculture, commerce and industry.

Compared to Romanian chambers, Hungarian ones were only assigned their duties by legislation after a lapse of time. It is true that these duties cover larger ground such as organising special training courses, issuing certificates of origin, filling out customs documents, issuing entrepreneurial permit (since 1998), keeping a register of tour guides, issuing haulage permit, performing the quality control of travel agencies, granting approval of certain commercial businesses, etc. Romanian chambers have been keeping a register of commercial companies since the very commencement of their operation. Only legal entities registered with them are allowed to carry out commercial activity.

However, the exercise of these administrative rights was ephemeral as not only compulsory membership was abolished on the 1st November 2000, but also administrative tasks were excluded from the purview of chambers. In contrast with that, operational conditions for Romanian chambers have been unchanged for 10 years.

4.8 The connections of agrarian chambers

Due to the singleness of Romanian chambers, it is hard for Hungarian agrarian chambers to find their counterparts. Although there does exist an agrarian department within the Romanian system of chambers, it mainly represents remaining state-owned landed estates and food industry with all the banks behind them. Hungarian chambers, by contrast, protect farmers' interests. There is no comprehensive organisation marshalling farmers though there are a few farmers' unions, but neither their size, nor their organisedness, nor their efficiency makes them comparable to the Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture.

Attempts at entering into communication have not brought a measurable benefit for either the chamber or its members. Failure can be attributed to lack of professionalism, work culture and ambition to reach higher quality on the Romanian side. Existing ties are often unilateral. Visits from Romania are rather frequent, however, they are mostly confined to, for instance, study trips with no concrete purposes whatsoever, businesspersons' meetings, etc. Hungarian visits are languishing due to the unresponsiveness of the Romanian party to Hungarian initiatives requiring concrete actions.

In addition, farmers do not usually feel inclined or have the urge to establish long-term co-operation with foreign business partners. They are more likely to find their market within Hungary.

4.9 The connections of chambers of commerce and industry

Fostering and nurturing international economic relations should be the duty of chambers of commerce and industry as their members include processing and commercial businesses as well as ones in international distribution.

It is not only through occasional actions that chambers of commerce and industry form their border zone relations. They also make attempts at transplanting political Euro-regional co-operation into the business sphere. Danube-Körös-Maros-Tisza (DKMT) Euroregion has, for example, surpassed county level. In February 1998 the chambers of the 9 member counties of DKMT (Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Csongrád and Szolnok Counties on the Hungarian side, Arad, Hunedora, Karas-Severin and Timis Counties on the Romanian one as well as the Chamber of Commerce in Voyvodina) signed a declaration manifesting their intention of co-operation and formed work committees.

The importance of those (either businesspersons or employees) settling down in Hungary after 1989 should also be emphasized as they have family and other relationships which may give rise to potential partnership.

4.10 The characteristics of the Chamber of Commerce in County Csongrád

The Chamber of Commerce of County Csongrád has been working in co-operation with the Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Counties Arad, Bihar and Timis since the early 90s. The links with all the three settlements include similar areas: providing a regular exchange of business information and a regular update of old and new regulations, encouraging the business relations of the enterprises fitting in one of the three profiles of the chamber, organising businesspersons' meetings and joint exhibitions as well as providing consultation facility for members.

The role of the County Csongrád Chamber of Commerce is reflected in the ideas behind various projects and its active participation in their accomplishment. It has successfully completed various PHARE projects together with the Romanian chamber (particularly, with the one in County Timis), e. g.

- the establishment of East Central European Centre of Information; its aim is to gather information on the business life in the region of Counties Csongrád and Timis, respectively and make it available through computer connection between the two counties;
- Spatial IT-based area planning and information network, plus East Central European Centre of Business Information
- the development of the relationship between Timis and Csongrád Counties; the project aims at boosting the economic relations of the two neighbouring counties through bilateral visits;
- Hármashatár ('Triple Border') Economic Conference (with the participation of 4 Hungarian and 4 Romanian chambers as well as the one in Voyvodina);
- Hármashatár ('Triple Border') Economic Conference and Business Meeting (with the participation of the 9 chambers mentioned above), whose main goal was the exchange of business information.

4.11 The characteristics of the Chamber of Commerce in County Békés

Since the commencement of its operation the County Békés Chamber of Commerce has laid special stress on the development of cross-border relations employing an expert on Romania. The most intensive relationship is the one with two border zone chambers (Arad and Bihar Counties). Prominence is given to

supplying their members with information, e. g. mediation of tenders, aid in red tape and setting up businesses, promoting participation in exhibition in Romania, etc. The most spectacular element of establishing ties is the joint website of the chambers of Counties Békés and Arad providing bilingual help with setting up businesses. They also offer brochures, guidelines and the necessary statutory background.

The importance of this co-operation is further emphasized by the fact that the Hungarian–Roman Section of the national chamber with Békéscsaba as its registered office.

4.12 The Hungarian–Romanian section of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce

The Békéscsaba-based sections have been called into existence to improve and co-ordinate foreign connections. The Békéscsaba section mediates between Hungary and the Romanian national chambers including the Romanian capital and its environs as well as County Ilfov.

The underlying aims include coordinating the businesses having business relations with Romania or wanting to develop their existing links and providing businesses with information necessary for business successes. Responsible exclusively for Hungarian–Romanian relations, the section has traditional duties to perform, e.g. providing help with foreign trade, promoting participation in exhibition, offering information on setting up businesses, providing legal counselling, organising lectures and businesspersons' meetings, mediating tenders and providing business databases. As well as civil contact, a monthly bulletin and a website facilitate maintaining communication. Having forged relationship with the chamber of practically every Romanian county, the Section's national-level partner organisation is the Nagyvárad Chamber, but it is also in daily contact with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Arad.

The most important areas being strategies dealing with foreign markets and aiming at increasing commercial activity, the Section relies on an annual schedule in its operation.

Established by businesses with Romanian connections in June 1999, the Section has over 260 member (due to compulsory membership) and branches in each county, the most active of them being Békés, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Pest Counties, the ones in the Southern Great Plain as well as the capital city. Voluntary membership will affect the Section, too.

Though temporarily suspended owing to the embargo between 1992 and 1995, co-operation between County *Csongrád* and the Chamber of commerce of

Subotica has been sustained for over 15 years. However, the Baja branch of the County Bács-Kiskun Chamber complains that relations have sunk to a lower level since 1998.

4.13 Business Development Foundation

The aim of the Romanian–Hungarian co-operation supported by County Békés Business Development Foundation is Eastern expansion, i. e. the establishment of a vanguard. The foundation also helped to set up the *Development Centre for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses in Arad*.

The aims of the co-operation are as follows,

- the establishment of a joint database
- joint educational and training programmes to help Romanian businesses
- a counselling service concerning the legal systems of the two countries
- the elaboration of micro-Euroregional development projects
- compiling and publishing tourist maps of border regions
- a counselling service concerning the rules and regulations of the two countries
- the protection and monitoring of the waterbase of the alluvial fan of the River Maros
- the evaluation of agricultural and food industry production and devising an EU-compatible agrarian strategy based on cross-border co-operation.

With the German-Romanian Foundation of Arad as the major applicant, Progress and Békés County Business Development Foundation applied for PHARE-Credo support (‘Together for Partnership’) in the autumn of 1998. The purposes of the co-operation were to support the training of businessmen in timber industry on an appropriate level on the one hand, and to establish business relations, for instance, through joint events and workshops, on the other.

The application *‘Innovation in Agrarian Tourism’* submitted by Progress Foundation, Katedra Foundation School and the Self-Government of County Hargita won PHARE Leonardo da Vinci support in 1998. County Békés Business Development Foundation also maintains informal links with Romanian chambers, privatisational authorities, self-governments, foundations and development agencies (e. g. County Arad Business Development Foundation, the Self-Government of Arad, the German–Romanian Foundation of Arad, the Self-Government of County Timis and Timișoara Incubator House Foundation).

4.14 Relationships between universities

As regards the relationship between Hungary and Romania, Szeged University has been in continuous touch since the late 1980s with Babes–Bolyai University in Cluj (Kolozsvár) and Timișoara (Temesvár) West University. Their co-operation takes the form of a regular student and lecturer exchange.

All the three universities mentioned above are members of CRE, a co-operation project networking Europe and maintaining connections between 527 universities in 41 countries. The forums and seminars organised within the framework of CRE ensure that university leaders can continue a dialogue and co-operation as well as explore and exploit potential of mutual interest.

The full involvement of the Romanian connection of Tessedik Sámuel College (Körös College Faculty) can be attributed partly to the launching of Romanian language teacher training in 1993, partly to the creation of Bolyai Summer Academy (with the help of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Romania). Another significant factor in foreign relations is the support of the groups of Transylvanian students, numbering 15–30 persons yearly, enrolled here and the organisation of correspondence course for border zone areas. Fostering relations with Arad University, Vasil Gallisz Foundation Private University and Nagyvárad University also plays a significant role in education. The activities of college faculties also adjust themselves well to the projects furthering Hungarian–Romanian co-operation as their special lines are related to the businesses to be developed (agriculture and commerce).

The complete workforce training urged by County Békés Regional Workforce Development and Training Centre is supported by PHARE. We do not want to go into details even though some of its aspects in Romania have proved useful and exemplary in eliminating unemployment.

It is interesting that, with respect to Yugoslavia, the closest – and unprecedented – ties between institutions of higher education were formed during the hard times of embargo. Though scientific co-operation between Szeged University and the Faculty of Science at Novi Sad University has remained symbolic, on the level of protocols, that between Szent István Agricultural University, Faculty of Horticulture and its affiliated open university centre in Senta has borne fruit. So far 80 horticulturists have graduated here (from North Bácska) and decided to remain in Vojvodina. Other success stories are Gábor Áron College of Engineering and its distant teaching centre in Subotica and, more recently, the affiliated open university of “SZÁMALK”, Budapest, in Topolya.

Another result of co-operation in higher education is that university and college students in Hungary do their summer training practice in Vojvodina from the summer of 2000 on.

5 The Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion and its role in the development of border zone relations

The border zone taking shape now forms the central backbone of the region defined in the narrower sense by the Subotica–Szeged–Arad axis, in the broader sense, however, by the parallel axis of Baja/Sombor–Subotica–Szeged–Arad. Territorially and functionally this axis are joined the triangles of Kecskemét–Békéscsaba–Szeged and Timișoara–Novi Sad–Szeged (Békéscsaba–Arad–Szeged).

5.1 The formation of the Euroregion

The southern part of Cisdanubia (the space between the Danube and the Tisza) and the Körös–Maros region with their relatively homogeneous natural potential, once forming an economic whole, was divided by international political decisions (Trianon Peace Treaty) into three parts. As a result, functional spatial relations broke up or plummeted. The changes of regime coming in the late 1980s with a different degree of intensity in each country and the forging ahead of market economy enabled these countries to renew their ties and rethink the regional structure of economy and communication on the basis of equality.

In accordance with the four liberty principles of the EU transborder relations form an integral part of the foreign relations of ‘post-change-of-regime’ and market oriented countries. Thus the regional intertwining of three neighbouring countries may foster local modernisation, innovate development and further the growth of sustainable economic and human relations (*Pászti Tóth, Gy. 1996*).

The Euroregion, formed on November 21, 1997, comprises the administrative units of three states (*Table 13*). It aims at developing and enlarging co-operation between local communities and self-governments in the areas of economy, education and culture, science and sports, as well as bolstering co-operation leading to integration into larger European processes.

The areas of co-operation are: economic relations, transport and telecommunications infrastructure, environment protection, tourism, science, culture, health care, sports as well as personal relations.

An agreement of co-operation was signed by the *trade unions* of the territorial units of the Euroregion in 1997. In 1998 it was the turn of the *chambers* in the region to sign a declaration of co-operation followed by a plan for joint economic development. The plan targets on promoting economic development in the Euroregion and making people recognise enterprises as a mode of life creating values.

Table 13

Euroregion partners of DKMT

County	Country	Territory in km ²	Population (in thousands)
Bács-Kiskun County	Hungary	8,362	542
Békés County	Hungary	5,631	407
Csongrád County	Hungary	4,263	438
Jász-Nagykún-Szolnok County	Hungary	5,607	423
Arad County	Romania	7,652	507
Hunediora County	Romania	7,016	547
Karas-Severin County	Romania	8,514	376
Timis County	Romania	8,692	716
Voyvodina	Yugoslavia	21,506	2,013
Euroregion		77,243	5,900

Source: Documents of DKMT.

The centre of DKMT is Szeged, where the Forum of Chairmen, the region's governing body, is convened. The ceremonial opening of the Bureau of Community Initiatives of the Euroregion took place on May 27, 2000, the day of DKMT (*Figures 4 and 5*). The opening of the Bureau was already the consequence of a modernisation phase, as the Forum of Chairmen had become a somewhat closed society. Euroregion as a beacon light had guided and encouraged the admission of more and more institutions, civil organisations, settlements, small areas and their interrelationship, cultural events, etc thereby necessitating the establishment of a bureau to ensure undisturbed operations.

5.2 The necessity of the establishment of the secretariat and its organisational structure

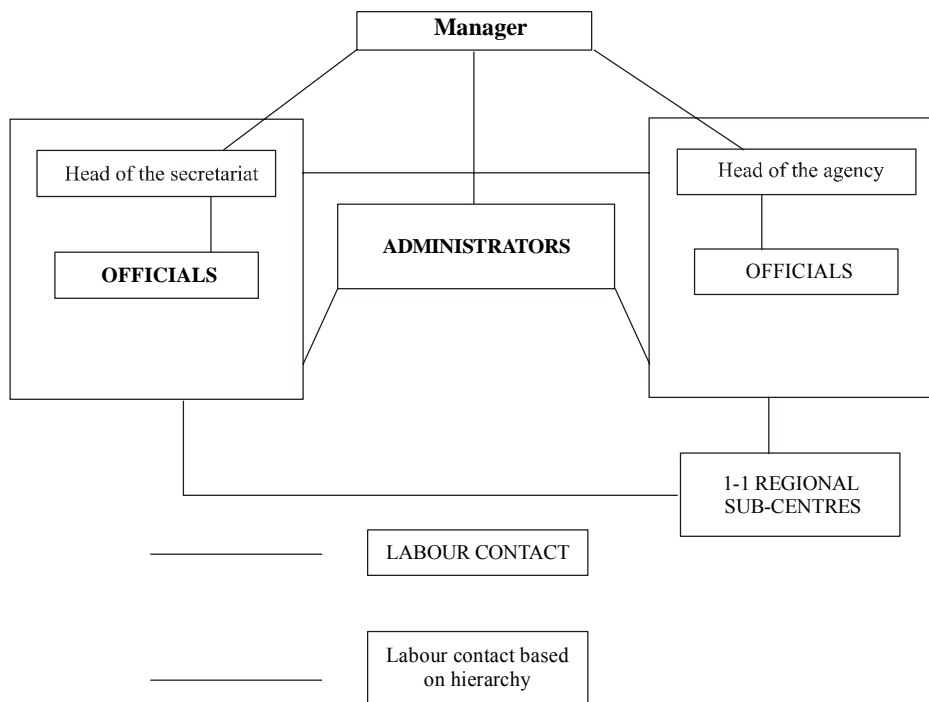
The ambition of the members of interregional co-operation has been from the beginning to create a standing secretariat in order to operate the administrative centre of the Euroregion. As a result, the Bureau of DKMT opened in May 2000, under the immediate guidance of the Forum of Chairmen whose president regularly gives an account of the Bureau's current activities at every session. The Bureau's main activities are to maintain contact with member regions, ensure

continuous information flow, follow different EU programmes, invite applications based on EU decisions and help implement such projects.

The expenses of the maintenance of the office and the implementation of meaningful co-operation are covered from the fund established by region members (number of inhabitants \times 0.04 Euro).

Figure 4

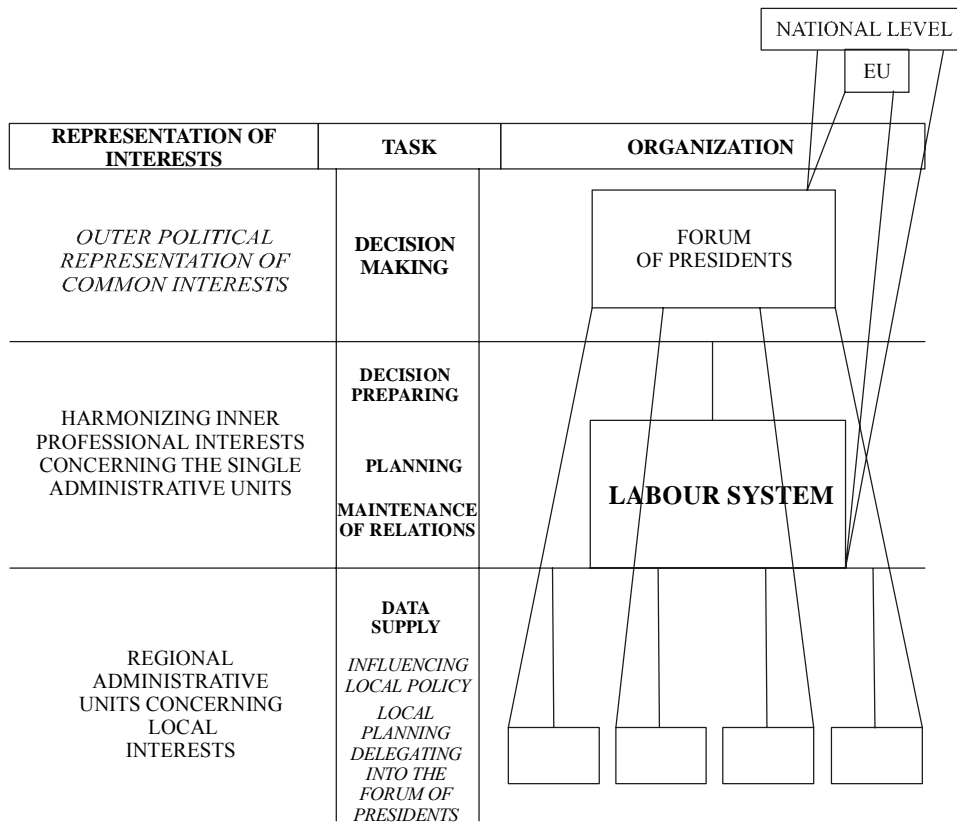
Structure and function of the DKMT's labour system



Source: A Strategic Project for the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Regional Cooperation (2000).

Figure 5

Role of the labour system in the Euroregion's value structure



Source: A Strategic Project for the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Regional Cooperation (2000).

5.3 Difficulties in the functioning of the Euroregion

On the operative level, the four committees are basically ad hoc ones wanting in regular activity. That is why the standing office of the region, the centre for information and coordination, was brought into being, which, subordinated immediately to the current president, prepares the sessions of the forum of chairmen and provides for the proper functioning of operative committees.

The presence of the cities of the Euroregion remains undefined – a great shortcoming as innovative developments are carried by the major cities, regional centres and capitals (Szeged, Timișoara, Novi Sad plus the faculties of Subotica University, the County Békés Tessedik College and Vasil Goldis Foundation University in Arad). Szeged's role as a regional centre is a given and all the more so as Hungary's accession to EU is secure. Szeged seems predestined to build its functions as a regional centre.

Instead of the Forum of Chairmen as the decision-making centre of the Euroregion, it would be more expedient to form an interregional council with the participation of institutions, organisations and self-governments, whose purview would extend to the election of the governing body.

Yugoslavia's (Voyvodina's) membership is a constant headache, as the country – at present not a member of the European Council – cannot count on any outside resource. In consequence there is a tendency today to move the Euroregion's centre of gravity to the Romanian–Hungarian border zone, to an already existing co-operation of Békés, Csongrád, Arad and Timis counties. In contrast with this belief, however, it is often emphasised that such a shift is not justified owing to the compactness of the region and the fact that the completion of the Euroregion with Yugoslavia cannot be delayed for long.²²

It should be also mentioned here that the Government of Voyvodina, for example, opposed to granting Subotica and Novi Sad the right to vote within the Euroregion. These restrictions also hinder the civil movement 'BANNET' just being organised by the Kikinda (*Distrikt – 0230*) – Timișoara (*Institutul Intercultural*) – Szeged (*Women's Association*) connection and the future representation of interests of the North Voyvodina Association of Settlements in the Euroregion.

It is also rather unfortunate that in spite of the fact that PHARE CBC supports the single development of the border regions of 4 counties on either side, their development has also been assigned to 2 statistical regions on either side (the Southern and Northern Great Plain region on the Hungarian side and the East-

²² While this paper was being finalised the author learned that promising changes had commenced in Yugoslavia.

Western and Western regions on the Romanian one) and two Euroregions (Carpathian and DKMT Euroregions).

This problem raises the issue of the harmonisation of area development, i. e. the question of how well DKTM can fit in Hungarian area development and whether the systems of small region, county, regional and Euroregional development are in concert with one another.

5.4 The strategic plan

Part of operational modernisation, the Euroregional Strategic Plan supported by PHARE has been formulated. It comprehends the principles of the operation of DKMT and its regional system, the administrative co-operation programme of the Euroregional Strategic Plan, the integration of former programmes and projects, Euroregional communication programme, a project aiming at establishing a network of co-operation for social and economic players as well as plans to strengthen Euroregional capability of acquiring resources.

The aim programme 1 is to set up a work organisation able to provide the administrative and expert background of Euroregional decision-making mechanisms.

The reason why programme 2 had to be devised is that the pillars of Euroregional co-operation are administrative institutions and that no legitimate or efficient programme can be put forward without defining the levels of administration. Thus, the aim of the programme is to explore the potential of Euroregional administrative co-operation and to set out proposals for the counties and countries taking part in the programme.

Euroregional member states do have EU-compatible development projects,²³ therefore, the harmonisation of border region co-operation is the only fulfilment to be achieved. Development documents rarely pay attention to co-ordinating cross-border goals, and projects considering joint exploitation and implementation are few and far between. It is these processes of co-operation that Euroregion should describe through formulating a strategic conception (directions, programmes and preferences) (programme 3).

²³ As well as the *Regional Development Conception and Project of the Southern Great Plain*, regional proposals have also been accepted and scheduling is under consideration as well. As far as Romania is concerned, scheduling in connection with the Western Region is still being discussed; however, the *Development Conception and Project of the Romanian-Hungarian Border Region* has been completed. The development conception of Vovvodina is subject to the Area Reconstruction Project of Serbia.

The 'Communication Programme' (programme 4) draws attention and gives publicity to and provides information on Euroregional initiatives. On the other hand, communication is expected to contribute to the success of regional co-operation. Describing the present system of communication, the programme also outlines the interrelationship between *regional, Euroregional and national broadcasting and the possible model of a Euroregional TV station*.

Programme 5 titled 'The formation of the co-operation network of social-economic players' attempts to help the reader to orientate himself in the region's civil relations designating areas where civil networks may reinforce Euroregional initiatives. The formulation of the programme is explained by the fact that the role of the network of civil organisations and their weight in economy and culture is so significant that their role in the development of cross-border relations is practically indispensable.

Finally Programme 6 on 'The strengthening of the Euroregion's ability to obtain resources' concerned with the resources ensuring the achievement of the goals set and the maintenance of the operation of institutions outlines the system of EU, Hungarian and Romanian natural and regional resources in the co-operation of the two countries

6 Possible directions of future co-operation as carriers of effective regional development

The multilevel *regional development system* of the Hungarian side encompasses the development of the border zones (area development of two counties,²⁴ six small regions²⁵ and the Southern Great Plain) keeping in view the developments of vital relations reaching across the border. The development strategy of Yugoslavia formulated in 'Serbia's Regional Development Plan – 1996' (and the associated area development plans of municipalities) which gives a strategic description of transborder developments in communication, commerce, tourism and environmental protection. The formulation of Romanian development strategy took place in accordance with the Hungarian side (though not in the form of a joint statement) and is contained in the frequently mentioned Border-Zone Conception and Programme. Below such possible developments are approached from the aspects of different sectors (*Table 14*).

²⁴ Regional development conceptions of Csongrád and Békés counties.

²⁵ Regional development conceptions of the small regions of Baja, Bácsalmás, Kiskunhalas, Mórahalom and Szeged.

Table 14

Priorities of regional development in Hungarian–Romanian border region

Priority 1 Improving the permeability of the state frontier and of the accessibility of the border zone	1.1 The development of roads and border crossing stations; the opening of new stations
	1.2 The development of railroad links and freightage; the linkage of railway lines
Priority 2 Environmental, nature protection and water management co-operation	2.1 Flood control and the control of wetlands
	2.2 Co-operation to protect surface and subterranean waters; water management co-operation
	2.3 Co-operation to protect the treasures of natural and built-up environment
Priority 3 The institutionalisation and development of cross-border co-operation	3.1 Ways of long-term institutional co-operation
	3.2 Improving information exchange and communication
	3.3 The co-ordination of development ideas; joint planning on all levels and in all areas
Priority 4 Enhancing economic co-operation	4.1 The co-ordinated development of economic services; the encouragement of business development co-operation
	4.2 The development of the poles of economic development (enterprises, zones, industrial parks)
	4.3 KKV development; the exploitation of the potential of co-operation between agriculture and food industry
	4.4 The exploitation of the potential of tourist industry
Priority 5 The development of human resources reaching across the border	5.1 Educational and training co-operation reaching across the border
	5.2 Labour market co-operation
	5.3 Language courses
	5.4 The development of civil, cultural and educational relations; the development of media relationship
	5.5 Co-operation in healthcare and social work

Source: Terra Stúdió Kft.

6.1 Development of communication

The development of communication infrastructure and its linkage to Hungary was required by Yugoslavia's territorial transformation and the change of direction in its interregional and international axes (coming into prominence of the N-S main communication axis).

The already operational Újvidék–Subotica–Szeged axis might be completed by M5 linked with the E75 motorway under construction connecting the Hungarian border with Subotica, Novi Sad and Beograd and creating a new axis between West and Central Europe and the Balkans and the Near East. The construction of the up-to-date Horgos–Röszke frontier crossing has already begun and its completion is expected this year.

The railroad crossing station at Subotica–Kelebia has remained in the stage of planning for decades and construction has not started yet. A major priority of Yugoslavian development is the construction of the Beograd–Budapest fast railroad line, which has already begun.

The reconstruction of the Subotica–Bácsalmás–Baja railroad line aims at creating an exit to the Danube area, it might also resolve the communication problems of border zone small regions (Bácsalmás small region). On the Yugoslav side of the border the electrification of the reconstructed Subotica-Horgos frontier stretch features among the long-term projects.

Hungarian development documents emphasize the essentiality of infrastructural investments both in the railroad connections (Szeged–Kikinda–Jimbolia–Timișoara main line, Szeged–Makó–Apátfalva–Cenad–Timișoara branch line) and in road transport (Kiszombor–Cenad frontier crossing station).

Concerning the northern frontier zone and the Hungarian connection, the 'Serbian Regional Development Plan' (1996) underlines the importance of developing communication between Beograd–Zrenjanin–Szeged and Novi Sad–Backa Palanka–Baja, respectively. These developments are propped up by infrastructural developments along the Danube including joint efforts with the Hungarian partners on the other side of the border and by constructing the Ridjica–Gara-(Bácsszentgyörgy–Gakovo) railroad. The reconstruction of the Kikinda–Banatsko Arandjelovo – border-Szeged railroad, which will involve in the long run the development of the Szeged–Tiszasziget–Djala–Beckerek–Beograd communication corridor, is also important.

All these prospective innovations in railroad traffic will require the establishment of railroad border stations at Ridjica and Banatsko Arandjelovo. Another (river) frontier station is planned on the Danube at Baja without an exact deadline.

The enlargement of temporary road border crossing stations at Bácsalmás and Tiszaliget will presumably take place after our EU accession.

The reconstruction plans of all crossing stations have been completed.²⁶ The construction of the new building of Kelebia railroad station will take place in May 24 2001. Before short, medium and long-term infrastructural developments, however, it would be imperative to co-ordinate bus schedules in the border zone and make them more flexible. This could be made feasible by the co-ordination of buses running between Szeged and the border and with the Yugoslavian lines calling at Horgos.²⁷ Similar arrangements could be made for Subotica–Kelebia–border, Tompa–border, B.Breg–Hercegszántó, Szeged–Tiszasziget, Novi Knezevac–Djala and Subotica–Bajmok–border; Bácsalmás–border lines as well. The co-ordination of schedules suggested here might facilitate and intensify shopping tourism and would certainly ‘spiritualise’ borders.²⁸

Communication development in the Hungarian–Romanian border zone aims at the enlargement of cross-border traffic, the short and medium term tasks being the opening of international passenger traffic of Kiszombor–Cenad road border crossing and the opening of Battonya–Turnu and Méhkerék–Salonta frontier stations to freightage (max. 7.5 t small trucks).

The railroad development plans include the upgrading of the Budapest–Szajol–Lökösháza–Arad line, the commencement of the design of the Szeged–Timișoara line and the reconstruction of the Makó–Arad and Makó–Sannicolau Mare connections.

Long-term developments include the opening of the Körösnagyharsány–Cheresig road crossing station, the construction of the Körösnagyharsány–Cheresig–Oradea rail link, the opening of the Lökösháza road crossing station for bilateral passenger traffic, the commencement of the construction of the Szeged–Timișoara railway line, the modernisation of the Kőtegyán–Salonta rail crossing station and the enlargement of its freightage capacity, the modernisation of the road between the Gyula and Méhkerék road crossing stations and the construction of M3 motorway.

²⁶ Due to financial difficulties the commencement of the expansion of the road crossing station of Hercegszántó for bilateral passenger traffic and freightage is still dubious. So is the reconstruction of the passenger traffic area of Tompa frontier station.

²⁷ Provided the itinerary of the bus service is extended by 2 km from Horgos to the frontier.

²⁸ It is mainly the schedules of the buses arriving from Novi Sad (Újvidék) and Belgrade that ought to be co-ordinated.

6.2 The possible territorial nodal points of economic development

As it has already been pointed out, the border region is bisected by the Danube industrial and communication corridor in the West, the Novi Sad–Subotica-state frontier (Budapest) industrial and communication axis at Subotica and by the Szeged–Kikinda–Timișoara corridor at Szeged.

The area of the *Danube industrial communication axis* overlaps the tourist attraction area along the Upper Danube and is in direct contact with Baja, a possible future centre of logistics, which might be the gateway for commerce in Vojvodina, especially in Sombor, Subotica and Kanjiža to foreign countries.

The *Novi Sad–Subotica industrial communication axis* might put the industry and commerce of Novi Sad, Subotica Vrbas and B.Topola into the commercial and economic circulation of the border region. The creation of the *Zrenjanin–Coka-Djala-Tizasiget (Szeged) secondary axis* would serve similar purposes for the underdeveloped areas of Bánát.

Regarding economic development in County Csongrád a business zone should be designated near the ‘triple border’ and a centre of logistics in Szeged integrating the junction of transit routes, the RO-LA terminal and the potential of a river port should be set up. Air traffic could be served by Arad International Airport.

As regards Romania, the development strategy described above is part of the mirror projects mutually agreed upon by the experts of the two countries and accepted as part of the Documents of Joint Schedule by the Joint Committee of Hungarian-Romanian Co-operation on 13 March 2000.

All these ideas also visualise the creation of a multifunctional *Szeged-Timișoara axis*. As to cultural and telecommunication co-operation, an integral part of the axis is the operation of Szeged Radio and Timișoara Radio broadcasting to Yugoslavia, too.

6.3 Chamber relations

In the system of spatial economic relations, chamber relations are the most vigorous looking back to a tradition of specific co-operations: the Counties Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád Chambers of Commerce and Industry are the carriers of co-operation with the Regional Chambers of Subotica, Sombor and the whole of Vojvodina whereas the same co-operation with Romania is realised through the county chambers of Csongrád and Békés. The present transformation of

chambers will, however, influence and hinder the furtherance of existing relations. Besides, the functional structures of chambers are far from being identical.

The expectations of entrepreneurs requiring changes in chambers are as follows:

- The initiation of the resolution of issues – customs and guaranty – requiring political dialogue on municipality and government levels.
- The development of communication network (roads, border crossing stations, etc) to improve the physical aspect of the traffic of goods between counties.
- The creation of security of finance, banking and investment.
- The main goal in the institutional and (business) service sectors is to achieve the intensification of trilateral chamber relations: services in Arad, Subotica and Sombor should be identical with those in Szeged and Békéscsaba. Some people envisage the establishment of an office in Arad by the Békéscsaba Chamber as the easiest solution of the problem. The root of the problem in Romania is that the information provided there is inadequate, rather expensive and the service partners recommended are often inefficient. Moreover, the entrepreneurs thus recommended charge more for their services than the one met later in the course of relation-building: lack of information costs a lot of money.

Fresh information is needed in the areas detailed below:

- The accessibility of Romanian statutes and tenders, if possible, in the Hungarian language (taxation, financial issues, insurance, establishment of firms, tenders);
- Help with the interpretation of different statements (from the aspect of accountancy);
- Corporate information data base with qualified Romanian service data base;
- The enlargement of tender data base; more efficient mediation of partners;
- Organising more frequent and specialised target-group exhibitions and business meetings;
- Counselling on foreign trade and customs issues;
- Organising training courses in relationship building;
- The elaboration of an effective moral guaranty system in debt servicing;
- The representation of business interests in politics to eliminate economic anomalies and gain increased control;
- In the case of existing services it is requested to increase efficiency and ensure continuity in the future.

Other demands to improve entrepreneurial chances on a higher level:

- Border zone potential should be considered in the establishment of border zone business areas, bonded warehouses, innovation centres and industrial parks (plus their marketing strategies) safeguarding the interests of both Hungarian and Romanian firms and creating a favourable climate for business and the acquisition of updated technology and know-how.
- We must be prepared for Hungary's earlier accession to the EU than Romania or Yugoslavia. The future EU border might mean that we will have to face another challenge in terms of both advantages and drawbacks.
- We must help the Romanian and Yugoslavian partners (politically and economically) with their EU integration, advise and counsel them on administrative or entrepreneurial level and lobby for them.

6.4 The co-operation project of Upper Bácska²⁹ and North Voyvodina³⁰

The improvement of the relationship and co-operation between businessmen on both sides of the border has been defined as primary aim in a programme backed up by regional development centres, the Danube-Tisza Regional Development Ltd and the New Handshake Non-profit Foundation.

Within the framework of suggested co-operation programmes prominence has been given *on the Hungarian side* to the co-operation of non-profit organisations and the civil sphere (including institutions of economic development, chambers, HVKs) as well as the development of business services. Also, a proposal has been put forward to create a model region developing the provinces, tourism, marketing, R and D and attracting investors.

On the Yugoslavian side prominence is given to establishing an information data bank, a joint Hungarian–Yugoslav bank and a bonded warehouse in Subotica to promote Hungarian investment in Voyvodina. There is also a demand for the reclamation of sand lands and for a project to manage waste and utilise thermal water.

'The Operative Programme of Border Zone Development in the South Plain Region' has elaborated the principles of border zone co-operation in food processing and affiliated industries meeting the expectations of the EU and based on the utilisation of the region's homogeneous natural resources and the existing traditional relations of experts (*Table 15*).

²⁹ Micro-regional association – Southern part of Bács-Kiskun county.

³⁰ Northern communities of Voyvodina.

Table 15

Regional development concepts of the Hungarian–Yugoslav border region

I.	Assessment of the resources of border zone regional co-operation with a view to preparing projects and business co-operation
II.	Establishment of a regional information data bank
III.	Development of personal business relations
IV.	Development of institutional co-operation; co-ordination of the activities of domestic and international organisations targeting transborder business relations in order to enrich and embed them in the region
V.	Creation of a support system for joint development and business projects
VI.	Utilisation of industrial parks to develop transborder business relations
VII.	Improvement of the culture and infrastructure of transit and shopping tourism in the border zone
I.	Co-operation project aiding water and landscape management
II.	Enlarging co-operation in flood control and the acceleration of planned projects
III.	Co-ordination of ideas and plans for water management and control of wetlands
IV.	Information exchange on nature protection and landscape management; co-operation in forming zones with different saturation points of environmental pressure
V.	Development of co-operation in plant and animal health care; co-operation of protection against infections; forecasting the spread of plant and animal diseases
VI.	Co-operation in the development of the biological bases of agriculture
VII.	Programmes of information exchange and relationship-building for producers, traders, manufacturers (and advisers) so as to spread the model of 'good agricultural practice'
I.	Creating the joint utilisation of tourism potential, developing tourism
II.	Feasibility studies to explore the joint tourism development potential of the border zone in order to attract investors; project financing
III.	Development of conference, cultural and festival tourism in the border zone

Source: 'The Operative Programme of Border Zone Development in the South Plain Region – Preliminary Draft Programme'.

6.5 The sustainable management of environmental problems – The perspectives of developments in the border zone examined

The sustainable continuation of environmental protection and management can be achieved through actions guided by integrated socio-economic strategies; Satisfactory environmental regulation mechanisms will be reached through the territorial and sectorial linkage of divergent modes of prevention and their extension to international co-operation.

Through the Hungarian–Romanian Agreement on Environmental Protection has not yet been officially accepted, environmental agencies on the Romanian side have recognised the importance of co-operation and bilateral relationships have been established the result of which being the publication of a joint collection of data on environmental protection by Békés, Arad and Bihar counties.³¹ The major issues to be settled are: the formation of a Hungarian environmental protection monitoring system in the Körös Valley and joint research of the Maros alluvial fan.

The goals of environment and nature protection as well as water management have been first defined in a complex form by the recently accepted ‘Regional Development Project of the Hungarian–Romanian Border Zone’ (*Table 16*). The draft projects around which feasible activities are centred are: ‘Co-operation in Flood and Wetland Control’, ‘The Protection of Surface and Subterranean Waters and Co-operation in Water Management’ and ‘Co-operation for the Protection of the Treasures of Nature and Environment’ At present the key issues are the short and medium term development of the border region and the prevention of exert too much pressure on the environment.

Initiatives concerning Hungarian–Yugoslavian nature conservation co-operation have been foiled by the political events of the past years. After the collapse of the Yugoslav Socialist Federal Republic it was the Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza EU region that could have been the very ‘institution’, which could have facilitated both traditional water-management co-operation and nature protection developments. All the more so as it would have been the Yugoslav party which would have been responsible for the co-ordination of the activity of the environment protection and water-management committee.

The development projects kept on standby include programmes ready to be commenced provided political relations, currently rather tense, relent.

³¹ Environmental Data from Békés, Arad and Bihor County.

Table 16

Subsidised activities fostering co-operation in environmental protection in the Hungarian–Romanian border zone

Co-operation projects	Supportable activities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment and regular maintenance of flood control infrastructure Joint monitoring for efficient flood control Actions taken to foster efficient co-operation between specialised institutions Turning watercourses bisecting the frontier into living waters
The protection of surface and subterranean waters; water-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The joint research of the alluvial fan and the water reservoir of the River Maros Investments decreasing water pollution (waste management and sewage treatment) Monitoring the co-ordination of water use and off take Checking and improving the water quality of streams bisecting the frontier Action programmes aiming at protecting subterranean water resources
Nature and environment protection: the protection of the treasures of nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments needed for the expansion of already existing nature reserves and for the establishment of their linkage reaching over the border Checking shared nature reserves Monitoring air quality, noise pollution and vibration protection Raising awareness of nature protection among the inhabitants in Romanian and Hungarian the border zone

Source: The Regional Development Conceptions and Program of the Romanian–Hungarian border region.

The co-operation programme supporting water and landscape management, part of 'The Operative Development Programme of the Border Region in the Southern Plain', includes the expansion of flood control and the acceleration of related projects and the co-ordination of water management and the control of wetlands.

The project suggests *information exchange concerning nature conservation and landscape management and co-operation in designating zones with different saturation capacity*. So as to comply with EU regulations imminent co-operation

must comprehend the following areas: *the enhancement of co-operation between plant and animal healthcare services and service providers, the co-ordination of protection against infection and setting up a network forecasting the spread of plant and animal diseases.*

On the Hungarian side participants include water management authorities, nature conservation inspectorates, border-zone water- management associations, regional organisations involved in the agrarian environment protection programme, those responsible for small regional planning, centres for plant and animal healthcare, the regional representative of the agrarian environmental protection programme and border-zone development associations.

6.6 The role of the ecological ('green') corridors of the Southern Great Plain in maintaining biodiversity between the Carpathians and the Balkans

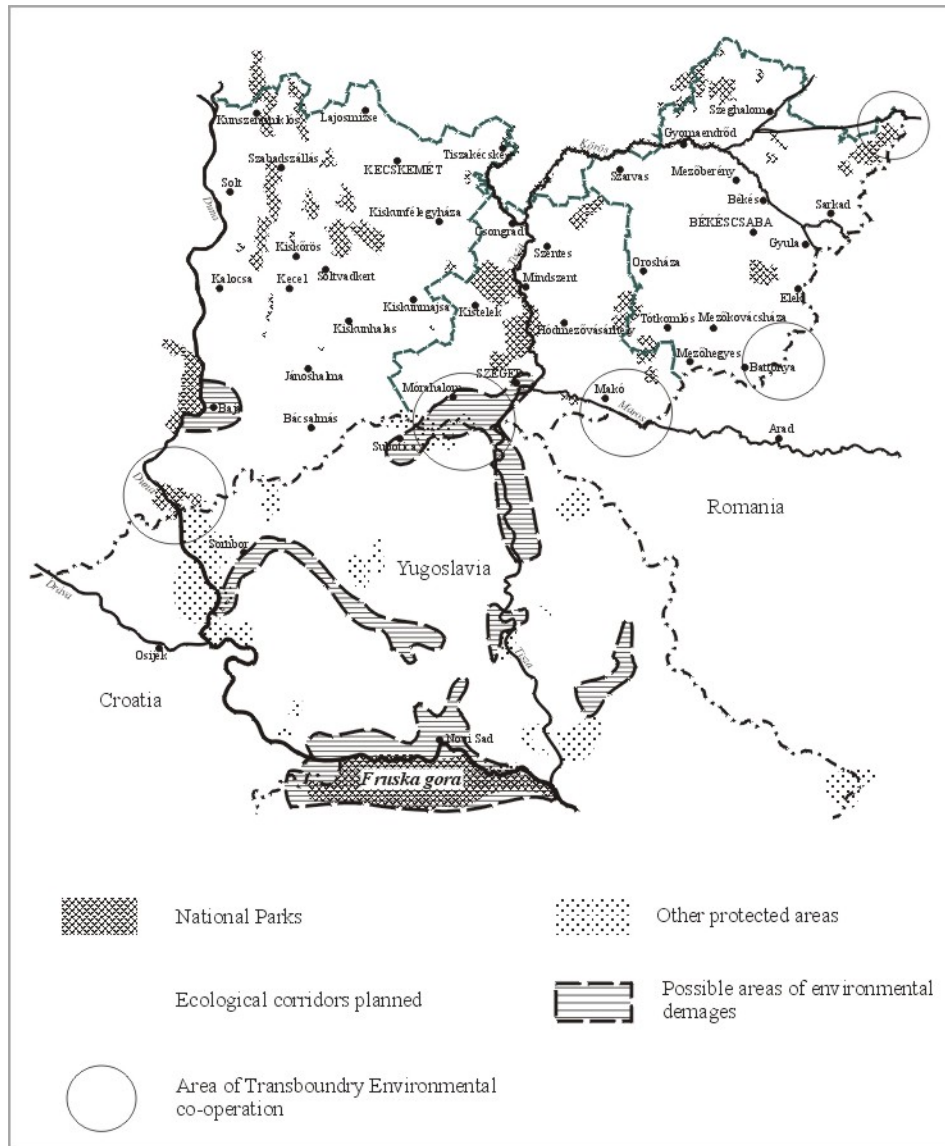
The fundamental goal of the area development of the border region in the Southern Plain is the improvement of its international competitiveness. To achieve this goal the following requirements have to be met: a stable economic and political environment, the shared and sustainable exploitation of natural resources, the creation of an environment conforming to EU standards as well as an attractive and healthy nature.

There is a network of areas (national parks, landscape conservation regions and nature reserves) enjoying national and local protection in the border region (*Figure 6*). Their protection necessitates complex landscape rehabilitation, which might be carried out by the Directorates of Danube–Dráva and Körös–Maros National Parks, the Environment Protection Agency of Serbia and the Nature Conservation Directorates of Oradea and Arad on the basis of bilateral relations. Proposed bilateral developments are as follows,

- The creation of the ecological (green) corridor connecting Danube–Dráva National Park along the River Danube in the Southern Great Plain and the tourist attraction-nature conservation zone along the Upper Danube in Yugoslavia; the proper care of these areas and of the one along the Croatian stretch of the River Dráva (Kopácsi Meadow);
- The joint care and linkage as nature reserves of the protected areas of the Hungarian border region (Körös Creek Landscape Conservation Region) and those of the Yugoslavian one (Subotica Woods, Palics–Ludas Regional Park and Szelevényi puszta [prairie]);

Figure 6

Environmental protection tasks in the Hungarian–Yugoslav–Romanian border zone



Source: author.

- The perfection of the Köröses–Tisza–Maros ecological (green) corridor, which might double as an international ecological (green) corridor both in the direction of Romania and Yugoslavia.³²

In County Bács-Kiskun it is the ecological corridor along the Danube that is the longest. It includes the flood area of the Danube in the North-South direction, becomes wider in the sand hills in the area lying between the Danube and the Tisza and joins the ecological (green) corridor along the River Tisza in Csongrád County at several points.

The ecological (green) corridor along the River Tisza includes the whole of the flood area of the river and those to be developed in the adjoining flood area of the River Maros. The national park here stretches as far as the Romanian-Hungarian border and joins the protected areas of County Arad in Romania. Another corridor, whose creation is, for the time being, only vaguely outlined and partially accepted, would run along the Nagymágocs–Hódmezővásárhely–Maroslele line and be vertical to the flood area of the River Maros.

Still planned, the corridor which would begin somewhere near Fehér tó (lake), run past Pitvarosi puszták (prairies) and finish at the flood area of the River Maros would be somewhat shorter. Its importance lies in the fact that it would link several protected areas of varying size.

The ecological (green) corridors of Békés and Bács Counties are located along the Rivers Körös, Tisza and Maros. Joining Romanian areas they are the carriers of the ecological relationship between the Carpathians and the Balkan Peninsula. In addition, they also connect the protected areas (Biharugra, Kígyósi puszták and the flood area of the Maros) making up Körös–Maros National Park.

7 Summary

Though the border zones of the three countries sharing geographical features, history as well as economic and cultural traditions have taken different political courses over the past several decades and have often showed hostility towards each other, they tried to assuage these conflicts when it came to co-operation. However, political trends are still attempting to exert their clout on the relations adopting European principles.

The picture of co-operation typical of the 90s is in accordance with Z. Hajdú's statement (2000) that the symmetrical areas of the Hungarian–Yugoslavian and Hungarian–Romanian border zones in their present state carry only topographical

³² The creation of natural habitats between the Biharugra ponds and Cefa and joining the flood area of the River Maros in Hungary and the one in Romania are already under way.

(inter-municipality) relations. However, some signs of 'tactical' relations are also present, and the potential of 'strategic co-operation' is also given.

The formal system of relations of co-operation has several different spatial types, which continue to leave the question of the definition of the term 'border region' unanswered:

- Type 1: mutual relations between symmetrical border zones, which means that individual municipalities and institutions on the Hungarian side co-operate with their counterparts on the other side of the border (cross-border co-operation);
- Type 2: border region or non-border region relations, which means that individual municipalities or institutions outside Hungary, especially Yugoslavian ones, keep in touch with their counterparts anywhere in core Hungary; these relations were established earlier due to the proximity of the Hungarian state frontier (cross-border co-operation);
- Type 3: relations formed outside the Yugoslav and Romanian border region but inside the Hungarian one and offering points of junction with Szeged, Baja and Békéscsaba; these links are typical of the 90s, when business and illegal trade in Vojvodina only reached the municipalities closest to the frontier;
- Type 4: asymmetrical (practically non-border region) relations typical of the 90s; the owners of more prosperous businesses were from more remote areas (Serbia and Montenegro) and they went further than Szeged, first to Kecskemét, then to Budapest. The Serb, Ukrainian and Albanian, mafia, people doing their shopping at Chinese markets and immigrants having quaternary jobs (journalists, writers, poets, musicians, university professors and engineers) are all among the ones attracted by Budapest.

Economic and educational aspects considered only the term 'asymmetrical border region' can be applied. Only when both countries have switched over to market economy can we speak of 'symmetrical relations'.

In the future it is the DKMT Euroregion that will provide the regions belonging to three countries with the conditions needed for their European style co-operation (despite their differing changes of regime and political systems) and the creation of a European style *modus vivendi*. This is supported on both sides by conceptions of development falling in line with the economic restructuring prescribed by the EU. New economic opportunities built on innovation present themselves, by means of which the region might be able to join in the processes leading to EU accession.

It is presumable that after Hungary's accession, with PHARE and INTERREG support, both Yugoslavia and Romania will be able to meet the requirements of EU accession, too.

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