



**CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN UKRAINE AND
SLOVAKIA AND ITS ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT EUROPEAN
EDUCATION**

**CEZHHRANIČNÁ SPOLUPRÁCA MEDZI UKRAJINOU A SLOVENSKOM A JEJ
ÚLOHA VO VÝVOJI EURÓPSKEHO VZDELÁVANIA**

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Abstract

The article deals with the problem of cross-border cooperation and its role in the development of the European educational space. The directions of cross-border educational cooperation, which are aimed at facilitating the exchange of students and teachers within the framework of partnership between schools of the Slovak-Ukrainian border territories, organization of excursions across the border, providing more information about the language, history and culture of neighboring countries in the educational programs of border schools, the introduction of bilingual educational programs; facilitating access to schools abroad, in particular through the introduction of preferential tariffs for the use of transport; the introduction of cross-border educational program or a regular educational program in which pupils from two border areas together attend school and receive the same education on both sides of the border with the help of teachers from both schools involved; promoting cross-border academic mobility and cooperation between universities in the border regions; joint use of facilities and equipment, including the information network of the Internet, the organization of joint research and teaching in higher education institutions in the border regions. It was clarified that cross-border cooperation takes place at different levels: between regions, between regional authorities, between local authorities, at the institutional level, at the university level, in particular between Uzhgorod National University and the Mukachevo State University and the Preshov University, as well as within the framework of Carpathian Euroregion and Border Cooperation Programs. The importance of the content of cross-border programs and the prospects of realization of tasks in the area of educational European integration is emphasized.

Key words: cross-border cooperation, education, educational programs, Ukraine, Slovakia.

Abstrakt

Príspevok sa zaoberá problematikou cezhraničnej spolupráce a jej úlohou pri rozvoji európskeho vzdelávacieho priestoru. Spôsoby cezhraničnej vzdelávacej spolupráce sú rôzne, napr. výmena študentov a učiteľov v rámci partnerstva medzi školami v slovensko-ukrajinskom pohraničí, organizovanie vzájomných exkurzií, poskytovanie informácií o jazyku, histórii a kultúry oboch štátov vo vzdelávacích programoch pohraničných škôl, zavedenie dvojjazyčných vzdelávacích programov; zjednodušenie vzdelávania v školách v zahraničí, najmä zavedením preferenčných taríf za využívanie dopravy; zavedenie cezhraničného vzdelávacieho programu, v ktorom žiaci/študenti z obidvoch pohraničných

oblastí spoločne navštevujú školu a dostávajú rovnaké vzdelanie v oboch štátoch; podpora cezhraničnej akademickej mobility a spolupráce medzi univerzitami v pohraničných regiónoch; spoločné využívanie zariadení a vybavenia vrátane informačnej siete internetu, organizovanie spoločného výskumu a výučby v inštitúciách vyššieho vzdelávania v pohraničných regiónoch. Ukazuje sa, že cezhraničná spolupráca prebieha na rôznych úrovniach: medzi regiónmi, medzi regionálnymi orgánmi, medzi miestnymi orgánmi, na inštitucionálnej úrovni, na univerzitnej úrovni, najmä medzi Užhorodskou národnou univerzitou, Mukačevskou štátnou univerzitou a Prešovskou univerzitou v Prešove, ako aj v rámci programov Karpatského euroregiónu a hraničnej spolupráce. Príspevok zdôrazňuje význam cezhraničných programov a ďalšie perspektívy realizácie úloh v oblasti európskej vzdelávacej integrácie.

Kľúčové slová: cezhraničná spolupráca, vzdelávanie, vzdelávacie programy, Ukrajina, Slovensko.

Introduction

In terms of globalization and internationalization of society, integration processes are developing at an accelerated pace, in connection with which are opened new opportunities for personal development of the person and economic development of the territories, including border areas. The experience of many countries in the world shows that the process of formation of favorable cross-border cooperation is influenced by a set of factors both at the macro and at the micro levels, including the educational processes that contribute to the formation of an effective personnel potential, develop ideological positions that enable to provide national interests of the country in the conditions of the European integration.

Cross-border cooperation in European integration

The basis of cross-border cooperation is a process of creation of connections and contractual relations in the border areas in order to find solutions of common and identical problems, and the "philosophy of cross-border cooperation" consists in the fact that two adjacent border regions cooperate in the development of plans and the choice of development priorities, and don't work separately, and then agree on development plans for individual activities.

Cross-border cooperation consists in order to engage all social groups and administrative bodies in the dialogue in all spheres of life. Among the main goals of such cooperation are: overcoming existing stereotypes and prejudices on both sides of the border; elimination of political and administrative barriers between neighboring nations; creation of economic, social and cultural infrastructure, subject to the formation of joint bodies, economic entities, centers, etc. [1; 4, p. 47].

Knowledge and understanding of a neighbor are as important as the formation of trust. The diversity of problems and potential development opportunities on both sides of the border across Europe leads to the fact that cross-border cooperation becomes inevitable, because it serves to implement the principles of international law in a clearly defined regional aspect.

Cross-border cooperation has all the reasons to become an effective tool for spatial development of Ukraine, because practically 15 regions of the state border on four countries of Central-Eastern Europe - Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania. Undoubtedly, the positive effects of the creation of the interregional association "Carpathian Euroregion" should be emphasized. During the independence of Transcarpathion, in particular, partnerships have been established with the Sabolch-Szatmar-Berezk region of Hungary and with the Košice and Prešov self-governing regions of Slovakia, the Maramuresh and Satu-Marsk districts of Romania, the Podkarpackie Voivodship of Poland, and recently with a number of regions of the Czech Republic and Germany. Such cooperation gives real results in the economic and social spheres. According to the volumes of foreign direct investments, that have received to the economy of Transcarpathion, Hungary placed fourth, the volume of investments – 30.2 million dollars (9.8% of the total volume

of foreign direct investments, attracted for the entire period of activity). Poland placed sixth, the volume of investments – 27.1 million dollars (8.8% of the total). Slovakia placed eighth, the volume of investments – 13.0 million dollars (4,2% of the total). For these countries, of the “Carpathian Euroregion” accounts for almost 23.0% of the total volume of foreign direct investment [4].

Let's note that on the territory of the Ukrainian Carpathians in 2007-2013 programs of European funds were implemented (Table 1.), which testifies to the importance of cross-border cooperation in the socio-economic policy of the European community.

Table 1. Indicative allocations of EU for cross-border cooperation programs 2007-2013, million euro

Cross-border program	2007-2010	2010-2013	Total 2007-2013
Poland / Belarus / Ukraine	97,107	89,094	186,201
Hungary / Slovakia / Ukraine / Romania	35,796	32,842	68,638
Romania / Moldova / Ukraine	66,086	60,632	126,718
Black Sea	9,025	8,281	17,306

At the same time, in the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe "On promoting cross-border cooperation in the field of culture between territorial communities or authorities" emphasized that mutual understanding and trust between nations which living in the border regions, regardless of whether they speak the same language, profess one religion, have a common cultural heritage or different cultural roots, strengthens cross-border cooperation in the field of culture and education [3].

Cross-border cooperation in the field of culture and education: the essence and significance

Cross-border cooperation in the field of culture and education contributes to the development and deepening of cooperation in education, civil service, economic development, environmental protection, regional planning and mutual assistance in emergencies, that is, the cementing basis of interstate relations. Cross-border cooperation in the field of education and culture is carried out in various forms.

The world community entered the third millennium, which has its own peculiarities and needs radical changes in all spheres of world order, in which information and education become dominant spheres of social life and produce a new type of social relations. After all, the social function of education is to broadcast not only national and ethnic culture, but also to attract the younger generation to universal values, to the world cultural process. In the context of this, the dialogue of cultures, ethics of interethnic communication is actual. Man is the bearer of a unique world of culture that interacts with other person-cultures that arise in the process of such interaction.

In the academic field, according to well-known scholars of European education policy, K. de Witt and J. Verhoven, there was cooperation at the Community level, for the expansion of which a series of programs was created that made it possible for students to pass part of their studies at universities of other countries, and to lecturers – to expand their academic communication: *programs for vocational education and strengthening the links between education and industry*: Comett (collaboration between university and production to improve the quality of preparation for technological changes); Petra (youth vocational training – the transition of young people to active adult and professional life); Eurotecnet (development of innovations in the field of vocational training; taking into account technological changes in the system of vocational training and teaching methods); Power (development of innovation policy and the exchange of experience in vocational training); *mobility programs, establishing contact between universities, studying European languages*: Erasmus (support exchange program for pilot-students for six years); Lingua (distribution of knowledge of foreign languages; preparation of a significant number of Europeans for communication in at least two foreign languages); Jean Monnet (providing the highest quality

teaching, research, analysis and dialogue in the field of disciplines in European integration in higher education institutions of the European Union and beyond); *support for marginal groups and regions*: Now, Iris (development of innovations in vocational training for the purpose of more active participation of women in European educational policy processes), Helios, Handynet, Horizon, Tempus (trans-European mobility in higher education, change of higher education systems in Central and Eastern European countries); *a program that provides for the exchange of information, the development of methods for recognizing diplomas* (Eurydice1, ECTS) [10].

In particular, the project "Danube Academy of Dual Education" aims to promote the solution of high youth unemployment in the Danube Region due to the lack of skilled labor [9]. His goal is to promote the modernization of vocational education in Slovakia. The transfer of positive experiences from Austria and Germany should facilitate the creation of compatible education systems in the Danube Region, which acts as the ERASMUS-KA3 EACEA 13/2014 "National Centers for Vocational Education – Introduction of Dual Learning Elements in the Slovak Republic (funding in the amount of about 240,000 Euro), aimed at reforms to support education in Slovakia, the introduction of dual education; creation of a double-training counseling center; mobilization of companies, especially small and medium-sized businesses, in support of vocational training; exchange of experience and transfer of "best practices" within the framework of the project partners of the Danube region. The focus of the project is the interdisciplinary study of the region in terms of environmental science, humanities and social sciences.

Deepening of the educational dialogue in the strategy of Ukrainian-Slovak cross-border cooperation

In the educational field, cross-border cooperation with the regions, in particular, Slovakia, aimed at expansion scientific and technical cooperation in the work carried out on the basis of the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic "On Scientific and Technological Cooperation" and the Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic "On Academic Mutual Recognition and Equivalence of Education Documents Issued in Ukraine and the Slovak Republic" [8].

Among the main forms of cooperation defined joint scientific and technological and research projects in mutually agreed spheres: exchange of scientists, specialists, researchers and experts in order to implement programs and projects of scientific and technological cooperation; exchange of scientific and technical information, documentation, as well as laboratory samples and equipment; organization and holding of joint scientific conferences, symposiums, seminars, exhibitions, etc.

At present, local and regional development agencies are active in the Transcarpathian region, which have a strong potential, aimed at improving the socio-economic development of this region. Within the framework of various regional and international programs, comprehensive training is provided for civil servants, self-government bodies and non-governmental organizations representatives on project management in order to increase the attraction of additional funds for the development of the region through the introduction of projects within the framework of the European Union programs.

In the Slovak regions, which are participants in cross-border cooperation with Ukrainian regions, in recent years there has been a more qualitative development of intellectual potential, which is manifested primarily in a greater number of students (in terms of 10 thousand people in the existing population), a higher level of availability of professors and teaching staff, a greater number of implemented innovations [6]. In our opinion, this is an experience worth paying attention in Ukrainian society.

In the conditions of development of Transcarpathian region, cross-border cooperation is an effective instrument of European integration, strengthening of interstate relations and solving regional problems, in particular through active participation of territorial communities of border countries in cooperation with neighbors. For example, the Transcarpathian region cross-border

Cooperation Program for 2016 – 2020 has been developed as an innovation, which, in the context of strengthening Ukrainian-Slovak cooperation, determines a number of activities between neighboring border regions of Ukraine and the Slovak Republic, in particular: carrying out the Days of Neighborhood on the Ukrainian-Slovak border; exchange of experience between regional organizations and organizations of the cities of Kosice and Presov, providing rehabilitation services for children with disabilities; realization of measures on opening of new, reconstruction of existing border crossing points on the Ukrainian-Slovak border and arrangement of border and road infrastructure [2].

The strategic document for Ukraine and the Slovak Republic is the project "Strategy for the development of Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation till 2020" developed within the framework of the tasks of implementing the project "Slovak-Ukrainian Cultural Center – Formation and Strengthening of Cooperation between the Presov Self-Governing Territory and the Transcarpathian Region of Ukraine" (EU Program and the ENPI "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine"). The Strategy states that the Ukrainian and Slovak adjacent border territories should be considered "as one region, divided into two separate parts, which should learn to cooperate at all levels of mutual interest". Based on these principles, the strategic goal of the Slovak-Ukrainian cross-border region in the medium term up to 2020 is formed – to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of the population of the border regions on both sides of the border. The strategic objectives of the mentioned document are as follows: increase of innovation and competitiveness of the cross-border region through its development and thoughtfulness of specialization; improving the external and internal accessibility of the cross-border region for the cross-border and interregional flow of people, goods and services; strengthening the social and cultural integrity of the cross-border region; – strengthening the protection of the environment, natural beauty, values and cultural heritage of the cross-border region; internationalization, that is, the involvement of the region in European and global processes [4, p. 40].

Higher School of Ukraine and Slovakia in Cross-Border European Cooperation

Wide international Ukrainian-Slovak educational cooperation is carried out on the basis of cooperation between higher educational institutions, Uzhhorod National and Mukachevo State Universities and universities of Slovakia.

International cooperation of UzhNU promotes the expansion of scientific research in various fields of knowledge (physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, philology, archeology, problems of the Carpathian region, etc.). Students pass a yearly practice at Presov University, teachers of the Slovak branch have the opportunity to practice at the Comenius University in Bratislava and Presov University, UzhNU has a close connection with the methodical center of Studia Academica Slovaca at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, students and teachers of the university took an active part in various academic mobility programs in Slovakia: "term training", studying and production practice, internship.

Within the framework of the implementation of the scientific project "Innovation University – an instrument for integration into the European educational and scientific space" an International scientific and practical conference, funded by the International Visegrad Fund, was held. The event was held on the basis of the "Tekhnikom" – Science park of the Košice Technical University – a partner of Uzhgorod National University in the project. The participants of the conference exchanged views on the innovation activity of higher educational institutions through the functioning of scientific parks as important mechanisms for the transformation of scientific and educational cross-border cooperation.

The close scientific cooperation was established between the Mukachevo State University and the Presov University in the field of pedagogical education, in particular, the teachers of Slovak Institution of higher education participated in the conference "Education and Competitiveness of Specialists in European Integration" (October 25 – 26, 2018), became the contributors to the

scientific professional pedagogical journal "Pedagogy and psychology", and a representative of Košice University is a member of the editorial board of this magazine.

For the development of cross-border cooperation, the Cross-border Student Parliament may be an effective form, that is the establishment of a common IST-instrument for the implementation of the forum in the border regions of Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. The goal of the project is to create a systemic and long-term cross-border cooperation in the border regions by implementing an information approach based on IST technologies. The main partner of the project is the Regional Development Agency "Polonina", Presov region, Slovakia. Project partners: Maramures Regional Council, Romania; Association "KIUT", Sabolch-Satmar-Bereg region, Hungary; Association "MAIRR", Transcarpathian region, Ukraine; NGO "Business Initiatives", Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine.

An International educational consortium is being established in the Transcarpathian region, which brings together educational institutions and public organizations interested in cooperation at the international level. On the initiative of Uzhhorod educational institutions and public organizations, the decision was reached on the appropriateness of consolidating the experience of educational institutions and projected institutions in order to participate in international projects and educational programs, to form partnerships, to actively exchange experience in the field of implementation of educational initiatives and the presentation of educational institutions at the international level. Every school has its own unique experience in international cooperation according to its specialization, namely: Uzhgorod Specialized School №5 implements the project "European School of Exchange". For the first time in the Transcarpathian region Uzhgorod Specialized School №5 served as the main partner within the framework of the program "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine 2007-2013"; on the basis of Lyceum "Leader" - School №20 in close cooperation with the Public Association "Road of Life", a School of International Tolerance, Inclusive Education in the framework of the cross-border project of the "Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine Program" 2007 – 2013 is being set up.

The "European School of Exchange" is actively working – the basis for social cooperation between educational institutions in the border regions of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The goal of the project is to create sustainable conditions for effective cooperation between educational institutions and increase the efficiency of state educational services in the border regions. The main partner of the project is the Secondary School № 5 with advanced study of the French and English languages. Project partners: Secondary school № 5 of Ivano-Frankivsk city with advanced training of German language, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine; public organization "Center for European Initiatives", Transcarpathian region, Ukraine; Association of regional development "KIUT" Sabolch-Satmar-Bereg region, Hungary; Secondary technical school in the city of Snina, Prešov Region, Slovakia; Energy Agency in Maramuresh (AMEMM) in Baia Mare, Maramures County, Romania.

Institutions of the border countries supported the initiative to create an international educational network: the Technical School of Snina, the Gymnasium of Sobrance and the Regional Development Agency "Poloniny"(Slovakia), the Vilmos Teichman School in Kisvarda and the Regional Development Association "KIUT" (Hungary); Art School in Baiya Mare and Energy Management Agency of Maramuresh (Romania) and others. The consortium defines the specialization of each participant, namely: Slovakia: technical education, engineering; Hungary: ecology; Romania: energy conservation; Ukraine: International Business and International Relations, Leadership, Tolerance.

The main target group: young teachers and students. During the two years of realization of the project "European School of Experience Exchange", a team of young trainers and project operators was set up – young people aged 15 –18, who, together with their partners from Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Ukraine, were trained and developed a concept for the development of the Carpathian Euroregion. The experience will be disseminated to interested educational institutions within the consortium and will include new ideas and initiatives.

An equally important project of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Slovakia is "Creating new cross-border opportunities: counseling and trainings for entrepreneurs" [2]. The main objective of the project was to promote the growth of economic independence and business success of entrepreneurs in the border regions of Slovakia and Ukraine. Its main tasks are to increase the number of successful cross-border educational and business ties. The project was based on three key areas of activity: promotion of opportunities for joint investment of business partners of the border region of Ukraine and Slovakia; advisory support of cross-border business projects between partners of Ukraine and Slovakia; conducting a training and practical training program aimed at improving the skills of entrepreneurs, managers and mid-level managers for the development and implementation of joint commercial projects. Participants of the Consortium will cooperate in the areas of organization of joint conferences, scientific forums, preparation and publication of educational and scientific publications, academic mobility of students, lecturers, doctoral students, development of joint scientific and educational programs, promotion and implementation of joint projects to national and international donors. In particular, a fundamental doctoral pedagogical study on the development of economic education in Slovakia has already been carried out today [7]. Thus, the implementation of joint projects in the field of cross-border cooperation will promote joint actions of participants in cross-border cooperation, implementation of bilateral projects in the field of education and science, which will enable to intensify Ukraine's European integration aspirations.

Conclusion

The consistent increase in the support of the European integration component of Ukrainian education and science is consistent with both the strategic goals of the Ukrainian state and society in terms of full integration into the EU and the ideals of the EU, its aspiration to create a single economic, political and value space in the new Europe. To date, cross-border cooperation is an important tool for sustainable development of the border region, raising additional funds in the form of international technical assistance and investment countries-neighbors. The Transcarpathian region, as a cross-border region, is bordering the four European countries, has a strong potential both in economic cross-border cooperation and in social and humanitarian (holding of the Day of Neighborhood on the Ukrainian-Slovak part of the border, conferences, round tables, meetings of interregional groups, trainings, various kinds of programs, projects that promote the formation of new forms of educational partnership and interaction).

Development of educational cross-border cooperation will be facilitated by the involvement of not only state educational and scientific institutions, but also non-governmental, in particular, regional analytical centers, in the project activities, which will allow the regional potential of Ukrainian science and education to such cooperation.

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