

## **Rethinking the Governance-Governmentality-Governability nexus at the EU's Eastern Frontiers: the Carpathian Euroregion 2.0 and the future of EU-Ukrainian Cross-Border cooperation**

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### **Abstract**

*The EU's neighbourhood policy and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in particular envisage bilateral and multilateral platforms for promoting cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries, and their regions. The Union's decade-old Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy framework, too, aims at increasing cross-border connectivity and capacity-building for good governance, including in Ukraine - one of the six EaP states. Within the EU-Ukrainian borderland, one of the key - but hardly unproblematic - roles in driving cross-border interactions as well as regional dialogue and development has been performed for the past three decades by the Carpathian Euroregion, whose agency is more attributable to distinct national representations than associated with the Euroregion as a whole. Empirically disentangling the institutional design and performance of the Carpathian Euroregion, with an emphasis on the Ukrainian part, this article seeks to contextualize and conceptualize the very phenomenon and varied practice of Euroregions forged along and beyond the EU-Ukraine borderlands. Drawing on the literature on cross-border governance, the article also integrates insights from the governmentality and governability studies (within the herewith originally theorized 'governance-governmentality-governability' nexus) in order to provide a more synergetic and encompassing analytical perspective on the past, present and the future of EU-Ukraine cross-border and inter-regional cooperation, Carpathian region-building - and the renewed role of the Carpathian Euroregion therein.*

**Keywords:** Carpathian Euroregion; cross-border cooperation; EU-Ukraine association; 'governance-governmentality-governability' nexus; Carpathian macro-region

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## Introduction

Over the past years, cross-border interactions have gained policy salience and public attention not least in light of the simultaneously unfolding processes of de-borderization and integration, re-borderization (both physical, legal and illegal) as well as the new wave of securitization of borders regionwide. The European Union's eastern borderland has traditionally been an area where contestation meets cooperation, security meets culture and identity meets identity. It is also a juncture where the EU's experimentalist external *governance* (including in the form of cross-border cooperation structures and regional development programs) faces diverse - and sometimes diverging - *inter*-national practices of *governmentality* (mentalities, rationalities, and techniques of governance - but also the emerging and consolidating borderland subjectivities themselves) as well as multiple challenges of regional *governability* (capacities of governance and issue management).

In one way or another, these dimensions of cross-border interaction have been addressed in many policy initiatives on/around/in this very region. The EU's neighbourhood policy and the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in particular foresee both bilateral and multilateral platforms for promoting cooperation between EU countries and neighbouring states sharing a land border or a sea crossing. Its decade-old Eastern Partnership framework, too, aims at increasing cross-border connectivity and capacity-building for good governance, including in Ukraine - one of the six EaP states.

One of the key (but hardly unproblematic) roles in driving cross-border cooperation (CBC) and regional dialogue and development has been performed by the Carpathian Euroregion (CE). Established in 1993, the Carpathian Euroregion (CE) now gathers nineteen borderland regions in Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. Stretching over a territory of 190 000 km<sup>2</sup>, the Carpathians rank as the second-largest mountain region in Europe after the Alps, with a population of around 68 million. The scope of the Carpathian Euroregion's activities extends from supporting cross-border cooperation to regional and local development, from region's promotion to inter-regional cooperation, thus contributing to sustainable development of the Carpathian macro-region on both sides of the border.

Against this backdrop, this article will assess the institutional design and performance of the Carpathian Euroregion, with an emphasis on its Ukrainian part, in the context of EU-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation dynamics, the long-overdue formation of the Carpathian (macro-)regional ecosystem, and Ukraine's European integration process. Based on the theories forwarded by the literature on cross-border governance, it will also integrate insights from the governmentality and governability studies in order to provide a more synergetic and encompassing analytical perspective on the past, present and the future of EU-Ukraine cross-border

and inter-regional cooperation, Carpathian region-building - and the renewed role of the Carpathian Euroregion therein.

The scholarly interest in Euroregions surged in the mid-1990s, thus responding to the phenomenon of proliferating Euroregions across Europe. A notably lesser attention has enjoyed the discussion of cross-border cooperation at the EU's external borders or the functioning of the Euroregions beyond the EU. With a few exceptions (Mikula, 2003; Popescu, 2008; Garagonych, 2012; Delcour, 2013; Tkachenko, 2014; Liikanen *et al.*, 2016; Jakubowski *et al.*, 2016; Tyushka, 2017), the vast share of the literature on EU-Ukraine and EU-Eastern neighbourhood's cross-border cooperation is nearly exclusively grounded in empirical analysis and thus provides an 'instrumental', or institutional-functional, understanding - rather than teleologically disentangling what the Euroregion phenomenon and varied practice means in a particular geographic and political context. Seeking to address such a gap in the literature, this article advances a compound analytical approach and conceptualizes Euroregion as a cross-border space of governance as well as that of governmentality-shaping and governability-building practices. It lays the empirical focus on the Euroregions formed at (and beyond) the EU's eastern frontiers, taking the Carpathian Euroregion as a case study. In what follows, the article presents the research framework, deconstructs it and conceptualizes the Euroregions formed in the EU-Ukrainian borderlands as spaces of cross-border governance, sites of cross-border governmentality-shaping as well as laboratories of cross-border governability build-up. Next, the rationale, design and functioning of the Carpathian Euroregion (and particularly its Ukrainian component) are analysed along the parameters of the constructed analytical framework.

## **1. Euroregions and the 3G nexus: governance, governmentality and governability**

The early 1990s not only saw tectonic shifts in global and regional transformations along Europe's East/West dividing line - they also witnessed the surge in regional and cross-border cooperation within/between Western and Eastern Europe alike. Having originated in the 1950s already, Euroregions (and the related forms of cross-border inter-regional cooperation and governance - from Euroregions and Working Communities to European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation) have truly proliferated in the 1990s leaving virtually no local or regional cross-border spaces out of any form of cross-border/transboundary/transnational cooperation as we know it (Perkmann, 2003; Noferini *et al.*, 2020). Having emerged in the supranational context of the EC/EU multi-level governance, Euroregions are richly featured today along the European Union's external borders and, sometimes, even further afield, as the Ukrainian 'Euroregions' formed at the country's Russia-adjacent eastern borderlands manifest it. Following the widespread criteria-based approach of the *Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)*, the *Euroregions* can be defined as a form of cross-border cooperation, formalized through: (a) an

association of local and regional authorities on either side of the national border, occasionally featuring a parliamentary assembly; (b) a necessarily present permanent secretariat and a technical and administrative team with own resources; which is (c) established under private or public law as a non-profit association/foundation or an inter-state body that enables territorial participation and action (AEBR, 1995). Whereas this criteria-based approach can more or less represent a broader consensus among the policymaking communities, the scholarly conceptions of the notion naturally vary from discipline to discipline (be it public administration, political science or international relations, but also within border and regional studies themselves - both classical and critical ones) as well as in view of the evolving practices *per se* (see representatively: Perkmann, 2003; Kramsch, 2003b; Medeiros, 2011). Perkmann's (2003, p. 156) formal organizational approach to Euroregion, as an essentially cross-border region, suggests to define it as a 'bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in a CBC initiative', thus bringing the management/governance perspective to the front. The changing idea of borders as well as bordering practices, distinct emerging forms of re-territorialization, multi-level governance but also 'governance beyond borders', seen against the backdrop of rising local and regional agency and the authority decentralization at large, do constitute an implicit drive towards redefining the concept in light of governance and governability dynamics (Medeiros, 2011; Noferini *et al.*, 2020). As a form of bottom-up structure built by and across cross-border regions, Euroregions incrementally serve as vehicles of joint regional policy generation at the national levels and produce spill-over effects on other policy domains - not least as they embody micro- 'laboratories of European integration' (Kramsch, 2003b, p. 70). The proliferating practice of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), which within the EU member states do not even require a prior signature of an international agreement, particularly well signifies a change in cross-border governmentality. It therefore appears timely and necessary an exercise to reconsider the 'Euroregion' phenomenon in light of evolving practices of cross-border cooperation as well as broader strategic frameworks of governance, governmentality and governability within which they operate. In so doing, this article disentangles the EU-Ukrainian borderland Euroregions within such a '3G' nexus and seeks to conceptualize as well as empirically analyse the Carpathian Euroregion in particular as a space of cross-border governance, a site of shifting - i.e. European integration-oriented - governmentality and a possible 'laboratory' of local and wider regional governability build-up. As an exploratory analytical endeavour, this study draws, in its empirical part, on document (content) analysis, institutional discourse and practice (performance) analysis as well as it includes elements of comparative research (along the set of argument-related parameters as manifested in the functioning of the EU-Ukrainian and within-EU Euroregions).

### 1.1. Mapping Ukrainian Euroregions within and beyond the EU-Ukrainian borderlands

In the early 1990s, the Euroregions phenomenon emerged as a form of cross-border cooperation first and foremost among the countries of East-Central Europe. Thereby, an active and significant role in the establishment of Euroregional institutions was performed by the Republic of Poland that, back in time, was bordering on integrated and institutionalized Europe and thus managed to establish in total nine Euroregions along its borderlands adjacent to Germany, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania but also Belarus and Ukraine. Among the first Euroregions established then were 'Pomerania', 'Viadrina', 'Spree-Neisse-Bober', 'Neisse-Nisa-Nysa', 'Union of Communes of Upper Silesia and Northern Moravia', 'Tatry', 'Bug', 'Niemen' and the 'Carpathian Euroregion'.

In Ukraine, which has become the EU's direct neighbour after the 2004 'big bang' enlargement, the '*Euroregional movement*' (i.e. the civil society's and local political support for the idea of cross-border cooperation essentially along the country's westward frontiers) emerged as early as in 1993 - just a couple of years after the country regained its independence from the Soviet Union. It considerably consolidated in the late 1990s to mid-2000s. As of now, 10 Euroregions operate on the Ukrainian territory: in addition to the country's premier Euroregion - the Carpathian Euroregion - that got established in 1993 and is considered to be the most successful Euroregion in Central and Eastern Europe, the Euroregion 'Bug' got founded in 1995, followed by the Euroregions 'Lower Danube' (1998), 'Upper Prut' (2000), 'Dnipro' (2003), 'Slobozhanshchyna' (2003), 'Yaroslavna' (2007), 'Black Sea' (2008), 'Donbas' (2010), 'Dniester' (2012)<sup>1</sup>. Importantly, five Euroregions (Carpathian Euroregion, Bug, Lower Danube, Upper Prut and Association Black Sea Euroregion) are formed along the EU-Ukrainian borderland (Figure 1).

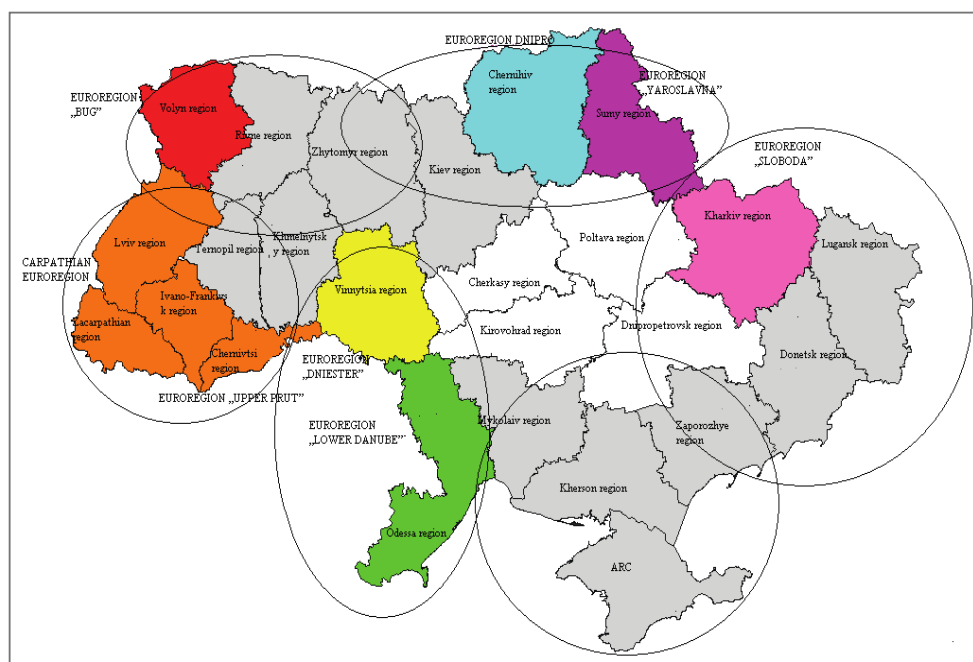
Ukraine's borderland Euroregions pursue multiple functions, even though their multifunctionality significantly differs from that of EU-internal Euroregions, not least as their activities revolve around the support for cross-border transport services, facilitation of joint projects under the EU's Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programs as well as cross-border tourism development. On the one hand, such curtailed multifunctionality is explained by the lack of strong identification links among constitutive regions and territorial entities with respective Euroregions, and on the other - by the unsatisfactory financial situation of the regions participating in such inter-territorial associations. This is, moreover, compounded by the fact that the effective functioning of the Euroregions is, to an extent, also hindered by the differences in the forms of government (and thus the varying degrees of regional

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<sup>1</sup> Notably, with the start of the Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014, five Euroregions that were created along Ukraine's borderlands with Russia effectively ceased operating ('Dnipro', 'Slobozhanshchyna', 'Yaroslavna', 'Black Sea', and 'Donbas').

autonomy and decision-making) as well as overall structural conditions in the participating countries that find themselves on distinct sides of the EU's external frontiers.

**Figure 1. Map of Euroregions with Participation of Ukrainian Regions (*oblasts*)**



Note: Grey-coloured oblasts depict the regional spaces proposed to be included into Euroregions.

Source: Tkachenko (2014, p. 61)

## 1.2. Euroregions as spaces of cross-border *governance* within the EU-Ukrainian borderlands

Cross-border regions denote both divided territories (i.e. *bordered lands*) as well as bridges (i.e. *borderlands*), where spatialities (i.e., socially constructed spatial attributes) of identity, culture, belonging and organizational boundaries intertwine. Euroregions therefore represent the so-called ‘soft spaces’ of governance, with an articulated ontology of network-based governance, heterarchical rather than hierarchical engagement, transboundary/transnational interactions, and a fuzzier public/private distinction than within the ‘hard spaces’ of nation-state governance (Telle, 2017, p. 96). They represent the lowest (i.e. local and sub-/regional) level of cross-border governance within the EU's multi-level governance system (Scott, 2000, p. 149; Lawrence, 2010). At the lowest level, cross-border governance,

structured around borderland Euroregions, is usually understood as a milieu in which national political, legislative and administrative cultures come together to enable respective local and regional actors to better assess the needs and trajectories of regional development, envision common goals and determine means to achieve them (Scott, 2000; Kramsch, 2003a; Perkmann, 2002; Perkmann, 2007).

In a wider perspective of international relations, however, Euroregions resemble a form of governance beyond borders and thus happen to be intrinsically reshaping the power relationships and interdependencies at stake (Newman, 2003). In much of the realist approaches, Euroregions are thought of as loci of shifting boundaries (and thus - loyalties) as well as spaces of extended influence or cooperative governance, where the power lies with those who decide on when and where to draw the boundaries - and 'erase' them, even if not quite literally in physical terms. Seen from this angle, cross-border Euroregions and other formalized forms of cross-border governance unveil geopolitical or geoeconomic rationalities - as well as implications (Sparke, 1998; Sparke, 2002; Popescu, 2008).

Borders and (re)bordering processes are a particularly salient political matter in '*new Eastern Europe*', i.e. countries such as Ukraine, Moldova or Belarus but also South Caucasus nations of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, whose nationalities were reinforced by the rise of the 'border' paradigm and actual border-drawing vis-à-vis metropolitan Russia, the centre of the fallen USSR empire, as well as among themselves (Liikanen, Scott and Sotkasiira, 2016; NEE, 2016; Jakubowski *et al.*, 2016).

The EU's bordering dilemmas in this geostrategic space are inevitably related to the issues of ontological (in)security, which has incentivized the EU's drive to extend its (good) governance practices beyond the frontiers, as much of the mushrooming '*external governance*' literature illustrates (Lavenex, 2004; Lavenex, 2008). After all, cross-border cooperation is commonly seen as a tool of regional development and stabilization, including the instances of soft or regulatory power projection and other hegemonic practices. As a hegemonic practice, the EU's external governance towards the Eastern Neighbourhood seeks, however, to transcend (rather than redraw) Europe's East/West divides - even though the achievements on this path are less pronounced than the declarations are (Langbein, 2014). As one and a half decade ago, the EU's Euroregions along the eastern frontier outline an area 'where East meets West' as it used to be the case with German-Polish borderland Euroregions before Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 (Kraetke, 1996). This persisting thinking on borders notwithstanding, the varied practices of bordering are the drivers of change. The EU's 2003 'wider Europe' programme indeed called for a broader vision of Europe without barriers (leaving legal and physical borders of neighbour states stand still). In an effort to extend good governance practices beyond EU borders, the Union has embarked on a process of drawing the neighbourhood closer in terms of regulatory and legislative approximation as well as political rapprochement and economic integration. Initially, such a policy endeavour was

broadly approached within the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) framework and, since 2009, within the more regionally specialized Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy framework, which had been initiated by Poland and Sweden in the early 2000s. It is particularly the EaP framework, which envisaged a multi-layered programme of 'region-building' in the EU's Eastern neighbourhood, that came to be incrementally perceived as a geopolitical exercise (Delcour, 2013; Browning, 2017; Cadier, 2019). In its shadow, the revival of cross-border regionalism on the EU's eastern frontiers, including through the activities of the borderland Euroregions, has also been considered as a 'strategic regionalism', i.e. the form of cross-border and transnational / transgovernmental cooperation that helps channel the transfer of EU norms and rules beyond its borders (Kramsch and Mamadouh, 2003; Khasson, 2013; Shyrokykh and Rimkutė, 2019). The negotiation of the EU-Eastern Neighbours' Association Agreements, which commenced in 2007 with the talks on the EU-Ukraine new enhanced agreement, and the conclusion of AA/DCFTA Agreements with EaP 3 states (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) in 2014 only reinforced the trend - and the perception within and beyond region about the European Union's expanding influence in Eastern Europe. Not least this has been due to the very integration-oriented character of those agreements that foresee the countries' political association and economic integration with the EU, a 'stake' in the EU internal market and legal system but, most of all, do practically resemble instances of 'neighbour-state building' akin to those the EU used in its enlargement approach of 'member-state building' (Tyushka, 2017). In view of the confirmed impact on regional growth trajectories of CEECs after conclusion of their Association Agreements ('Europe Agreements') back in the mid-1990s (Monastiriotis *et al.*, 2017), the EU's current Association Agreements with EaP3 may also potentially help develop 'disadvantaged areas' through enhanced cross-border and territorial cooperation mechanisms, as for instance stipulated in Art. 446 of the EU-Ukraine AA (see also: Stadnytskyi, 2017).

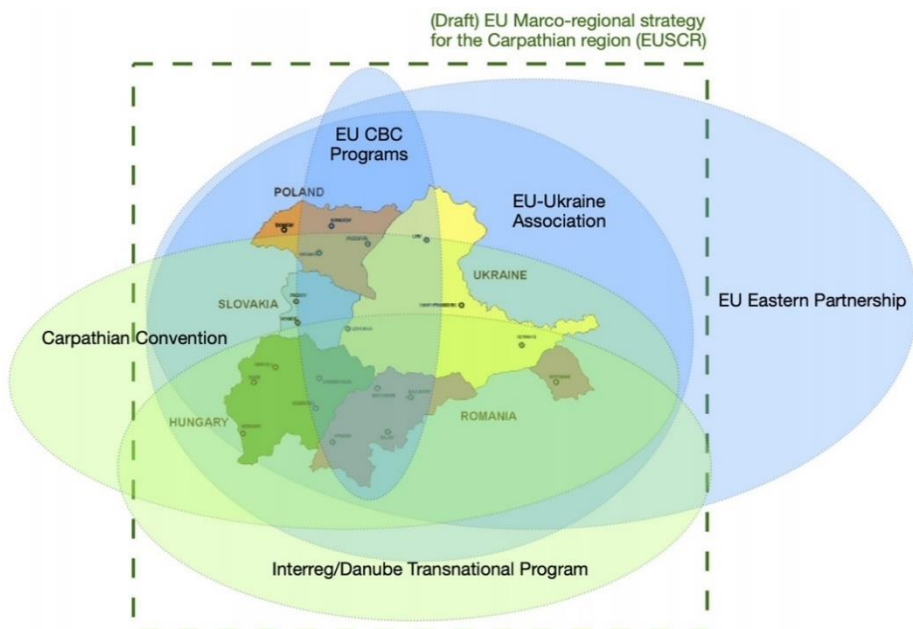
Currently, the EU-Ukrainian cross-border and regional cooperation in the Carpathian space is governed by several tangentially overlapping legal and policy frameworks, including:

- *EU cross-border cooperation programmes*, as extended to the non-EU member states' regions;
- *European Territorial Cooperation (formerly, Interreg)* tools;
- *multilateral policy frameworks* of wider regional cooperation, such as the EU's 2009 Eastern partnership and the 2004-launched European Neighbourhood Policy at large;
- an *intergovernmental* mechanism, i.e. The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (*Carpathian Convention*), concluded in 2003 by seven EU and non-EU countries (Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine);
- *bilateral instruments*, such as the now-expired 1998 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA, 2009 EU-Ukraine Memorandum of Understanding for the



Establishment of a Dialogue on Regional Policy, as well as the more recent and comprehensive framework of EU-Ukraine political association and economic integration - the 2014 Association Agreement with the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Component (Figure 2):

**Figure 2. Strategic Policy Frameworks of EU-Ukraine Cross-Border and Regional Cooperation**



Source: authors' representation

Notably, the cross-border and regional cooperation have been constituting an area of active and constructive EU-Ukraine mutual engagement even before the conclusion of the Association Agreement. The matters have been regulated by Art. 70 of the EU-Ukraine PCA, the 2009 MoU on Regional Policy Dialogue and the manifold instruments under the ENP/EaP since 2004 onwards. Currently, the entire area of bilateral cross-border cooperation and regional policymaking is regulated solely by four Articles (Articles 446 to 449) of *Chapter 27* of the *EU-Ukraine Association Agreement*. Promotion of mutual understanding and bilateral cooperation in the field of regional policy, particularly as regards the methods of regional policy formulation and implementation (not least drawing on the principles of multi-level governance and partnership), constitutes the main rationale of EU-Ukraine CBC (Art 446 EU-Ukraine AA). Notably, the mandated EU-Ukraine cross-border and regional cooperation spans, i.a., across the areas of inter-regional infrastructure and connectivity-building

(transport, energy, tourism, communication networks), shared heritage preservation and promotion (culture, education) as well as safety and security (public health, emergency services, border management), etc. (Art 448 EU-Ukraine AA). Thereby, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement stipulations do not entail any benchmarks or policy guidelines on the implementation of cross-border and regional cooperation. As a result, the pace and success of the EU-Ukraine cooperation in this area can be assessed against the backdrop of individual projects of cross-border and territorial cooperation, rather than the Association Agreement's regulatory framework itself (cf.: Tyushka, 2018, pp. 199-200).

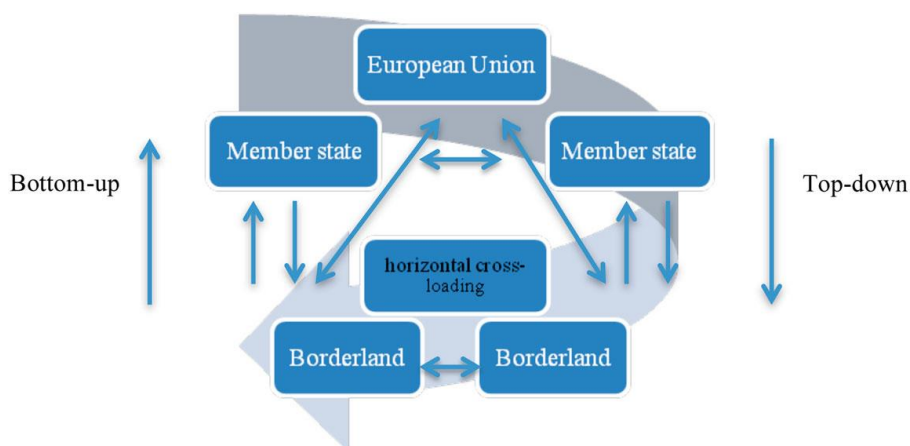
### **1.3. The EU-Ukrainian borderland Euroregions as sites of cross-border governmentality**

The EU-Ukrainian borderland, as any other, resembles a dialogical space, in which ideas, identities as well as the best (and worst) governance practices contagion and interact, thus channelling new approaches to governance and helping nurture new subjects of governance, i.e. cultivating a particular type of 'governmentality'. The idea of *governmentality*, also known as 'government rationality' or 'technologies of governance', originates from the early 1980s' works of M. Foucault and comes to denote a shift of focus from the government (as *the* 'right manner of disposing of things' in pursuit of predefined goals) to a 'whole series of specific finalities' to be achieved via 'multiform tactics', thus reconfiguring the central-local power relationships. In other words, governmentality stands for a multi-layered and dynamic social construction of rationalities and political technologies of governance, which are constantly re-negotiated among relevant networked actors - self-governing subjectivities. The idea of governmentality thus facilitates understanding of power not as a vehicle of repression and subordination but as a discursive and policy practice that leads to the emergence of distinct subjectivities. The semantic linking of 'governing' and 'mentality', that underwrites the Foucauldian 'governmentality' notion, feeds into what he calls a 'contract between technologies of domination of others and those of self' (Foucault, 1988, p. 19). By zooming in onto the technologies and rationalities of 'governing of self' within the entire continuum of governance, governmentality is particularly applicable an idea in the context of local and regional governance studies.

The rise of the governmentality approach is inextricably linked to the 'practices' and 'narrative' turns in border and regionalism studies. Varró (2016) observes that the proliferating practice - and people-centred accounts (and thus a shift towards the studying of *bordering*, i.e. the multitude of cross-border governance and interaction practices) point towards a growing recognition of emerging 'transnational spaces' and 'subjectivities' of cross-border cooperation. Naturally, the processes of cross-border regional identity (re-)shaping constitute a particular strand of scholarly enquiry in this context (Jordan, 2001). In the framework of the EU's

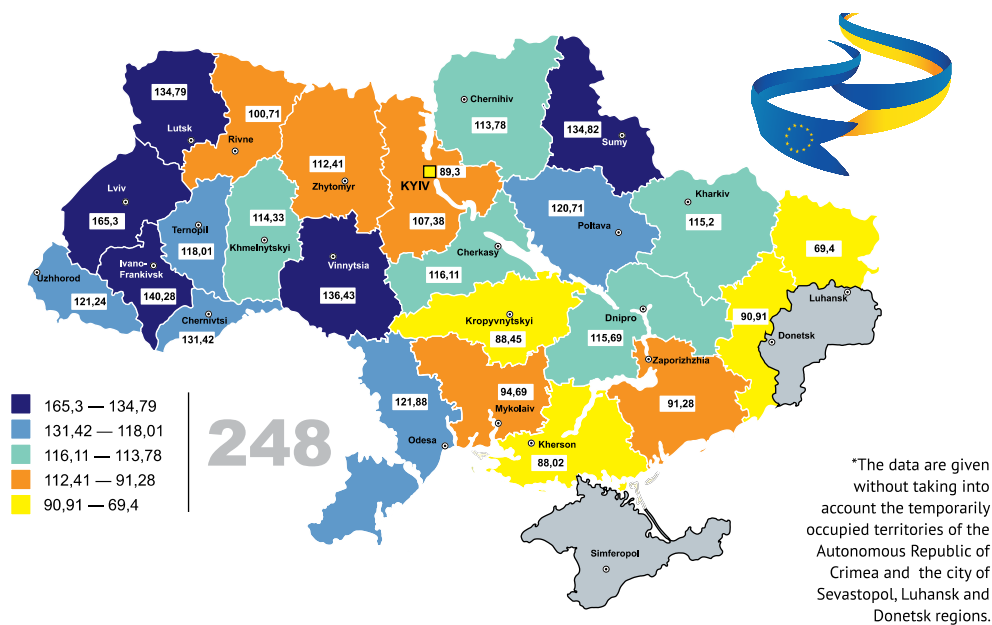
external relations and borderland politics, the post-structuralist readings of bordering and regionalization proliferate particularly in the Europeanization literature, which unveils the rationalities and effects of both vertical and horizontal EU-ization of borderlands in terms of identity re-construction, governance practices and overall normative diffusion (Bürkner, 2014). Significantly, the Europeanization of borderlands can be facilitated in both a top-down (downloading), a bottom-up (uploading) as well as in a horizontal (cross-loading) manner (Figure 3):

**Figure 3. Vertical and horizontal Europeanization of borderlands**



Source: Opiłowska (2017, p. 287)

Such processes affect not only liminal subjectivities (i.e. borderland identities) per se (Kuhn, 2015; Makarychev and Yatsyk, 2016; Yatsyk, 2018; Scott and Liikanen, 2010; Gasparini, 2014) but are also capable of triggering systemic changes and spatial re-ordering processes - from cross-border '*rescaling*' (Medeiros, 2013) to '*regionalization*' (García-Álvarez and Trillo-Santamaría, 2013; Jacobs and Varró, 2014) to '*integration*' (Scott, 2002; Sohn, 2014, p. 598; Svensson and Nordlund, 2015). The recent empirical evidence unequivocally confirms that - at least as far as the Ukrainian case of cross-border cooperation with the EU is concerned - both identity perceptions and governance practices are heavily gravitating towards the European Union in Ukraine's western borderlands, with Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Volyn *oblasts* scoring high on the rating of European integration of Ukrainian regions (rather exceptionally, high Euro-integrational performance is also recorded in further located Vinnytsia and Sumy *oblasts*), as depicted below (cf. Figure 4):

**Figure 4. European Map of Ukraine: Rating of European Integration of Regions**

Source: New Europe Centre (2019, p. 9)<sup>2</sup>

According to the most recent opinion polls conducted in February 2020 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), the western regions of Ukraine lead in the ranking of EU accession-favouring Ukrainian *oblasts* (with 69% of respondents supporting Ukraine's EU accession and only 12% opposing it), followed by central Ukrainian oblasts (57% in support and 19% against the EU accession), and southern and eastern regions, respectively (40% vs 37% and 26% vs 50%)<sup>3</sup>.

The cross-border cooperation has been part of Ukraine's European integration strategy effectively since 1991 (Garagonych, 2012). Combined with the gravity of the borderland per se (including the existence of five Euroregions formed with EU member states) and the enhanced mobility along the Ukrainian-EU frontiers, it is evidently responsible for the success of western Ukrainian regions and smaller achievements of the eastern and southern ones on the way to European integration.

<sup>2</sup> New Europe Center (2019), The European Map of Ukraine: Rating of European Integration of Regions, Kyiv: NEC.

<sup>3</sup> Геополітичні орієнтації жителів України. Прес-реліз КМІС за лютий 2020 р. [KIIS Opinion Poll on Geopolitical Preferences of Ukrainian Citizens, February 2020], available at: <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=927&page=1>

#### 1.4. The EU-Ukrainian borderland Euroregions as laboratories of cross-border governability?

Arguably, the roots of the modern understanding of the ‘governability’ notion originate from the German public discourse on *Steuerung* and *Steuerungsdefizit*, i.e. governance and governability failure, whereafter the idea got its popularity in the discussions of ‘governableness’ and democratic governance quality, in particular with regard to Latin American countries (Kooiman, 2008, pp. 172-173). In its contemporary understanding, *governability* signifies certain qualities of governance, i.e. the relation of the object of governance to its subject - as well as their interrelationships, and thus can best be defined as ‘the overall capacity for governance of any societal entity or system’ (Kooiman, 2008, p. 173). It therefore integrates the complex system of multi-level interrelationships within the governance system between multiple actors and stakeholders (governance institutions) and a system-to-be-governed. Euroregions have long been described as venues of ‘governance institutions’ building - be those policy networks, cross-border policy management structures or communities of interest (Perkmann, 1999; Frątczak-Müller and Mielczarek-Żejmo, 2016). In local and regional realms, governability thus manifests through decentralized governance capabilities, the ability to build networks and communities as well as to enable relevant forms of local and regional policymaking (Harguindéguy and Sánchez Sánchez, 2017). In this sense, governability is directly proportional to local participation: the lesser participation modalities, the weaker governability.

Depending on the type of public/private actor participation, Euroregions can be formed with, or enable, the participation of local governments, supra-local governance institutions, and/or sub-state governments (Noferini *et al.*, 2020, p. 11-12). Across Europe, the evidence showcases in this regard that cross-border Euroregions are ‘social capital maximisers’ as well (Grix and Knowles, 2002). The Carpathian Euroregion features a governance structure across three levels (local, supra-local, and sub-state). Whereas such structural features might well suffice for constructing ‘regional advantage’ (Oliveira, 2015, p. 344) not least via the given variety of actors involved, their variety seems to be unrelated (i.e. lacking complementarity, competence sharing and synergy across entities and sectors) and thus less capable of building a cross-border Euroregionalism as ‘a self-organizing system’ (Jacobs and Varró, 2014). Still, as the recent research unveils, the neighbouring cross-border regions are particularly conducive to policy and governance practices diffusion, or spatial spillover (even if it happens sporadically, rather than in a well-organized way) - not least as there is a strong correlation between the quality of government in neighbouring regions (Ezcurra and Rios, 2019, p. 5). Policy spillovers have also been recorded in the area of cross-border inter-firm networks at the EU’s eastern borderlands as a result of EU CBC programmes implementation (Turkina and Postnikov, 2014).

The idea of governability can, in a broader sense, be also linked to now emerging paradigm in governance studies - i.e. resilience. Seen as an ability to withstand external shocks and/or swiftly recover after those, resilience is particularly important within peripheral and borderland areas that usually belong to depressed regional spaces. Particularly since 2015-16, the European Union has been involved in strengthening the resilience of the neighbours at its Eastern periphery by promoting social and economic cohesion, regional development, state-building, capability/institution-building, good governance and 'good neighbourly relations' more generally (Healy and Bristow, 2019; Borshch, 2014; Wolczuk, 2019; Panchuk and Bossuyt, 2018). Even though, the scholarly critique has it that much of the EU's recent narrative turn on 'resilience-local ownership' has failed to materialize in respective policy turns (Petrova and Delcour, 2020).

Thus, the quality of governance and its' institutions, is at the core of the governability approach to cross-border cooperation and regionalization as it resembles manifold practices of institution- and capability-building (from border management to inter-regional development policy shaping), which, in turn, facilitates the emergence of cross-border regions as policymakers - an important leap forward on the way towards a 'Europe of macro-regions'.

## **2. The Carpathian Euroregion and the challenges of cross border governance, governmentality and governability**

On February 14, 1993, the first political step was made towards cross-border cooperation in the Carpathian region, when Foreign Affairs Ministers of Hungary, Poland, Ukraine and Slovakia adopted in Debrecen (Hungary) a *Declaration on the creation of the Carpathian Euroregion*. It emphasized that the creation of the Carpathian Euroregion would greatly enhance the friendship and prosperity of the countries of the region and guarantee the active implementation of the principles of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki Act of 1975), the Paris Charter for a New Europe and other instruments. The creation of the Carpathian Euroregion sought to streamline the efforts of the Council of Europe and the European Union in promoting regional cooperation in this part of Europe. Shifting geopolitical constellations in East-Central Europe, including temporary disruption of existing bilateral economic, trade and cultural ties, as well as the presence of favourable legal instruments - not least the Council of Europe's 1980 European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (*Madrid CBC Convention*) - provided for an unimpeded and timely launch of the Carpathian Euroregion, an international association of cross-border regions with shared history, similar levels of economic development and similar cultures. In 2000, Romania joined the Carpathian Euroregion, and thus now 19 administrative units of five CEECs with a total area of around 160 000 km<sup>2</sup> and population of 15 mln people make up this grouping, as follows (cf. Table 1 and Figure 5):

**Table 1. The Carpathian Euroregion: Basic geospatial data**

Participant countries	Constituent regions and administrative units	Population (mln)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
<i>Poland</i>	Subcarpathian voivodeship	2 370 654	18 683
<i>Romania</i>	Bihor County, Botoşani County, Harghita County, Maramureş County, Sălaj County, Satu Mare County, Suceava County	2 274 016	27 104
<i>Slovakia</i>	Košice and Prešov Regions	1 111 177	10 459
<i>Hungary</i>	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, Hajdú-Bihar County, Heves County, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County, as well as cities Miskolc, Debrecen, Eger, and Nyíregyháza	2 609 114	28 639
<i>Ukraine</i>	Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv and Zakarpattia Oblasts	6 429 900	59 000

Source: AOMS EKU (2017, p.8)<sup>4</sup>

The Statute of the *Interregional Association of the Carpathian Euroregion* (Art. 3) stipulates that the Euroregion aims to bring together the people who inhabit the region of the Carpathian Mountains and in particular to: organize and coordinate activities that will promote economic, scientific, environmental, cultural and educational cooperation between its members; assist in the development of specific projects of cross-border cooperation between members of the Association in the field of mutual interests; facilitate the development of contacts among the population of the territories that are members of the Association, in particular among specialists in various fields; promote good neighbourly relations between members of the Association; identify potential areas for multilateral cross-border cooperation among Association members; as well as mediate and facilitate the cooperation of members of the Association with international organizations and institutions. Active for over twenty years now, the Interregional Association of the Carpathian Euroregion is neither an international organization or an administrative unit nor a supranational entity. Rather, the Carpathian Euroregion is a platform to promote interregional cooperation - a joint advisory and coordination body.

<sup>4</sup> AOMS 'Evroregion Karpaty–Ukrayina' (2017), *Evroregion Karpaty–Ukrayina: 10 rokov spilno dlia rozvytku Karpat (Activity Report for the Period of 2008-2017)*, Lviv: EKU

**Figure 5. The Map of the Carpathian Euroregion****Map 2. The Carpathian Euroregion – administrative division (including LAU 1 level)<sup>a</sup>**

Source: Cierpiat-Wolan (2012, p. 14)

Similarly, to the institutional organization of other Euroregions (Greta and Otto, 2019, p. 110), the Carpathian Euroregion has a four-level structure: the Board with the Bureau and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors; the International Secretariat; National Offices; and Working Committees<sup>5</sup>.

The highest authority of the Carpathian Euroregion is the Board of Directors, consisting of three representatives from each participating country. The *Board* meets every six months and sets the guidelines for inter-regional cooperation as well as unanimously adopts decisions including on joint projects. The Chairperson is elected every two years to chair the meetings and the present the Euroregion in general. The *International Secretariat*, which is located, on a rotating basis, in the national representation of the country that is holding the presidency of the Carpathian Euroregion Council, is responsible for the overall administration of the Euroregion, coordination of its ongoing activities, organization of the Board meetings, facilitation of relations between the national representations of the Euroregion, as

<sup>5</sup> On the institutional dimension of decision-making within the Carpathian Euroregion in greater detail, cf. eg.: Mikula (2003, pp. 118-121); Chabanna (2013).



well as the liaison with international organizations. A *national office* operates in each participating country and sustains inter-regional cooperation. National offices are tasked with organizing, coordinating and redistributing joint tasks as well as with implementing joint interregional projects. A number of the *Working Committees* is established by the decision of the Board. Their main aim is to focus on specific areas of interregional cooperation. Notably, the Working Committees are spread among the Euroregion-constituting countries and managed by them as follows:

- Committee on Regional Development (Hungary);
- Committee on Cross-Border Trade (Romania);
- Committee on Tourism and Environment (Poland);
- Committee on Social Infrastructure (Ukraine);
- Committee for the Prevention of Natural Emergencies (Slovakia).

The Carpathian Euroregion can also be *singled out* from among similar structured cross-border cooperation initiatives for at least four reasons. Firstly, the Carpathian Euroregion is the first cross-border organization created on the territories of the former Socialist bloc countries. Secondly, all regions that make up the Carpathian Euroregion have a shared history and moderate to strong links be those close cultural, economic and not least geopolitical ties. Thirdly, the Carpathian Euroregion-constituting regions exhibit varying regional development potential as well as economic capabilities, which provides for a greater dynamism within these peripheral spaces altogether (Dolia *et al.*, 2013, pp. 64-70; *The Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond*, 2015, pp. 58-59). Fourthly, nearly all participants of the Carpathian Euroregion represent the case of depressed territories within their respective states' spatial orders in terms of both economic and social development indicators.

In spite of multiple mounting challenges<sup>6</sup>, the Carpathian Euroregion showcases some of the important *strengths*, including: (a) the opportunity to conduct activities within a single ecosystem; (b) the presence of a shared border with the European Union, which facilitates the implementation of joint projects; (c) the ability to finance cross-border projects within the framework of various joint operational programs of the European Union, the European Neighbourhood Instrument<sup>7</sup>, etc.; (d) the availability of common technical infrastructure within the Carpathian Euroregion; (e) the presence of a shared cultural heritage; (f) a relatively unpolluted environment throughout the territory of the Carpathian Euroregion; (g) the presence of the largest in Europe International Biosphere Reserve (i.e. the Carpathian IBR)

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<sup>6</sup> On the lasting and future challenges for the operation of the Carpathian Euroregion, cf. eg: *The Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond*, 2015, pp. 55-58.

<sup>7</sup> On the EU's ENP-related financial instruments, cf. eg.: Maass, A. S. (2017). In the MFF 2021-2027, the new Neighborhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) will replace the 2014-2020 European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) as currently proposed, cf. eg.: Lilyanova (2019).

which spans across the territories of the Ukrainian, Polish and Slovak parts of the Carpathian Euroregion.

It should be noted that the Carpathian Euroregion is currently experiencing a *crisis of governance*: meetings of the Board and other bodies of the Interregional Association have not taken place for six years now. In addition to that, not every country has yet established a national representation of the Euroregion - legally formalized structures operate in Hungary as well as in Ukraine and Poland in the form of associations of local self-government bodies, leaving Romania and Slovakia lagging behind the developing institutionalized cooperation.

Among other externally and internally relevant factors, the main *causes of the unfolding crisis of governance of the Carpathian Euroregion* are as follows: *First*, the size of the Interregional Association is effectively too large, thus covering a total of 19 regional units in five countries, with distances between their centres reaching some 500 km. This spatial stretching, of course, causes difficulties in regularly maintaining multilateral contacts within the Interregional Association, wherefore the bilateral format has established itself as a main vehicle of cooperation. *Second*, Article 2 of the Charter of the Carpathian Euroregion does indeed define the regional scope of the organization but remains silent on who actually shall the 'national party' be. Given uneven levels of decentralization of governance within the Euroregion-constituting states as well as varying decision-making, financial and infrastructural capabilities of respective regions, this factor plays an important role as an obstacle to a smooth and swift cooperation dynamics. From Poland's side, for instance, just a single territorial unit is part of the Interregional Association; the regional and local authorities of Romanian, Slovakian, Hungarian and Ukrainian regions, that participate in the Euroregion Carpathians, are faced with both inter-regional and national coordination necessities, which cannot but affect the pace of decision-making and the leeway in terms of cooperation implementation paths. In the case of Ukraine, a potent solution to this complexity has been discovered via the decision to establish the association of bodies of regional governance composed of both regional and local self-government bodies. Thus, upon the initiative of the members of the Interregional Association in Ukraine, in December 2019, the structure of the Association was reorganized, and a new legal entity emerged, i.e. the Association of Local Self-Government Bodies '*The Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine - A Carpathian Regional Development Agency*', which, as of 1 April 2020, encompasses 50 local self-government bodies from Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, Lviv and Chernivtsi regions of Ukraine. *Third*, an overwhelmingly politically motivated decision about the creation of the Carpathian Euroregion, which brings together about 16 million people and spans over a vast territory and diverse regions in terms of both development levels as well as development imperatives, results in the deficiencies in due functioning of the entire organization, but also gives rise to a crisis of identification of the participating regions with the Interregional Association per se, which, in turn, weakens the level of their engagement in the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion. *Fourth*, the inconsistency

within the competences of the national parties to the Carpathian Euroregion, which is caused by the reality of distinct systems of administrative and territorial structuring in five participating states, poses challenges to identifying ‘similar’ administrative units with corresponding levels of delegated authority, especially at the local levels, within which the cross-border cooperation could develop more effectively. *Fifth*, the uneven levels of professional training and competences of local executive bodies within each participating country do, to an extent, hamper the implementation of the agreed cross-border cooperation initiatives. *Sixth*, border crossing procedures for the Carpathian Euroregion participants (beyond the official delegations and top local governing elites) present both a temporal and procedural obstacle to contact regularization, intensification as well as broadening. Last but not least, *seventh*, the lack -within the framework of the European Union’s cooperation programs - of a single financial framework for funding the activities of the Carpathian Euroregion as a whole, which nowadays draws from various available funding mechanisms offered by the European Union, EU Member States and other international bodies and entities.

## 2.1. The Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine

Two decades into its functioning, the Interregional Association ‘The Carpathian Euroregion’ still has not managed to defy the gravity of organizational and legal barriers to inter-regional and cross-border cooperation on both sides of the European Union’s eastern frontiers, and thus has not acquired a legal personality under international law. In the absence of a single legal actorness, the main aims of the Carpathian Euroregion have been individually furthered until now by each respective national representation (office) - and done so with a truly varied level of accomplishments.

### **The Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine: Institutional Design, Functionality and Performance**

On the Ukrainian terrains, the functions of the national representation within the Carpathian Euroregion have been fulfilled, since 2008, by the *Association of Local Self-Governments ‘Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine’* (aka “*Evroregion Karpaty*”)<sup>8</sup>. The Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine emerged in 2007 as the first bottom-up driven community-building initiative in Ukraine for inter-regional territorial action and cooperation. It functioned so far as a (a) representative, (b) advisory and a (c) network-building organization - akin to functions that other Euroregions perform across Europe and beyond (Greta and Otto, 2019, p. 110-111).

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<sup>8</sup> The Association of Local Self-Governments ‘Euroregion Carpathians–Ukraine’ (AOMS ‘Evroregion Karpaty’), cf. <http://ekarpaty.com>.

According to its Statute (as amended in 2016, cf.: *AOMS EKU*, 2016)<sup>9</sup>, the Association is managed by the Executive Directorate, which is directly supervised by the Executive Board (periodically - by the Supervisory Board), and accountable to both General Assembly and the Audit Commission:

Roughly a decade after it got established, the Association underwent in 2019 a significant functionality reformatting and legal reorganization into the *Association of Local Self-Governments 'Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine - The Carpathian Regional Development Agency'* ("*Carpathian Euroregion RDA-Ukraine*"). As of 1 April 2020, the renewed Association unites fifty members from Zakarpattia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi regions of Ukraine, including three regional (*oblast*) councils, twenty-nine district (*rayon*) councils, and eighteen local councils. Decisions about joining the Association were made by the respective councils themselves, which appears to be an important and future-fraught factor of their commitment and engagement in inter-regional cooperation initiatives. According to the Decision of the Board of the *Carpathian Euroregion RDA-Ukraine* from 23 March 2020, the revised new set of activities which fall under the Association's responsibility from 2020 onwards is as follows (cf. *Table 2*):

Thus, altogether five areas of activity have so far profiled the effort of the Association, including<sup>10</sup>: (1) the shaping of a development policy for the Carpathians at the national - Ukrainian - level; (2) advancing the cross-border cooperation with adjacent regions of the EU member states; (3) stimulating the inter-regional cooperation and cohesion; (4) driving local and regional development, as well as (5) the promotion of the Carpathian region and its (underexploited) potential.

In terms of the functional scope and practical cooperation initiatives, the Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine has so far implemented the projects on capacity-building of local self-governments, community-building within and across regions of the Carpathians, socio-cultural exchange and cooperation as well as regional development and region branding, etc.

Emblematically, in October 2018, the Association 'Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine' has initiated the development of the first joint holistic body for four regions, which at the same time is a profiled central executive body in Ukraine, - i.e. the *Carpathian Regional Development Network (CRDN)*, which seeks to boost the effectiveness of regional economic development in the Carpathians first and foremost by resorting to instruments of inter-regional cooperation. The *CRDN* Project, endowed with the general budget of UAH 48 880 200 UAH (i.e. over EUR 1.5 mln), is implemented with the financial support of the European Union within the framework of the *Sectoral Policy Support Program - Support for Regional Policy*

<sup>9</sup> AOMS 'Euroregion Karpaty-Ukrayina' (2016), Statut Organizatsii Organiv Mistseвого Samo-vriaduvannia 'Euroregion Karpaty-Ukrayina' (as of 12.12.2016), Lviv: EKU.

<sup>10</sup> Activity Areas of the Association of Local Self-Governments 'Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine' (AOMS 'Euroregion Karpaty'), cf.: <http://ekarpaty.com/pro-nas/yeuroregion-karpati-ukrayina/>

of Ukraine and with the participation of the following national and regional partners: Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Housing and Communal Services of Ukraine; Lviv Regional State Administration; Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State Administration; Zakarpattia Regional State Administration; Chernivtsi Regional State Administration; and the Association of Local Self-Government Bodies 'Euroregion of Carpathians-Ukraine'<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 2. Activity Areas of the Association of Local Self-Governments 'Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine' for 2020**

Activity areas		Objectives	Levels of engagement
SECTORAL ACTIVITIES	Cooperation for Development	Becoming an initiator and developer of, as well as an active participant in, national and regional development policies and programs of interregional and cross-border cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•European Union</li><li>•National parliaments of the countries of the Carpathians</li><li>•Mountainous border regions of the adjacent states in the Carpathians</li><li>•Central executive authorities</li><li>•Carpathian regions of Ukraine</li><li>•Luhansk and Donetsk regions (oblasts)</li><li>•Members of the Association, especially united territorial communities (UTCs) and cities</li><li>•Key donors</li><li>•Businesses as part of public-private partnerships</li><li>•Civil society organizations (CSOs)</li><li>•Communal bodies</li></ul>
	Promotion of the Region	Becoming a bearer of the 'Carpathian region' brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•European Union</li><li>•Mountainous border regions of the adjacent states in the Carpathians</li><li>•Central executive authorities</li><li>•Carpathian regions of Ukraine</li><li>•Members of the Association</li><li>•Businesses as part of PPPs</li><li>•CSOs</li><li>•Key donors</li></ul>
	Strong local self-government	Becoming an authoritative premium – an association of self-governing bodies of the Carpathian region – in both national and wider regional realms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•European Union</li><li>•National parliaments of the countries of the Carpathians</li><li>•Central executive authorities</li><li>•Carpathian regions of Ukraine</li><li>•Members of the Association, especially united territorial communities (UTCs) and cities</li><li>•Key donors</li></ul>
HORIZONTAL (CROSS-SECTORAL) ACTIVITIES	Strengthening of the organization's institutional capacity	Becoming a leader in policy development for the Carpathians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•European Union</li><li>•National parliaments of the countries of the Carpathians</li><li>•Mountainous border regions of the adjacent states in the Carpathians</li><li>•Central executive authorities</li><li>•Carpathian regions of Ukraine</li><li>•Local communities of Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi regions (oblasts)</li></ul>
	Promotion of the organization as a reliable partner in the Carpathians		
	Increasing organization's presence in the information and communications sector, in particular within the bodies of local self-government		
	Maintaining liaison and active project portfolio with respective national and international donors		
	Accession to existing partnerships and cooperation platforms as well as the active launch of new networks of cooperation across borders and regions in the Carpathians		
Mission	Advancing the Carpathian Development Policy		

Source: authors' representation based on the data from: Decision of the Board of the *Carpathian Euroregion RDA-Ukraine* from 23 March 2020 (on file with the authors)

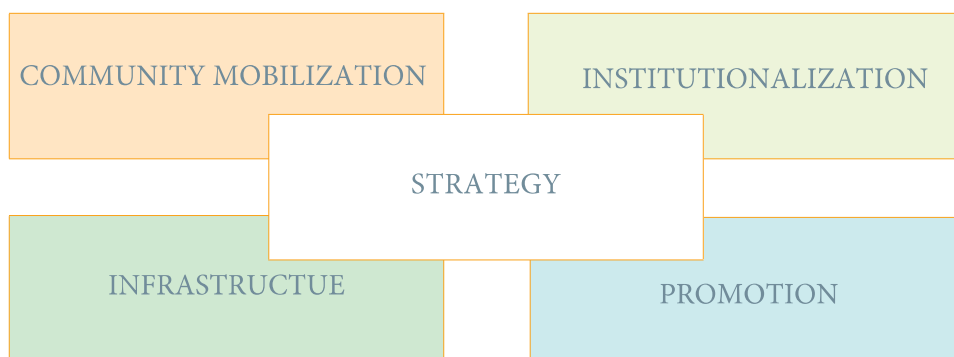
The *Carpathian Regional Development Network* is operationalized and implemented through distinct projects of (a) infrastructure development; (b) institutionalization; (c) community mobilization; (d) CBC and regional promotion; as well as (e) strategy-making and the shaping of national strategic visions of cross-border

<sup>11</sup> For details on the CRDN Project developments, cf.: Наглядюва рада проєкту 'Карпатська мережа регіонального розвитку', *Єврорегіон Карпати - Україна*, 24.05.2019, available at: <http://ekarpaty.com/naglyadova-rada-proektu-karpatska-merezha-regionalnogo-rozvitku/>

cooperation and regional development within the Carpathian ecosystem (Fig. 6).

In practical terms, the *CRDN* Project envisages i.a.: (a) the development of the Strategy of development of the Ukrainian Carpathians and an action plan for the strategy implementation; (b) construction of the *Carpathian Center for Regional Development*, headquartered in the village Volosyanka of Skole district of Lviv region; (c) purchase of mobile pavilions for holding conference meetings as well as respective equipment for deepening the interaction between Carpathian regions; (d) creation of the *Carpathian Agency for Regional Development (CARD)*; (e) development and implementation of a program of support for initiatives of local Carpathian communities as well as implementation of 40 pilot projects of development of mountain areas in respective communities; (f) delivery of trainings, organization of study visits and internships as well as five fora/conferences and three exhibitions in the Carpathian regions; and last but not least, (g) promotion of cooperation in the Ukrainian Carpathians region.

**Figure 6. The Building Blocks of the Carpathian Regional Development Network**



Source: AOMS EKU (2017, p. 23)<sup>12</sup>

The Euroregions usually operate across a number of issue areas and functional rationalities, which gave rise to the idea of their ‘*multifunctionality*’ (Greta and Otto, 2019). The multifunctionality of the Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine presents both a regional diversity’s imperative but also a challenge in terms of lasting legal, political and practical constraints. The territory of the Ukrainian Carpathians, albeit exhibiting a huge potential of natural as well as historical and cultural heritage, has been evidently underfinanced in order to be able to unleash its full development potential and mitigate a number of joint challenges in the field of security, accessibility, and ecology. As earlier mentioned, at the regional level, a few

<sup>12</sup> AOMS ‘Euroregion Karpaty–Ukrayina’ (2017), *Euroregion Karpaty–Ukrayina: 10 rokov spilno dlia rozvytku Karpat (Activity Report for the Period of 2008-2017)*, Lviv: EKU

successful practices of pooling and accumulating financial resources for the development of mountainous territories can be identified.

### **The Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine: Sectorial Fields and Financial Instruments**

The EU-internal Euroregions, as sites of cross-border cooperation practices, mostly focus on local economic development, and accessibility and transportation, followed by environment, education and culture, as well as cooperation on social cohesion, public health, spatial planning, governance quality and security (as measured by Noferini *et al.*, 2020, p. 16). The cross-border and inter-regional cooperation projects portfolio of the Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine ranges from cultural and heritage-related activities to safety and security, accessibility and connectivity as well as regional development<sup>13</sup>. Currently, the *preservation and promotion of shared culture, natural and historical heritage* occurs within the following projects and activity packages: ‘The World of Carpathian Rosettes’ (aiming to help preserve the cultural uniqueness of the Carpathians); ‘Cross-border pathways along wooden architectures’ (unique historical and cultural heritage preservation); ‘CBC Pilgrim’ (an instrument of promoting shared historical and cultural heritage in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands); ‘The Carpathian winemaking heritage academy’; ‘The Carpathian Bee’ (joint action on preservation of unique natural heritage in the Polish-Ukrainian borderland); ‘SlowRivers’ (cross-border tourism promotion package) and other projects on sustainable regional tourism development. The *human safety and environmental security* domain is addressed with projects on joint protection of the Carpathian environment and populations, aimed i.a. at the shaping of joint Polish-Ukrainian system of early warning and crisis management in the area of anthropogenic security matters. *Regional infrastructure* development as an activity area is profiled by accessibility and connectivity-enhancing projects such as: ‘Rovelove Roztochia’ (a project seeking to improve connectivity and bike road infrastructure in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands); ‘Panther’ (a transport infrastructure-enhancing project between cross-border cities of Przemyśl and Nyzhankovychi); and ‘The Accessible Polish-Ukrainian Borderland’ (a joint action on road infrastructure enhancement). In the field of *regional and local development*, two flagship initiatives have underpinned the Association’s most recent effort, i.e. the ‘Carpathian Regional Development Network’ (a cross-border network- and region-building project framework) and the ‘East and West together’ project which promotes regional consolidation within Ukraine. Local development presents a particularly viable line of effort of the Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine, with 1136 funded and co-funded projects,

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<sup>13</sup> For details on the scope and variety of project portfolio of the Euroregion Carpathians–Ukraine, cf.: <http://ekarpaty.com/nashi-proekty>.

including socially important ones, reaching its next peak in 2019 (Lytvyn, 2019). The support to grassroots initiatives in the cross-border and inter-regional cooperation has long proven to be a working instrument in leveraging local action and Euroregional community-building (Carmin *et al.*, 2003; Chabanna, 2008).

Unlike EU-internal Euroregions that draw on an extended pool of financial resources and project management capabilities, including under the ETC scheme<sup>14</sup>, the Euroregions which operate at the EU's borderlands are typically eligible for CBC program support. For the Ukrainian part of the Carpathian Euroregion<sup>15</sup>, the following EU financial instruments have been deployed in the financial perspective 2014-2020 (cf. *Figure 7* and *Table 3*):

- EU's Cross-Border Cooperation Programs 2014-2020 under the European Neighbourhood Instrument<sup>16</sup>: (1) Poland-Belarus-Ukraine (PL-BY-UA); (2) Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine (HU-SK-RO-UA); (3) Romania-Ukraine (RO-UA); and, since 2007, (4) ENI CBC 'Black Sea Basin'<sup>17</sup>
- EU's Danube Transnational Program under the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC; aka Interreg VB) instrument.

For the first time in united Europe's history, the EU's multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020 has allocated more funding available for European regions than member states per se when it comes to direct budgetary support line. A prerequisite to the conclusion of territorial contracts on the implementation of regional operational programs is the availability of regional development strategies as well as 'smart' specialization strategies capable of ensuring the competitiveness of the region(s) concerned. The comprehensive use of the principle of subsidiarity in the implementation of the European Union's regional policy helps strengthen the role of the regions, improve the effectiveness and ensure even use of EU funds, thus counterbalancing existing disparities in socio-economic development across regions.

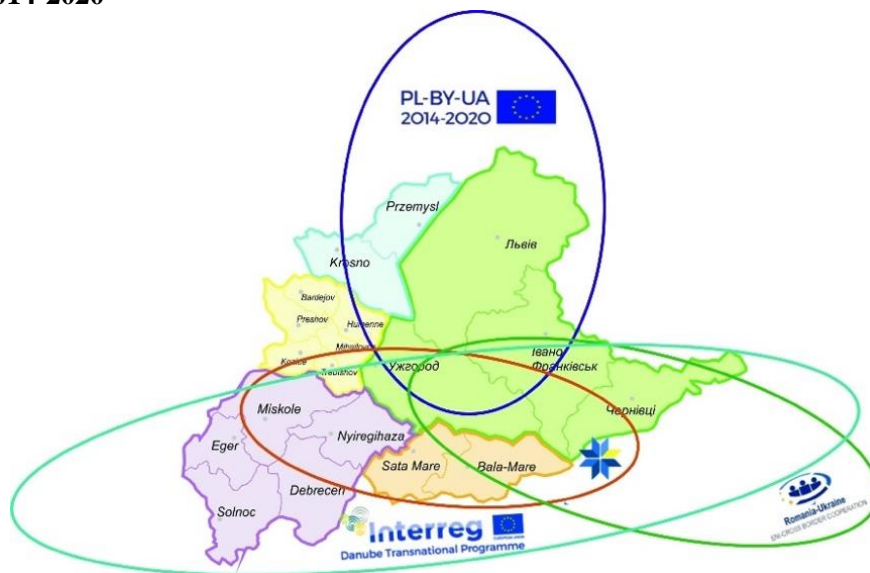
<sup>14</sup> On the funding of Euroregions Nisa and Šumava, cf. eg.: Abrahám (2017).

<sup>15</sup> On the financing of the activities of the Polish part of the Carpathian Euroregion, cf.: Proczek (2019).

<sup>16</sup> On latest implementation of CBC programs with Ukraine's participation, cf. the 2019 governmental report on the implementation of the EU-Ukraine AA: GOEEI (GOEEI Ukraine (2020), Report on the Implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union in 2019, Kyiv: GOEEI, retrieved from: [https://eu-ua.org/sites/default/files/inline/files/ar\\_aa\\_implementation-2019-4\\_eng\\_0.pdf](https://eu-ua.org/sites/default/files/inline/files/ar_aa_implementation-2019-4_eng_0.pdf)).

<sup>17</sup> The ENI CBC 'Black Sea Basin' unites land and sea spaces of EU member states and non-EU countries as follows: Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Turkey, cf. <https://blacksea-cbc.net>.



**Figure 7. EU-Ukraine cross-border and transnational cooperation instruments, 2014-2020**

Source: authors' representation

**Table 3. EU Financial Instruments in Support of Cross-Border and Transnational Territorial Cooperation applicable within the Ukrainian Part of the Carpathian Euroregion in 2014-2020**

Programme title	Budget	Participating states	Priority/Action Areas
CBC Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine <sup>1</sup>	EUR 165 mln (EU financial allocation)	Poland Belarus Ukraine	HERITAGE: Priority area 1: Promotion of local culture and history; Priority area 2: Promotion and preservation of natural heritage ACCESSIBILITY: Priority area 1: Development and enhancement of transport services and infrastructure; Priority area 2: ICT infrastructure development SAFETY AND SECURITY: Priority area 1: Support to the development of public health and social services systems; Priority area 2: Problem-solving in the area of shared security challenges BORDERS: Priority area 1: Facilitating border efficiency and security; Priority area 2: Improving border management, facilitating customs and visa procedures
JOP Romania-Ukraine <sup>2</sup>	EUR 60 mln (EU financial allocation)	Romania Ukraine	RESEARCH AND EDUCATION: Institutional cooperation in the educational field for increasing access to education and quality of education; Promotion and support for research and innovation HERITAGE: (1) Preservation and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY: (1) Development of cross border transport infrastructure and ICT tools SAFETY AND SECURITY: (1) Support to the development of health services and access to health; (2) Support to joint activities for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters as well as joint actions during emergency situations; (3) Prevention and fight against organized crime and police cooperation
CBC Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine <sup>3</sup>	EUR 81 347 200 (EU financial allocation)	Hungary Slovakia Romania Ukraine	HERITAGE: (1) Promoting local culture and historical heritage along with tourism functions ENVIRONMENT: (1) Sustainable use of the environment in the cross-border area - preservation of natural resources, actions to reduce GHG emission and pollution of rivers ACCESSIBILITY: (1) Development of transport infrastructure to improve the mobility of persons and goods SAFETY AND SECURITY: (1) Support to joint activities for the prevention of natural and man-made disasters as well as joint action during emergency situations; (2) Support to the development of public health systems

Programme title	Budget	Participating states	Priority/Action Areas
The Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) <sup>4</sup>	EUR 274 578 077 (EU financial allocation)	Nine EU member states (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia) and five non-EU countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine (four regions))	INNOVATIVE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE DANUBE REGION: (1) Improve framework conditions for innovation; (2) Increase competences for business and social innovation ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE RESPONSIBLE DANUBE REGION: (1) Strengthen transnational water management and flood risk prevention; (2) Foster sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and resources; (3) Foster the restoration and management of ecological corridors; (4) Improve preparedness for environmental risk management BETTER CONNECTED AND ENERGY RESPONSIBLE DANUBE REGION: (1) Support environmentally-friendly and safe transport systems and balanced accessibility of urban and rural areas; (2) Improve energy security and energy efficiency WELL-GOVERNED DANUBE REGION: (1) Improve institutional capacities to tackle major societal challenges; (2) Support to the governance and implementation of the EUSDR

<sup>1</sup> Cf. European Union's ENI *Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine (CBC PL-BY-UA) 2014-2020*, available at: <https://www.pbu2020.eu/ua/pages/251>.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. European Union's ENI *Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine 2014-2020*, available at: <https://ro-ua.net/en/>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. European Union's ENI *Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine 2014-2020*, available at: <https://huskroua-cbc.eu>.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. European Union's ETC/Interreg *Danube Transnational Programme*, available at: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu>.

Source: authors' representation and compilation based on official data from respective EU CBC Programmes (CBC PL-BY-UA 2014-2020; JOP RO-UA 2014-2020; CBC HU-SK-RO-UA 2014-2020; ETC/Interreg DTP)

As a neighbour of the European Union that directly borders with four EU member states, Ukraine and its regional governments benefit from multiple frameworks of multilateral and bilateral financial instruments that are, as a matter of rule, allocated to central government alone, thus depriving Ukraine's regions of similar direct access to cooperation programmes as the regions within the EU do enjoy<sup>18</sup>.

In view of the unfolding processes of Ukraine's European integration, not least in the context of the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, as well as the expediency of using European experience in implementing regional policy in order to enhance the competitiveness of Ukrainian regions, one might consider initiating a pilot project in the field of regional development, to be launched within the EU's next (i.e. post-2020) financial perspective under the respective bilateral legal framework for cross-border and

<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting, however, that there are some rather unique recent precedents in the relations between the European Union and Ukraine where financing decisions about launching support programs for the regions outside Europe have successfully been adopted – including e.g. within the Agreement on the implementation of the *EU Support to the East of Ukraine (ENI / 2017 / 040-554)*, adopted in 2017 as an EU's Special Measure within the framework of the ENI and with a budget of EUR 50 mln., cf.: *Commission Implementing Decision on the Special Measure 2017 II for Ukraine Action Document for EU Support to the East of Ukraine (ENI / 2017 / 040-554)*; *Financing Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the European Commission (ENI / 2017 / 040-554)*.

regional cooperation (Art 446 to 449/Chapter 27 EU-Ukraine AA). Considering the existing practices of the implementation of the European Union regional policy through direct interaction between the European Commission and the EU regions (i.e. direct budgetary relations in the implementation of regional operational programs), it appears reasonable to initiate, on similar terms, the development and implementation of *a pilot program for the Carpathian region post-2020* (consisting of the terrains of Ukrainian Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia and Chernivsti regions). The 'Polska Wschodnia' (Eastern Poland) Operational Program may serve as a template as it features similar structural conditions in which Ukraine's western borderlands find themselves when juxtaposed with more developed adjacent regions of EU member states. Being implemented in Poland's five border regions adjacent to Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, which are characterized by low socio-economic development indicators compared to other EU regions, the Program has been financially supported in 2014-2020 with a budget of EUR 2 353 million<sup>19</sup>. On a competitive and non-competitive basis, the program implements projects in priority areas such as entrepreneurship, modern transport infrastructure and trans-regional railway infrastructure. A similarly-fashioned regional development-focused programme initiative extended beyond the EU's borders might help support regional development within the Carpathians on both sides of EU frontiers and reduce disparities in socio-economic development across the shared ecosystem along the European Union's eastern borderlands. Initial steps have already been made towards pursuing this vision. On Ukraine's side, the national strategy for the development of the Carpathian region is planned to be developed still this year, as envisaged by the 2020 project, initiated by the Ministry of Regional Development, Housing and Construction of Ukraine and co-financed by the EU Sectoral Support Programme - Support for Regional Development, i.e. *Carpathian Regional Development Network (CRDN) Project*; the project also envisages institutional capability-building in the field of regional development management, not least via the strengthening of the Association of Local Self-Governments 'Euroregion Carpathians-Ukraine'. In turn, Poland, as a party to the Carpathian Euroregion as well as a partner in EU CBC and binational regional cooperation programs, has initiated and developed a draft *EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian region*<sup>20</sup> that will enable direct access of

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<sup>19</sup> 'Polska Wschodnia' Operational Programme 2014-2020, cf.: <https://www.polskawschodnia.gov.pl>

<sup>20</sup> On March 31, 2017, at the initiative of the Polish Ministry of Development, a working meeting of Carpathian governments was held to discuss the draft *EU's Macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian region*. Representatives from Poland, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Serbia and Moldova participated in the meeting. Initially, the Government of Romania and the Czech Republic did not support the initiative but changed their stance later on. On December 4, 2019, upon the initiative of Marshal of the Carpathian Voivodeship (Republic of Poland) Władysław Ortyl, the European Committee of the Regions approved the *Opinion CDR 3425/2019*, which favours and recommends the adoption of the strategy, cf.: European Committee

Ukrainian regions from within the shared ecosystem of the Carpathian mountains to EU regional development instruments and know-hows (even though the parity of the Ukrainian regions along with the Polish participating regions is yet to be approved by the EU and Ukraine). The above-outlined efforts in strategy-making, underpinned by institutional capabilities and political will of regional and national elites, provide a seminal ground for implementing the far-reaching and ambitious aims of regional development and regionalization on both sides of EU borderlands.

### **3. The Carpathian Euroregion 2.0 and the Future of EU-Ukrainian Cross-Border Cooperation within the emerging Carpathian Macro-region**

Strategy-making and policy delivery present a substantial challenge to Euroregions no matter whether they are formed beyond EU borders or within those, thus making some scholars question whether Euroregions have a future as only a decent share of over seventy EU Euroregions today can demonstrate viable achievements (Haselsberger and Benneworth, 2010). In addition to this existential challenge, Euroregions face both pressures and opportunities for organizational and institutional development - not least as their spatial evolution may follow the patterns of concentration, withdrawal or expansion (Pupier, 2020, p. 20). The Carpathian Euroregion similarly faces the challenges of both spatial-organizational and existential evolution (Mikula, 2003, pp. 158-172; *The Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond*, 2015, pp. 61-75). National regional policies of the Euroregion-constituting countries, institutional and organizational practices, as well as lasting disparities in socio-economic development among the Carpathian regions present salient challenges. An even greater challenge is presented by the lack of a coordinated strategic vision of the cross-border region development in both certain national frameworks and across them.

In the wake of the '*Sustainable Development of Border Regions through the Effective Functioning of the Carpathian Euroregion*' Project implementation, that occurred under the EU's 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Programme HU-SK-RO-UA, the united efforts of the self-governing body of the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Region (Hungary) - in partnership with the Regional Development Association for Carpathian Euroregion (Hungary), the Carpathian Euroregion-Slovakia (Slovakia), Maramures County (Romania), the International Association of Regional Development Institutions (IARDI, Ukraine) and the CSO 'Business Initiatives' (Ukraine) - in 2015 brought about the development of the *Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond* (2015). Primarily aimed at the increase of the efficiency and predictability of cross-border cooperation and provision of sustainable development of border

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of the Regions (2019). *Opinion on the Macro-regional Strategy for the Carpathian Region (CDR-3425/2019)*, Brussels, 4-5 December 2019, available at: <https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-3425-2019>.

regions, i.a. by forming effective instruments for the establishment and sustainment of inter-regional cooperation, the Strategy also envisages specific objectives, such as: (1) strengthening the role of the Carpathian Euroregion in CBC by elaborating new approaches to Euroregional development; (2) ensuring effective decision-making process in border regions resorting to both existing and novel instruments under sustainable development policy framework; (3) forming a qualitatively new level of cooperation between respective authorities, self-governments as well as NGOs and other stakeholders in the multifaceted cross-border regional setting (*The Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond*, 2015, p. 3).

**Table 4. The Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and beyond: priorities and objectives**

VISION		PRIORITIES	CROSS-SECTORAL PRIORITIES
Carpathian Euroregion: a place where people like to live, a place worth visiting			
Sustainable Development of the Carpathian Euroregion	Core strategy	1  Lively, active, competitive economy & attractive investment area	1  Assisting the Ukrainian part of the CE in EU standardisation and association via CBC activities and sharing reforms experience
		2  Clean and environmentally friendly	2  Enhancing CBC & institutional capacities
		3  Well-connected & effective border regime	3  People-to-People
		4  Innovative, skilled and well-educated	
		5  Natural heritage, local culture and history	
		6  CBC community development, health, employment and social development	
- Economic	- Compact, quality, green, clean, connected, safe		
- Social	- Real economic recovery		
- Cultural	- Sustainable neighbourhood		
- Environmental	- Intelligent and smart specialisation		
- Mobility			

Source: Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond, 2015, p. 89

Notably, the cross-sectional priorities include, among other issues, the Euroregion partners' commitment to assist Ukraine in the process of legislative and regulatory approximation, as envisaged in the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, thus furthering Ukraine's European integration as a declared strategic goal. In spite of ambitious goals declared, the Strategy failed to receive support from the regional and, to an extent - national, authorities as exemplified by a still-pending decision on the approval of the *Carpathian Euroregion Strategy 2020 and Beyond* by respective stakeholders. In light of such vagueness that revolves around the building of will and capability to advance cross-border cooperation in a more systematic and determined

way, a handful of scenarios currently crystallize that range from a complete decline to a complete renewal of the Carpathian Euroregion, as follows:

- *Path One: Inertial Decline of the Carpathian Euroregion.* Considering the lasting inertia of the Carpathian Euroregion's functioning as a whole and, by contrast, the incremental trend in the deepening of bilateral cooperation - not least via the formation of *European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)*<sup>21</sup>, such as the Tisza EGTC<sup>22</sup> (with the participation of regions Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (Hungary), the municipality of Kishvákár (Hungary) and Zakarpattia oblast (Ukraine)), or through the launch, within the past six years, of the so-called cross-border 'functional areas'<sup>23</sup> along the Polish-Slovak<sup>24</sup> and Polish-Ukrainian<sup>25</sup> borderlands - may well lead to the decline in the Carpathian Euroregion functionality.
- *Path Two: Simmering Visibility feat. Low Feasibility.* This development path presupposes as well inertial stagnation and business as usual, without any determined and significant impetus or a drive for cooperation. It will allow maintaining certain visibility of the Carpathian Euroregion on the map of Euroregions but will hardly help deliver feasible results, thus falling short of achieving the stated cross-border cooperation goals.
- *Path Three: Revival of the Carpathian Euroregion.* The elaboration of a common vision of the cross-border region's future, accompanied with both regional stakeholders' and national commitments towards advancing cooperation, may help resume CBC initiatives and activities - not least following the build-up of effective organizational structures across borders, that would explicitly enjoy necessary decision-making and implementing powers within the national parties as well as feature working mechanisms for cross-border interaction (including as regards joint financing, updating of cooperation goals and priorities but also, possibly, joint spatial planning and area development

<sup>21</sup> On the difference in organizational ecology of EGTC compared to that of Euroregions, cf. eg: Telle and Svensson (2020); Engl (2016); Lange (2012).

<sup>22</sup> European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation Tisza (*Tisza EGTC*), cf.: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/CoRAactivities/Pages/tisza-egtc.aspx>

<sup>23</sup> The concept of a 'functional area' or 'functional region' represents a new approach to territorial governance based on cohesion and integration principles. In practical terms, various types of territories and governance spaces may encompass a 'functional area', which in turn, can be deconstructed as a vast aggregation of mutually dependent sub-areas. Importantly, functional areas do not necessarily have to align with existing administrative entities. With a new draft regulation by the European Commission taking the concept of "functional area" on-board, the next generation of INTERREG programmes post-2020 might well be shaped around this notion, cf. eg.: European Commission (2018).

<sup>24</sup> *Powolano Transgraniczny Obszar Funkcjonalny 'BESKID NISKI'*, cf.: <https://www.powiat.jaslo.pl/aktualnosci/turystyka/933-powolano-transgraniczny-obszar-funkcjonalny-beskid-niski>

<sup>25</sup> *Konwent o utworzeniu Transgranicznego Obszaru Funkcjonalnego 'BRAMA PRZEMYSKA'*, cf.: <http://powiat.przemysl.pl/konwent-o-bramie-przemyskiej/>

strategizing, including as regards the joint pursuit of economic development, cf. e.g.: Slusarciuc and Prelipcean 2013).

- *Path Four: Renewal of Cross-Border Cooperation and Regionalization via the Establishment of a Carpathian Macro-Region.* A new macro-regional organization, akin to that which, since 2009, underpins EU-internal territorial cooperation structures (i.e. the Adriatic and Ionian macro-region, the Baltic Sea macro-region, the Alpine and the Danube area macro-regions)<sup>26</sup>, holds potential for a complete renewal of cross-border cooperation and region-building in the Carpathians area, provided that the obligations of all partner countries and regions become unequivocally stipulated and that the proven mechanisms of formalizing territorial cooperation get adopted.

In any case, the addressing of systemic ills of the Carpathian Euroregion as it stands now necessitates the implementation of a handful of joint tasks and *future-proofing* undertakings. First and foremost, the rationale and main areas of activities of the Interregional Association will be revised and adjusted to the unfolding dynamics and patterns of cross-border and interregional territorial cooperation within the Carpathian Euroregion. The development and implementation of a single European Union operational program for the Carpathian cross-border region in the next 2021-2027 financial perspective may further help boost the project-driven engagement of the Euroregion stakeholders from within and beyond the EU borders. On the other hand, Ukraine, as the sole non-EU country that is party to the Carpathian Euroregion, shall elaborate and implement the national strategy for the development of the Ukrainian Carpathians not least with the aim of reducing discrepancies in the levels of socio-economic development throughout the Carpathian Euroregion. Next and more importantly, the organizational structure of the Carpathian Euroregion as an interregional association should itself be reformed in light of the updated aims, vision and mission. Finally, changes ought to be expected at the local executive level as well, where the formally existing bodies in charge of cross-border cooperation shall become fully operational, including through the exercise of a broad range of discretionary (decision-making and implementing) powers and granted possibilities to establish links with other stakeholders within and across national regional borders.

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<sup>26</sup> As the European Commission's official discourse holds it, the *EU's macro-regional approach* represents 'an attempt to respond and adapt to the economic, political and social upheavals that have occurred since the end of the 1980s and to the successive enlargements that have since then taken the EU from 12 to 28 Member States' (European Commission, 2015, p. 42). Effectively, macro-regions differ from cross-border Euroregions by virtue of being *multilateral* and by the fact that, in general, it is the *states* themselves that are the *principal actors*. Since 2009, the European Union has progressively implemented *four macro-regional strategies (MRS)*: two based around maritime areas (the Baltic Sea region (EUSBSR) and the Adriatic and Ionian region (EUSAIR)); one comprising a major river basin (the Danube region (EUSDR)); and one around a mountain range (the Alpine region (EUSALP)), cf.: European Commission (2015).

Altogether, these changes will enable both long-term activities planning, cooperation on, and possibly joint planning of, spatial development, the exchange of best practices from beyond the Carpathian Euroregion, as well as swift management of sudden and emerging regional challenges across borders.

## Conclusions

Soon to be turning thirty, the Carpathian Euroregion, the largest and the flagship project of EU-Ukrainian cross-border and regional cooperation, struggles in mitigating its strategic organizational, identity and identification-related challenges.

As unveiled above, the scope of the Carpathian Euroregion's activities extends from supporting cross-border cooperation to regional and local development, from region's promotion to inter-regional cooperation, thus aiming to contribute to sustainable development of the Carpathian cross-border region on both sides of the border. The performance of the Euroregion varies as so does the performance of its national parts, as argued above. In the case of Ukraine, cross-border cooperation constitutes both a matter of local, inter-regional interaction in the EU-Ukrainian borderland and a matter of broader national strategy of European integration that Ukraine signalled back in 1998. However, until very recently, little coordination has been noted both within the Ukrainian domestic realm and, to a larger extent, among both the Carpathian Euroregion-constituting states and their regional authorities. Substantially, territorial cooperation within the CE has so far been nearly exclusively implemented in the bilateral format of cooperation between the Euroregion-constituting countries and their regional entities - usually within the 'one-point' regional cooperation projects as well as, more significantly, within certain specific targeted programmes of cross-border cooperation in the environmental, humanitarian and cultural policy areas. As a result, the inherent potential of the Carpathian regional space as a space of policymaking on systemic and sustainable regional development and regional governance has not yet been fully exploited. The performance of the Carpathian Euroregion across three dimensions - i.e. governance, governmentality and governability - shows limited effects, whereas it progressively establishes itself as a space of cross-border governance, but falls short of producing viable and sustainable effects in terms of the build-up of governability. In terms of governmentality-shaping, the comparative outlook onto Ukraine's many other Euroregions clearly demonstrates that the gravity of the EU-Ukrainian borderland per se impacts on the popular pro-European perceptions, changing governance practices and actual state of Europeanization and integration of (western) Ukrainian regions into a wider European governance area.



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