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### EUROREGIONS OF THE EASTERN BORDERLAND OF POLAND – WHAT CAN THEY AIM AT IN THE CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL CONDITIONS (DEVELOPMENT, STAGNATION, TWILIGHT OF FUNCTIONING)?

#### | Abstract

- ▶ *Goal* – the problem presentation of the evolution of the functioning of the Euroregions located in the eastern borderlands of Poland has been examined in the context of the objectives of the EU's eastern policy.
- ▶ *Research methodology* – the study is based on an analysis of documents (founding acts, statutes, activity reports and others) of the Euroregions (Neman, Białowieża Forest, Bug and Carpathian) and the scope of their financial support from the EU funds.
- ▶ *Score/results* – alongside the positive elements, the reservations in their functioning arising from the economic and political crisis phenomena occurring since 2008 are pointed out. Recent events, related to the hybrid war on the Polish-Belarusian border and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, have prompted a deeper reflection on their future. The results of this analysis, applied to the latest developments, allow us to argue that there may be a further acceleration of the process of the already ongoing curtailment of the statutory activities of most (apart from the Carpathian) of the Euroregions under investigation. The distant future may lead to the disappearance of the activities of some of them (especially the Neman and Bug Euroregions) without excluding the possibility of their disappearance.
- ▶ *Originality/value* – the article raises the important and timely issue of the functioning of Euroregions.

| **Keywords:** EU eastern policy, cross-border cooperation, Euroregions.

## 1. Introduction

The functioning of Euroregions largely has a practical dimension. It is also the subject of many considerations undertaken in scientific works. A great increase of attention (both theoretical and practical) to the issue of the creation of Euroregions located on all Polish borders took place in the period of several years of the late 20th and early 21st century (in the years 1991–2003). In the context of the forthcoming expansion of the scope of European economic integration, they were created first on Poland's borders with the European Union. They were also formed on the Eastern border of Poland – on the external EU borders.

Nowadays, the process of their formation and functioning can be assessed from the perspective of the past few decades. There is no doubt that their functioning may raise many doubts as to the degree of implementation of the assumptions made. A number of dilemmas became particularly apparent in relation to those operating in Poland's eastern borderlands in the second decade of the 21st century. These included: the legitimacy of the functioning of such groupings, the purposefulness of their activities, the role they play in an integrated European Union or their impact on economic processes. There must therefore be a question about their future.

In the light of the above, it is worth considering in this study: in the perspective of the coming years, will the Euroregions (especially those in the eastern borderlands of Poland) start to gradually become inactive and slowly disappear, or will they still be able to function in their hitherto stagnant and little changed formula? Perhaps, however, there will even be a strengthening of the activities of some of them (in particular the Carpathian Euroregion) because of the recently gaining more and more favourable conditions in the exceptionally rapidly changing EU policy towards the integration aspirations of Ukraine?

## 2. Models and key practical principles of Euroregions

The concept of "Euroregion", not only because of its repeated use and its interdisciplinary nature, is variously defined in the literature. In fact, however, it has not lived to see its own fully comprehensive legal regulation. Nor does it appear as an economic category (an institution of the economic integration process) in official EU documents. Furthermore, there is no mention of it in international agreements. In addition, it is not to be found in agreements and other

official documents dealing with cross-border cooperation issues. It is therefore necessarily assumed to be a much more “colloquial term” [Dębowski, 2015: 20]. The term is primarily used in documents (contracts, agreements) formalising cross-border cooperation, in scientific studies and in media releases. However, this lack of a legislative formulation of the term depreciates its legal significance. Undoubtedly, its psychological significance is also of great importance. It emphasises the European Union’s decidedly positive attitude to the development of border areas. This is a particularly important issue for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe [Małecka, 2004: 16]. Nevertheless, a variety of approaches to understanding the essence (definition) of a Euroregion can be found in the professional literature devoted to cross-border cooperation issues<sup>1</sup>. Their citation is not the most important thing for us in this context. In principle, they are pretty close to each other. They also generally give an idea of *what a Euroregion actually is*. In doing so, they emphasise that every Euroregion is<sup>2</sup>:

- an institutionalised formal relationship [Chmielewska, 2014: 31–42].
- established between governmental and/or self-governing organisations of neighbouring states,
- formed with the objective of establishing cross-border cooperation.

In Poland, Euroregions were created on the basis of the provisions of the Law on Associations<sup>3</sup>. Those operating at the Polish borders were created in two stages. This was done as a result of an agreement between previously established national Euroregions with the attribute of a legal personality. In contrast, a new institution created in such a manner with entities from two or more countries does not have such an attribute. Nor is it based on the domestic legislation of any of the participating states. Nor is it an institution of international law, as it was not created with the participation of subjects (states) of international law. The proper functioning of a Euroregional organisation is guaranteed by the existence of its common supranational structures. Resolutions, in order to be valid, must be accepted by the national Euroregional bodies [Kusiak-Winter, 2011: 94].

<sup>1</sup> For a presentation of these, see: Dębowski, 2015: 20–21.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of the legal demarcation of the terms “voivodeship”, “region”, “Euroregion”, see: Perkowski, 2013: 16–52 (chapter 1. *Województwo w stosunkach międzynarodowych*).

<sup>3</sup> Ustawa z dnia 7 kwietnia 1989 roku Prawo o stowarzyszeniach, Dz.U. 1989 Nr 20 poz. 104.

At the heart of the creation and establishment of the Euroregional structures is the voluntarily expressed wish to cooperate extensively beyond the borders of a single state. They must comply with the domestic law of each of the states entering into the agreement. Bilateral and multilateral agreements between the states concerned are also subject to the main provisions formulated by the Council of Europe relating to cross-border cooperation [Tomaszewski, 2007: 117]. In the eastern border region of Poland, the requestor of cross-border structures was the government administration with the cooperation of the central authorities. Euroregions were created administratively, i.e. centrally. Associations of municipalities were created only later. This, in turn, took place in a kind of forced manner.

In international legislation, the Euroregional activities are structured by the following legal provisions [Galicki, Owsieniuk, 2014: 43–51]:

- the European Framework Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities of 1980 (known as the Madrid Convention in brief),
- the European Charter of Local Self Government,
- the European Charter of Regional Self-Government,
- the European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions.

The creation of Euroregions in the form of associations between state and/or local government organisations of neighbouring states is the result of two underlying reasons. The first is the administrative structure of the countries whose border regions intend to function within the framework of the Euroregion to be set up. It is not always possible to sign a Euroregional cooperation agreement between self-governing organisations. It has happened that there may not have been self-government on one side of the border. This has often been the case in Russia and Belarus as well as in Ukraine. In some cases, the local government is not legally empowered to take decisions on Euroregional cooperation. The second reason is the will (or lack thereof) of the parties at the state and local government levels to enter into an agreement.

Taking into account the ability of both governmental and local authorities to establish a Euroregion, there are two models of Euroregions distinguished in the literature:

- local governmental / self-governmental,
- administrative and local governmental / self-governmental (administrative).

The self-government model is shaped by local initiatives. The first step towards cooperation within the framework of such a model is for the municipalities to form a special-purpose association and have it registered with the court. This is followed by the signing of an agreement with a similar association on the other side of the border and the formation of the corresponding Euroregional structure. The self-government model is characteristic of Poland's western and southern borders. Small and medium-sized Euroregions have been created there. They often do not cover a compact territory. This is related to the lack of interest of municipalities in joining these formalised structures. There are also cases of double membership of municipalities in Euroregional structures. There are no binding restrictions in this respect. The Euroregion self-government model is referred to interchangeably as a goal-oriented association of municipalities [Lewkowicz, 2013: 35].

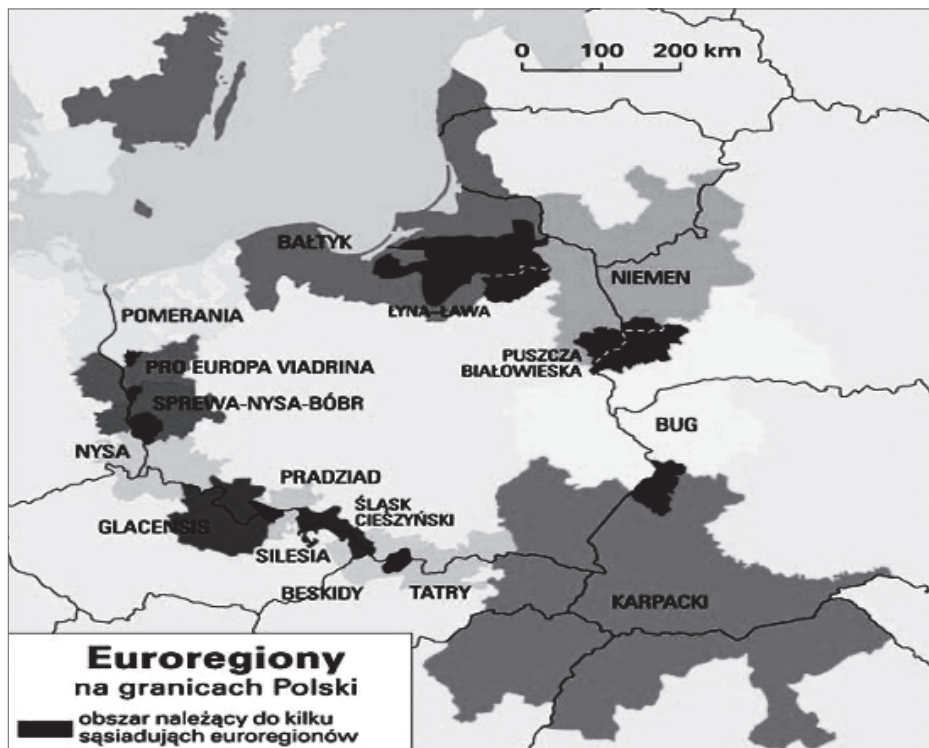
The administrative model already arises on the initiative of the government administrative bodies. The administrative decision is made at the voivodeship level with significant participation of the central level. In Poland, this mainly applies to the eastern and northern borders. Especially the eastern border region (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine) turns out to be politically very specific. The lack of competent local authorities in these countries means that cooperation at the voivodeship level must be established with similar structures (districts, regions) on the other side of the border. Hence, the members of Euroregions are usually supra-local structures. The Euroregions created are quite large in terms of area. The administrative model of a Euroregion is also referred to as an interregional association [Dumała, 2000: 60–62].

In the course of their existence, the Euroregions, as cross-border cooperation institutions, have developed a number of principles on the basis of which the cooperation of their members should be based. Among these, the following deserve to be mentioned [Borys, Panasiewicz, 1996: 12–13]:

- a good neighbourhood of people in the border zone;
- preservation of the identity (national, state, regional, local) of the members of the agreement;
- voluntary participation in the Euroregion;
- symmetry and parity (equal number of seats/voting rights in the Euroregion's bodies, equal representation of the parties in its external relations and proportionality in the financing of the activities);
- pragmatism and cost-benefit considerations;
- friendship and trust in the implementation of joint undertakings;

- consensus, i.e. finding a common position through discussions, negotiations and agreements;
- rotation, i.e. changing places of organisation and carrying out joint initiatives, as well as changing the chairmanship of various cross-border bodies and institutions.

Figure 1. Map of the Euroregions on the Polish border.



Source: Dębowski, 2015: 23.

The detailed rules for the activities of the Euroregions are incorporated in the documents which formalise their cooperation, i.e.: agreements, contracts, statutes and regulations. The verification of the provisions existing therein allows for the conclusion that most of the abovementioned principles are usually taken into account by the Euroregions. However, their application occurs with varying (greater or lesser) intensity. It is also strongly dependent on the formed model of Euroregional cooperation and the competencies of the authorities involved in the association. These factors further influence joint initiatives and create a certain level of openness of the Euroregion.

### 3. Objectives and tasks of the Euroregions of the eastern borderlands of Poland

The objectives and tasks of the Euroregions are formulated in their basic founding documents, i.e. in the agreements on establishment and statutes. They are usually presented in separate chapters with similar sounding names, i.e. “Objectives and areas of cooperation”, “Objectives of the community and forms of cooperation”, “Goals and tasks”, “Goals and motives of cooperation”, “Forms of cooperation”, “Objectives”. They focus mainly on economic cooperation, infrastructure development, environmental protection, tourism, as well as cultural and educational activities. In the initial period of its existence, the political importance of the Euroregions was emphasized above all. They have constituted and still constitute a bridge in the process of European integration<sup>4</sup>.

The detailed provisions relating to the objectives and tasks carried out by the Euroregions located on the eastern border of Poland are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1.* Principal objectives and tasks of the Euroregions from the eastern border of Poland

Name of the Euroregion	Objectives and tasks
Neman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisation and coordination of all cross-border cooperation of Polish entities with entities from other countries;</li> <li>• management of European Union funds in support of cross-border cooperation;</li> <li>• maintenance of the Euroregion's European Information Point;</li> <li>• implementation of own projects within the framework of aid programs with particular emphasis on the development of international tourism in the area of the Augustow Canal;</li> <li>• conduct of training and educational activities</li> </ul>
Białowieża Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strengthening the scope of environmental protection and the rational use of natural resources;</li> <li>• promotion of the development of cross-border ecotourism in the territory of the Euroregion;</li> <li>• socio-economic, cultural and scientific-educational cooperation in the border areas;</li> <li>• rapprochement of peoples while maintaining a favourable environment for future generations;</li> <li>• preservation of the unique natural complex of the Białowieża Forest affecting the climate of the continent.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> This observation applies to the Euroregions on the eastern border, which cover the area between the countries that are members of the European Union and those that are not.

Name of the Euroregion	Objectives and tasks
Bug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spatial and land-use planning;</li> <li>• communication, transport and connectivity;</li> <li>• education, health protection, culture, sport and tourism;</li> <li>• protection and improvement of the natural environment;</li> <li>• elimination of threats and natural disasters;</li> <li>• development of contacts between inhabitants of border areas and organisation of institutional cooperation and cooperation of economic entities.</li> </ul>
Carpathian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organisation and coordination of activities to develop cooperation between members in the following fields: economy, ecology, culture, science and education;</li> <li>• assistance and support for specific projects and plans of common interest;</li> <li>• development and facilitation of contacts between the inhabitants of the association's area of activities;</li> <li>• development of contacts between experts in different fields;</li> <li>• establishing good neighbour relations between members;</li> <li>• identification of potential areas of multilateral cooperation between members;</li> <li>• intermediate and facilitate co-operation between members and organisations, agencies and institutions.</li> </ul>

Source: own study based on an analysis of the articles of association, statutes and activity reports of the aforementioned Euroregions.

An analysis of the aims and tasks ascribed to the Euroregions on the eastern border of Poland allows for the observation that the basic message of the participants in the agreement has always been to emphasise cooperation in a broad dimension, covering a variety of fields, areas and issues. In some cases, a certain outline of an emerging 'specialisation' can also be discerned. This is the case, for example, with the Białowieża Forest Euroregion. They formulate their objectives and tasks in the context of environmental care and ecological issues. The objectives of the Euroregion Neman, on the other hand, are essentially focused on cooperation related to the implementation of projects financed from the European Union funds.

#### 4. A feasible vision for the future of Euroregions in the eastern borderlands of Poland

The functioning of the Euroregions, established in the eastern borderlands of Poland, is closely linked to the political relations of the countries (Poland, Lithuania, Slovakia) newly acceded (2004) to the European Union with the countries



located at their borders – the external borders of the European Union<sup>5</sup>. It is also determined by the nature of the political relations between the parties/countries participating in it (Poland, Russia, Ukraine Belarus). So far, the EU–Russian relations have been characterised by a rather high degree of volatility – from normal to even extremely tense [Bieleń, Chudolej, 2009; Bodzio, 2005].

The political crisis between the European Union and Russia has had its course since (2008) the Russian-Georgian conflict. In turn, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014 greatly exacerbated these tensions. Poland, being a member of the European Union, could not remain indifferent to both of these crises. It had a dual role in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. After all, decisions at the European Union level were binding on all its member states – including Poland. In addition, Poland has been a neighbour of Ukraine and has actively supported the democratic changes taking place there since Ukraine gained its independence. It thus found itself in opposition to Russia as the unquestionable aggressor in the Russian-Ukrainian dispute. In the existing circumstances, the behaviour of Poland and Russia in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict of 2014 resulted from bilateral and multilateral relationships<sup>6</sup>.

The events of 2014, as the Russia–EU political conflict escalated, had profound international consequences. They exacerbated tensions between the countries that were directly and indirectly involved. Poland's political and economic relations with Russia have also deteriorated. This has also adversely affected Poland's already poor relations with Belarus [Kłysiński, Żochowski, 2016: 7–9]. There has been a clearly perceived deterioration in the conditions for the implementation of the *“Eastern Partnership”* as well. Neither has it been without a negative impact on changing the conditions for the implementation of cross-border cooperation policy in the eastern borderlands of Poland and the Euroregions operating there [Cygler et al., 2014: 65–73].

In those newly created after 2014, significantly more complicated geopolitical conditions, the Euroregions operating on Poland's eastern borders have already been increasingly treated by some bodies as a relic of the past. A further escalation of political tensions in this part of Europe, this time on a scale hitherto unheard of, occurred at the turn of 2021/2022 in connection with the hybrid

<sup>5</sup> Read more in: Rutkowski, Proniewski, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> A detailed overview of the calendar of these happenings in 2014, with their resulting political and economic consequences, is presented in: Cygler et al., 2014: 65–73.

war on the Polish-Belarusian border<sup>7</sup> and Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

Therefore, one must ask the question about the future shape of the eastern policy of the European Union and, consequently, about the further existence of its various forms of economic cooperation – including the Euroregions analysed here – which have been implemented so far. The long-standing assertion that one of the following three scenarios may occur in this regard becomes admissible [Dębowski, 2015: 28]: disintegration, continuation or domination. In the opinion of the author of this study, the disintegration scenario is the most likely to occur – especially in relation to the Euroregions of eastern Poland. This is based on the assumption that European integration may significantly slow down. As a result, a number of factors will come to light, which will prevent the Euroregions from continuing to function. In a certain sense, even the achievement of a high level of integration by the European states may already mean that there is no validity associated with the continued existence of the Euroregions. This scenario assumes that there may be growing scepticism in the European Union on the part of decision-makers and local societies towards the realisation of the vision of a European federation of regions which, after all, differ in terms of status, competencies, demographic and economic potential, and are in a weaker position vis-à-vis the EU bureaucracy than nation-states. European states and certain European communities may thus view integration processes and cross-border cooperation less enthusiastically. Even, as is becoming increasingly evident today, they may associate this with a loss of national identity and see this as a threat to their sovereignty [Lewkowicz, 2013: 246–247].

The continuation scenario is based on the assumption that the Euroregions will continue their activities in the context of cross-border cooperation. In order to deepen this cooperation, they will, as it were, be forced to reform themselves in institutional and legal terms. According to this scenario, it is not anticipated that any factors would emerge that would prevent future Euroregional activities. In the opinion of the author of this study, however, this cannot be ruled out in relation to the regions of Eastern Poland under analysis here. Nor is it envisaged that the Euroregions will gain their political independence. After all, the special

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<sup>7</sup> Belarus, which had maintained its neutrality in principle in the political conflicts of 2014–2015, then began to depart more and more clearly from these principles and became an active ally of Russia in the implementation of its imperialist intentions as early as 2021. For more on the evolution of the Belarusian policy from neutrality to decisive support for Russia in: Kłysiński, 2018, and Wilk, 2021.

role of the EU funds is emphasised in the continuation scenario. It is also not an isolated view that it is “the number of funds at the disposal of the Euroregions, and subsequently the level of their use, that can decisively contribute to the realisation of the optimistic or pessimistic variant of their development scenario” [Lewkowicz, 2013: 243–245].

In contrast, the dominant scenario assumed (in the most likely variant) that in the 2014–2020 programming period, the Euroregions will implement separate operational programmes for territorial cooperation and will eventually transform themselves into the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation. As a result of acquiring a “new” legal personality, having at their disposal significant financial resources and a propensity for innovation, they will gain a real influence on decision-making processes in the institutions of the European Union. The concluding effect of the Euroregionalisation phenomenon in this scenario is a new order in the European Union giving the Euroregions complete freedom of action. The strengthening of the position of the Euroregions is to mean that they are assigned a significant role: social, economical and political within the European Union, the Council of Europe and other sub-regional international organisations [Lewkowicz, 2013: 239].

An analysis of the functioning of some Euroregions in Poland indicates some symptoms of the realisation of a disintegration scenario. Such a view is shared by many authors – mainly from research centres in Podlaskie Voivodeship<sup>8</sup>. However, the continuation scenario is much closer, at least for most of the Euroregions (leaving aside those located on the eastern border of Poland). The possibility of its continuation was in principle already confirmed in the

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<sup>8</sup> Some testimony to this is provided by, among other things, the following confirming facts: “discontinuation of the Polish-Czech Euroregion Dobrawa, established in 2001 (liquidated in 2004). Another example is the failure of the municipalities of Gołdap and Kowale Oleckie to join the cooperation within the Sheshupa Euroregion. At the turn of 2014/2015 there was media information about the intention of Biała Podlaska to withdraw from the Euroregion Bug, these phenomena are not caused by the effects of integration processes. It is worth noting that the Euroregion Dobrawa has not taken action at all in practice. The commune of Kowale Oleckie did not receive permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to cooperate in the Sheshupa Euroregion (however, it was not possible to establish the reasons for the failure of the commune of Gołdap to cooperate). Meanwhile, the municipal authorities in Biała Podlaska explained their desire to leave the Euroregion structure simply because of the generation of cooperation costs in the absence of benefits. The observed changes argue for a slight shift in the functioning of Euroregions towards a disintegration scenario” [Dębowski, 2015: 29].

financial perspective 2007–2013. At that time, the Euroregions actively participated in obtaining European funds within the framework of the third objective of the EU cohesion policy – European Territorial Cooperation. Euroregional cooperation was included in this period in the ETC operational programmes [Zielińska-Szczepkowska, Zabielska, Kisiel, 2018: 69–74]. A total of 7.75 billion EUR was allocated to this type of cooperation in the European Union. The allocation of ETC funds implemented in the Polish border programmes is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Allocation of ETC funds implemented in Polish border programmes 2007–2013

No.	ETC programme	Budget of the programme (in euros)
Western border of Poland		
1.	Poland – Czech Republic	258 000 000
2.	Poland – Saxony	124 000 000
3.	Poland – Brandenburg	146 470 982
4.	Poland – Mecklenburg-Vorpommern/Brandenburg	156 250 000
Southern and eastern borders of Poland		
5.	Poland – Slovakia	185 185 633
6.	Poland – Lithuania	71 680 000
7.	South Baltic Sea	75 342 210
ETC programmes within the Eastern Partnership		
8.	Poland – Belarus – Ukraine	186 200 000
9.	Lithuania – Poland – Russia	130 000

Source: Greta, 2013: 205.

At this point, one can already notice the insignificant attention paid to the Euroregions related to Podlaskie Voivodeship and the entire eastern border region of Poland. Even the ETC South Baltic Operational Programme, referring to the cooperation of partners forming the Euroregion Baltic, left out members from the areas of Latvia and Russia. Within the framework of the Eastern Partnership, which is one of the dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Euroregions from the south-eastern borderlands, i.e. the Carpathian, Bug, Neman, Białowieża Forest, Lyna-Lava and Sheshupe, have marked their activity in the implementation of the ETC operational programme Poland–Belarus–Ukraine and Poland–Lithuania. Some of them (Euroregions:

Neman, Sheshupe and Lyna–Lava) and the Euroregion Baltic were in the area of influence of the ETC Lithuania–Poland–Russia operational programme [Greta, 2013: 181–195].

It is worth noting that, in the 2014–2020 financial perspective, the European Territorial Cooperation was again one of the objectives of the European Union’s cohesion policy [Zielińska-Szczepkowska, Zabielska, Kisiel, 2018: 75–80 and Michalik, 2017: 319]. This time, unlike the 2007–2013 financial perspective, it was the second objective. It proved to be a model for the previous programming period as well. It became an important element in strengthening the community’s social and economic cohesion. Within the framework of the ETC in Poland, programmes financed from the European Regional Development Fund, presented in the table below, were planned for implementation.

*Table 3. Allocation of ETC funds implemented in Polish border programmes 2014-2020*

No.	ETC programme	Budget of the programme (in euros)
1.	Poland – Slovakia	155 000 000
2.	Poland – Czech Republic	226 000 000
3.	Poland – Saxony	70 000 000
4.	Poland – Brandenburg	100 000 000
5.	Poland – Mecklenburg–Vorpommern/Brandenburg	134 000 000
6.	South Baltic Sea	83 100 000
7.	Lithuania – Poland	51 500 000
8.	Baltic Sea Region	264 000 000
9.	Central Europe	246 000 000
10.	Interreg Europ	359 000 000
11.	INTERACT 2014-2020	39 000 000
12.	URBACT III	74 000 000

Source: *Programy Europejskiej Współpracy...*

The Euroregions on the borders of Poland could have become active beneficiaries of the funds guaranteed by the ETC programmes. The experience gained in the

previous programming period should have strengthened Euroregional activity in the context of the realisation of their own aims and objectives as well as those of the EU cohesion policy – but did it happen? – especially in relation to the eastern external borders of the European Union which are of most interest to us in this study. It is difficult to unequivocally answer the question posed in this way. It is not even clear whether a full assessment of this state of affairs will be possible immediately (after 2020) following the end of this financial perspective. There are far more arguments that this may only be feasible during the implementation of the next financial perspective. There are also many more arguments to suggest that the functioning of the majority of the Euroregions (certainly located on Poland's internal EU borders) will continue to be a part of the continuation scenario. A less optimistic scenario (with many arguments in favour of a pessimistic one) appears, due to the new situation, with regard to those existing on Poland's eastern external border. The most optimism may relate to the Carpathian Euroregion due to the Union's ongoing interest in the integration process of Ukraine.

## 5. Conclusions

1. Euroregions, operating on the Polish border since the early 1990s, have already become a permanent feature of the country's economic picture.
2. The fact that no new associations have been founded in the last decade does not, however, imply that the existing ones are dying out.
3. However, a positive assessment of the functioning of all the Euroregions in Poland is not possible. The functioning of the Euroregions in the eastern borderlands of Poland (mainly including Podlaskie Voivodeship, which is of most interest to us here) is of particular concern.
4. There is no doubt that this question, in the context of the emergence of new geopolitical conditions in 2022, will require a great deal of new research in a larger scope.
5. It seems premature to claim that Euroregional activities on the Polish borders may disappear altogether.
6. However, such a development (cf. previous point 5) of events cannot be absolutely ruled out – with a possible reservation concerning the Euroregions operating in the eastern borderlands of Poland.

7. An analysis of the activities of Euroregions so far in the last two EU financial perspectives – 2007–2013 and 2014–2020 – confirms the conviction of researchers and observers of this sphere of socio-economic and political life that the most likely scenario is the continuation of Euroregions on Poland's internal borders – with the possibility, however, of their far-reaching limitation or even the disappearance of some on the eastern external borders.
8. The most recent events of the 2020–2022 period (hybrid war on the Polish-Belarusian border and Russian aggression against Ukraine) are removing the remnants of any optimism even in the 2014–2020 financial perspective. Leaving aside the Carpathian Euroregion, which has opportunities for development, at least in general terms presented earlier, the political conditions are increasingly sketching out a pessimistic vision for the future of the other Euroregions from Poland's eastern border region. The most pessimistic variant, however, may apply to the Euroregions Neman and Bug – *not even excluding the possibility of their liquidation*. Moderate pessimism, only due to the unique natural values of the area, may concern the Euroregion Białowieża Forest.

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