

Central European Regional Policy and

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Central European Regional Policy and Human Geography

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DESTINATION IMAGE AND POSSIBILITIES OF ITS FORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE IMAGE OF THAILAND AS A TOURIST DESTINATION PERCEIVED BY SLOVAKS

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Abstract: Nowadays, planning of the activities leading to the formation of desirable image held by potential investors, tourists, residents, and others contributing to the territory development is an important part of development plans for territories of various scales. One of the most widely accepted research fields of the image, in terms of its relevance and importance for the subsequent application in practice, is a destination image or place image researched from the perspective of its use for tourism.

This study highlights the importance of destination image for the development of territories and offers a brief historical overview of opinions on the destination image principles and possibilities of its formation. The main objective is to analyze results of the survey focused on the identification of Thailand's destination image attributes in terms of their nature as suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, and 2003). Attention is paid to the analysis of the external image of this tourist destination and detection of a range of possible associations held by interviewed Slovak respondents. We focused primarily on associations that Slovak respondents have with Thailand as a potential place of their holiday. Consequently we reviewed those associations from the point of their utilization in establishing or optimisation of potential development strategies for tourism destination.

Keywords: image, destination image, semantic differential, beneficial image, Thailand image

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INTRODUCTION

These days, we are literally overloaded with a huge amount of information, which we are trying to handle. Despite the enormous efforts, however, we do not even catch the majority of them. We process a complex and more complicated reality unconsciously every day. Regardless of the original object or phenomenon, we modify and transform reflections of the reality into the form which is intelligible to us (Vysekalová, 2009). Thus, we use simplified substitutes for the reality, i.e. images representing an easily understandable and identifiable message about the meaning to us. Accordingly, in this context, image can be understood as an essential means facilitating the orientation. Even if the important information is unavailable

or vague, an image facilitates decision-making in the process of selection through the formation of subjective opinions, attitudes, and ideas.

The beginnings of making conscious effort to shape the image held by potential customers can be found in business companies' practices. Here they came into being as the reaction to the increasing product competition. The concept of image was gradually shaped into a broad-based and commercially almost universally applicable approach used wherever the commercial rivalry have appeared. At the present time, image is researched by a wide range of subjects but also each professionals (marketers, psychologists, sociologists, urbanists, geographers and others) enrich the existing professional discourse by different dimension of image perception from the perspective of their own science.

Application of the concept of image to a place was related to the post-Fordist processes of marketing, broadening in the so-called *entrepreneurial city* period during the 1970s (however, in the field of urban planning we have come across with the application of this concept since the 1950s). Planning activities leading to the formation of a desirable image held by potential investors, tourists, residents and others contributing to the territory development has thus become an important part of the development plans of areas of various scales. The image that people have of a place significantly affects the way people think about that place, the way they behave towards it, and the way they respond to everything that is made or done there (Anholt, 2007), consequently people directly or indirectly affect prosperity of that place. In case a considerable attention is paid to the image, it can become an important factor which affects the competitiveness of the territories.

THE IMAGE AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR THE TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Attractiveness of the image research has increased more significantly in recent years, especially in the context of the economic recession. It has been revealed that many generally positively perceived territories with a strong and distinctive image have a higher resistance to unexpected shocks and that such territories can deal with unexpected situations better than the others. Hence, their price is increasing in the marketplace. The explanation of this situation has to be sought in the principles of creating the images of places as their possible virtually-pseudo realistic forms based on an individual foundation. Created psychological reality reflects the existing reality only partly, or sometimes even not at all (Vysekalová, 2009). It means that if the place image is strong enough, a man has a tendency to overlook or even to ignore certain information (both negative and positive), which do not correspond with already created idea or stereotype. In such situation we can use prejudices as a certain form of protection against unforeseen shocks. In relation to a strong positive image prejudices have an ability to mitigate the impact of these shocks and offer the prospect for rapid territory revitalization. The French metropolis serves as a good example of this situation. In late 2005, Paris was facing a wave of two weeks long unrests which were spreading to the suburbs of the city. The intensity of the unrests was so high that a state of emergency was declared in the country. Although, these events have repeated themselves in the following years, they have touched the vibrant urban tourism only slightly and just for a short time. A strong positive image of Paris built on multiculturalism, tolerance, and creativity has undoubtedly helped the city to dispel the notion of potential tourists' risk associated with travelling to this destination.

Indeed, in the opposite case, i.e. when there is a strong negative image, prejudices embody a major obstacle. Overcoming these prejudices requires a long process, and changing a negative image of places poses a great challenge. This issue can be illustrated by the example of the American city Chicago which is well known for infamous gangsters in the 1920s and 1930s. At that time, there were tens of gangs in the city (Avraham, 2004) and their

conflicts with the “law” have become a rewarding topic for Hollywood film-makers. They have put the city in the minds of people around the world together with organised crime through the film and absorbing stories of mafia bosses such as Al Capone. Although Chicago has one of the lowest crime rates among major American cities during these days, it is still perceived to be a dangerous city for many people (Avraham, 2004). Thus, it appears that even the reality has changed; the stereotype has survived despite the enormous effort of the local leaders for the long period of eighty years. A similar example is shown by Burgess (1982) who describes the problems that Scotland is struggling with while overcoming the prejudices concerning the residents’ way of life and which have lasted since the nineteenth century.

A man is naturally making both conscious and subconscious decisions influenced by prejudices against the place of origin of different products. Actually, we do not mean a common shopping in the supermarket, when we are trying to choose between tomatoes planted in Poland and Spain, or if we buy microwave manufactured in Germany or another one from China. The image of the place affects us also in many other situations. For example, while choosing between a private dental clinic of a dental professional coming from Ukraine and the other one from Germany; or when choosing foreign university where we want our child to study; when deciding between a less known college in London and Belarus state University in Minsk, etc. All of the above examples show that the image of the place is important in the process of their development. Popularity of this concept has led some authors (e.g. Morgan and Pritchard, 1988) to the opinion, that the concept of the image is a central to the post-modern theories and that this concept is even more important than the reality of the place itself.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DESTINATION IMAGE PRINCIPLES AND POSSIBILITIES OF ITS FORMATION

Around the year 1960, the implementation of marketing into the system of economic sciences, as one of the world-recognised scientific disciplines with a sophisticated methodology and tool system, became an important step in making the ideas about the way of place image formation more precise (Matlovičová, 2007). The recast and gradual transfer of numerous elements of product marketing are considered a significant advance at the beginnings of creating the concept of place image. In the field of product marketing, a considerable attention was paid also to the image of the product and the brand.

In terms of place image relevance and importance for further application in practice, perhaps the most widely accepted field of the place image research is a destination image from the perspective of its use in tourism.

Academic interest rate in the issue of destination image as an explicitly formulated phenomenon increased during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hence, the mentioned period is considered to be a beginning of the systematic research of image impact on the rising place attractiveness from the point of view of attracting potential tourists (e.g. Telisman-Kosuta, 1989; Gallarza et al., 2002). The initial interest was focused on the external target audience and on the research of tourist potential of places. Already in the late 1970s, in the literature there appeared the first definitions describing the observed phenomenon in a relatively complex way. For example, according to Lawson and Bond-Bovy (1977), the image is “*the expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual might have of a particular object or place*” or Crompton (1979) states that image might be defined as “*the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination*”.

Dyslexia of the essence of image creation has been reflected in inconsistent views on its nature. Besides the belief that it is primarily about the uni-personal perception of the place (Crompton 1979; Hunt, 1971; Lawson and Bond-Bovy, 1977; Markin, 1974), there are also views highlighting its collective nature (Hunt, 1975; Lawson and Bond-Bovy, 1977). In such case it is stressed that image can also have the nature of group idea, which is created by diverse subjects at the same time. Thereby, in this stage of concept development, even though only indirectly, they refer to its major attribute, i.e. to its complexity. Essential to this period was a consensus on the major impact of destination image on tourists' behaviour, which says that destinations with a strong and positive image are going to have a better chance to be chosen by potential tourists as their potential destination (Goodrich, 1978; Hunt, 1975; Schmoll, 1977).

The next period (the late 1970s and early 1980s) brought numerous empirical studies, which highlighted a major contribution of the strong and positive place image to the tourism development. However, conceptual place image definition emphasising a synthesis dates back at first to the late 1980s (Telisman-Kosuta, 1989).

Despite the attempts to conceptualise place image, and despite the strong emphasis on synthesis at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a criticism of the lack of an adequate theoretical framework of the existing numerous studies, which would have an empirical and not a theoretical nature (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991; Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). At the beginning of the 1990s, there were also works describing possible theoretical approaches to conceptualisation of the place image in more details (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Heath and Wall, 1992; Kotler et al., 1993; Parenteau, 1995). The complex nature and multidimensionality of the place image have been highlighted most often in connection with the issue of its conceptualisation (Smith, 1994). A multifarious nature of components forming the identity of destination image gave rise to the need for multidisciplinary research focus on its character and also on the process of its formation (Baloglu, 1997; Bramwell and Rawding, 1996).

Definitions of that period have emphasized the aspect of generalisation of the huge amount of stimuli into to the form of a simplified substitute for reality. For example, one of them says that: *"image is a mental construct developed by a potential tourist on the basis of a few selected impressions among the flood of the total impression"* (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). This aspect of the image formation mechanism can be considered a certain reflection of views concerning product marketing during the previous period (that of Reynolds' (1965) and others mentioned above). Gartner (1993, 1996) describes that destination image is *"formed by three distinctly different but hierarchically interrelated components: cognitive, affective, and conative."* Similar approach reflects also Chon (1990) since he defines image as a *"result of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about an object."*

In the field of destination image during the 1980s, attention was paid to the image as if an objective factor in terms of competitive identity. From the point of view of successful promotion of the target place, a need for better effectiveness of positioning was stressed so the places could differentiate themselves from the competing destinations in the minds of potential customers. In this regard, Calantone et al. (1989) suggest the need for the establishment and consequent formation of various positive perceptions. A strong and positive image is considered to be a key component of the place competitiveness. In this partial field of the science during the late 1980s, Gunn (1988) (later also Ganter in 1996 and others) presented a theoretical model of tourist destination image formation. His concept describes seven phases, through which a tourist passes while forming own image about a certain destination: (1) accumulation of mental images about certain destination; (2) modification of those images by further information; (3) decision to take a vacation trip; (4) travel to the destination; (5) participation at the destination; (6) return home; (7)

modification of images based on the vacation experience. Generally, it is a model of active place image formation, in which there identify not only affective but also conative and cognitive components. In addition a significant impact of the primary and secondary information resources is stressed. Most of the theories of this period accept that image formation is influenced by so-called organic (books, media, teachers, friends, family, traditions etc.) and induced components (which are the results of the special purpose promotion).

Typical of the last decade is a continuous intensive competitiveness between places of different scales, which is likely to be fostered by the increasing globalisation. Thus, many of the places in an effort to differentiate themselves from their competitors almost constantly try to change their “*package*” through which they attempt to present their attractive image. They are convinced that by doing so, they will succeed in competition for international prestige, which could help them in attracting tourists, businessmen, investors, business headquarters, congresses, sports events, industry or global capital (Kotler et al., 2002). However, they are worried about the threat of the loss of a positive image, since a negative image is considered a very serious obstacle to success. Moreover, the greater frustrations are caused by situations in which the negative image is of no true reason because the real situation consequently does not correspond with a public opinion (Avraham, 2004). Removing the bias appears to be a serious, time consuming and too much money demanding problem.

Taking into account the above views on the place image and its fundamentals, place image can be seen as a certain simplified mental construct of the reality, which has unstable interpersonal nature. This arises as the result of interactions of the most diverse external stimuli (real, mediated, conscious or unconscious) and existing personal views, beliefs, acceptable values, feelings or expectations, which tend to occur based on no rational relationship to the place.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR THE STUDY OF THE DESTINATION IMAGE

In many existing empirical studies there are several possible approaches to the destination image evaluation.

Semantic differential

One of the most widely used tools for destination image research is a semantic differential based on different partial scales of the Likert's scale. This technique, developed in 1956 by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (Osgood, 1956, p. 160), is considered to be a technique of bipolar adjectives, which serve as anchors at both ends of the scale. The resulting image is then determined by averaging the results and analysing the deviations from the average. Such an approach enables us to assess the strength of the image and its character, however, just in terms of definiteness, i.e. in case of small deviations it is still about definite image; otherwise it is a rather diffused one. This technique was also applied, for example, by Matlovičová and Sovičová (2010). Even though it could be expected that the effort of destinations will be oriented towards the achievement of definiteness in this case, it is usually not like that in practice. Many places prefer a diffused image (Kotler, 2001, p. 544-546). Diversity of opinions and place perceptions offer to the image a scope to apply a non-differential or differential segmentation strategy rather than a concentration strategy.

Such a research allows us studying both the primary (formed by personal experience with destination) and the secondary (formed by secondary information about a destination) image of tourist destination. In general, prepared questionnaires most often include closed

questions offering more options, which express a degree of adherence of assessment of image attributes separately at every single respondent.

Identification of beneficial image of destination

Many empirical studies developing the concept of marketing destination image (already mentioned above) have shown that image influences the decision-making of tourists when selecting a tourist destination. If we consider a base of destination image as a certain form of tourist's belief that a selection of certain destination will ensure him a higher value (he expects more benefits) than the selection of others, subsequently from the point of view of increasing competitiveness, it is important to identify those attributes, which in the customer's mind have decisive influence on the final choice.

There are many works showing that the importance of individual attributes in the process of decision-making is not the same (e.g. Crompton, 1979; Tapachai and Waryszak, 2011) and that some of them does not influence the choice at all. In such a case the effort is concentrated on the detection of those destination image attributes which influence a tourists' decision-making process. According to the model of consumption values, designed by Sheth, Newman and Gross in 1991, the process of marketing decision has a multidimensional character (Sheth et al., 1991), and tourists perceive its single attributes according to the nature of potential benefits. In this regard there are five different consumption values influencing consumer choice behaviour. These are functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional values. Functional values are connected with physical characteristics of the destination as a product. On the basis of these characteristics, a tourist assesses the utility of destination. Social values of the destination are determined by a subjective perception of stereotypes (i.e. associations with positively or negatively stereotyped demographic, socio-economic and cultural-ethnic groups); emotional values are represented by feelings and reflect the selection of those alternatives, which are capable of eliciting a desirable emotional response; cognitive values embody the ability of destinations to arouse curiosity, provide novelty and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge (desire for something that is new, different or fashioned); conditional values are associated with a specific context in terms of which the expected result is evaluated in relation to an usually unusual situation which a potential tourist is confronted with when choosing a destination.

The concept of the destination image components identification by Echtner and Ritchie

The works of Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, and 2003) might be considered a significant enrichment of the discourse on the conceptualisation of the destination image. According to these authors, the concept of the image is comprised of six diverse groups of components. These were placed on the counterparts of three mutually intersecting axes (Figure 1): (1) axis of functional and psychological characteristics, (2) axis of common and unique components and (3) axis of holistic components and of those based on individually perceived attributes. According to the authors, however, it is not possible to set a firm boundary between individual groups since they mutually overlap. In other words, holistic feelings are based on combination and interaction of attributes as well as the perceptions of individual attributes may be influenced by overall impressions and feelings. As Echtner and Ritchie further state, particularly very ambiguous is a dividing line set between the functional and psychological image characteristics.

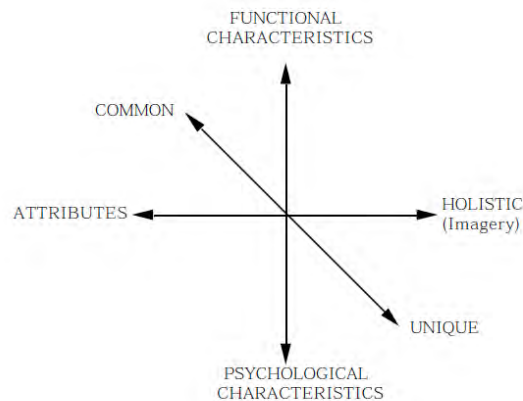


Figure 1 Components of the destination image
Source: Echtner and Ritchie (2003)

CASE STUDY OF THAILAND

We focused our survey on the identification of the destination image attributes of Thailand in terms of their nature as it was suggested in the works of Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, and 2003). We especially paid attention to the analysis of the external image of Thailand as a tourist destination. The aim of the study was to identify a range of possible associations held by interviewed Slovak respondents who viewed Thailand as their potential holiday destination. Gained associations were further studied in terms of their utility at establishment and optimisation of marketing strategy of tourist destination.

Survey methodology and survey sample characteristics

For the objectification of the gained data analysis, it is necessary to consider a broader society-wide context in which respondents live and which undoubtedly impact the perception of a destination as as far Thailand is.

78% of respondents experienced a period of so-called “Socialist reality”, which was among others associated with significant mobility restrictions. Opening of the borders after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989, gradual disposable incomes growth of Slovaks, improving the language skills and other fundamental changes in Slovak people’s lifestyle became important impulses for travelling to the more distant tourist destinations. Listed changes resulted in regular annual increase in the number of Slovak tourists. While in 1992 tours of Slovaks to foreign destinations outside Europe comprised of only 2.7% of all organized tours, this ratio had increased to as much as 29.5 in 2008% (SÚ SR, 2010). Changes in transport, namely its higher speed, spatial and financial accessibility have changed a perception of space. Time-space compression has caused a gradual reduction in the distance importance in the decision-making process and in the choice of tourist destinations by the Slovak tourists. Thanks to the rapid expansion of budget airlines, flying has become more accessible even for the less solvent social classes which could not afford this means of transport before its boost. The formation of the individual country image attributes is significantly influenced by changes in the communication with the outside world, which is nowadays faster, more reliable, and certainly even more comfortable. However, a global

awareness in relation to the image of the country can alternatively become a hindrance. In case of Thailand, the SARS epidemics (2003), the devastating Tsunami (2004) or even the political unrest (2009) are events about which a world was informed almost immediately and which had a major impact on the decreasing number of tourists. In addition, these situations undermined the image of the country, which was previously perceived as a safe and enjoyable tourist destination (more attention to this issue was paid in Matlovičová and Kolesárová, 2011).

For obtaining a primary data we used an on-line survey. It was carried out in March 2010 and attended by the total of 337 respondents from Slovakia (Table 1). Besides the identification questions (dealing with the respondents' gender, age, education and place of residence), combined types of questions were also used (both open and closed ones). The facts about the respondents' socio-economic situation, especially where they spend their vacation (at home or abroad) and how often they go on vacation in their country or outside Europe were investigated by the closed questions. In terms of the identification of the type of image (primary versus secondary image), important was a question finding out whether the respondents have already been to Thailand. Other closed questions were dealing with a perception of Thailand as a potential tourist destination. We were finding out opinions on the perception of security of the country and its attractions, but also opinions on the factors which on the contrary discourage tourists to take holiday in this country. We were also interested in an overall assessment of the respondents' attitude to Thailand as a potential place for holiday (i.e. whether they would recommend this country to their friends and relatives as a holiday destination, and which places should be visited or respectively what should be experienced in Thailand). Very important was the open question asking about the first associations coming to the respondents' mind when hearing the word *Thailand*. This question was analysed in depth also in relation to other questions in the questionnaire.

Table 1 Composition of the survey sample

Gender	Female: 52.8 %	Male: 47.2 %		
Age	15-18: 20.8 %	19-24: 38.6 %	25-39: 27.0 %	40 years and over : 13.6 %
Education	Primary: 19.9 %	Secondary: 46.2 %	Bachelor degree: 18.4 %	Master degree: 15.4 %

Data source: own empirical research

Approximately half of the survey sample (52%) consists of respondents who usually spend their holiday at home. Their ratio in our sample increases with the higher age and the respondents who are older than 40 years represent the most numerous group of respondents who spend their holiday at home. With respect to the education, rising interest rates in foreign destination were observed in the case of respondents with university education. We assume that the level of education probably influences the intensity and frequency of foreign holidays because respondents with lower education more often reported that they spent their holiday at home, respectively that they have never been to any seaside destinations. Of course, broader generalisation of such a statement requires verification by the specific research.

Position of Thailand as a tourist destination in Slovakia

Thailand is one of those exotic countries the interest rates in which have increased in Slovakia in the recent years. According to the statistical data, the number of trips to Thailand organised by travel agencies in 1999 did not reach even one tenth of the total percentage

(0.07%). In 2008 that ratio was raised on the level of almost 0.3%, which indicated an increase of more than 250% (ŠÚ SR, 2010) (Figure 2).

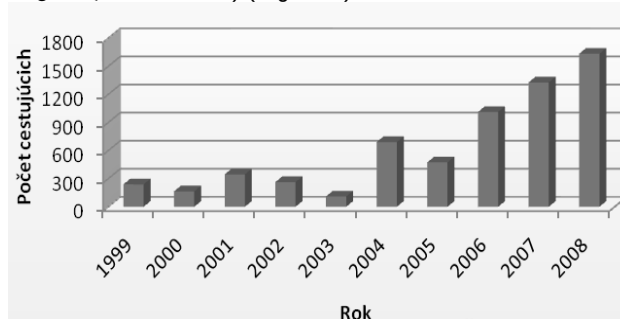


Figure 2 The number of Slovak tourists in Thailand (1999-2008)
(Rok – year, Počet cestujúcich – number of tourist)
Data source: ŠÚ SR (2010)

The growing interest in this exotic tourist destination was also positively influenced, inter alia, by intensive promoting activities of Thailand in our country. These activities included not only promotion through a variety of printed materials, but also through other media, exhibitions, and numerous study tours for travel agents and media representatives (for more see Matlovičová and Kolesárová, 2011). Figure 2 suggests that the growing interest as well as the absolute number of tourists (over 7 000) during the past ten years created a sufficient group of potential respondents who have first-hand experience with this destination. This fact enables us to compare differences between the primary and secondary image of Thailand. Under the so called primary image we understand an image which is created on the basis of own personal experience with a country and the secondary image results from the secondary information from various secondary sources. Respondents who have not been to Thailand reported 17% in our obtained survey sample. These were largely respondents with university degree and just 2% of them were so-called business tourists. The next paragraph will go into more details about other potential differences concerning this group.

Components of the destination image of Thailand as they were perceived by Slovak tourists

As we have already indicated in the introductory theoretical part, one of the approaches to the evaluation of destination image is through the identification of its attributes in terms of their character. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, 2003), consumers perceive a destination as a product not only through the individual attributes of destination, but also through the overall impression, i.e. by the application of the holistic approach. Therefore, in the process of decision-making of potential tourist, not only general but also symbolic (image-forming) information is presented. By the assessment of individual attributes, the customer reduces the possible alternatives of his choice to the smallest number of destinations meeting his wishes. A holistic approach based on comparison of symbolic attributes of destination can be applied in order to make a definitive choice between them. However, as Echtner and Ritchie (2003) say, the reverse approach is also possible. They suggest distinguishing between functional (tangible) and psychological (intangible) characteristics of the destination image while assessing the possible attributes. Whereas functional characteristics are directly recognizable or measurable (e.g. prices, building footprint, etc.), psychological characteristics are those which can not be quantified (e.g. friendly atmosphere, various feelings). At the same time Echtner and Ritchie (2003) emphasize, that both types of components play a critical role and determine the destination

image. Formerly mentioned pairs of components are placed on mutually intersected axes as counterparts dividing the whole spectrum of possible alternatives of the perception of tourist destination into four quadrants (Figure 3). As we have already indicated in the introduction, it is possible to add a third axis to the model of image. Echtner and Ritchie (2003) perceive this third axis as a third dimension dividing components into common and unique ones according to their nature (since the representation of the third axis is problematic in this case, we will consider this pair separately).

Our survey concerning the image of Thailand has demonstrated the existence of the following perceived components at the surveyed Slovak respondents (Figure 3):

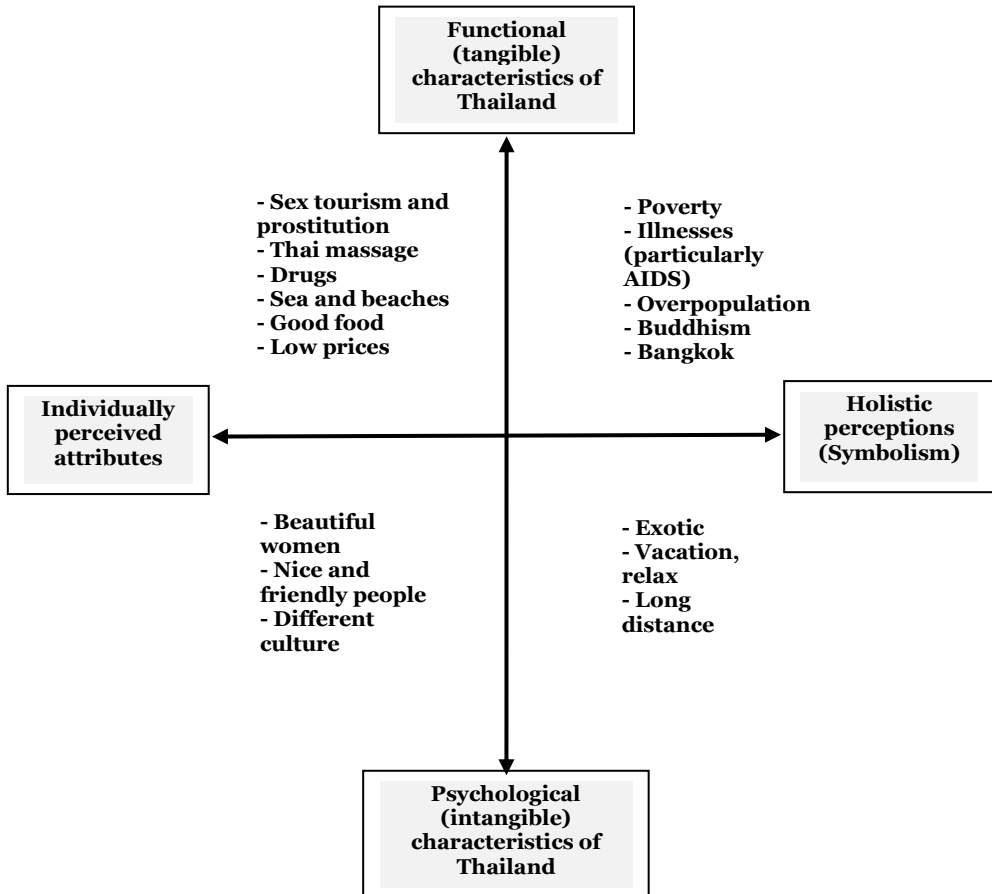


Figure 3 Perceived components of destination image of Thailand

Figure 3 demonstrates that there is a problem to set a dividing line between the individual groups of components (especially between the functional and psychological ones). We are confronted with the same problem while assessing the nature of attributes of the image of Thailand in terms of whether they are common or unique. Nowadays, technological progress makes it possible to imitate these elements of the environment which until recently

belonged to the inimitable. In this regard, the following attributes reported by respondents can be considered as unique: Bangkok (including its individual attractions), Thai massages, and general tolerance of gay tourism, high concentration of transvestites.

From the perspective of developing the tourism destination brand, one of the other options to assess the attributes of the image of Thailand is the assessment in terms of whether the elements are positive or negative. The results of our survey were placed again on mutually intersected axes representing possible counterparts of perception of *positive* versus *negative* or *tangible* versus *intangible* attributes. We tried to indicate the “*position*” and “*strength*” of attributes. The *strength* is represented by the frequency of the respondents (the size of the ellipse in Figure 4 reflects the frequency of respondents).

Figure 4 depicts the very first associations which came to the respondents’ minds when hearing the word *Thailand*. As Figure 4 indicates, the most reported and positively perceived imaginary notion related to Thailand were the ideas of Thailand as an *exotic country* (30%) and a *beautiful sea and beaches* (27%). The most frequently cited negative associations included *prostitution* and also *sex tourism* (20%), which was negatively perceived by most of the respondents. 32% of the respondents recorded at least one negative association. Actually, many of the respondents recorded combinations of both positive and negative associations. For instance, while thinking about Thailand, the following were stated by the respondents:

- man, 19-24 years: *vacation, Thai massage, different culture*
- woman, 25-39 year: *exotic, beautiful beaches, kind people, prostitution;*
- man, 25-39 years: *exotic, sex tourism, good food, pretty women;*
- woman, 40 and over: *prostitution, drugs, street children, poverty.*

Associations recorded by the respondents who have already been to Thailand (primary image) appear to be more specific, describing cultural difference and traditions of the country. Moreover, it dominates a cognitive component of the image in their descriptions, i.e. they more often stated specific tourist attractions. Affective components of primary image of Thailand represented mainly (overall 93%) positive emotions at the surveyed respondents, which were raised by the idea of the journey undertaken. Here are some examples of the above explained combinations of associations:

- woman, 25-39 years: *Phuket, honeymoons, our destroyed canoe, tasty food;*
- man, 40 and over: *vacation, scuba diving in turquoise sea, sex tourism, chilli;*
- woman, 19-24 years: *eating insets, elephant show, transvestites, shopping;*
- woman, 25-39 years: *friendly and optimistic people, Bangkok, shopping, Damnoen Saduak floating market.*

Taking into account the 9/11 era, a very sensitive perception of safety of the tourist destination has become one of the most important attributes. In this regard in case of Thailand, there were many other already mentioned negative key situations (SARS - 2003, devastating Tsunami - 2004, or political unrest - 2009), about which the world knew almost immediately. However, thanks to the successful crisis management and also intensive post crisis marketing campaigns (for more see Matlovičová and Kolesárová, 2011), Thailand has succeed to eliminate their devastating impact on the overall image of the country as a safe tourist destination.

The overall evaluation of our survey confirmed that the majority of surveyed respondents share about Thailand the opinion of the safe tourist destination (almost 70% consider Thailand to be a *completely safe* or *rather safe* country). In this regard, however, there is a significant difference in the image of Thailand created on the basis of primary experience and secondary resources. All surveyed respondents having a personal experience with the country consider Thailand a *completely safe* destination (42%) or *rather safe* (58%).

Thailand as a *dangerous* or *rather dangerous* country is considered by up to 30% of surveyed Slovaks; however none of them have ever been to Thailand. Presented fact demonstrates a negative impact of second-hand information on general image of the country. Criminality related to drugs and poverty (recorded by 18% of respondents) was the most frequently recorded problem of the safety.

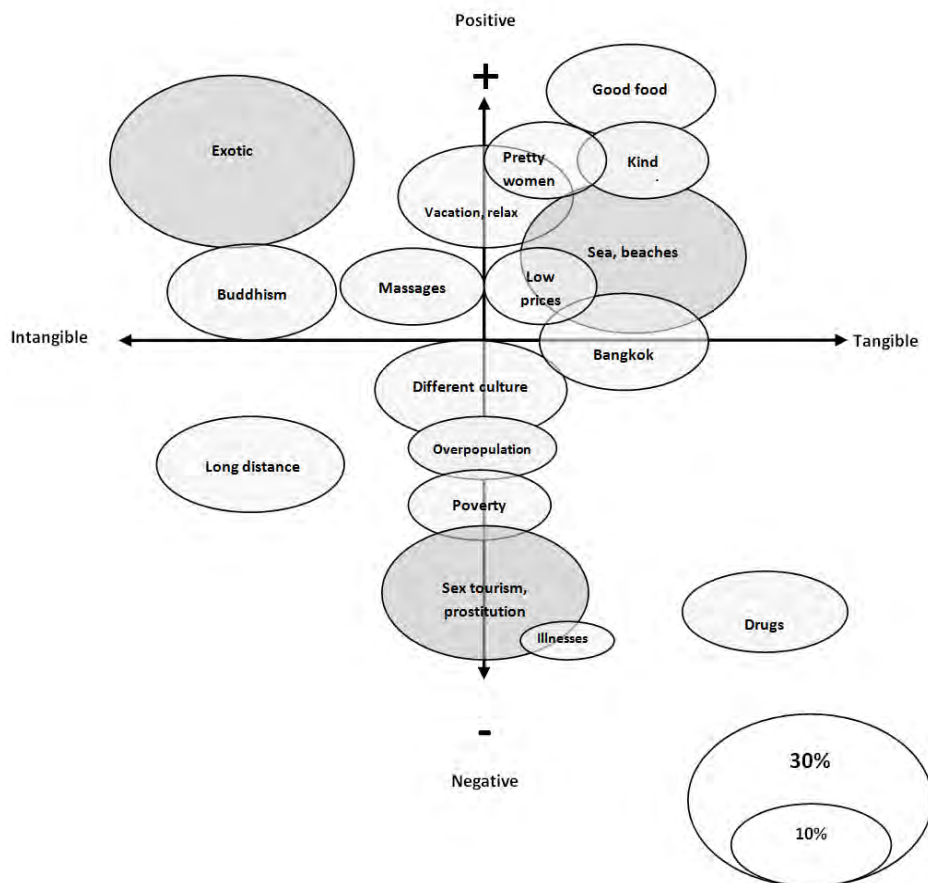


Figure 4 Perceived components of destination image of Thailand in terms of the strength and rate of positivity to overall image of the country

The personal view of safety is closely related to the willingness to recommend this tourist destination to friends and relatives. Therefore, it is of no surprise that most of the respondents who view the country as safe, provide also positive references to the potential tourists. In a way, it is surprising, that more than half of the respondents, who considered the country as dangerous (56%), would recommend it as a good place for holiday.

Positive references made to this destination are considered to be the key ones in shaping the positive image of the country. In this respect, therefore, we were searching for cognitive components of the image which dominated at surveyed Slovaks. We were asking the respondents about the places in Thailand which Slovak tourist should visit in their opinion.

Among the recommended suggestions the *sea and isles with white beaches* dominated clearly which were recommended by 30% of respondents. The sea and its other close characteristics connected with a leisure form of coastal tourism “sea” and “sand”, also known as 3S, seems to be the biggest attraction, i.e. what the Slovaks are interested in the most in terms of outbound tourism. Recommended suggestions of the respondents who have never been to Thailand were as following: *islands and beaches of Thailand* (30%), *Bangkok* (24%), *traditional way of life* (18%), *natural attractions* (15%), *Thai massages* (7%), *Go-go bars* (3%), and *sex tourism* (3%). While comparing the structures of preferences (i.e. responses of people who have personal experience with Thailand versus those who have any experience with Thailand), we found an essential difference in the option referring to the Thai beautiful nature. This option was recommended by almost 30% of the respondents who have personal experience with Thailand and only by 15% of the respondents who have any personal experience with this country.

One of the reasons discouraging Slovak tourists from travelling to Thailand, which can be only hardly removed, is the *high costs of the trip* (cited by 51%) which is caused mainly by the long distance from Slovakia (a substantial part of the costs for a trip are the costs of transportation). Other reasons were accounted as less important factors because of their frequency (although, the most frequently cited were *drugs, prostitution, cultural difference*, or comments on *long distance and lack of leisure time*, etc.). However, a positive message concerning building the brand of Thailand as a tourist destination is that up to 20% of surveyed respondents have not specified any particular reasons discouraging them from visiting Thailand.

CONCLUSION

Our empirical study also shows that the complexity, heterogeneity and subjectivity of perception of the identified attributes encounter a problem when trying to accomplish some classification or segmentation. The problem is to set a dividing line between the groups of components, for example between functional and psychological components, unique and common ones, or the problem might occur while assessing a positivity since it might be interpersonally judged very differently. Despite all the difficulties, the research of the image is still a required type of research, offering some guiding lines for the establishment and optimisation of development strategies for tourist destinations around the world. According to an assessment of travel agencies, Slovak people prefer to enjoy their vacation in the southern part of Europe or in the northern part of Africa. Moreover, agencies agree upon the fact that demand for more distant and exotic destinations is growing. Portfolio with offered exotic trips is getting more diverse year by year. New direct flights from nearby airports in Vienna, Brno, Ostrava, and Prague to distant destinations have significantly reduced total costs for trips. Thus, these exotic tours are becoming more affordable.

Tours to Thailand, but also to nearby Sri Lanka and the Maldives, were negatively influenced by the earthquake and subsequent Tsunami in late 2004 which in fact together with the current political instability have caused a decline of interest in Thailand. One of the options how to restore the previous position of Thailand on the Slovak market, i.e. when Thailand dominated in the demand for winter exotic tours, is that by intensifying the marketing communication and strengthening the positive image of the country. In this respect, our research confirms that Slovak people hold a rather positive image of Thailand, the main attributes of which are the following: beautiful sea, beaches and nature, exotic culture, and tasty food. Attributes perceived as negative include criminality, drugs, and prostitutions.

While considering the nature of perceived attributes, the main functional characteristics of Thailand are: sex tourism and prostitution, Thai massages, drugs, sea and beaches, tasty food, and low prices. The second group of functional attributes, however, perceived rather in a holistic way, consists of the following: poverty, illnesses (particularly AIDS) overpopulation, Buddhism, and Bangkok. Psychological (abstract) attributes were also divided according to Echtner and Ritchie (2003) into individually perceived (pretty women, nice and friendly people, different culture) attributes and those perceived in a holistic way (exotic, vacation, relax, long distance).

We can summarize that the surveyed group of Slovak respondents perceive Thailand as a country of “*exotic and erotic*”. This perception reflects in its essence a certain ambivalence of the country’s image in the spirit of dualism presented everywhere. Thailand embodies for Slovaks an exotic country with a very different culture determined by Buddhism which encourages to self-denial and humiliation. On the other hand, there are luxury resorts and a wide range of secular pleasures that are in sharp contrast with each other. Thus, the image of Thailand is perceived by Slovak respondents as dual and is represented principally by negatively perceived erotically-oriented tourism (respectively prostitution) and, on the contrary, by very positively perceived beautiful nature and valuable cultural monuments.

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THE EXISTING EGTC MODELS OF TERRITORIAL COHESION AND THEIR APPLICABILITY IN THE DEBRECEN-ORADEA AGGLOMERATION

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Abstract: One of the biggest aims of the European Union is to become one undivided region, and the process of integration is helping the EU to achieve this goal. Analyzing the Lisbon Treaty, one might realize that territorial cohesion is a new objective for the European colossus, and the phenomenon of integration has raised the question of cohesion among different territories (Spinaci and Vara-Arribas, 2009).

The "Handbook on the governance of cross-border conurbations" also revealed that the European integration process has facilitated the appearance of cross-border conurbations and the cross-border flows of goods, capital, information and workers have led to the creation or reinforcement of functional urban spaces spreading over state borders. These cross-border agglomerations are expected to contribute to the forming of genuine living spaces with high living standards, also promoting multiculturalism and European citizenship, this way becoming laboratories for a European citizenship in the making.

Especially nowadays in the prisms of the heavily mediated economic, social, political and environmental problems, in Europe there is an urging need for joint policies and for fast cooperative responses which must put an emphasis on certain territories, involving municipalities, local authorities, regions, countries, selected groups facing the same challenges, to combine their resources in order to achieve shared cross-border solutions.

The main purpose of this study is, by putting under a magnifying glass two of the existent EGTCs from Europe, to take the good examples from their areas of cooperation and to try to come up with new forms of cross-border cooperation meant to be implemented in the future Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis.

At the end of this scientific bypass, the distinguished reader who is at the same time the objective critical voice of our research analysis, using the data put on its disposition and also using its deductive logic will decide if the proposed initiatives are feasible and if they are worth to be taken into consideration.

Keywords: EGTC, Oradea-Debrecen Eurometropolis, Cerdanya Hospital, Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, territorial cohesion, cross-border cooperation

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THE DEBRECEN-ORADEA CROSS-BORDER AGGLOMERATION

Focusing our attention on the Hungarian-Romanian border region, we acknowledge that the cross-border cooperation Oradea-Debrecen is a topic of current interest at European level and implicitly within the area of the Romanian-Hungarian border area and the urban

communities of Debrecen and Oradea as neighbouring cities with old forms of cooperation in various areas: social, cultural, economic, educational, sports, etc.; the prospects for cooperation is taking a new form, as European cross-border cooperation, and more specifically, the form of European grouping of cross-border cooperation (EGCC).

With reference to the cooperation between the two cities of Debrecen and Oradea, there is a wide range of perspectives:

- The cultural-historical premise
- Socio-cultural premises
- The cooperation expertise, based on the existence of an important body of actors participating in the cross-border cooperation.

The beginnings of the idea of cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Romania, namely the cities of Debrecen and Oradea, can be traced to the innovative idea of Prof. dr. István Süli -Zakar (University of Debrecen) and Prof. dr. Ioan Horga (University of Oradea), a project entitled "To prepare a common future: Agglomeration of Communities Debrecen-Oradea 700,000 (2020)" (Horga et al., 2009), premises that are found in the development of the Lisbon Strategy, which generates clusters of urban communities and also aims to develop Europe into a knowledgeable society; all of the aforementioned could be achieved in several ways, among which urban concentration and development of scientific and technological research within the centres (poles) of excellence.

As we noted in the current European geography, these poles of excellence are found in the large agglomerations that exercise attraction by means of financial and human investment, due to own power consumption and its impact on a wider region and not least all major investors are looking for strong communities of consumers

Here are some examples of urban concentrations: Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao (Spain), Porto (Portugal), Toulouse, Montpellier, Marseille, Bordeaux, Nantes (France), Liverpool (UK), Munich, Leipzig, Cologne (Germany), Krakow, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Katowice (Poland), Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Gothenburg (Sweden), Milan, Turin, Bologna (Italy), Thessaloniki (Greece), Zurich (Switzerland)

The European Union is very closely paying attention to one of its important objectives, the European Territorial Cooperation which envisages the following:

- development of cross-border economic and social activities through local and regional initiatives in joint venture
- strengthening transnational cooperation through initiatives that promote integrated territorial development
- bilateral cooperation between maritime regions
- interregional cooperation through networking activities and experience exchange between regional and local authorities.

According to the World Bank criteria for assessing the share of investment in relation to a community, Oradea and Debrecen, in 2007, are cities that can expect a maximum investment of \$ 30,000,000. Through a coherent policy of promoting a common development strategy, they could attract investments of up to 100 million.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The central indicator of the research undertaken at the community level aimed at Debrecen and Oradea consider the interests of the three target groups for the project on "To prepare a common future: The Debrecen–Oradea Cross-border Agglomeration 700 000 (2020)" as welcome to joint development of the cities of Debrecen and Oradea, and the options for answer were: YES, NO, I DO NOT KNOW (Table 1).

Table 1 The interest for a future Debrecen–Oradea project

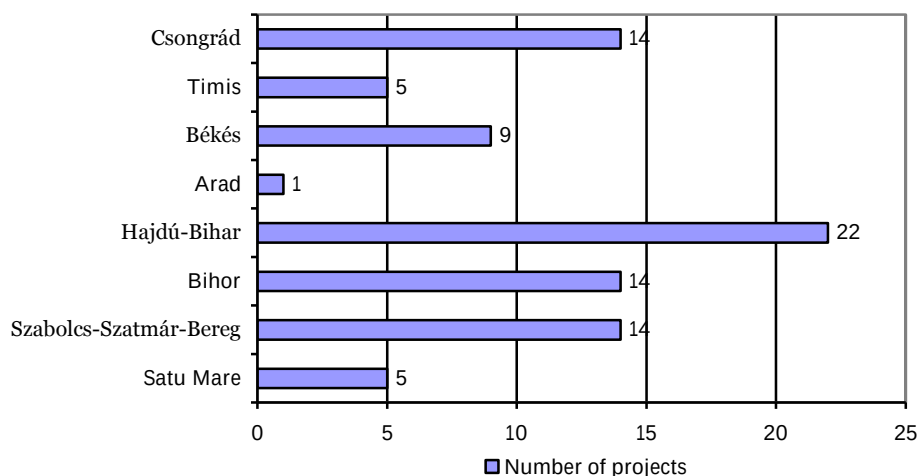
Indicator		Students	>25 years	Institutions
YES	Oradea	66%	64.5%	73.1%
	Debrecen	51.7%	63.1%	60.2%
NO	Oradea	13.1%	10.3%	15.7%
	Debrecen	5.4%	4.9%	5.8%
I don't know	Oradea	20.9%	25.1%	11.2%
	Debrecen	42.9%	32%	34%

Data source: own research results

One of the central questions of the research was oriented to capture the views on the draft on "To prepare a common future: The Debrecen–Oradea Cross-border Agglomeration, 700 000 (2020)", for joint development of Debrecen and Oradea city, building a three-choice question.

The affirmative answer of the three target groups showed support of the joint project The Debrecen – Oradea Agglomeration.

The analysed dimension is the cross-border projects, based on the published statistical data about Romanian-Hungarian cross-border cooperation with a target on 4 Romanian counties (Satu-Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timișoara) and 4 Hungarian counties (Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés, Csongrád). We noted that the counties of Bihor (Ro) and Hajdú-Bihar (HU) are the most active on the Romanian and Hungarian sides, with a total of 36 implemented projects on the two financing priorities; the amount of implemented projects is 5,761,400 Euro, which is 37% of the European funding attracted for the Romanian-Hungarian border (Figure 1a, 1b).

**Figure 1a** Most important characteristics of HU-RO projects

Data source: http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed_projects

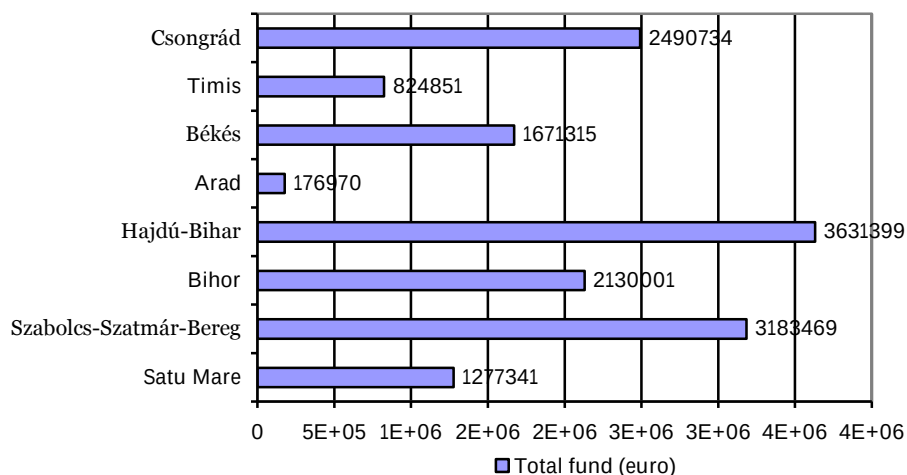


Figure 1b Most important characteristics of HU-RO projects

Data source: http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/financed_projects

Of the total funds raised for the two big priorities, where there is a balance of funding attracted on both sides of the border for Bihor and Hajdú-Bihar, we singled out: 1.2.3 Cross-border news programmes, 2.2.2 Joint research projects, 2.3.1 Cooperation between education institutions, 2.5.1 Cooperation between communities. Based on the abovementioned data, we can say that the communities and counties of Debrecen-Oradea and the counties of Bihor-Hajdú-Bihar entered into cooperation between the initiated projects.

REASONS BEHIND THE CREATION OF THIS DEBRECEN-ORADEA AGGLOMERATION

Debrecen and Oradea are two twin cities, situated on different sides of the border between Romania and Hungary. For centuries they have lived in peace and solidarity with each other, and also their entrance in the European Union initiated an early collaboration in various fields, such as cross-border cooperation, sustainable development, infrastructure, human resources, environmental protection, tourism, human resources, human relations, ethnic, regional and urban development, etc. As it was stated in the previous lines to deepen the bilateral relations between the two partner cities, in 2006 in Oradea and Debrecen the local governments have decided to develop a joint strategy of development, putting the basis of a so-called urban conglomeration or Eurometropolis, foreseeing the completion of the project till the end of 2020. (Közös tervek Nagyvárad-Debrecen, <http://www.padis.hu/aktualis/hirek/175-kozos-tervek-nagyvarad-debrecen.html>).

From surveys conducted by university students from Debrecen and Oradea in 2007, it appeared that 66% of the population of Oradea supported the idea of the creation of an urban conglomeration, while this percentage was slightly lower in the case of the inhabitants of the "Calvinist Rome", reaching only 51 %. Both the citizens of Hungary and Romania put an emphasis mainly on cooperation in areas such as: sustainable territorial development, economic cooperation, infrastructure, tourism, environmental protection (Raffay, 2005).

Also the demographical statistics favour the implementation of this large-scale project, given the fact that a city with an average of 200,000 souls has an absorption capacity of 10-30 million Euros, but if the Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis will be created, it will number almost 500,000 inhabitants (Table 2), not even mentioning the fact that this great urban conglomeration would enjoy the status of an organization with a legal personality, having the right to make projects on its own, being able to absorb not 10-30 but 30-100 million Euros.

Table 2 Demographic data of Debrecen and Oradea

City	Population
Oradea	184,861
With metropolitan zone	220,450
Debrecen	208,016
With metropolitan zone	240,000
Total	460,450

Data source: Census 2011. Final official report. Situation on counties,
<http://www.agentia.org/anchete/recensamant-2011-raport-oficial-final-situatia-pe-judete-35457.html>

Further reasons sustaining the creation of such conurbation can be found in the professional analysis realized by the president of the Oradea Metropolitan Zone, Mr. Adrian Foghis, stating that the Debrecen-Oradea territorial conglomeration has the capacity to assure the attraction of direct investments, this being a cross-border space of development of opportunities and clusters, at the same time also being able to counterbalance the polycentres situated within a 250 km distance (like Cluj-Napoca, Szeged, Timisoara).

EGTC MODEL

Before proceeding to the actual field of action, namely the listing and description of possible joint projects, it is absolutely necessary to get familiar with some concepts such as urban or territorial conglomeration, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), and Eurometropolis, concepts that will be used throughout our analysis.

Since the early eighties it can be noticed (especially in Western Europe) that more and more border towns have chosen a more concrete and less formalized form of cross-border cooperation. These entities on the territory of the already formed euroregions, or in the place of these euroregions, have chosen more pragmatic forms of cooperation. The new millennium saw the daylight of the so-called cross-border conurbation or agglomeration (border conurbation) and the Eurometropolis. Both Eurometropolises and cross-border agglomerations boast with legal personality and financial autonomy (Majoros, 2009).

Since the late 1980s, the European Union has funded cross-border cooperation through the INTERREG programmes, whose management has been partially hindered by different national laws and procedures. To find a solution to this obstacle the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was introduced, in order to bring both uniformity and legal stability to cross-border cooperation.

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is designed to facilitate and to promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. Unlike the structures that were managing this type of cooperation until 2007 (Euroregions, Eurodistricts), the EGTC has legal personality; therefore, it may acquire and sell goods or employ personnel.

The EGTC objectives include simplifying the process of territorial cooperation at the borders of the Member States, by providing a clear and coherent framework for interventions at local, regional and national level, and by the prevention of the constitutional, legal and financial barriers. The EGTC can act either for the management and implementation of territorial cooperation programs or for the management and implementation of projects co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund or the Cohesion Fund, but can perform other actions, like specific territorial cooperation between its members, with or without the financial contribution of the European community.

The EGTCs attributions are established by its members through Convention and Status, but it must subscribe to the objective of facilitating and promoting territorial cooperation.

Members of EGTC can be (Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, <http://www.mdrl.ro/index.php?p=1273>): member states, regional or local collectivises, associations, other organisms of public law.

The first EGTC from the EU can be considered the cross-border agglomeration found at the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai border region, between France and Belgium, which at the same time defines itself as a *Eurometropolis*, created in 2008. The second EGTC was registered in May of the same year, named Ister-Granum, situated at the border between Slovakia and Hungary (Majoros, 2009).

In the prism of this information, it can be affirmed that these two twin cities long for the title of *Eurometropolis*, and that this project is already on the agenda for 2007-2026 of the Oradea Metropolitan Zone, its final objective being the creation of a regional corridor of development between the two cities, based on the concept of territorial conglomeration, initiated in collaboration with the University of Oradea, Euro-Régió Ház and the University of Debrecen. This project promotes the emergence of poles and centres of development and competitiveness from Central and Eastern Europe (Oradea Metropolitan Zone, Portfolio 2007-2026, <http://www.zmo.ro/>).

Analysing the objectives of the Debrecen-Oradea territorial agglomeration, we may ascertain that their preoccupations and desired target areas are similar to those of the other existent eurometropolises from Europe, namely the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation, the management and implementation of European Funds, the consolidation of economic and social cohesion, the promotion of the cities of Oradea and Debrecen as engines for regional and national development, and last but not the least the creation of urban/rural relations and reconfiguration of the polycentric networks.

Süli-Zakar (2009) elaborated new areas of cooperation for the two bordering towns, taking their existent cooperation to another level. Identification of new fields of cooperation: regional and urban development, development poles, human resources, accessibility, infrastructure development, migration, tourism, environmental health, security, and CBC connection.

As we can see this project is already on the agenda of the Oradea Metropolitan (Table 3), being in the phase of implementation, but we will not enter into details regarding the common projects because their presentation does not constitute the topic of our academic research.

Table 3 Common projects that are already on the agenda of the Oradea Metropolitan Area 2007-2026

Project	Estimated budget (euro)	Brief description of the project	Target
International airport BHB	60 million	Construction of international airport as an air station of European regional interest	Amelioration of accessibility
New Expressway linking Oradea to Debrecen passing through Tamasel	240 million	The construction of highway with 4 lanes	Development of infrastructure, increase of connectivity and accessibility
S-Bahn Oradea-Debrecen	50 million	Construction of railway line S-BAHN (fast train) between the two cross-border poles	
International centre for advanced micro-technologies	35 million	Creating an education campus in advanced technologies	Establishing in partnership with European institutions of advanced technology, a regional centre to provide the service industries and high value added components and assemblies of international production (medical, aerospace, electronics)

Source: <http://www.zmo.ro>

AN ANALYSIS OF A FEW EGTC PROJECTS ALREADY IN PROGRESS

In this subchapter we intend to present two of the most successful EGTC projects already in progress, our objective being that after a brief analysis of their main areas of cooperation, we try to implement these ideas in the Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis, giving a new direction to their cross-border cooperation.

The first EGTC under a magnifying glass is the Cerdanya Cross-Border Hospital, which boasts with the title of being the first cross-border hospital in the European Union. Indeed a very innovative project, its main objective consists of the creation of a cross-border organization for the construction and subsequent management of an acute-care hospital for all patients in the regions of Cerdanya (France, Catalonia-Spain) and Capcir (France) (Cerdanya Hospital, <http://www.hcerdanya.eu/webgc/en/territori.html>).

The distinguished reader might wonder why there was a need for the creation of a common hospital if the citizens from Western European countries like France or Spain enjoy the benefits of a high profile health-care system. Well the answer is simple, first of all it has some historical connotations, the region currently being divided between two different countries but it was once a single unit. As it is revealed in the official site of the project, we acknowledge that before the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) Alta Cerdanya County and Capcir County once belonged to Northern Catalonia, the part of Catalonia that now forms part of France.

Before giving green light to the project, a thorough analysis was conducted revealing the need for a hospital in the region but also the type and extent of the services required. The

research uncovered that on the Spanish side, there is a hospital in Puigcerdà with, however, limited capacities, while on the French side, the next hospital for acute care is about 150 km away. Looking at the geographical profile of Cerdanya and Capcir we find out that these are plain regions surrounded by mountains and divided by the French-Spanish border. This thinly populated cross border area numbers around 30,000 inhabitants (53.4% on Spanish territory, 46.6% on French territory) but this number can reach up to 150,000 in the tourist season. As previously stressed, in the French border region, there is no acute care facility available and the closest clinic offering these services is situated in Perpignan about 150 km away. The condition of the road is very insecure, especially during the winter season because of the surrounding mountains. Hence, for giving birth to their children, French women often faced some difficulties going to Perpignan, and in emergency situations they have sometimes been treated on the Spanish side of the border region. In this area, only one hospital is undertaking its activity, namely the Puigcerdà health-care facility, dating back to 1190. Although this hospital has been renovated recently, there is no possibility to extend its existing capacities, and on the French side of the region there are no hospitals but many retirement houses, nursing homes and rehabilitation services (http://www.euregio.nrw.de/project-descriptions/details/id-102-hospital_of_cerdanya_details.pdf).

This project enjoys great political interest, involvement and support of the local authorities, who have acknowledged that there is a genuine need for a new hospital in the region, not only to provide healthcare, but it also will keep the population from moving away from the region, supporting the development of tourism, bolstering the economy. The overall objective of the project is to ensure medical care both for the local population and also for the tourists visiting the region. Based on the data from Dossier de presse Avril 2010, Hôpital de Cerdagne et son projet de santé du territoire, (<http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/enUS/Projects/already/Documents/Dossier%20de%20Presse%20avril%202010.pdf>) we find out that the estimated costs of the project are around 31 million Euros, of which 18.600.000 (60%) will be founded through the ERDF and 40% (12.400.000) will come from self contribution.

The second EGTC under scrutiny is the well known Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis presented in a few words in the previous lines of the study. Of course this article has its limitations therefore it will not insist on making a detailed presentation of this cross-border conurbation, mainly focusing on its two areas of cooperation that it is intended to be implemented in the Oradea and Debrecen Eurometropolis cross-border project.

The Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis was born on 22 January 2008 after the creation of its legal body by the French regional prefect. With its bi-national and tri-cultural territory covering 3,550 km², and comprising of more than two million inhabitants, it has earned the title of the largest cross-border metropolis in Europe. Familiarizing with its structure, it is unfolded that the Eurometropolis brings together 14 institutions which have decided to work hand-in-hand to support and promote cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional cooperation (Figure 2).

As illustrated above, the metropolis with its 5 universities plus one e-campus, with its two airports, 2 TGV stations, 6 major ports and 10 motorways is a real added value to the development of the region. Its main objectives are (<http://www.eurometropolis.eu/who-are-we/overview.html>):

- to realise cross-border consistency of the cross-border region
- to ensure consultation, dialogue and political debate between the partners of the Eurometropolis
- to enable, set up and realise projects
- to facilitate the daily life of the inhabitants.

From its long list of priority fields of cooperation, our attention focuses on two areas, namely on tourism and health-care



Figure 2 Added value of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis

Source: <http://www.eurometropolis.eu/who-are-we/key-dates.html>

Demystifying the tourist sector, one might find that the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis boasts historic centres and facilities but which because of their isolation could not be properly capitalized. The main challenge thus constituted how to link up all the tourism structures within the territory in order to form a network. Their efforts were mostly focusing on certain sectors like ("nature" leisure, gastronomy, events, museums, shopping, etc.) to structure and develop them, making them part of a Eurometropolitan approach. In order to bring together more than one hundred sites from both sides of the border into one single medium, a tri-lingual (French, Dutch, English) tourist map of the Eurometropolis was created, which now is available in all tourist offices within the cross-border territory. This tourist map gathers museums, theme parks, châteaux, natural spaces, etc. spread all over the 3,350 km² of the territory conurbation, providing destination for all the tourists with different preferences eager to visit the region.

Looking at the health sector, the Eurometropolis set the creation of a common health care zone as its main target. Cooperation agreements now exist between certain French and Belgian hospitals. There are also plans to define directions for cross-border cooperation with regard to awareness raising and prevention, and last but not least the receptions and treatment of elderly and disabled people will go through an optimization process in the upcoming years.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF DEBRECEN-ORADEA EUROMETROPOLIS

Before speaking about our proposals for the future Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis we have considered appropriate to make a thorough SWOT analysis of the two cities, unfolding their forte points and weaknesses in order to reveal which are those areas of cooperation that are meant to be strengthened and those which have an unexploited potential.

Based on the SWOT analysis, we will try to capture the four fundamental dimensions of the analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, categorized on two levels which are internal factors and external factors of the two communities.

Another central element of the research was the SWOT analysis through which we wanted to capture the views of three target groups for the internal and external elements of the cities of Debrecen and Oradea.

The SWOT Analysis of Oradea revealed 52 indicators at the level of Debrecen and identified 37 indicators of the most diverse which are found as internal factors (strengths, weaknesses), or external factors (opportunities, threats).

Looking at the results of the two neighbouring cities, we can extract the common points that we can assign according to the following criteria: cultural, educational, neighbourhood, transport, tourism, and modernization of the city

As we can see at Debrecen and Oradea cities level we can talk about six major common criteria, which can be taken into consideration for the thought of a common development strategy for the two communities.

Of the six major criteria two of came out through the cumulative answers: the cultural and the educational criteria. Here we can speak of two powerful cultural-educational cities where we can find two major university centres.

In completion of the objectives of a future Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis, looking at the results of the two neighbouring cities we can extract the common points that we can assign according to the following criteria (Table 4).

Table 4 SWOT analysis of Debrecen-Oradea Eurometropolis

S Strengths •Cultural dimension: cultural objectives, architecture, churches, religious centers, historical heritage •Educational dimension: academic environment represented by the two Universities from Oradea and Debrecen, cross-border innovative cluster •Commercial centers •Commerce •Geographical position •Tourism	W Weaknesses •Infrastructure •Transport •Institutions •Working Places
O Opportunities •Tourism •Projects •Development possibilities of the cities •Investors •Cultures, Sport •Labor places in the EU •Innovation an technology development	T Threats •Labor places •Public administration •Migration, Brain Drain

Source: own research results

Among the common weaknesses we distinguish the following criteria: infrastructure, transport and jobs.

Regarding the weaknesses in the application period of the questionnaires in the city of Oradea, the work on infrastructure was strengthened, circulation was more difficult and there was agglomeration, and the frequency of responses was very high due to this reason.

Although the two cities, counties put under sociological research have a strong economy in the development regions, they are two strong centres with a low rate of unemployment, therefore an employment high, and it seems that this direction would need improvement.

Analyzing the opportunities seen by the respondents of the research, we observe that some of the indicators that are found on common strengths and opportunities include tourism, city development, neighbourhood, infrastructure, and expressway.

Tourism is an important opportunity because of the existing touristic attractions at the two cities level. In addition, if it showed the value of the cultural dimension that has been identified as a strength it would result in efficient Euroregional tourism which could grow. If we stick to the tourism, another opportunity for development could be the cross-border projects, Phare CBC on the Romanian side and the Interreg on the Hungarian which have a role in border development, while there is the possibility of developing the road infrastructure between the two communities.

Jobs represent the only common element for the two cities, a higher frequency encountered at Oradea city level, while in Debrecen the frequency is much lower, as for the rest, there are different indicators for the two areas.

In the perspective of building a commune development strategy for Debrecen -Oradea the cross-border communities, the internal factors that relate directly to the two communities (strengths and weaknesses) must be taken into consideration as well as the external factors (opportunities that may exist for a harmonious development and last but not least the prevention of potential external threats).

Therefore, it must be take advantage over the cultural dimension - educational, neighbourhood size, proximity, tourism size and strengths, highlighting these, with the purpose of sustainable and strategic development, the use and the attraction of European funds for cross-border development.

From the weaknesses point of view, once identified, it is necessary for them to find elimination solutions or even the realisation of achievements with the purpose to turn them into strengths.

One of the strengths mentioned is tourism, that appears to be opportunity, must be exploited, taking advantage of the two neighbouring cities, at the same time taking into consideration the cultural dimensions and the existing tourism resources by attracting grants, implementation of joint programs, integrated in tourism.

PROPOSALS

After this historical bypass, and in-depth SWOT analysis, the main purpose of this study is to come up with some proposals, new forms of cross-border cooperation regarding the future development of the Debrecen-Oradea territorial agglomeration. We have based our proposals on the results of the research data and on the experiences implemented with success in the case of the two Eurometropolises, deliberately scrutinised in the previous subchapter.

Our proposals aim at the creation of a:

- common international airport
- common healthcare facility, cross-border hospital
- joint centre for the promotion of tourism

Common international airport

Regarding our first proposal, namely the creation of a common international airport, those who are familiar with the evolution of the Debrecen-Oradea cross-border conurbation, know that this is not a new project, this constituting the research interest of the local authorities both from Oradea and Debrecen since the beginnings of the new millennium, also numbering between the targets of the Oradea Metropolitan Area portfolio. Building a common airport between the two cities, would significantly improve the accessibility of the Central Eastern European countries and that of the border regions. This way Oradea and Debrecen could play the role of transit cities to various destinations from Central Europe to Eastern Europe and vice versa.

In 2007 the former vice-president of the Council of Bihor County, Ștefan Seremi, declared that they wanted to realise a common project of regionalisation with the Airport of Debrecen because this project would have been beneficial for the entire region, and that it could have attracted some European funds. Seremi also added that the development of the Airport of Oradea on the same location was absolutely impossible (<http://www.ziuaDECJ.ro/action/article?ID=6721>).

According to the affirmations of the former vice-president of the Bihor County Council, there was no way out from this situation the city could not develop because of the current airport, nor could the airport develop because of the city. Facing this paradox situation it has been decided to sell the territory of the current airport, and with the money acquired the acquisition of a new land outside the city was foreseen, and the association with a private investor who would want to construct a new airport. Apparently, in that period the Airport of Debrecen was confronted with the same situation, which was also privatised, being taken over by the Xanga Company with Chinese stakeholders (<http://www.ziuaDECJ.ro/action/article?ID=6721>).

Both of the cities had some troubles with their airports, these being quite old, but after the creation of an urban agglomeration, these would become absolutely inappropriate. In December 2011 the modernization of the passenger terminal of the Airport of Oradea has started with a budget of 995,000 Euros, and in 2012 the restoration and extension of the runway, landing, roll straps for aircraft tracks and platforms are expected to be completed with a budget of 31.99 million Euros.

Unfortunately, none of the previously echoed ideas regarding the complementation of each other's functions with the development and operation of different functions got implemented, this problem still remains at the level of a blunt stagnation.

While in Debrecen the Xanga-groups have great hopes of boasting the airport, in Oradea the local enterprises are urging the development of the airport.

The Association of the Enterprises from Bihor (AFB) in November 2011 sent a letter to the County municipalities, parliamentary MPs and senators of Bihor County, requesting the quick modernization of the existing airport. Contrary to the claims of AFB, Ödön Szabó, the county government representative of RMDSZ is lobbying for the construction of a new airport which would serve the interest of the whole conglomeration. In his opinion the airport should be created neither in Debrecen, nor in Oradea but somewhere in the middle, following the old solution provided by the "golden mean". The new airport should be situated at a distance of 20-25 km from the two towns, because as stated in one his interviews *"nowhere in the world are the airports situated within a city, they can be found at a distance of 10-15 km from the city"*. According to Mr. Ödön Szabó a bigger and modernized airport would be attractive for international air companies, which would initiate flights to various international destinations, this leading to economic benefits. In the background of the current situation it is not known to what extent it can be implemented, the proposed joint airport of the cities of Debrecen and Oradea, the only thing being sure is that the ideas of Ödön Szabó is worth to be taken into consideration. But of course the implementation of this idea is totally up to the

local authorities, and with this academic research we can only develop some proposals and perhaps influence the decisions of these local leaders (Airport between Debrecen and Oradea, <http://szebbjovo.hu/node/9925>).

Common healthcare facility, cross-border hospital

Based on the model of the Cerdanya Hospital between France and Spain, our second proposal targets the creation of a common cross-border hospital between the neighbouring cities of Oradea and Debrecen. This idea is a totally innovative one, it cannot be found in any of the specialized literature. In the formulation of this proposal we were influenced first and foremost by the successful project of the Cerdanya Hospital, building up our initiative on the health-care trends and habits of the population from the border towns.

Both from the description of the Romania-Hungary Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, and from our personal information acquired over the years, we have concluded that many patients from Oradea mostly visit the university centers with medical assistance hospitals and private clinics. The vast majority of the patients from Oradea are interested in services related to obstetrics and gynecology (many women resident in Oradea, or in the metropolitan area, decide to give birth to their children in Debrecen), surgery and internal medicine, traumatology (<http://www.infocooperare.ro/Files/Programul%20de%20Cooperare%20Transfrontaliera%20Ungaria-R.pdf>).

The patients from Debrecen are mostly attracted to Oradea, especially for the dentistry services.

Possible areas of cooperation could be: emergency, gynecology, maternity, dentistry, surgery, mental health, nephrology, scientific research, etc. A first step in the realization of a cross-border cooperation in healthcare constitutes the collaboration between the Neurology Clinic of the Medical and Health Science Centre of the Debrecen University and the Neurology Clinic of the University from Oradea, among which from this year there will be a permanent video connection. The aim of this project, with a budget of 50 million forints is the involvement of the DEOEC specialists in the treatment of patients from Oradea.

In our opinion there is a great need for the creation of such a cross-border hospital, not only for the supply of medical assistance but also because this would lead to the growth of health tourism, also conducting to a sustainable economic development. The objective of this project would be to assure the medical assistance and the access to health-care services for all inhabitants of the two border towns. This would be an organization based on a private culture that would include all the advantages of the health-care system. For the implementation of this project there would be a need for an increased participation and support from the population, professionals, local authorities, as well as informational communication training and a clear definition of responsibilities. The construction of the health-care facility would be realized using the most advanced and efficient instruments.

Joint centre for the promotion of tourism

On a previous occasion we had the opportunity to analyse the purposes of the visits of the inhabitants of the cities of Debrecen and Oradea made in the neighbouring country, providing us with useful and invaluable data regarding the travel habits of the population from the two sides of the border.

The answers regarding the purposes of the visits made in the neighbouring country with the possibility of choosing between the purposes: tourism, transit, shopping, business, family, finally existing the option - other purposes where it could be noted other purpose than those mentioned above (Figure 3 and 4).

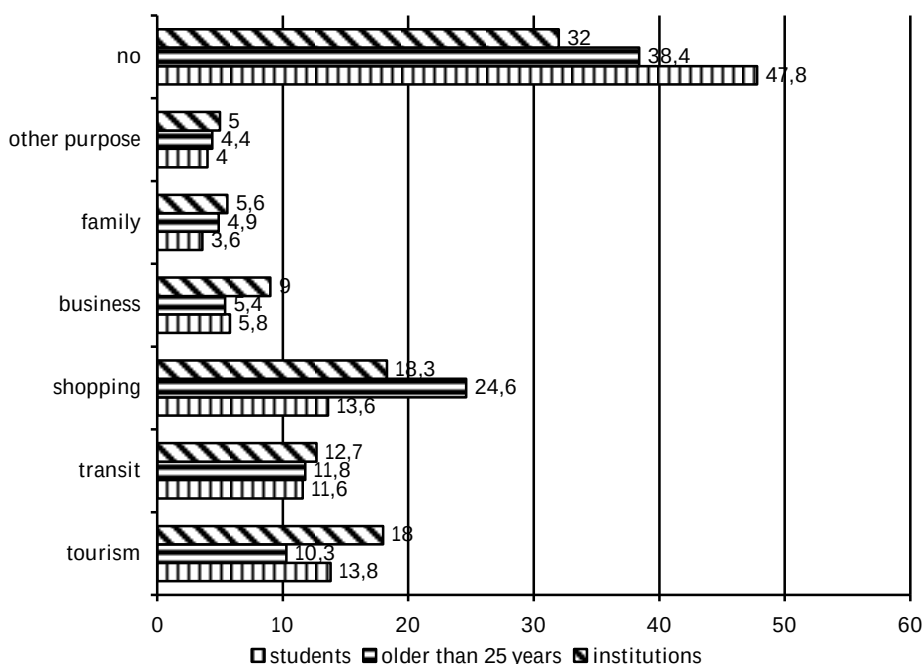


Figure 3 The purpose of the visits: Oradea to Debrecen (%)

Date source: own empirical research

Other purposes include cultural and amusement events, medical, competitions, educational programs, conferences, seminars, teachers' exchanges, Erasmus and Leonardo da Vinci projects.

The purposes include tourism, transit, and shopping which are the most important goals, in terms of the identified percentages. Travel is an affinity for one side of the citizens of both countries to visit the neighbouring country, with tourist attractions, traditions, customs and cuisine of different regions, all in one place and develop an attraction, there are stations on both the Hungarian and Romanian side, Hajdúszoboszló and Băile Felix, respectively.

The purpose of business is also represented because there are many firms in the two cities of the Bihor -Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion which includes the two cities, partnerships are developed, international cooperation, even multinational companies with some involvement on both sides of the border.

The Romanian-Hungarian border is filled with history, there were a series of historical moments that led to the cultural influences of various types and therefore the final demarcation of the border of the two neighbouring countries has brought about the separation of people and two states by drawing the state border, this leaving a wide part of the border and citizens which have different degrees of kinship, and this influences more the visits in the neighbouring state.

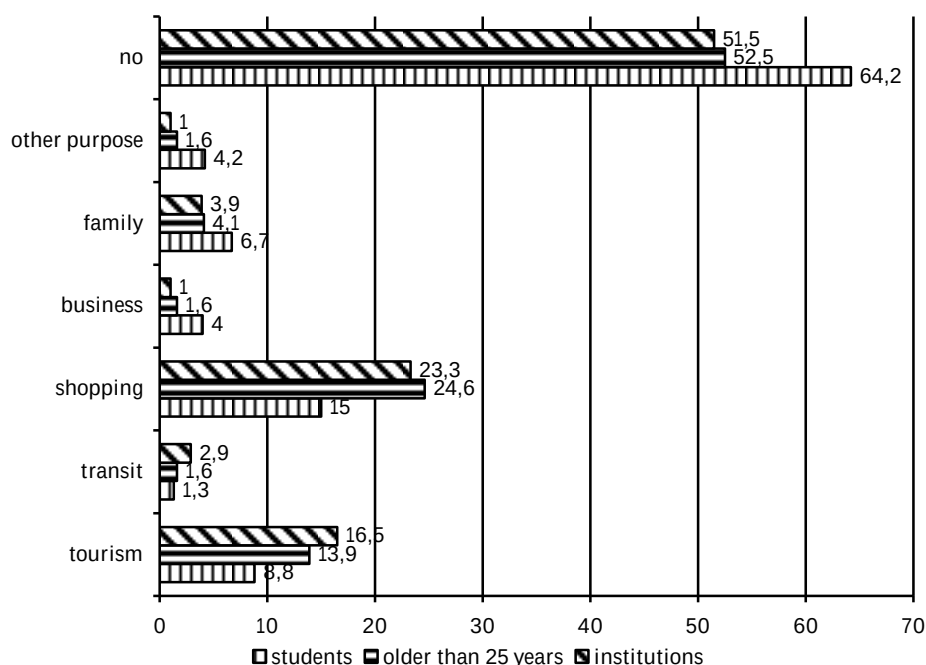


Figure 4 The purpose of the visits: Debrecen to Oradea (%)

Date source: own empirical research

In addition to these pre-coded answer options there was a response option open where they showed more choices where we can observe that there is cooperation at the institutional level that are transformed in conferences, international seminars, school projects, even contests. All responses identifying the existence of cross border communication both into the past, present and future, prospect of identifying the possibility to access structural funds in order to develop the cross-border cooperation.

From the medical point of view we can say that the two cities have one academic medical centre, training specialists in this field, centres that will appeal to students from all over Europe and other continents.

According to the questionnaires and the SWOT analysis, tourism is one of the forte points of both of the neighbouring cities, though is not properly exploited and valorized by neither of them.

With the creation of such a common centre for the promotion of tourism based on the existent resources and making it accessible for both Romanian and Hungarian citizens, as well as for foreigners, may increase the touristic exploitation potential of both of the cities, leading to the enhancement of intercultural dialogue, people-to-people contact, not to mention the financial development. Inspiring from the positive example of the Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis, the publication of a trilingual (Romanian, Hungarian, English) common tourist map which would bring together the most important sites on both sides of the border, on a single medium, could be the first step in the creation of this joint tourist centre. One could find here museums, theme parks, castles, natural spaces, aqua parks,

thermal spas, hotels, zoos, forests, caves, mountains, historical buildings, cultural sites, restaurants, and shopping centres.

Corroborated with the touristic potential of the area, there is a series of other tourism types that can be practised in the counties of Bihor and Hajdú Bihar, at the level of Debrecen and Oradea (Figure 5):

- a) health tourism: medical, fitness and wellness tourism, professional tourism, ecotourism, heritage and cultural tourism, country-hunting and fishing tourism, cycling, water and equestrian tourism, mountain tourism, and caving (Dávid et al., 2008);
- b) for health tourism we can include the spa tourism, a form of tourism that came to Europe in the nineteenth century, being based on the spa culture of the Roman Empire (Várhelyi and Müller, 2008). Two resorts that attract health tourism are Băile Felix and Hajdúszoboszló; please note the study that analyses the infrastructure, the accessibility and the quality of the geo-thermal water¹ of these two resorts (Bántó, 2011), educational tourism: general educational tourism, adult study tours, international and domestic university and school students travel, foreign study trips and excursion organized by language schools, school excursions, student exchange programs, international student mobility (Árva and Könyves, 2008);
- c) shopping tourism. It can become a very important indicator for cross-border cooperation (Tömöri, 2008). A particular study is dedicated to the expansion of the Metro CC network in Romania and Hungary (Tömöri, 2010); the percentage of people living in Oradea in report to the entire population of Romania who choose to shop in Debrecen is 59.28% (Süli-Zakar et al., 2011) to which it adds the shopping population from Germany 35%, Ukraine 6%, Poland 5%, and Slovakia 3% (Tömöri, 2007).

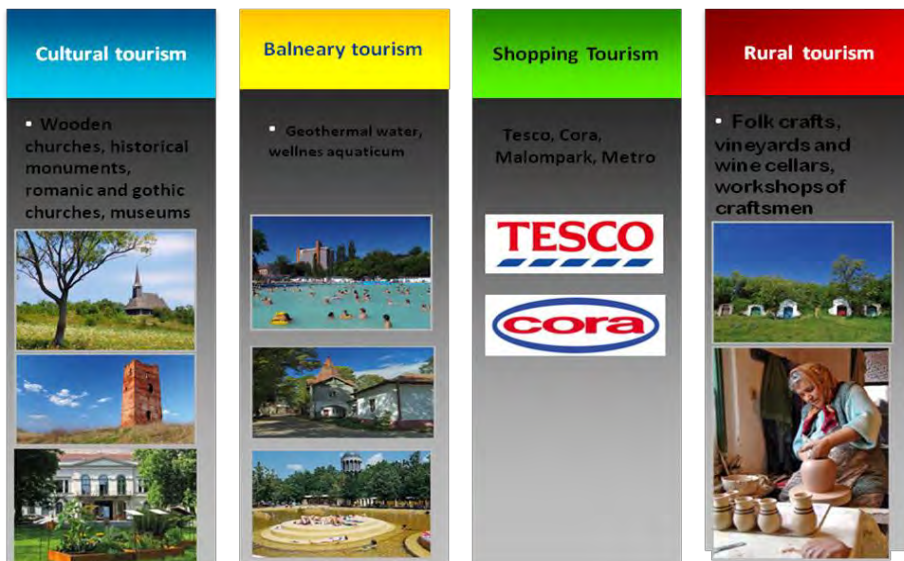


Figure 5 Other types of tourism

Source: own edition inspiring from <http://www.tourismbihor.info>

¹ From the category of geothermal deep waters from: Debrecen, Hajdúszoboszló, Hajdúböszörmény, Berettyóújfalú, Biharnagybajom, Komádi, Körösszegapáti, Hencida, Sárrétudvari, Balmazújváros, Oradea, Băile Felix, Băile 1 Mai, Răbăgani, Marghita, Târnăvești, Chișlaz, Săcuieni, Balce, etc. (Ambrus, 2010)

CONCLUSIONS

In this scientific research we have intended to analyse two of the existing EGTC models of territorial cohesion and to implement their best practices in the future Debrecen-Oradea conglomeration. Regarding our first proposal, that of a common airport we are quite pessimistic, having the sensation that this project has been doomed to failure even before it could be launched, being sentenced to a numb stagnation. That is why we would like to raise the attention of the local authorities to mobilise in order to create this common airport somewhere in between the two cities.

We acknowledge that fact that the status of our second initiative is only on the level of infancy, a more detailed analysis, thorough researches and feasibility plans are needed in order to implement such a project, but we are confident that the idea itself of "*it is worth a mass*", more precisely it is worth being taken into account.

Judging from the posture of the realistic and objective observer, our final proposal envisaging the creation of a common centre for the promotion of tourism has the biggest chances of being implemented, the sector of tourism, although not fully exploited it has some advantages resulting from previous successful forms of cooperation - it is enough if we look at the initiative of the Bihor-Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion.

The level of implementation of these proposals, is still a mystery of the future but one thing is certain: if all these large-scale projects would be implemented (together with those that are already on the agenda), then the Oradea-Debrecen region would become a real pole of competitiveness, worthy to compete with the existent territorial cooperation structures from Western Europe, not to mention the transformation of the region into an area of welfare and prosperity.

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SOME SPATIAL ASPECTS OF AGEING IN HUNGARY

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Abstract: Ageing is both a problem and an asset for mankind. After the introductory and contextual section, the paper provides empirical examples for this Janus-faced phenomenon from Hungary. The case study discusses the macro elements of the acceleration of the ageing process and its consequences in the Bihar region with special regard to the internal migration. The conclusions indicate the need for future investigations for international comparison.

Keywords: ageing, regional differences, internal migration, Hungary

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AGEING PROCESS IN HUNGARY

Ageing (from a statistical point of view: the increase in the ratio of old people within the population) has been the most perspective demographic process since the end of the last century. We can anticipate with high probability that its deep and long standing effects entangle the whole society. The ageing process has a diffusive character. Since its emergence, ageing has also moved spatially, from the highly developed countries to less developed ones (including Hungary). The diffusion of ageing is an uneven process. The timing and mechanisms of its appearance and the development of the process varies from countries to countries. In spite of its heterogeneity, the start of the ageing process is easily provable by data, and with the help of analogues of similar countries from the past, we can forecast the near future trends. However, it should be noted that it is hard to prepare for the potential consequences. The continuous decreasing trend of the total fertility rates in line with the growing life expectancies at birth and other ages play the fundamental role in the start of the ageing process within a closed population (Illés, 2000). Whereas, the above mentioned processes might happen in the context of the growing population number in an absolute sense, and at first sight the problem of ageing does not seem so grave. Ageing has a potentially high policy relevance, but referring to the long term effects of ageing is not sufficient to convince the decision makers and the public opinion in general that it is time to make efforts in order to avoid the negative consequences of ageing.

In Europe and in the rich part of the World the ageing process has reached a completely new stage. The temporary advantages of ageing disappeared, and the negative consequences began to play the dominant role. Behind the deteriorating dependency ratio we can find the decrease of the active population in line with the increase of the inactive ones,

and within the inactive population the ratio of children fell and the proportion of pensioners expanded. The highly rising social and health expenditures combined with the decreasing fertility and population loss.

From the historical perspective, in 1869, at the time of the first modern population census, one in every twenty people was 60 years or more. After one and a half century, every fifth Hungarian was old in a relative sense. The long term distribution of the population by gender and by five-year- age groups provides us a mosaic-like picture on the ageing process. In an analytical approach, the indicators lead us to a deeper understanding than using simply the absolute data. We can estimate better the level of mortality more precisely if we use indicators such as the average age, dependency ratios, index of ageing and life expectancy. All indicators have their inevitable shortcomings. From among the indicators, we chose the life expectancy at birth and at other ages in order to concentrate on the more recent changes in longevity.

Table 1 Life expectancy at birth and at other ages between 1949 and 2009 in Hungary

Year	<i>At birth</i>			<i>At the age of 60</i>			<i>At the age of 70</i>			<i>At the age of 80</i>		
	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>
1949	59.28	63.40	61.36	15.82	17.11	16.52	9.79	10.42	10.14	5.31	5.61	5.49
1960	65.89	70.10	68.03	15.60	17.55	16.67	9.40	10.39	9.96	5.03	5.45	5.27
1970	66.31	72.08	69.20	15.19	18.19	16.78	9.22	10.88	10.17	5.10	5.69	5.46
1980	65.45	72.70	69.02	14.58	18.32	16.56	8.88	11.19	10.17	5.03	5.92	5.59
1990	65.13	73.71	69.33	14.72	19.02	17.03	9.47	11.81	10.83	5.27	6.27	5.91
2000	67.11	75.59	71.33	15.29	20.04	17.90	9.94	12.59	11.59	5.85	6.90	6.53
2001	68.15	76.46	72.32	15.97	20.65	18.56	10.37	13.09	11.99	6.01	7.05	6.69
2002	68.26	76.56	72.43	15.98	20.74	18.61	10.39	13.12	12.01	6.05	7.05	6.70
2003	68.29	76.53	72.43	15.79	20.61	18.45	10.22	13.01	11.88	5.93	6.92	6.58
2004	68.59	76.91	72.78	16.06	20.86	18.72	10.46	13.24	12.12	6.01	7.03	6.68
2005	68.56	76.93	72.76	16.04	20.85	18.70	10.43	13.19	12.08	5.97	7.04	6.67
2006	69.03	77.35	73.21	16.30	21.13	18.97	10.73	13.49	12.38	6.08	7.18	6.81
2007	69.19	77.34	73.30	16.31	21.23	19.02	10.62	13.59	12.39	6.05	7.23	6.83
2008	69.79	77.76	73.83	16.58	21.44	19.27	10.90	13.75	12.61	6.19	7.33	6.94
2009	70.05	77.89	74.03	16.61	21.51	19.32	10.95	13.83	12.68	6.24	7.39	7.00

A – Male, B – Female, C – Total

Data source: Demographic Yearbook 2010. Hungarian Statistical Office, Budapest.

Table 1 shows that life expectancy has increased since 1949, except for the 1960ss and 1970s in Hungary. In 2009 the life expectancy at birth was longer by almost 13 years in comparison with 1949. However, the increase was uneven during the studied period due to the epidemiological crisis characterising the second half of the socialist period (Daróczy, 2007). If we analyse the gender differences we may draw the conclusion that the life expectancy at birth of the female population exceeded the male counterpart. Perhaps the most interesting finding is that the four-year gap measured in the initial period grew to 8 years. Table 1 demonstrates that the epidemiological crisis affected the male population more

extensively than the female population. We can conclude that in the medium term, the life expectancy at the age of 60, 70 and 80 increased significantly. We also found that the absolute values of natural growth decreased (2.80; 2.54; 1.51). The increase between the ages of 60 and 70 was impressive, and it was mainly caused by the improvement of the life expectancy of women. The value for men exactly at the age of 60 increased slightly (0.79). All in all, the longevity as one of the components of the demographic ageing has spread widely and the age structure of the elderly has become older and older.

The ageing process has become one of the main population challenges in Hungary (Józán and Katona, 2003). The weight of the population problems depends on the authors' values and norms, too. In a widely quoted study of Emil Valkovics and Péter Pál Tóth (1996, 2) distinguished ten fundamental population problems in Hungary: in which the population ageing and its consequences occupied the fourth place right after the decrease in the population number, the low fertility level and the relatively high mortality. Thereafter, the level of mortality has fallen continuously (Józán, 2006) so ageing got somewhere on the third place. In our opinion, the pure demographic process of ageing is not a problem regardless of the economic, social and political context. If the individuals get older and older, in general it is a joyful phenomenon. Only some consequences of ageing can be judges as the source of tension or potential possibility in society (Végh, 2008).

THE PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION TO THE AGEING DISADVANTAGEOUS RURAL AREAS IN HAJDÚ-BIHAR COUNTY

The place of the case study

The general ageing of the population co-occurs with very different problems even within such relatively small areas as half of a county (Tóth, 2007). The results of the present research, conducted in Hajdú-Bihar county located along the eastern borders of Hungary, exemplify this phenomenon well.

The problematic area, Bihar, is situated in the southern part of the county (Figure 1), which was attached to the county during the reform of the public administrative system in 1950. This area covers 50 settlements on the Hungarian side of the historical Bihar county, which was split by the border and most of it was annexed to Romania (Beluszky, 1999, 2000; HCSO, 1997).

Settlements in Bihar accounted for the vast majority (two-thirds) of the newly formed Hajdú-Bihar county in 1950. This was not the case with their population weight, which was hardly one-third of the total population of the county. They mainly belonged to the small-sized settlement category (Nemes Nagy, 2009).

During the socialist era outward internal migration was the strongest from these small-sized villages. This was the case on the settlements of Bihar, too. Today, their share of the total population of the county does not reach 20%. For more than half a century these settlements *have lost more than a third of their population*. Even villages that became towns in the meanwhile were unable to prevent the outmigration of the labour force, since Berettyóújfalu, Derecske, Létavértes, Biharkeresztes and Komádi belong to small- or tiny-sized towns having less than ten or five thousand inhabitants. Until the 1980s the population loss was primarily *due to the outward migration*. Since then the natural population decrease has fuelled the process further. The main driving force behind outward migration is job seeking. The unfavourable traffic conditions make it impossible to commute to the county seat (Debrecen lying maximum 50-60 kilometres away) from these villages on a daily basis (Papp, 1989).

A clear consequence of the continuous population decline is the ongoing decrease in the size of settlements and the aging of the population. Two-thirds of the settlements belong to small villages having less than 2000 inhabitants, moreover Bedő, Bihardancsháza, Told and Vekerd

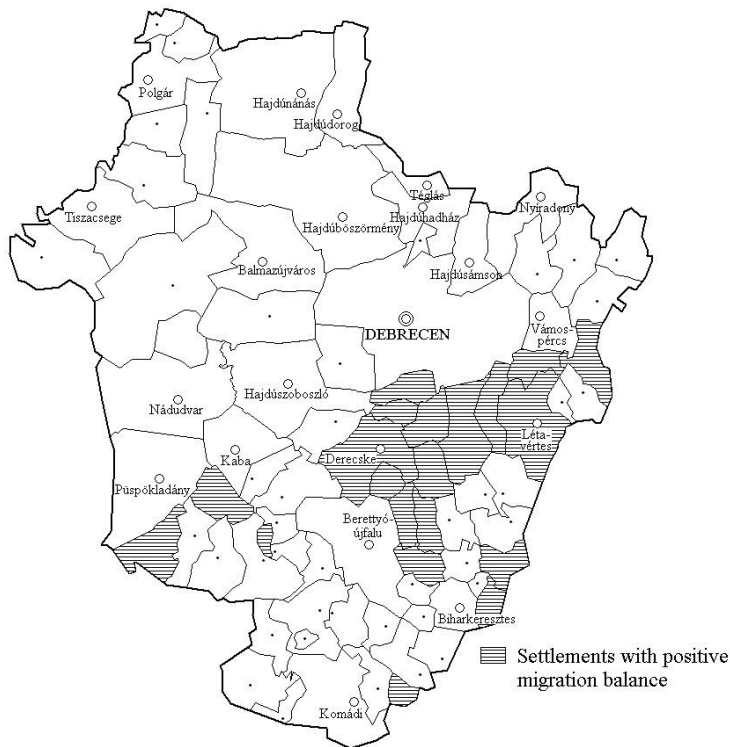


Figure 2 Settlements in Bihar with positive migration balance, 1990-2001

Data source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2001; Volumes of the Census, Hajdú-Bihar county data edited by Péntes, J.

Inward migration has been going on since then, although its pace has been decreasing. Comprehensive and comparative data will be provided by the 2011 census.

Newcomers have provided further problems for local governments being already in a hard situation. The emerging problems caused by the in-migrants were explored during the face-to-face consultations with mayors of the Bihar area and questionnaire surveys conducted by the lecturers of the Department of Social Geography and Regional Development Planning at the University of Debrecen.

General context of the Bihar area

Settlements in this depressed region that receive migrants also reflect the dual nature of nationwide tendencies. Of the villages neighbouring Mikepércs, Sáránd and to some extent Hajdúbágyos, Debrecen along Road No. 47, provide the scene for suburbanization, whose main characteristic feature is that many people move to these three settlements who used to live and work in Debrecen but now have become old age pensioners. They supplement their pensions by farming around the house (home garden). This sort of leisure activity provides a relatively high quality of life. Other settlements in Bihar receiving in-migrants are not in an advantageous position either in terms of their labour market and traffic conditions or the demographic and social composition of the arriving people.

Of the settlements in southern Bihar even the most prominent centre, Berettyóújfalu, or other towns such as Derecske, Létavértes and some settlements near Debrecen having good traffic links, are characterized by higher unemployment rates than the nationwide average. Other villages or towns such as Biharkeresztes are characterized by unemployment rates that are two or three times higher than the Hungarian average. The rate of unemployment in Újléta, Szerep, Bihardancsháza, Told, Vekerd, Körösszakál, Nagykereki and in the town of Komádi (along the southern border of the county) is persistently three or four times above the national average (Balcsók, 2003; HCSO, 2001, 2009). The high rate of long-term unemployment is also depressing in these settlements.

The especially hard situation of the labour market is due to several reasons. Besides the fragmented settlement structure and the unfavourable traffic conditions, social reasons such as the presence of the Roma population should also be mentioned. Interrelations can be detected from the questionnaires filled in by the leaders of local governments. Despite the especially hard situation of the labour market of the settlements in Bihar, and together with the fact that there was a general population decrease in the region between 1990 and 2001 due to the natural population decline (to a smaller extent) and outward migration (to a greater extent), still there are settlements (as shown in Figure 2) which are characterized by a positive migration balance during the decade investigated. Moreover, migrants leaving towns or industrial centres emerge in villages where the number of local people moving out exceeds the number of new people moving in (Eke, 1998).

The situation of settlements in Bihar based on the results of the questionnaire survey

Valuable information was provided by 40% of the local authorities. The characteristics of the settlements can be summarized as follows.

The sample contains one town, Létavértes, that had 7 045 inhabitants in 2001. One-third of the settlements have slightly more than 2 000 inhabitants, the other one-third of the settlements have around 500 or even fewer inhabitants, so they belong to the tiny-sized villages. The remaining villages have 500-2 000 inhabitants.

The past ten years were characterized by a decrease in the population both in terms of natural demographic changes and negative net migration. Nevertheless, the picture is not totally homogenous. Besides the town of Létavértes, the number of births exceeded the number of deaths in Kokad and Konyár, too (the proportion of Romas is above 20% on all those settlements where natural population increase is registered). According to the structure of the age groups, the ageing of the population in Vekerd and Bihardancsháza seems to be irreversible, where the proportion of the elders (over 60s) is 34% and 44% respectively. Both the proportion of the children (under-14) and the elderly are higher on the majority of settlements as compared to the national average (in 2010 the share of the children was 14.7%, and of the elderly people was 22.5%). This fact is due to the presence of the Roma population. Romas lead a traditional lifestyle in the villages of Bihar. During the socialist decades the non-Roma population took part in the village-town migration as part of the urbanisation process (if settlements had a mixed population structure) in higher numbers compared to Romas. Those who stayed at home were the elderly non-Romas. Since the change of the regime the region's depressed economic situation has resulted in the intensified internal migration of the Roma population between the settlements, and also in the higher number of births, since government aid is the only source of living for many members of the Roma population. Figure 3 shows the proportion of Romas on settlements included in the survey. Romas live on all settlements except for Bakonszeg and Bihardancsháza, their share is above one-third in Bagamér, Bojt, Konyár and Szerep. The rate of unemployment is around 80-90% on the above mentioned settlements.

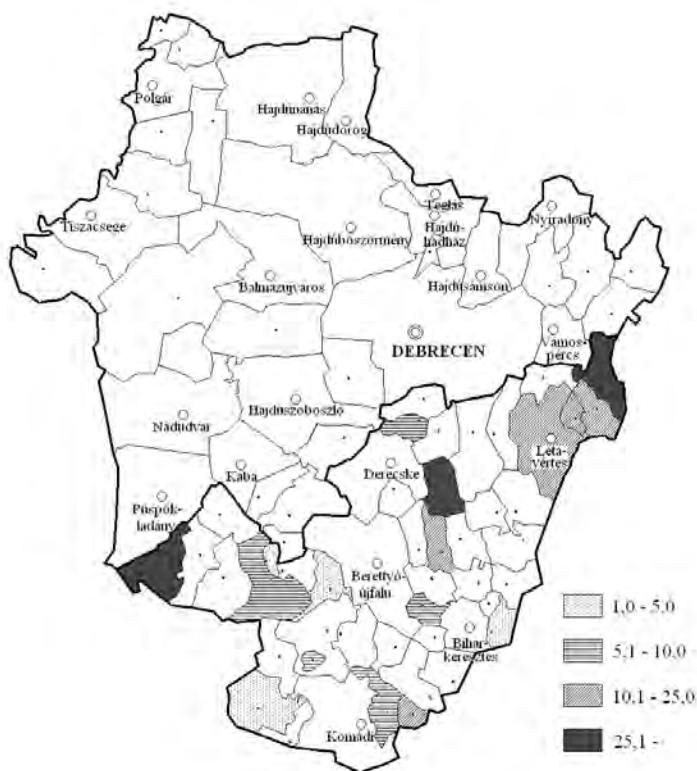


Figure 3 The proportion of Romas on the settlements included in the survey (%)

Data source: own research
edited by Péntes, J.

The age structures are well-exemplified in the case of Bojt, where half of the population is Roma, while the other half is non-Roma. The percentage of the children is 24%, while the share of elderly people is 26%. The general educational level further emphasizes the problems of the region that seem to be unsolvable in the short run. The percentage of those who do not complete even the elementary school within the age group 7 and over is 3-13% on those settlements where the proportion of the Roma population is at least 10%. Like in other areas with fragmented settlement structure, the share of well-educated social groups is strikingly low in this region, too. The share of the population with third level education in the age group over 7 reaches 4% only in Létavértes and Sáránd while all other settlements have lower figures, and in the tiny villages the university-educated people are not present at all.

Socio-economic and spatial characteristics of the in-migrant population

According to the research results, three-quarters of the in-migrant people moved to six villages, i.e. to one-third of the settlements included in the survey. These settlements (Álmosd, Bagamér, Bakonszeg, Konyár, Nagyrábé and Sáránd) belong to the larger-sized category (Álmosd has almost 1 700, Bakonszeg 1 240 inhabitants, the other villages are inhabited by 2 000-2 500 people). Despite their relatively larger size, these settlements belong to the category that lost one-third or a half of their population during the socialist era,

as a result of which there are plenty of cheap houses in these villages due to the low demand level. More than one-third (35%) of the mobile population has moved to Bakonszeg during the past one and a half decade. Except for this village, the share of Romas is above 10% on all the other settlements receiving newcomers. In Bagamér, where the number of in-migrants (910) is the highest, the share of Romas is also among the highest (30%).

As far as the larger administrative units are concerned, newcomers came from 12 out of 19 counties of Hungary to 18 settlements of Bihar. People moved to Bihar from all counties to the east of the Danube river except for Heves county and three Transdanubian counties (Tolna, Fejér and Komárom-Esztergom). According to the place of origin, more people came from towns than from villages. It is a striking feature of the newcomers' origin that towns or cities are over-represented among the sending settlements as an example of counter-urbanisation. More than half of the people moving into villages in Bihar emigrated from towns within Hajdú-Bihar county. Emigrants came from 9 towns of Hajdú-Bihar county, most of them from Debrecen. Half of the settlements involved in the survey received migrants from Debrecen. The second most often mentioned sending city was the capital, Budapest. People from the capital lived in one-third of villages of Bihar. From the neighbouring counties, county seats were often mentioned as senders, such as Miskolc, Nyíregyháza and Szolnok.

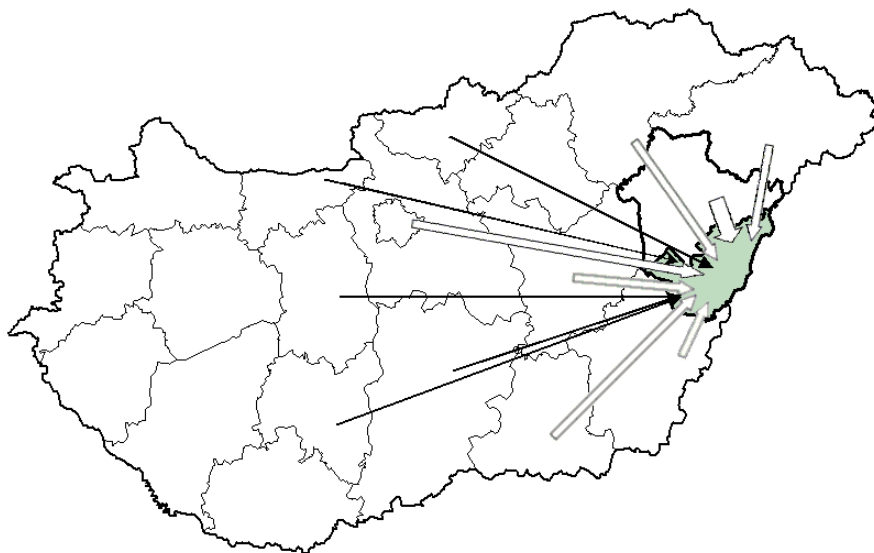


Figure 4 Origin counties of migrants moving to settlements in the Bihar area

Data source: own research
edited by Péntes, J.

Concerning the newcomers' socio-economic status, persistent unemployment and the income situation of households were those questions that were answered by local authorities the most elaborately. All settlements received migrants who were long unemployed. Respondents often add to figures that this is not striking, since most local residents are unemployed, too. The proportion of households without any job-related income, making a living only from government aids, is between 25-70% among newcomers, and the share of those who are on the minimum wage is 20-50%. The share of old age pensioners is also high, around 15-40%,

who often move to their children living there already. The share of in-migrant origin households having more than 100 thousand HUF income per month (this sum is somewhat higher than the current Hungarian minimum wage) is below 10% on all settlements except for Sáránd. The economic situation of incoming households is the most favourable in the case of Sáránd. Here the proportion of households without any income is below 15%, while the share of households with more than 100 thousand HUF income per month exceeds one-third of the total. *The demographic and social characteristics of newcomers suggest that they are middle-aged or older and belong to the lower layers of society.* According to the place of origin, more people came from towns than from villages. It is a striking feature of the newcomers' origin that towns or cities are over-represented among the sending settlements as an example of counter-urbanisation.

Respondents repeatedly answered that the *reason behind their migration was the opportunity of buying cheap property.* Answers are somewhat more diversified in Sáránd where there is a higher proportion of those who used to work in Debrecen and possessed hobby gardens here as a survival strategy (Végh and Illés, 2011), but as they became old age pensioners they moved to this village. The share of daily commuters who work in Debrecen is also high in Sáránd due to its favourable traffic conditions. Suburbanization also occurs to a lesser extent in Bakonszeg lying in the neighbourhood of Berettyóújfalu. In half of the villages a significant number of former residents, who became old age pensioners or unemployed, returned to their birth place. This can be seen in villages, where half or two-thirds of migrants arrived from Hajdú-Bihar county.

Answers concerning the social integration of newcomers can be grouped into three categories: unproblematic, mixed, and problematic. The first group contains four settlements. The leaders of suburban settlements suppose that migration provides an opportunity for building intensive relationship with the neighbouring city and increasing the prestige of the village. In Nagyrábé, where the number of newcomers reaches 500, the integration of migrants is seen positively, because those who are on the periphery of the society and make a living from social aids can easily be integrated into the similar segment of society of the village. In Gáborján 70-80% of Roma migrants are unemployed, moved to relatives and their integration is unproblematic. Their children attend kindergarten or school, while parents make a living from seasonal work or social benefits. Most respondents, however, considered the integration of newcomers mixed or problematic. Mixed (or rather negative) opinions are due to the fact that newcomers from towns or cities do not adapt to the lifestyle of the village. They move to detached houses, but they do not farm, ("they just hang around"), however they apply for social aids immediately. Closed and hard-working village communities deem this attitude negatively. Most problems are caused by deviant migrants, especially Romas, however other social groups are also seen as problematic. Many migrants who leave towns or cities like Debrecen are unemployed, alcoholic, escape from authorities and lead an unbalanced lifestyle. Leaving behind their debts, they move from towns to villages, however they are unwilling to pay even lower overheads and migrate again instead. There are too many newcomers who do not have a plan for the future, their physical and mental health condition is bad. Settlements that are already in a hard social situation cannot tackle this problem. Moreover the integration of newcomers into the local community or simply the co-existence with aborigines also causes daily tensions.

The consequences of heterogeneous migration trends

The generalisation of the results of the questionnaire survey conducted in the settlements of Bihar can be carried out from *three aspects: from the viewpoint of sending and receiving settlements combined with the people taking part in the migration processes* (Franz, 1987a; Franz, 1987b; Illés, 2004; Zelinsky, 1971).

From the *viewpoint of sending settlements* (if they are towns, and in most cases they are towns indeed) the out-migration of the poor households is a positive process (no matter how sad this is for migrants) for the local society. In this way local authorities get rid of a significant part of their social problems. With the outward migration of the (former) working class people often with Roma origin, the middle class can become stronger, especially if there is an increase in the number of incoming wealthier social layers (Gatzweiler, 1975; Genosko, 1980; Mammey, 1977).

The situation of the *receiving villages* is just the opposite. The social cohesion of villages in Bihar weakened due to the continuous outward migration during the socialist era. Local governments, set up after the regime change, have to manage the ageing local societies that are facing high-unemployment and problems caused by unfavourable social groups. People moving into these villages do not ease the demographic and economic problems, since newcomers are middle-aged or older and their economic status is low. There are a lot of young households with a high number of children which make their living on social allowances and benefits, meanwhile, causing serious problems for local authorities and child protection offices. As a result, rural societies have been weakened twice: first due to the outward migration during the socialist decades, second by the inward migration after the regime change.

Only a minority of the people moving to settlements in Bihar can be grouped into the category of wealthier suburban migrants. Most of them are deprived town dwellers on the minimum wage or even below. They are the ones who are unable to pay high overheads in the towns, they depend on social aids or make a living as old age pensioners. The evaluation of migration for them meant a downward mobility in social hierarchy and usually there is no way back.

During the analysis it became clear that the societies of Hajdú-Bihar county and of the borderlands, belonging to the periphery already during the socialist era, were poor and aging at the time of the regime change (1990) and their backward position has not changed due to the reverse direction of rural-urban migration trends.

CONCLUSIONS

In the second half the twentieth century the settlements of the Bihar area lost more than a third of their population. The population loss was primarily due to the outward migration until the 1980s, and since then natural population decrease has fuelled the process further. During the socialist era outward internal migration from the small-sized villages was the strongest phenomenon. The main driving force behind outward migration was job seeking. The consequences of the continuous population decline due to the selective character of out-migration and the longevity was the ongoing decrease in the population size of settlements and the acceleration of ageing of the inhabitants. There were plenty of cheap houses in these villages due to the low level of inner demand.

In this rural peripheral area with shrinking and ageing population the major tasks of local governments, set up after the regime change, include the management of the high unemployment rate, rising usually above the average rate of the country and the county, and to provide framework for the operation of aging rural societies. The high and persistent unemployment rate combined with the presence of the Roma (Gypsy) population. In some extreme cases the share of Roma people reaches 50% within the total population. Since the 1990s this backward region of the county has become the target of in-migration in an unexpected volume and way.

The settlements in Bihar receiving in-migrants are in a disadvantageous position in terms of their labour market and traffic conditions or the demographic and social

composition of inhabitant people. According to the place of origin, more people came from towns than villages as a segment of counter-urbanisation. Since the change of the regime the region's depressed economic situation has resulted in the intensified internal migration of the Roma population among settlements. Only a minority of the people moving to settlements in Bihar can be grouped into the category of wealthier suburban migrants. Most of them are deprived town dwellers on the minimum wage or even below. They are the ones who are unable to pay high overheads in the towns. They depend on social aids or make a living as old age pensioners.

The demographic and social characteristics of newcomers suggest that they are middle-aged or older and belong to the lower layers of society. The mayors of the settlements repeatedly emphasised that the reason behind their migration was the opportunity of buying cheap property. Concerning the newcomers' socio-economic status, persistent unemployment and the income situation of households were those questions that were answered by local authorities. Newcomers have provided further problems for local governments having been already in a hard situation. We can conclude that the social cohesion of villages in Bihar weakened twice due to internal migration processes during the last sixty years: firstly the outward migration during the socialist decades, secondly by the inward migration after the regime change.

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RETAIL WITHOUT BORDERS: THE EXAMPLE OF DEBRECEN (HUNGARY) AND ORADEA (ROMANIA)

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Abstract: Social and economic activities, such as retailing, shopping, and tourism, often cross international boundaries in today's globalized world. Shopping and tourism are among the most important activities in borderlands. The role of borders in relation to shopping tourism has fundamentally changed in most parts of Europe due to the enlargement of the EU and the Schengen Area. The 'removal' of borders among member states resulted in the development of cross-border activities, such as shopping tourism. The paper describes the present state of this new situation through an empirical study on shopping tourism in two cities (Debrecen – Hungary and Oradea – Romania) along the Hungarian-Romanian international border.

Keywords: retail, border, shopping tourism, Debrecen, Oradea

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INTRODUCTION

Social and economic activities, such as retailing, shopping, and tourism, often cross international boundaries in today's globalized world. Shopping is one of the most favourable activities undertaken by tourists, which often functions as the primary or sole motivation behind travelling (Timothy 1995, 2005). Shopping and tourism are among the most important cross-border activities (Hardi, 2001) that can generate positive social and economic changes on both sides of the border.

The role of borders in relation to shopping tourism has fundamentally changed in most parts of Europe due to the enlargement of the EU and the Schengen Area. The European integration process has made it possible for EU citizens to travel and do their shopping freely in any member state. Since the accession of Hungary and Romania to the EU shopping tourism and other cross-border activities have become much less restricted by political borders, therefore market conditions have turned into a key factor. The paper describes the present state of this new situation through an empirical study on shopping tourism in two cities (Debrecen – Hungary and Oradea – Romania) along the Hungarian-Romanian international border.

INTERPRETATIONS OF SHOPPING TOURISM

Shopping and tourism are interconnected in many ways and the relationship between the two phenomena is rather complex, therefore constructing a scientific framework and definition of shopping tourism is fairly complicated. The international and Hungarian literature

distinguishes two basic categories with respect to the relationship of shopping and tourism (Michalkó, 2004; Timothy, 2005; Wessely, 2002). The first category, where the primary purpose of the traveller is to shop, is termed 'shopping tourism'. The second is called 'tourist shopping', where shopping is done as a secondary, supplementary activity during a trip which might be motivated primarily by something else (e.g. sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, cultural tourism, etc.).

Shopping tourism often takes place near international boundaries which is often referred to as cross-border shopping. Economic, legal and social differences on opposite sides of an international border can be the major driving force of cross-border shopping (Timothy, 2000). Cross-border shopping, wherein people cross international boundaries with the explicit purpose of shopping in a neighbouring country, is present in nearly all parts of the world (Timothy, 2005).

THE ROLE OF BORDERS IN SHOPPING TOURISM

Shopping tourism is one of the most important forms of cross-border social and economic relations (Hardi, 2001). Shopping tourism necessarily entails crossing borders, since one of the criteria of tourism definitions is crossing the borders of one's daily activity space (Michalkó, 2007). The nature of borders (e.g. open vs. closed, alienated vs. integrated) influences the volume and quality of cross-border relations (Martinez, 1994; Süli-Zakar, 2003) including shopping tourism, as well. Generally, open and permeable borders provide the most favourable conditions for cross-border shopping tourism. Nevertheless, it should also be emphasized that there needs to be enough contrast on the opposite sides of an international border with respect to price levels, product variety and/or quality for cross-border shopping tourism to appear (Timothy, 2005). Consequently, two opposite characteristics (permeability allowing people to cross the border and separation creating contrast on opposite sides) of an international border have to be present simultaneously to create optimal circumstances for cross-border shopping tourism.

Borders are often seen as obstacles to cross-border activities and borderlands are usually regarded as peripheral and disadvantageous areas (Süli-Zakar, 1992). The role of borders on cross-border trade is discussed in regional economics and economic geography in detail (Haggett, 2006; Nijkamp et. al., 1990; Van Houtum 2000). Most researchers conclude that borders function as a barrier to cross-border activities, such as shopping tourism. As a result state borders are seen as artificial obstacles within (European) space that prevent the natural continuity in the flow of activities (Van Houtum, 2000). The number and/or intensity of activities shows discontinuity at state borders and a much lower rate of activity can be detected on the opposite side of the border (Figure 1).

The barrier function of political borders during cross-border trade is primarily caused by the border tax (trade tariffs). Border taxes (tariffs) result in a loss of market areas on the opposite side of an international boundary because of rising costs of cross-border trade. The complete removal (e.g. Schengen Area) or the reduction of an international border can improve the level of cross-border trade through lowering taxes (tariffs) on goods that cross the border and providing an enlarged market area on the other side of the border (Haggett, 2006). There is a growing number of customs unions (e.g. the EU) throughout the world, wherein border taxes are removed, providing the opportunity of free trade for member states. However, not only political boundaries, but also natural boundaries (such as rivers with no border tax) can have a negative effect on cross-border trade, especially in those cases when there is only one border crossing point (e.g. a bridge) (Haggett, 2006). This fact proves that the Schengen Area alone is not able to ensure the automatic functioning of cross-border free

trade and market areas, since one of the preconditions of this is to have enough border crossing points (such as roads, railways, bridges, etc.) that connect borderlands in reality.

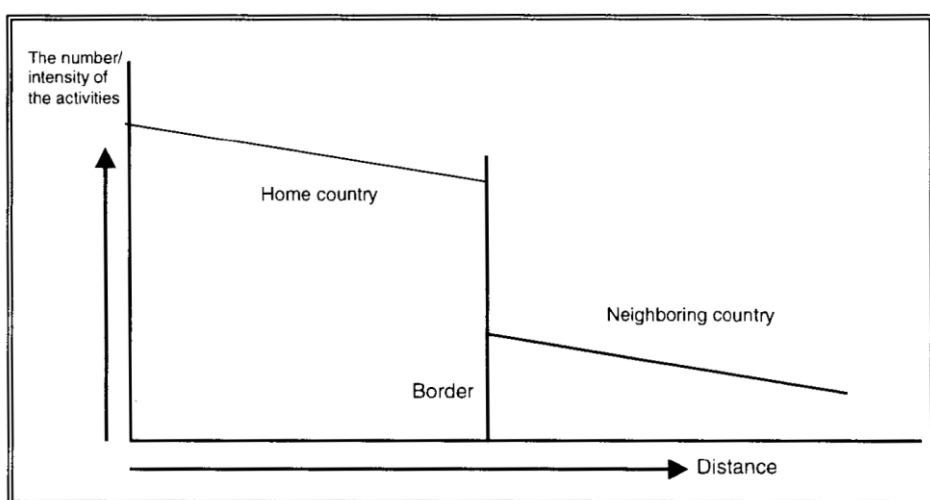


Figure 1 Borders as barriers to cross-border activities.

Source: Van Houtum, 2000. 61. p.



Figure 2 Market areas of towns and cities extending across political boundaries along the borders of Hungary.

Source: Süli-Zakar, 2003

A special case of shopping tourism occurs, when consumers live nearer to retail centres in the neighbouring country than to shops in their own country (Hardi, 2001; Timothy 2005). According to Christaller's central place theory, people do their shopping in those areas that are closest to their homes and offer the best cost-effective merchandise. As a result many retail centres have market areas that extend across political boundaries (Timothy, 2005). This cross-border shopping activity is often detectable along the borders of Hungary, since the borders of the Trianon Treaty (1920) divided the traditional gravity zones and market areas of cities and towns within the Carpathian Basin (Figure 2). Consequently there are numerous towns and cities along the borders of Hungary that have market areas extending across current political borders (Süli-Zakar and Csüllög, 2003). This fact necessarily entails the occurrence of cross-border activities, including shopping tourism, too. Fortunately, today the European integration process (the enlargement of the EU and the Schengen Area) offers an opportunity to reunify the traditional market areas of cities and towns in the Carpathian Basin (Süli-Zakar, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the empirical research was to explore the major characteristic features of shopping tourists' demand (e.g. volume, percentage of foreign customers, catchment area, shopping behaviour and habits, etc.) in two neighbouring cities (Debrecen – Hungary and Oradea – Romania) on opposite sides of the Hungarian-Romanian border. Since statistics do not provide data on shopping tourism, a standard questionnaire survey method was applied. The survey was conducted between October 2010 and February 2011 simultaneously in Debrecen and Oradea with the same methodology. Altogether 312 questionnaires were fully completed, out of which 208 in Debrecen and 104 in Oradea. In the course of the research shopkeepers and/or the staff were asked to answer the questions, because it was presupposed that they meet foreign shoppers on a daily basis, so supposedly they possess the most relevant information about this special consumer group. As a result, the results of the survey reflect respondents' personal opinion on foreign shoppers' demand (Tömöri, 2011a,b).

The retail sectors of both cities are complex and highly-developed, therefore it was inevitable to concentrate the empirical research on selected research areas. Research areas included both traditional (downtown) and modern retail environments (shopping malls) in both cities (Figures 3, 4). In Debrecen the traditional retail milieu comprised the high street of Debrecen, which is called Piac Street (or Market Street), while modern retail environments included the Fórum Shopping Mall and the Tesco hypermarket. In Oradea the high street of the city, called Republicii Street, represented the traditional retail environment, while modern retail formats included the Crisul Center, the Lotus Center, the Real hypermarket and the Carrefour hypermarket (Tömöri 2011a, b).

RESULTS

According to the results of the empirical questionnaire survey, the percentage of foreign customers (as compared to the total number of customers) is quite low in both cities (Figure 5). The percentage of foreign customers is slightly higher in Debrecen than in Oradea, however, differences are not significant. Results show that in most cases the proportion of foreign shoppers is below 5 or 10% in both cities (Figure 5), although there are substantial differences among retail establishments. For instance, the share of foreign customers is the highest in the Forum Shopping Mall (Debrecen, Hungary), reaching 50 or 60% in some retail units, while in some inner-city shops, foreign customers are almost completely missing.

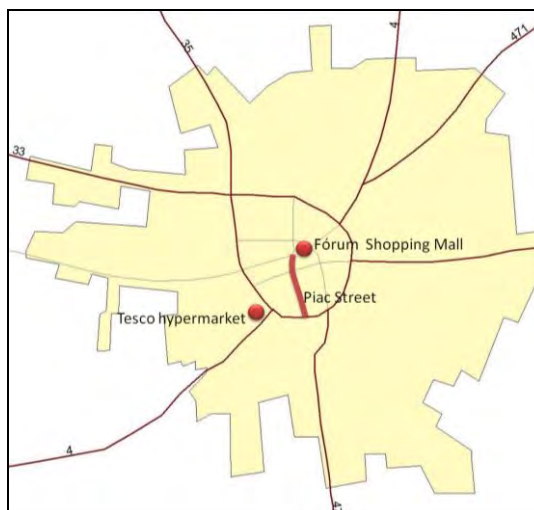


Figure 3 Study areas in Debrecen

Source: own edition

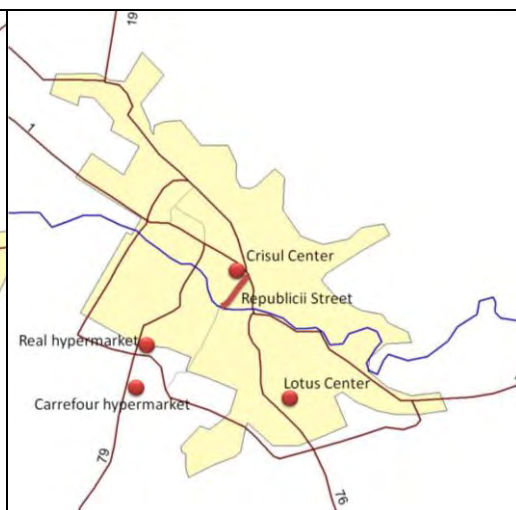


Figure 4 Study areas in Oradea

Source: own edition



Figure 5 Proportion of foreign shoppers (within the total number of shoppers) in retail units (%)

Data source: own empirical research

Research results show that the overall majority of foreign customers in both cities come from European countries, nevertheless almost all regions of the world are present, except for Latin-America (Table 1). In Debrecen foreign university students represented a relatively significant group of shoppers, especially in shopping malls. This can be due to the fact that a substantial number of foreign students study (usually medicine) at the University of Debrecen (Hungary) whose shopping activity is undoubtedly detectable in the retail establishments of the city.

Table 1 Origin of foreign shoppers in Debrecen and Oradea according to continents

	Debrecen	Oradea
Europe	80.6%	86.4%
Middle East	11.3%	1.2%
North-America	4.0%	0.4%
Africa	2.3%	2.9%
Asia	1.7%	8.7%
Australia	0.2%	0.4%
total	100%	100%

Data source: own empirical research

Based on research results foreign customers can be grouped into 4 categories (Tömöri, 2011a):

- *Cross-border shoppers.* This category includes customers from Hungary shopping in Oradea, and customers travelling to Debrecen from Romania. According to research results, this group of shoppers is the most significant in the retail units of both cities (Figures 6, 7). The reason for this is the geographical proximity and it is assumed that 'traditional' cross-border shopping tourism (lasting less than 24 hours, functional, business oriented shopping) plays a significant part in it. The occurrence of 'traditional' cross-border shopping tourism from other countries is unlikely (because of greater distances), only the nearest parts of Ukraine and Slovakia might be affected.
- *Tourists.* Besides classical shopping trips, Hungarian and Romanian tourists' shopping activity can also be significant, since statistics show that their proportion is quite substantial at the accommodation facilities in Hajdú-Bihar county (Hungary) and in Bihor county (Romania). The second most often mentioned group of foreign customers in both cities come from Germany and/or Austria. Research results show that the composition of foreign tourists in Debrecen is highly influenced by geographical proximity, since they come from (besides the already mentioned countries) nearby states, such as Ukraine/Russia, Slovakia/Czech Republic, and Poland (Figure 6). On the other hand, cultural factors play a prominent role in Oradea, since the proportion of shopping tourists arriving from countries using a Romance language (or Neo-Latin), such as Italy, Spain, and France, is significantly higher in this city than in Debrecen (Figure 7).
- *Foreign university students.* This consumer segment is significant only in Debrecen. Foreign students primarily come from the Near-East (e.g. Iran, Israel), North-America (USA, Canada), Africa, and some European countries (e.g. Norway).
- *Immigrants.* The significance of this group is marginal in both cities, mainly Asian (Chinese) and African immigrants can be detected (Table 1).

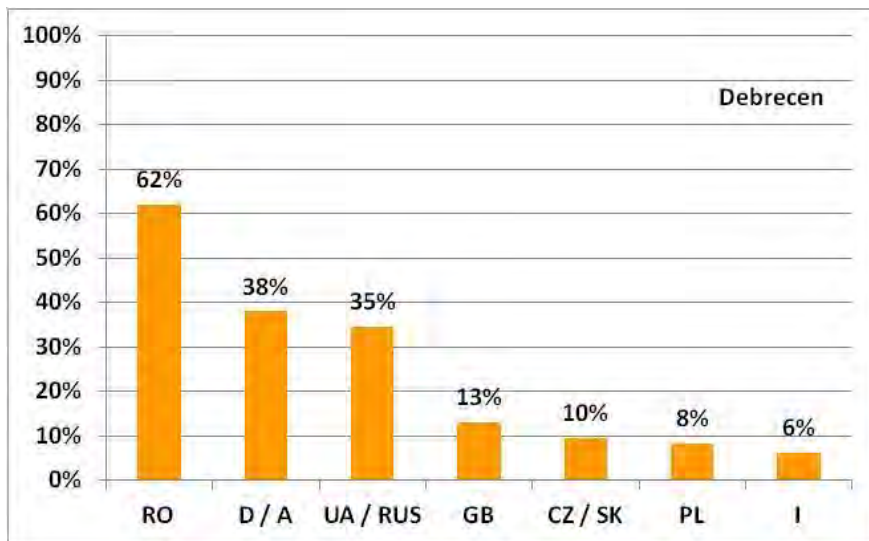


Figure 6 Origin of foreign shoppers from Europe in Debrecen
(multiple answers were possible)
Data source: own empirical research

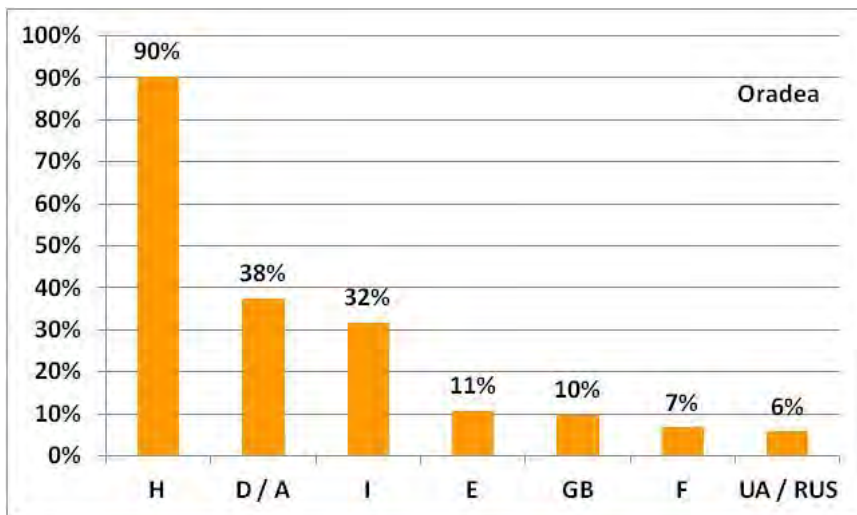


Figure 7 Origin of foreign shoppers from Europe in Oradea
(multiple answers were possible)
Data source: own empirical research

According to research results, the number and/or percentage of foreign customers has slightly increased in the relative majority of retail units in Debrecen in the past few years,

while in Oradea there has been a decrease according to the relative majority of respondents (Figure 8).

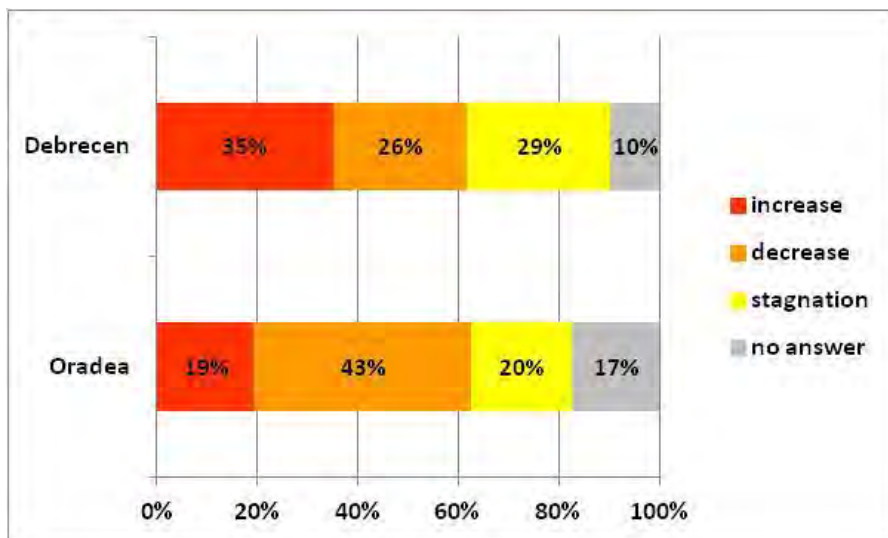


Figure 8 Changes in the number foreign customers in Debrecen and Oradea in 2010 as compared to previous years (according to respondents' opinion)

Data source: own empirical research

According to those respondents who claimed that there had been an increase in the number of foreign customers in their retail establishments mentioned that one of the reasons behind this tendency was the European integration process, which made border crossing easier and new member states better-known among tourists (Table 2).

Respondents in Debrecen also pointed out the attractiveness of relatively low prices, good price/quality ratio, the wide selection of goods, attractive brands, the proximity of borders, favourable exchange rates (the devaluation of the Hungarian Forint) and the VAT increase in Romania, which resulted in a general increase in prices in the neighbouring Romania. In Oradea respondents highlighted the importance of their successful marketing strategy targeting foreigners and affluent shopping tourists whose spending is not affected by the economic crisis (Table 2).

Those respondents in Oradea who claimed that there has been a decline in the number of shopping tourists thought that the reasons behind this tendency were the negative effects of the economic crisis, declining tourism and a general rise in prices due to VAT increase in Romania. Retailers in Debrecen also pointed out the unfavourable consequences of the economic crisis, declining tourism, the negative effects of shopping malls on 'traditional' (inner-city) retailers and the end of VAT refund due to Romania's accession to the EU (Table 2).

Table 2 Reasons behind the changes in the number foreign customers in Debrecen and Oradea (according to respondents' opinion)

	Debrecen	Oradea
reasons behind the increase in the number of foreign customers	– relatively lower prices (compared to other countries) – positive effects of the European integration process (EU and Schengen) – attractive brands – wider selection of goods (compared to other countries) – proximity of international borders – favourable exchange rates (devaluation of the Hungarian forint) – VAT increase in Romania	– relatively lower prices (compared to other countries) – positive effects of the European integration process (EU) – affluent tourists' spending is not affected by the economic crisis – positive effects of the marketing strategy targeting foreign customers
reasons behind the decrease in the number of foreign customers	– negative effects of the economic crisis (decreasing purchasing power) – general decline in tourism (economic crisis) – end of the VAT refund for Romanian customers due to EU membership – negative effects of shopping malls on inner-city retailers	– negative effects of the economic crisis (decreasing purchasing power) – general decline in tourism (economic crisis) – VAT increase in Romania (general increase in prices)

Source: own empirical research

CONCLUSIONS

The role of borders among the member states of the European Union, including Hungary and Romania, has considerably changed in recent years. The formerly closed and hostile borders have become open and permeable providing new opportunities for cross-border activities, such as shopping tourism to develop. The results of the empirical research conducted in Debrecen (Hungary) and Oradea (Romania) undoubtedly prove that cross-border shopping tourism is present along the Hungarian-Romanian border. Moreover, results show that many respondents think that the positive effects of the European integration process (making borders easier to cross and new member states better-known among tourists) contributed to the rising level of shopping tourism.

Despite the relatively favourable conditions, the general intensity of shopping tourism is still low in both cities. Consequently, retailers, local governments and tourism experts should strengthen their cooperation in order to develop shopping tourism and better exploit the mutual benefits of this cross-border activity.

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A NEW CROSS-BORDER RESEARCH POSSIBILITY IN FOUR COUNTRIES (HUNGARY, SLOVAKIA, UKRAINE, ROMANIA)

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Abstract: The creation of the cross-border regional innovation strategy has been expected to play an important role in enhancement of the interregional and international cooperation and competitiveness. The creation of the common cross-border network represented a rather exceptional opportunity to test and overcome the border barriers, to strengthen transnational and regional co-operation in the field of SMEs, tourism and to exploit the existing capacities in a more efficient, integrated way. We (The University of Miskolc/Department of Geography and UNI-FLEXYS) want to create that cross border network in that new way. This study focuses on introducing our plans and how we want to carry out idea.

Keywords: SMEs, regional development, cross-border, network building

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THE PREVIOUS/FORMER CONNECTIONS- PARTNERSHIP BUILDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISKOLC/DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Our first connections with the Slovak partners (Technical University of Kosice, University of Prešov) were carried out within the confines of the

- INTERREG III/A HUSKUA /05/02/404 sustaining environmental quality within the historical Bodroghköz region. This INTERREG funded project team aimed at optimising land-use based on research into the environmental and human resources and conditions of the area (Molnár et al., 2008).
- The INTERREG III/A HUSKUA/05/02/400, “Introduction of the natural values and the conflicts among the environmental protection and economy in exhibitions and on CDs”.

Another bilateral connections (HU-SK) was under preparation within the frame of "The Cross-Border Knowledge Bridge in the Renewable Energy Sources Cluster in North Hungary and Eastern Slovakia" funded by EC within the 7th FP (project acronym KNOWBRIDGE) and to be finished in 2012. Identification of the branches of common interest has been followed by surveying companies, leading to comparison of regional business environments, encouraging trans-regional learning and exploiting the existing capacities (Burger et al., 2010).

Our department has got in touch with the Ukrainian partners (Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute in Beregovo, Uzhhorod National University) through former projects (ESoter, eContentplus GSSoil). The Romanian partner – Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Satu Mare county is connected with the UNI-FLEXYS previously.

LOCATIONS AND THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ACTION/PROJECT

Eight counties on the NUTS 3 level from four countries (Hungary: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, Romania: Judetul Satu Mare, Judetul Maramures , Slovakia: Presovsky kraj, Kosicky kraj, Ukraine: Zakarpattia Oblast, Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast) will be involved in the project which are cross-border territories, moreover, they all lie far from the country centers (Figure 1). As a consequence of the underdeveloped society and economy they can be characterized by high unemployment-rate, low employment, undergraduated population, deprivation and weak purchase power as well.

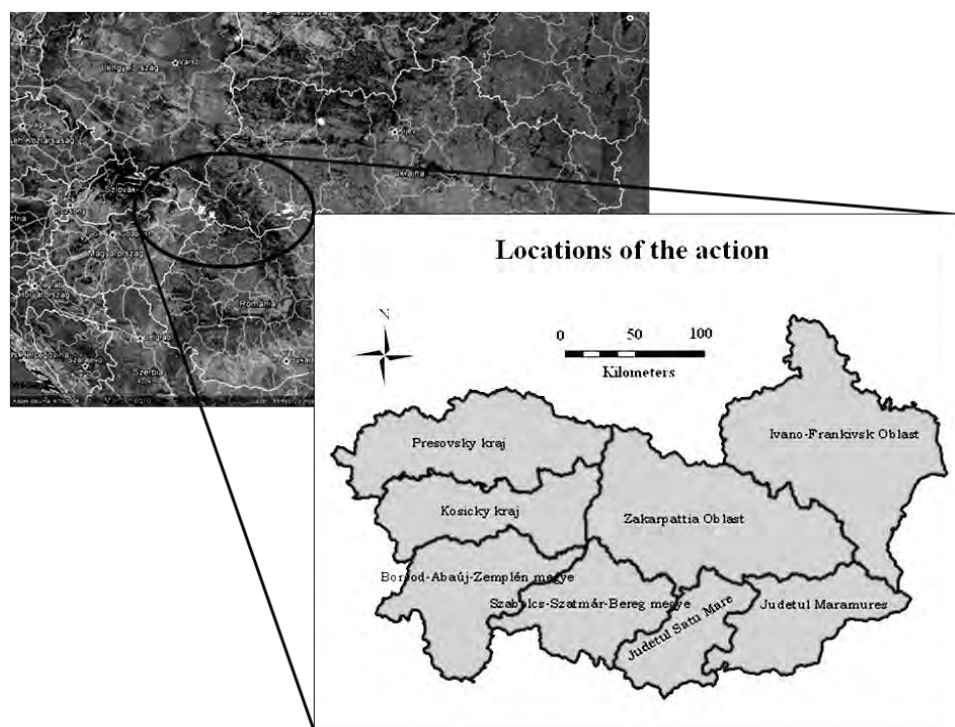


Figure 1 The locations of the action
edited by Szalontai, L.

Six consortium partners will cooperate during the project: the UNI-FLEXYS University Innovation Research and Development Public Nonprofit Ltd. is the applicant and the Department of Geography at the University of Miskolc participates as a research team in the project, from Slovakia the University of Prešov, from Romania the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Satu Mare county and from Ukraine the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute and the Uzhhorod National University are the members.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The overall objectives of the project are to widen and deepen the cooperation between different players and actors of the local society and economy involving four countries (Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and Hungary) in an Eastern borderland area of the European Union in order to provide helpful information, knowledge for local SMEs to promote innovation and cooperation in this peripheral region.

The specific objective of the project is to cooperate with institutions, universities, research centres and public bodies, and to involve them in several actions (like workshops, web network, etc.) supporting SMEs.

Many researchers emphasize the significance of the SMEs in the underdeveloped areas since they are the key elements in increasing economic efficiency. These SMEs are often unsuccessful because the entrepreneurs do not have adequate information about the local market, the labour force and the other relations; moreover, they are not aware of the opportunities for their enterprises (for example, tender funding, potential cross-border partners, etc.). Several research projects dealt with the cross-border co-operation, the systems of commercial relationships, the opportunities with regard to the tourism in the examined area. However these studies were carried out mainly without co-operation between researchers, research centers and universities, hereby, they could not build up on previous results.

Another problem is that these results could not reach those who were most interested in them: the local economic stakeholders, entrepreneurs. To solve these problems, on the one hand, the project creates a forum which connects these actors via the internet; on the other hand, the studies of the different universities and research centers will be collected on the project's website. In addition, the project establishes a database (it will be available on the website as well), which tries to help enterprises of the smaller settlements with useful data to harmonize the market of labour force opportunities and provide other information about these regions (relating to tourism, economy).

We also plan to collect and denominate the previous and present projects, small researches carried out in the area making a list of different activities indicating their timing. These would be instructive for the actors of the economy in the area. It would be a great help not only for the SMEs but for the institutes, organizations which would like to carry out subsequent research in the area.

For promoting the co-operation, the project initiates a survey for data-collection with their partners supporting SMEs to analyze the conditions of the market of the labour force. In the future more research centres and universities would be involved in the project (with the help of workshops) in order to widen the specific research co-operation in the area. In this context the project estimates small and medium enterprises of the settlements under the population of 1 500, their relationships and their main characteristics. Complementing the previous data with secondary data about human resources, a database will be created, which will be published on the project's website. Five workshops will be organized during the period

of the Action, where the partners could work together with professionals, experts on issues of SMEs, moreover, they will be able to exchange their experiences and assigning pilot-areas promoting the cross-border cooperation and more successful action of SMEs.

Our target groups involve universities, research centres and organisations of the region, also the SMEs, stakeholders, several actors, players of the local societies and economies. Around 450 settlements will be analysed in two counties from Hungary, 1 100 in two counties of Slovakia, 710 in two counties of Romania and 1 205 on the territory of Ukraine, altogether about 3 465 settlements. The project has the ambition to contact as many research centres and public bodies as possible and building up a long-term cooperation with them.

The project will help SMEs by more information and opportunities for building up connections. A common website will be established, which would function as a platform, where studies relating the issues of cross border co-operation and SMEs could be found by scientific and non-scientific actors as well. It would be a great help firstly for researchers (and all of the stakeholders), since they would see the previous projects, hereby they could apply the previous results and experiences as well. This data and study collection is very important, because it could inhibit double financing. It could decrease the deprivation and increase the effectiveness of the economy in the entire area as a result of the project which means that the whole population of the region will be the final beneficiaries of this Action.

ACTIONS DURING THE PROJECT

The following actions will be carried out during the project:

- Completing the overall aim of the project it is also important to create several ways of co-operation between universities, research centers and chambers, associations. Helping to achieve this goal and widen the cooperation we start a website, called: HUSKROUA Cross Border Website for Researchers and SMEs. Here we link stakeholders, research institutes and centers with each other, and there will be accessible database about researches and projects about cross-border co-operations and issues relating to SMEs in the research area. Registration option is planned for the SMEs of the territory, and the attendance of all organizations is preferred, which deal with researches in this specialty or carry out other support for SMEs. Hereby, we carry out the so-called HUSKROUA Cross Border Network for Researchers and SMEs. With the help of the long-term managed website in five languages (Slovakian, Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and English) and the annual newsletters to be sent, we provide the reservation of connection systems after the end of the project, moreover we give an opportunity for further registrations as well. These institutions will get to know more about each other with the help of the above website, in addition, they will get into touch effortlessly with the SMEs as economic actors can do too. Furthermore, we will have the possibility to appoint such integrators who will be appropriate for the service to support SMEs. The database surface of the website shows a user-friendly and picturesque map, on which the examined settlements are available. The statistical data – which introduce the characteristics of human resources of the examined settlements – and the empirical database can be checked by clicking on these settlements. The data will be downloadable thematically grouped from the website as well.
- The above mentioned empirical study covers the settlements with less than 1 500 inhabitants in the eight counties from the four countries (Figure 2). We visit the Mayors or Notaries of the settlements with the help of questionnaire survey to collect information about their villages. In this context we have the opportunity to

create a comparative database for the secondary data, which can involve different variables of the data-service of the four countries. Hereby, we can demonstrate a uniform impression about the rural territories. We plan signing contracts with the leaders of the examined settlements, so that the most important data of their settlements will be updated in every year. Hereby, this actualized database will be available on the website as well.

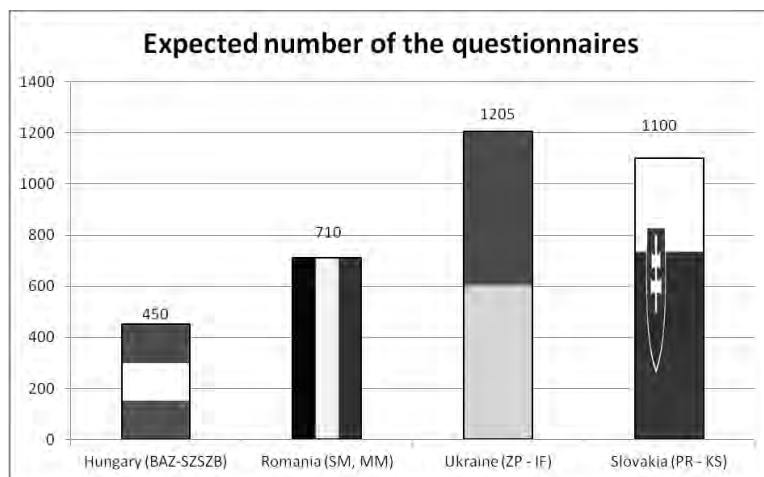


Figure 2 The expected number of the questionnaires

- Five workshops are to be held. 4 workshops will be organised in the 14th work month separately in the cross-border regions. We wanted to invite there the members of social, economic- or other research institutes who has any kind of research from/about the project area in the last 5 years, the SMEs from the region and any other persons/members of institutes who are interested in these issues. We will introduce our institutional-network, the website; we would like also to tell the participants about the mission of these workshops, and the main objectives of the research. A bigger joint fifth workshop will be held in the 19th work month, where all of the partners and the participants of the HUSKROUA Cross Border Network for Researchers and SMEs will be invited. Here, we would like to present the newest results of our project that will include statistical and empirical data and the former results of such similar projects. This could help to develop the work of the SMEs more efficiently, provide ideas how to build up and expand their cross-border connections, how to use this networking system, and what the opportunities/advantages are for the labour market.
- An International “project closing” conference will be held in the 24th project month and in honour of this we will publish a study monograph in which we want to write 6 studies related to the SMEs. The study topics will be the following:
 - Human resources and labour market analyses from the aspect of the cross-border regions
 - Opportunities and advantages in the field of tourism for the SMEs from the aspect of the cross-border regions
 - Building out a cross-border smart grid/network system/close connections between the SMEs from the aspect of the cross-border regions

- The other 3 studies will introduce the local capabilities of the SMEs in Ukraine, Romania and Slovakia

These studies will be written together with the experts of the regions and with the expert researchers in the field of economy and geography. The work and the contact will begin under the 5th workshop. As a result of the Action, research co-operations could improve in a long term, and as a consequence of this, the SMEs could receive significant benefit from it.

CONCLUSIONS

We could see that the overall objective of the action is to improve the activity of the SMEs (which are interested for example in tourism, renewable energy resources (RES) and other local economy participants) and to develop a network between these SMEs and cross-border regions. Hereby, they could harmonize their activities; they can make up common programs, plans for the tourists across the “borders”.

Furthermore, there is another objective of the action, namely the common project submissions. The action tries to make up close connection between SMEs and attempts to be linked in common work (for example, raising the utilization of the RES, building new cycle routes, organising “green festivals”, etc.) in different projects. We hope the project will be supported by the decision-makers and we can carry out our plan.

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CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION FOR THE LIMES: WORLD HERITAGE PROGRAM IN THE UPPER DANUBE REGION

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Abstract: "The borders of the Roman Empire, the limes" UNESCO World Heritage Site including the Hadrian's Wall (Great Britain, 1987), the Upper German-Raetian Limes line (Germany, 2005), and the Antonine Wall (Great Britain, 2008). The possibility is given for any country, which has got ancient Roman limes lines on its territory, to apply, after the suitable preparations, for the World Heritage category. The European Union European Regional Development Fund Central Europe Programme published a new cross-border programme called Danube Limes Project (2008-2011). In this project the process was to prepare the nomination statement of the Ripa Pannonica - Hungary and Slovakia common world heritage application.

Keywords: Danube Limes Project, UNESCO World Heritage, Nomination of Ripa Pannonica

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THE BORDERS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, "THE LIMES" UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

The limes was the military defense system along the border line of the Roman Empire (Figure 1), and it was over 5 000 km long around the area of the Mediterranean Sea (the land area of the Empire was nearly 6 million km²). The organisation of this defense system was not a simple task in the ancient world; therefore, the Romans tried to locate the border line near natural barriers (rivers, mountains, deserts, etc.), so the limes line could intercept the hostile attacks and protect the Roman Peace in the Empire.

Along the border the Romans build a lot of watch towers (within sight), and walls, trenches, forts (legionary forts), and the stone-paved limes road (Mócsy, 1974). The limes was not only a military border, it was also a "meeting place of the barbaric and the cultured world", so in the limes developed advanced trade between the two worlds, so it is a prosperous place to live in the Ancient world. Therefore, the posterity the area of the limes is very rich in archaeological treasures and monuments. This is the foundation, and the task, that must be protected, and should be explored and mapped on the area of the limes because it is a significant heritage for everyone.

The Roman Empire, probably one of the greatest single influences on the European cultural development, so even all of the ancient Roman remains could be avoided in the UNESCO World Heritage List (Bíró et al., 2009). The Hadrian's Wall was the first world heritage protected limes line in the world, and it was declared an independent heritage in 1987. But it was changed and the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004 founded the new

heritage category: "The borders of the Roman Empire, the Limes", as a transnational world heritage site.

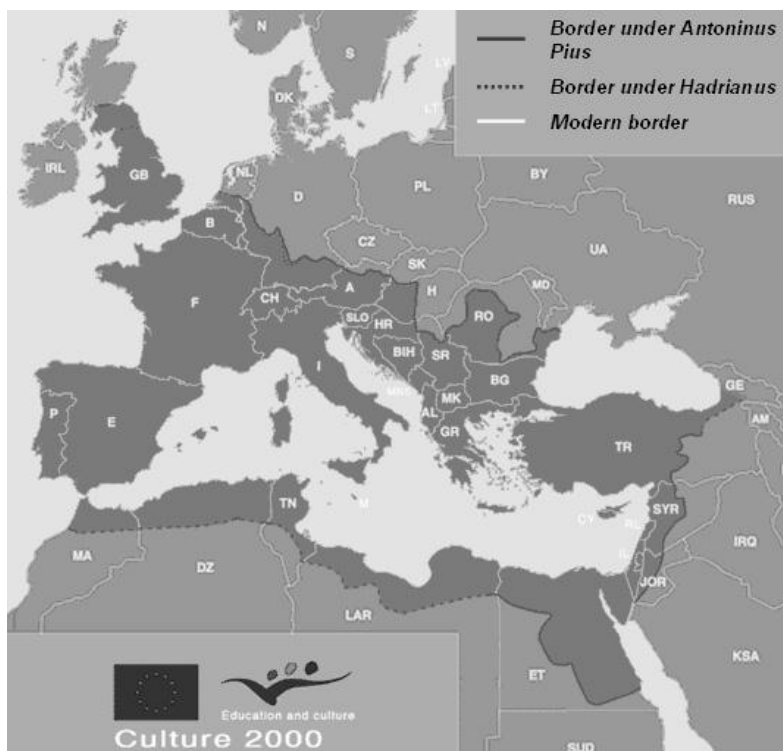


Figure 1 The Roman Limes line

Source: <http://www.limes-oesterreich.at/html/index.php> (2012-03-13)

The UNESCO The Bratislava Group was founded to coordinate the technical and scientific work in relation to every Roman limes world heritage. In this group 6 countries participated in the work (Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Great Britain). In 2003 the Bratislava Group set a nomination criteria system for the countries which have limes remains. The criteria for the limes remains, created by David J. Breeze et al. (2009) is as it follows:

„The Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site should consist of the line(s) of the frontier at the height of the empire from Trajan to Septimius Severus (about AD 100 to 200), and military installations of different periods which are on that line. The installations include fortresses, forts, towers, the limes road, artificial barriers and immediately associated civil structures.”

Now, in this world heritage category there are three limes lines: Hadrian's Wall (Great Britain, 1987) (Figure 2), the Upper German and Raetian frontier (Germany, 2005) and the Antonine Wall (Great Britain, 2008). Near all of these limes lines significant improvements and management organizations have been implemented in the recent years. In Great Britain there are two development companies: the Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd. in Hexham and Historic Scotland – and the Antonine Wall in Edinburgh. In Germany there are two

organizations: the Deutsche Limeskommission in Saalburg, and the Touristic Association for German Limes in Aalen



Figure 2 Hadrian's Wall (from visitBritain)
Source: <http://www.visitbritain.com> (2012-03-10)

„DANUBE-LIMES – UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE” PROJECT

The European Union European Regional Development Fund established the Danube Limes Project under the concept of development in Central Europe, with the full name: Nomination of the Central European part of the Roman Danube Limes (Figure 3) within the international UNESCO World Heritage Framework „Frontiers of the Roman Empire” (project number: 1CE 079 P4). The amount for this project is 2 051 600 euro, and the duration is October 2008 – September 2011 (Bíró et al., 2009). The main objectives of this project include the financing of the documentation and research near the Danube limes line for the preparation of the World Heritage entry. The main works are archaeological excavations, identifications, and the preparations of economy, tourism, management and history preservation plans and studies. The main candidate is the Hungarian National Office for Cultural Heritage (Budapest, Hungary). Other partners are the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic (Bratislava, Slovakia); the Research Institute of Austrian History (Vienna, Austria); the German Limes Commission (Saalburg, Germany); the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, Warsaw University (Warsaw, Poland); the Archaeological Department at the University of Pécs (Pécs, Hungary); and the City of Paks (Paks, Hungary). The scientific archaeological work was carried out by Dr. Zsolt Visy (head of the Archaeological Department at the University of Pécs) and his research team. In the full length of the Ripa Pannonica the scientific works directed for the excavation research near the known and suspected roman deposits as well (Visy, 2003). The methods in the research were determined by archive sources, on-site inspection, and air archaeological research.



Figure 3 Danube limes line (from Limes-Oesterreich)

Source: <http://www.limes-oesterreich.at/html/index.php> (2012-03-13)

COOPERATION IN THE UPPER DANUBE LIMES LINE

Germany

Germany has always placed great emphasis on the presentation and preservation of its cultural values. The Upper German and Raetian frontier is a very special world heritage site in Europe because of its length of more than 550 km, and its heritage buffer zone of 250 km². Administratively, the four affected provinces are Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Hessen and Rhineland-Palatinate, and 58 villages between the Danube and the Rhine. The German Limes Commission (Deutsche Limeskommission) was founded in Esslingen (Germany) in 2003 (Henrich, 2011). The primary task of this organisation was to create the Upper German and Raetian frontier's application and to create a management for the German limes line. The members of the German Limes Commission are university professors, provincial heritage departments and research institutions. In addition to the heritage conservation work, another important task of the German Limes Commission is to manage tourism and build relationship with more sponsors (Fassbinder, 2010). For the tourist purposes there is another organisation called German Limes Route (Verein Deutsche Limes-Straße), whose task is marketing, and communication, and creating tourism packages (travel calendar, etc.). They created a cycle road network along the German limes line whose length is more than 800 km. The bike path is divided into six main sections:

1. Bad Hönningen – Holzhausen (107 km)
2. Holzhausen – Hungen (135 km)
3. Hungen – Miltenberg (136 km)
4. Miltenberg – Lorch (165 km)
5. Lorch – Weissenburg (147 km)
6. Weissenburg – Regensburg (128 km)

Hungary

In 2008 the new organization, called the Hungarian Limes Cultural Association (Magyar Limes Szövetség) was founded with the aim to create the Limes Cultural Route in Hungary, to cooperate with museums, archaeological parks, etc., and to cooperate with the local governments, NGOs and international organizations to ensure the protection for the Roman remains, and exploring opportunities for local tourism (Bíró et al., 2010). So most of the basic tasks for the Association is to become the centre for all management, cooperation, marketing and tourism along the limes line. The limes, as a cultural heritage, associated with tourism and other economic areas can create a new European Cultural Route.

The regions, which are affected by the route, can hold much more possibility for the significant tourism and economic prosperity (Mráv, 2009). The main development areas include cultural tourism (museums, traditions, etc.), active tourism (cycling, horse riding, water sports, etc.), wine tourism, rural tourism, youth tourism, accommodation and catering, and transport development (Posta, 2010a). The plans for the future include a new type of tourism management: tourism and regional destination management. This organisation will be able to coordinate the local management, marketing, and development with and under the direction of the Hungarian Limes Cultural Association. The intended destination management centers are Győr, Komárom, Visegrád, Budapest, Dunaújváros, and Szekszárd.

COOPERATION IN THE LOWER DANUBE LIMES LINE**Serbia**

The limes frontier line in Serbia is 580 km long (Jilek, 2009). Primary, the most important Roman limes heritage in this region are the two legionary camps: one in Belgrade (Roman name: Singidunum) and the one in Kostolac (Roman name: Viminacium). The excavations in Kostolac in 2008 revealed the eastern gate of the legionary fort, the amphitheatre, the Roman bath and the cemetery, and Roman jewellery (Figure 4). Archaeologists found the Roman fort remains in Čortanovci (the Roman name was probably: Ad Herculem) whose area was 70 times 100 metres, and the diameter of its tower was 13 metres. In the ancient world, Stari Slankamen (Roman name: Acumincum) had a significant role in the Danube limes line, because it was settled near the mouth of the River Tisza, so this place could be one of the trade and military centres in this region, but nothing is left from the Roman fort. Not far away there was Surda (Roman name: Rittium), the Roman fort, whose task could strengthen Acumincum's security. Further along the River Danube we can find Novi Banovci's (Roman name: Burgenea) Roman military camp whose area was 500 times 600 metres. Near the mouth of the River Sava, in Zemun (Roman name: Taurunum) there was a harbour for the Danube fleet. After Dacia province was established, the Romans built several bridges over the Danube (Bíró et al., 2010). One of the best preserved remains of these bridges can be seen in Kostol. (Figure 5)



Figure 4 Jewelry from Kostolac

Source: <http://www.viminacium.org> (2012-03-13)



Figure 5 Roman bridge remains near Kostol

Source: <http://www.viminacium.org> (2012-03-13)

Romania

The limes in Romania is 600 km long which ends at the Black Sea, and it also means the end of the European limes section (Jilek, 2009). The Romanian limes line differs from those in the other countries in the Danube region because the limes is found not only along the River Danube (Posta, 2010b): it's in inferior of Romania. The Archaeological Department at the University of Pécs researched the Roman limes line in Romania (Zsolt Visy and his team) (Figure 6), in cooperation with Szilamér Péter Pánczél and his team from the Archaeological Department at the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca (Bíró et al. 2010). In 2007 a new project was established, called Limes Dacicus Orientalis (LiDOr) for the management of the limes research. The partners in the project are as follows: the Archaeological Department at the University of Pécs, the Archaeological Department at the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, the Mureș County Museum (Târgu Mureș), the Museum of Rezső Haáz (Odorheiu Secuiesc), and the Museum of István Molnár (Cristuru Secuiesc). In 2010, two additional members joined the project: the Muzeul Secuiesc Ciuc (Miercurea Ciuc) and the Muzeul Național Secuiesc (Sfântu Gheorghe). The number of the known Roman camps in Dacia is twelve which can be found in Liveziile, Orheiul Bistriței, Brâncovenesti, Călugăreni, Sărățeni, Inlăceni, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Sânpaul, Olteni, Comalău, Boroșneu Mare, Brețcu, and there are two more suspected camp sites in Gurghiu and Baraolt. Back to the Danube region, there are four main Roman forts along the River Danube: one at 20 km from Cernavoda (Figure 7, Roman name: Capidava), one at 8 km from Galati (Roman name: Dinogetia), near Tulcea (Roman name: Halmyris), and near Corabia (Roman name: Scaidava) (Jilek, 2009).

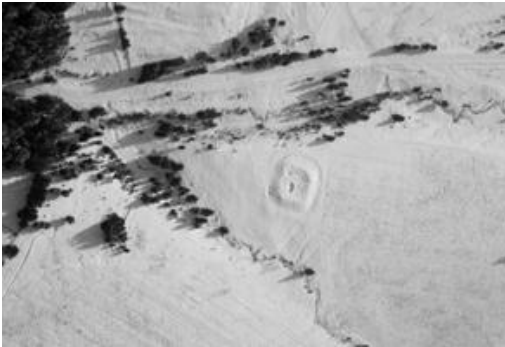


Figure 6 Roman tower near Băile Homorod
Source: Photo by Máté Szabó



Figure 7 Capidava's archaeological site
Source: <http://www.capidava.ro> (2012-03-13)

CONCLUSIONS

"The borders of the Roman Empire, the "Limes" UNESCO World Heritage Site include the Hadrian's Wall, the Upper German-Raetian Limes line, and the Antonine Wall.

The common goal and vision of the European Union and the UNESCO is to establish a unified limes world heritage site throughout Europe including Great Britain, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania. Along the Hadrian's Wall there is already a real tourism region with common economic development and infrastructure system. The possibility is given for all these countries to build up a same tourism region. The European Union European Regional Development Fund Central Europe Programme published a new cross-border programme called Danube Limes Project (2008-2011). In this project the process was to prepare the nomination statement of the Ripa Pannonica - Hungary and Slovakia common world heritage application.

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