



LINES OF EXCLUSION AS ARENAS OF CO-OPERATION:
RECONFIGURING THE EXTERNAL BOUNDARIES OF EUROPE
POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PERCEPTIONS

EXLINEA



EXLINEA progress report

The Exlinea team have now been observing border regions on the EU's external boundaries for several months. Preliminary regional profiles and background studies have already been completed and discussion of the different regional problems is ongoing. At the moment, more involved empirical case studies are being prepared. In the meantime, recent events at the supra-national level have underscored the salience of EXLINEA's research objectives. With the "Wider Europe" initiative, officially communicated by the Commission in March of this year, the EU's emerging Common Foreign and Security Policy expressly emphasises new strategies, which will secure stability and effective working relationships with neighbouring regions. The Wider Europe approach is not only based on discourses of competitiveness and adaptability, but also on a notion of political integration that links economic, social, environmental and cultural issues. This has contributed to the emergence of a set of "European values" that are now being projected onto both non-EU Europe and other regions of the EU's so-called near neighbours. In conjunction with several international conferences, including "Border Regions in Transition VI" which took place in Hungary (see the website <http://www.rkk.hu/brit/>), project members have been discussing the changing (EU)-geo-political contexts for cross-border co-operation in several of the case study areas.

For this reason, EXLINEA has been focusing on the possible inclusion/exclusion dynamics that might influence cross-border co-operation in the case study regions. The EU will attempt to prevent new border regimes from dividing the continent anew and thus increasing tensions between states. One step in this direction is the attempt to rationalise EU policy with regard to border regions and to make the financing of bilateral and multilateral projects more feasible. However, as preliminary results indicate, partnerships between the EU and neighbouring regions remain subject to numerous contradictions and political obstacles. The promise of multidimensional EU-geo-politics lies in broadening the societal basis for "positive inter-dependence" by establishing comprehensive co-operation agendas between many different participants. This will be difficult to achieve if EU enlargement results in highly regulated external borders and a further marginalisation of border regions.

In the months to come, EXLINEA will continue investigating the consequences of "Wider Europe" and Enlargement for cross-border co-operation. Several publications based on project results and discussions are already in production and course materials derived from EXLINEA's research perspective have been prepared for the academic year 2003-2004.

By: James Scott
Project Coordinator

EXLINEA project workshop

Debrecen, 27 – 29.9.2003

EXLINEA held its second project workshop in Debrecen, Hungary on September 27 – 29, 2003. Altogether, 25 people from the EXLINEA team attended the meeting. It was the second of the six workshops to be held during this three-year project. The next meeting of the EXLINEA project team will take place in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in April 2004.

The September meeting lasted for three days and was chaired by James Scott, the project coordinator, who provided information concerning project progress (including the outcomes of the first Project Progress Report for Brussels) and an overview of management, communication and dissemination activities.

The results of the first work packages, as well as preliminary reports on ongoing research, were outlined in various presentations by the respective team members. The main discussion focus, with regard to these background profiles of the case study areas, was compatibility with the background report template and the comparability of border regions in general. The project team agreed to include a small sub-section for the Greek Case study that looks into the situation in Cyprus as it is an excellent test case for European integration in general.

In addition, the first results of an additional work package, dealing with the Policy of the European Commission toward the Re-Bordering of the European Union, were presented by team members from the University of Nijmegen.

As for the upcoming empirical fieldwork, a draft version of the questionnaire was discussed in detail and both the methodological and practical as well as substantive aspects were debated. The delivery of the final version of the questionnaires was delegated to smaller working groups.

The meeting was organised and hosted by The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies, Debrecen, Hungary (Béla Baranyi, Zoltan Raffay and colleagues).

By: Silke Matzeit

Assistant project coordinator



Background report on case study region

The Finnish-Russian border region

The Finnish-Russian border, which is currently the only land border between the European Union and the Russian Federation, has occupied its current position since the Peace Treaty of Paris in 1947. As a result of political changes in the 1990s, its role has been re-defined in several important respects. Although it is still strictly and effectively controlled, “room for regionality” has been created in the political landscape, and required technical infrastructure such as crossing-points have been constructed. This has led to the emergence of new forms of interaction at various spatial scales. The establishment of Euregio Karelia in 2000, between the Karelian Republic and its neighbouring regional councils in Finland, is a concrete example of these developments.

The total length of the Finnish-Russian border, from the Gulf of Finland to the far north, almost up to the Barents Sea, is approximately 1300 kilometres. Most parts of the border region are thinly populated, the metropolis of St. Petersburg, at a distance of about 150 kilometres from the border, being the only notable exception. The total population number, of those living on the Finnish side in the municipalities (NUTS 5) sharing the border with the Russian Federation, is 280 000.

At the NUTS 4 level, the respective figure is 460 000, and at the NUTS 3 level 1,1 million.

On the Russian side, the total number of population in the three border regions (Leningrad Region, Karelian Republic, and Murmansk Region) is 3,4 million while St. Petersburg with its 4.6 million inhabitants is a separate administrative unit inside the Leningrad Region.

Eastern Finland can be regarded as a textbook example of the region, which has suffered from its location next to a closed border. Its production structure has been dominated by the forest sector (forestry and forest-based industries), the employment in which has declined during the last decades. Against this background, the change of border regime after the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in positive anticipation in the beginning of the 1990s. The expectations of economic growth and structural renewal only materialised to a limited degree. On the Russian side, the production bases of the border regions clearly differ from each other, which has been reflected in their development trends since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The total volume of border crossings has grown rapidly since the early 1990s, but trade and investments have not increased in a stable manner. Currently, 74 per cent of the border crossings take place at the border of the Leningrad Region, 25 per cent at the border of the Karelian Republic, and only one per cent at the border of the Murmansk Region. A great deal of the border traffic consists of short-term visits for buying low-cost commodities, petrol and tobacco. As a whole, the socio-economic gap at the Finnish-Russian border has grown since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and it is currently one of the worst in Europe (for instance, approximately 4 to 1 in terms of the GDP per capita).

By: Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen,
Juha Ruusuvuori, Petri Virtanen
and Dimitri Zimine



EU Eastern Point, Finland

Background report on case study region

The Estonian-Russian Border Region

The border between Estonia and Russia is all together 294 km, and more than half of it runs along the Lake Peipsi.

What we define as the Estonian-Russian border regions are the Ida-Viru, Põlva and Võru counties on the Estonian side and Kingisepp (Leningrad oblast), Gdov and Pechory districts (Pskov oblast) on the Russian side. At the level of perceptions, the border between Estonia and Russia can be divided into three different zones: Narva-Ivangorod, Lake Peipsi region and Setu Land.

Until December 1991 Narva and Ivangorod had been one administrative entity, and the state border dividing them may thus be perceived as an artificial barrier between two Russian-speaking and culturally similar border regions.

Lake Peipsi forms a natural and therefore an easily visualised mental dividing line between Estonia and Russia, which separates two socially and culture distanced places. One can characterize this border zone as borderless. The 'border' situation has not affected social life of the people living on both sides in any significant way since historically connections between them have been weak.

The Setu Land has played a buffer role between two bigger and more imposing cultures. It is a contested borderland, where the separation line between 'us' and 'them' is neither cultural nor political but is based on familiarity and indigenous belonging.

Legal and Historical aspects

On 20th August 1991 Estonia regained its independence, but the negotiations about the Estonian-Russian border control and relations did not solve the question whether the border would be established according to the Tartu Peace Treaty (1920) or the Soviet administrative division established in

1944-46. In December 1991 the de facto border control was launched, and in July 1992 the visa regime for the incoming non-citizens was established. Consequently, the actual borderline – with checkpoints and customs offices – came to be called temporary control line and it continues to perform all the functions of a state border. The absence of the Estonian-Russian border agreement has been a significant issue in the Estonian accession negotiations with the EU.

The simplified border-crossing regime between Narva-Ivangorod and in the Setu Land was established in 1991 and continued to exist for ten years supported by the local authorities. The regime involved approximately 17-20000 people living in the border regions who received border-crossing passes on the grounds of the existence of relatives or their graves, churches, real estate, employment or studies on the other side of the border. To comply with the Schengen regulations, Estonia abolished the simplified border-crossing regime in January 2000, and beginning from September 2000 the full visa regime between Estonia and Russia was established. As a substitute for the simplified border-crossing regime, 4000 free visas are issued annually in the borderlands.

Problems for Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC)

- Absence of the legal foundations for CBC such as the Border Treaty or the Cooperation Agreement between Estonia and Russia
- Imbalance in the size of administrative entities: counties in Estonia and oblasts in Russia
- Centralised decision-making in Russia while lack of top-down initiative in Estonia
- Mutual mistrust and prejudice
- Conflict of interests, lack of communication and personal interest
- Relying on EU funding rather than local budgets
- Imbalance in the economic development between Estonian and Russian border regions
- Double customs tariffs on imported Estonian goods to Russia
- Lack of skilled functionaries and strong cross-border institutions

By: Eiki Berg, Julia Boman, Vladimir Kolossov



Background report on case study region

The Polish – Ukrainian border region



The Polish – Ukrainian border has existed since 1991, after the dissolution of Soviet Union and acclamation of independent Ukraine. Today's borderline was demarcated almost 60 years ago in 1945 as a Polish –USSR state border and was introduced on a basis of political reasons, not taking into account social, geographical and regional issues. Before this the Polish -Ukrainian transboundary area had been a common region under one political regime. In addition to the above-mentioned common history, within each country regime there are some other similarities on both sides of the border, such as settlement structure, number of administrative units, area and number of inhabitants, existence of ethnic minorities. But whereas Poland's political structure is mostly self-governing, the Ukrainian side has centralised administrative units.

The border was closed during a 50-year period after the war and border traffic was strictly limited. Poor quality and lack of transport infrastructure helped in that process. The authority was not interested in improving the infrastructure linking neighboring countries. Some railway and road bridges were used only by the army and not rebuilt after the war. The only new investment in infrastructure in the Polish - Soviet border area was the railway line linking Silesia in Poland and Volyn in order to transport industrial raw materials and industrial goods. When the Soviet Union had disappeared, Poland was the first country in the world, which acknowledged and supported Ukrainian independence. In 1991, the trans-border co-operation between the countries started. Some new investment in border-crossing points' infrastructure, and also a non-visa border regime, had a positive influence on the number of visitors from the Ukraine. Citizens of the Ukraine, who were going to stay in Poland for less than 90 days did not have to have a visa. Since the 1st October 2003, Poland has been obligated to create a visa regime for all citizens of non-EU countries. Ukrainians need a free of charge visa, whereas no visa is needed for Polish citizens in the Ukraine.

From the social dimension, the whole transboundary region may be counted as typically agricultural with approximately a 40 % share of the population employed in agriculture. The farms are small, disintegrated, not tradable, and bring low profits to their owners, they require maximum expenditure in

peoples' labor. The level of unemployment in Eastern Poland has achieved the level of about 17,5% in recent years. In the Ukrainian border region, it has been systematically falling to 4,5%. There is a growing level of migration on both sides. This process is compensated by a natural increase in population on the Polish side, whereas the Ukraine is supported by a negative natural increase.

Regarding the economic situation, the share of both Polish and Ukrainian border regions in national gross value added is very low. In real value, the level of gross value added per capita is also lower on average in the country and this share has been systematically decreasing in the Polish border region since mid-90s. The Polish part of the transboundary region develops more slowly than other regions in Poland and thus remains a Polish periphery. In case of the Ukrainian border area, which is also counted as periphery in Ukraine, its share in national gross value added has been increasing since 1998. It might be the sign of a faster development rate in the eastern border region of the Ukraine compared to the average in the country. However the level of GDP in the Ukraine is still few times lower than on the Polish side. The rate of FDI has been increasing on the Ukrainian side since 2000 but it is still generally lower than in Eastern Poland.

Cooperation in the Polish-Ukrainian transboundary region has grown rapidly in the last two years. First of all, it is caused by stabilisation of the political and economic situation in the region. Polish investors have already invested over 26 mln \$ (from 168mln \$) in the Lvivsky region. In addition, the companies from Lublin, (the biggest Polish city in the transboundary region), have achieved a significant share of the local market in Lviv. Secondly, by establishing SEZ on the Ukrainian side, those attract investors from Poland. There are 35 companies from Poland among 86 registered in the most successful Ukrainian SEZ in Jaworów. Cooperation among the Euroregion has been also strengthening thanks to the EU PHARE funds. In addition, some social activities, on a local scale, have been started (e.g. bilingual articles in newspapers, tourist information points etc).

By: Katarzyna Krok

Background report on case study region

The Hungarian-Romanian and the Hungarian-Ukrainian border regions

The study area was created as a result of the Trianon peace treaty in 1920, therefore it is a very new formation. The biggest problem, until today, is caused by the fact that, in the course of drawing the new borders, the main point of concern was the route for railway lines, while ethnic relations and the spatial structure of the economy, age-long cultural and administrative connections etc. were neglected. The study area became part of the Soviet sphere of interest after World War II, which measurably encumbered the realisation of cross-border co-operation, only a strictly controlled and narrowly supervised form of cooperation was realisable.

The observations of the research shows that despite the apparent differences between the Hungarian-Ukrainian and the Hungarian-Romanian border regions (e.g. differences in the administrative and the legal system, in the living standards or in the economic efficiency etc.), we can find a number of common problems. One of the common phenomena is that, since the political changes and the economic re-structuring of the late '80-s, these border regions have permanent economic and employment problems. The disposal of these difficulties is encumbered by the fact that peripheries meet along these state borders, where the solvent income and the capital of enterprises is low, the economy's ability to attract direct investments is inconsiderable, there are no jobs, poverty is rife and social disparity is growing.

The most important characteristic of cross-border co-operation is – because of the above-mentioned socio-economic factors – that the importance of economic connections is small,

and the forms of connections necessary for subsistence are dominant (subsistence trade, illegal jobs). Illegal spheres of connection are flourishing (fuel tourism, smuggling of humans and goods, illegal jobs in Hungary) which greatly affect the frequency of border crossings as well. Also, physical geographical characteristics call for deepening of cooperation as the catchment area of the Tisza river is shared among the three regions (flood protection and fight against pollution are common tasks). The first Euroregions in this area (Carpathians Euroregion, Danube–Körös–Maros–Tisza Euroregion) were established in the 1990-s, these organisations were intended to encourage the development of cross-border cooperation. Realisation of the appointed goals was only partially accomplished, because of the excessive size, different political, economic and social development level of the members, lack of financial resources etc., that is why, in recent times, bi- and trilateral, smaller sized Euroregions were formed (Hajdú-Bihar–Bihar, Bihar-Bihar, Interregio). The situation becomes more complicated as Hungary will be a fully-fledged member as of the year 2004. Romania is expected to join the EU in the year 2007 and the Ukraine won't be able to join the European Union in the foreseeable future, therefore it will be the external border of the EU in the long run.

By: Dr. Baranyi Béla

Background report on case study region

The Moldova-Romania border region

The history of the border between Moldova and Romania goes far into the depth of centuries and is rather complicated. Similar language, traditions and architecture in the border regions of Moldova and Romania are the heritage of the Moldovan principality (1389–1812) to which the present day border regions belonged. In 1812, the eastern part of the principality was annexed by the Russian Empire, while the rest of it remained under the Ottoman Empire and eventually was merged with the principality of Valakhia into a new State – Romania.

The short period of Romania's expansion in Bessarabia (1918–1940) eliminated the border and resulted in free contacts and exchange of goods, although mostly on the personal level. During 1944–1991, the border was impenetrable either for goods, people or information. After the Romanian revolution in 1989 and independence of Moldova in 1991 the movement of people across the Moldovan-Romanian border became enormous. Initially, both countries allowed free border

crossing with the internal IDs but, in 2001, a requirement for passports was introduced. A number of border check points were opened including the one at Costesti-Stinca hydro power station, which is within the border region under examination. Gradually, the exchange has slowed down.

At the Izmil Summit of 1997, the Presidents of Romania, Moldova and the Ukraine signed the Declaration on Cross-border Cooperation and also the protocol on tri-lateral cooperation at government level.

The Agreement on creation of the Euroregion "Upper Pruth" was signed in Botosani (Romania) in the year 2000. The area, of the Euroregion, amounts to 28,9 thousand km², and the population is 2,9 million, including an active population of 1,6 million. The region is predominantly agricultural, the mobility of population is very low, the main towns are situated at 40-50 kilometers from the border and these factors limit the need for trans-border cooperation and possibilities for this. The Euroregion is mostly controlled by the governments and

the competence of the region's districts and municipalities is limited.

Euroregion working groups are elaborating and implementing common projects. The projects have been submitted to the European Commission, to the TACIS Programme such as: "Creation of Marketing Centres for Support of Small Business and Development of Cross-Border Trade", "Business Development Resources", "Assessment of a Possibility to Create a Regional Centre for Production of Environmentally Pure Products" and "Wine Road". The only project that is currently under implementation is one supported by TACIS: "A Database for Setting up an Ecological and Scientific-didactical Centre in the Nature Reserve "Emil Racovita".

So far, there is no a real progress in developing of the Euroregion. There is still long way to go regarding adjusting of the legislation of three countries, definition of the legal status of the regions, creation of regions' bodies for audit

of the projects, stabilisation of the personal membership of Working Commissions, and creation of the free trade zones in the framework of the Euroregion.

The participation of the Republic of Moldova in trans-frontier cooperation within the Euroregion "Upper Pruth" implies the following legal and institutional difficulties:

1. Territorial-administrative units in the Republic of Moldova have a much lower economic potential than their counterparts in Romania;
2. Both central and local authorities in the Republic of Moldova are quite inert in trans-frontier cooperation;
3. Territorial-administrative reform of May 2003 in Moldova limited decision-making powers of the local administration and discontinued the Euroregion membership

By: Alla Skvortova

Background report on case study region

The Northern Greek border regions

The border between Greece-Albania-FYROM-Bulgaria is the external border between the EU and Southeastern Europe. The Greek-Albanian-FYROM-Bulgarian cross border zone refers to an area, which consists of 29 NUTS III level districts covering a total area of 62.509 km². The cross border area is characterised with a low population density as well as low performance in social and economic figures.

The whole area was part of the Ottoman Empire for almost four centuries. The 1st Balkan War in 1912 played a decisive role for the allied Balkan countries that liberated almost every European territory from Turkish domination. During the "Cold War" an "iron curtain" regime was imposed along the border. The collapse of the communist regimes has brought forward significant changes at a social, political and economic level.

The inter-Balkan collaboration has been revived during recent years. The Skopje 2001 Summit Meeting adopted the Action Plan for Regional Economic Cooperation, a text which referred among other things to both the encouragement of establishing "euro regions" and cross-border cooperation.

The Greek border zone, even though it displays a low development index compared to the European index, maintains a strong convergence dynamic. However, the overall "transition" border zone shows not only a divergence but also a huge gap. The FDI occurring in these three transition countries are minimal on a global level. However, Greece has emerged as an important investor, in the Balkan area in general, over the last few years. The trade deficits of the transition-Balkan countries are rising at a constant pace whilst a totally different

figure is noted in the EU. Evidence, however, shows that cross

border economic relationships are at low levels compared to other European regions.

As far as migration is concerned, Greece has become a host country to migrant population since 1990. The presence of Albanian migrants is dominant. The migrant population from the three countries accounts for 91,1% of the total Greek border area migrants, something very important for the role of geography relating to migrant flows. Only 6.6% of the total Albanian and another 3.2% of Bulgarian migrants are concentrated in the border area – a fact that shows that the actual Greek border region does not attract large migration flows.

In relation to the presence of minorities, Albania is a country with some minority groups as the Greek ethnic population in the Southern part and the Slavo-macedonian minority is concentrated in the region of Prespa. In FYROM, the Albanian minority is a dominant feature accounting for about 22% of the total population. The minority is mostly concentrated in the country's west, bordering on Albania. It is estimated in Bulgaria that the Turkish minority accounts for 9,43% and 3,69% for Gypsies (Romans). In Greece, a religious Muslim minority lives in the Northeast part of the country in the area of Thrace. The minority is mixed on an ethnological basis, being made up of ethnic Pomaks, Turks and Romans.

By: George Petrakos and Lefteris Topaloglou.

Background report on case study region

The German-Polish and Austrian-Hungarian border regions

These two border regions at the present external boundary of the EU have a rather long track record of cross-border co-operation. Here, different forms of regional interaction have emerged and involve all levels of public administration, from national authorities to local self-government, operating both on the basis of formal agreements and within rather informal policy networks. With the EU enlargement drawing near, regional authorities of Burgenland (Austria) and West-Pannonia (Hungary) and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Brandenburg, Saxony (Germany) and the West Polish Wojewodships Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie, Dolnośląskie, have produced several policy documents and development strategies concerned with a wide variety of topics: from spatial planning, development of tourism, economic clustering and the improvement of transportation networks to environmental protection, labor migration and public attitudes. These increased activities attention can be explained both as a means to raise awareness from national politics and as an attempt to “unbias” the public discourse still influenced by anxieties at the border.

Of course the point of departure for both regions is quite different. While the Polish-German border is relatively new and artificial, manifesting a clear socio-historical divide, the Austrian-Hungarian region is much more cohesive and culturally coherent. In the German-Polish case, the (political and economic) peripherality of East Germany and the relatively weak settlement pattern in West Poland hinder the development of a sense of regional purpose. In the Austrian-Hungarian case, rapid economic growth on both sides since 1995, low unemployment and increasing patterns of cross-border commuting – along with historical ties – make for a much clearer cross-border regional perspective. The evidence provided by the background studies on these two border areas supports the hypothesis that cross-border regionalism

depends upon simultaneous processes of formal and informal integration.

A far more decisive role in encouraging closer interaction at a day-to-day level could be thus assumed by the Euroregions, especially in the German-Polish case. Although it is more thoroughly organized and equipped with greater responsibilities (e.g. in administering EU INTERREG funds) than the Austrian-Hungarian Euroregion West-Pannonia, the German-Polish Euroregions have had less success in bringing Polish and German actors together. More attentions should be paid here to the actual task of networking and developing social capital than physical investment. On a more positive note, the German-Polish Euroregions have facilitated hundreds of small projects bringing together local inhabitants in joint cultural activities ranging from spring festivals to sports competitions, theater workshops or youth fairs. Furthermore, several non-profit organizations (e.g. the regionalized German-Polish associations and business organizations) are very busy in establishing a positive environment and in raising attention for the neighboring regions in order to overcome the historical burden of national antagonisms. All in all, developing a positive sense of being “on the border” remains a long term project in the German-Polish case.

In contrast, the Hungarian-Austrian border region represents perhaps one of the more positive examples of development at the EU’s external boundaries due to the cumulative self re-enforcement of multilevel regionalization impulses. This is, furthermore, a regionalization process strengthened by historical, social and geographical contexts that are seldom found in other cross-border areas of Central and Eastern Europe.

By: **Andreas Uhrlau**

EXLINEA First University Course started in October 2003

The EXLINEA project coordinators from the Free University of Berlin, James Scott and Silke Matzeit, have begun a two-semester university course dealing with European Border Regions at the fringes of the enlarging EU. The course commenced in October 2003 and will continue until July 2004. The course is designed for graduate students and comprises theoretical discussion as well as empirical research and field work. It deals with the “making of regions”, especially border regions. At the end of the two-semester in Summer 2004 a three-week excursion of selected border regions will be offered.

Students will deal with different theoretical approaches to borders in the larger framework of Political Geography, with official communication and policy schemes from the European Commission, including the “New Neighbourhood” instrument, the “Europe of Regions” and the “Wider Europe” policy paper, and with the newest developments in regions on the external boundaries of the enlarging European Union. This should enable students to develop individual and “custom-made” research approaches towards different border regions.

Results of the seminar will be published, and the EXLINEA website will shortly provide selected course material for university, college and high school teachers/scholars.

All project partners as well as the public are invited to provide their own teaching experience and materials in this educational forum and archive.

NEWS AND ACTIVITIES FROM THE PROJECT CASE STUDY REGIONS

Visa regime for Ukrainian citizens from 1st October 2003 is affecting Polish – Ukrainian cross border co-operation

On the 30 July 2003 a bilateral agreement between the Polish and Ukrainian Governments regarding visa regime was signed. According to this agreement, Polish citizens do not require a visa to cross the Polish – Ukrainian border, whereas Ukrainians must have a visa to travel to Poland. However, visas for Ukrainian citizens are free of charge and may be obtained in one of the Polish Consulates in Ukraine (i.e. in Kiev, Charkov, Lviv, Luck, Odessa). This solution is seen as a compromise and is said to support Polish – Ukrainian desires for joint co-operation and partnership. On the other hand, both Belarus and Russia did not accept the proposal of a non-visa regime for Poles and free visas for Russians and Byelorussians and agreed only to payable visas for all concerned.

44 031 visas for Ukrainians were issued between 01.09.2003 and 20.10.2003. (Whereas in the same time 29 254 for Byelorussians and 21 795 for Russians were issued.) Most of the visas were issued by the consulates in Lviv, with those in Kiev and in Luck in “second” and “third” place.

The number of citizens crossing the border decreased dramatically after 1st October. In the first days after visa introduction there was almost no pedestrian and car traffic at all from Ukraine. However the situation has been slowly changing since then. The number of Ukrainian citizens, who crossed the border on 20th October, had grown by 100% in comparison to 1st October. According to a Polish border officer stationed at the border crossing point in Mociska the situation on Polish – Ukrainian borders should be normalized in 3-4 months time.

By: Katarzyna Krok

Koli Border Forum seminar series 2003-2004

The Karelian Institute, University of Joensuu participates in the organisation of a series of seminars called the Koli Border Forum, which are financed by the Finnish Cultural Foundation. The first of the five seminars was held in May 2003 in Koli National Park, under the title Russian Borderlands. The seminar gathered some 50 researchers from Finland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark and the UK. Focus of the seminar was on changing Russian border policy and the pattern of cross-border cooperation on different Russian borderlands.

The second Koli Border Forum seminar Transfrontier National Parks and Biosphere Reserves in Europe, was held 23-24 October 2003. The seminar focused on nature conservation and economic, social and cultural values connected to it on the local level.

The seminar series continues in November 27th and 28th 2003 with the symposium On the Border of the European Union. The theme of the symposium is Development of Labour Markets and Vocational Education in Border Regions.

The last two Koli Border Forum seminars will be held in February and March 2004. The February 14th and 15th 2004 seminar topic is Borders of Europe. The seminar will discuss conflict and cooperation on the European borders based on the work of two EU fifth framework programme research programmes, EUBORDERCONF and EXLINEA.

By: Ilkka Liikanen and Juha Ruusuvoori

Euroregional Workshop

“Tranfrontier Institutional Development in the Lake Prespa/Ohrid Region”

21 October 2003; Ptolemaida, Greece.

The workshop was a follow up to the Thessaloniki conference “Stability and Sustainability Development through Institutional Cross Border Cooperation in the Prespa/Ohrid Lakes”, held in March 2003. The Euroregional seminar was organised by the East West Institute with the collaboration of the Council of Europe under the objective: The establishment of the Euroregion Prespa/Ohrid.

The workshop also aimed to present the legal framework and the best cross border institutional practices, to improve skills and know how in the field of local and national authorities for the support of cross border institutions and finally to provide a field for discussion as well as to adopt a common line for the future Euroregion Statute of Prespa/Ohrid.

By: Lefteris Topaloglou

Conference:

“PEIPSI FORUM III.

Regional Development and Cross Border Cooperation in the Estonian-Russian Border Area”

Tartu and Kallaste (Estonia); August 22-23, 2003

The Peipsi Forum III focused on the development of tourism and water transportation and on educational and cultural cooperation in the Estonian-Russian border area. The Estonian - Russian border is about 300 km long, where approximately two-thirds of the border passes through Lake Peipsi/Chudskoe (surface area 3,558 km²), which is the biggest transboundary lake in Europe.

Another important topic of the conference comprised transboundary cooperation and financial support for this regarding the future external borders of the European Union, relevant challenges and obstacles. The presenters stressed that, after Estonia’s joining of the EU, a significant intensification of cross-border cooperation on its eastern border can be expected due to the special attention the EU pays to its external borders and in particular to the border with Russia. It was concluded that Estonian-Russian cross border cooperation is still at a poor level and there are several obstacles still present. It was discussed that while central governments are not very much interested in promoting cooperation, the local level has a bigger interest but they lack financial and human resources to develop joint activities.

The conference was organised by Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation. Earlier Peipsi Forums took place in the years 2000 and 2001 in Estonia and Russia. In the earlier conferences, the main topics comprised environmental cooperation and collaboration between local governments.

On the second day, conference participants visited the region and took part in the annual onion and fish fair in Kallaste town and in the opening of Kallaste tourism information centre.

The full conference report is available at: www.ctc.ee

By: Margit Säre



Conference report:

“BRIT VI: The Border Regions In Transition”

Pécs, Békéscsaba and Debrecen (Hungary);

September 21– 27, 2003

This year the already traditional meeting of “The Border Regions in Transition, VIth International Conference (BRIT VI.)” was organised September 21–27. 2003 in three locations (Pécs, Békéscsaba, Debrecen) in Hungary by the Centre for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and a cooperating international team. The conference was named “Regionalisation, EU Enlargement and Shifting Borders of Inclusion and Exclusion” where participants could hear almost 50 presentations mainly about cross-border cooperation issues with special consideration of the probable consequences of the EU accession along the new, reshaping external (Schengen) borders of Eastern-Central-Europe in the Hungarian-Croatian, Hungarian-Serbian-Montenegrin border regions.

The members of the international group of researchers have organised the former BRIT conferences in the borderlands of Germany, Finland, the United States, India and Estonia.

The issues of the BRIT 6 conference was especially relevant this time, as the creation of the new external (so called Schengen-) borders of the European Union and Hungary results in a totally new situation, which means also new challenges in the border regions. The conference was divided into three parts, each part was held in different Hungarian cities-Pécs, Békéscsaba and Debrecen. A session of the conference was held at each of these locations, and the sessions were followed by a field trip, where participants had the opportunity to personally meet and discuss with other experts from the other sides of the Hungarian-Croatian-Serbian, the Hungarian Romanian and the Hungarian-Ukrainian borders.

By: Dr. Baranyi Béla

Kallaste onion and fish fair. In the photo (from left): Margit Säre, Peipsi CTC; Viktor Nukka, Kallaste town mayor; Virve Tuubel, Peipsi CTC

Description of the participants with contact details

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FUB is a multi-disciplinary working group incorporated within the Department of Geography at the Free University of Berlin. Presently it encompasses various aspects of urban and regional development and planning.

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