

## УКРАЇНА В СУЧАСНИХ ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ПРОЦЕСАХ

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### Thematic Priorities For Sustainable Development of Ukraine-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation (The Case Study of Chernivtsi Region)

This paper seeks to investigate sustainable cross-border cooperation (CBC) as a distinctive model of interstate collaboration, embedded in the neighboring borderland regions of two or more countries. The focus of the research revolves around the establishment and further development of geostrategic, economic, cultural and scientific capacity of the Ukrainian-Romanian partnership as a fundamental construct in ensuring and strengthening the stability, security and cooperation in Europe. This research highlights Ukraine's aspirations to establish, develop and diversify bilateral good-neighborly relations with Romania both regionally and internationally. The main objective is to elucidate Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation initiatives, inasmuch Ukraine-Romania CBC has been stirring up considerable interest in terms of its inexhaustible historical, cultural and spiritual ties. Furthermore, the similarity of the neighboring states' strategic orientations grounds the basis for development and enhancement of Ukraine-Romania cooperation.

The authors used desk research and quantitative research to conclude that Ukraine-Romania CBC has the impact not only on the EU and on Ukraine multi-vector foreign policy, but it also has the long-term global consequences. In the light of the current reality, the idea of introducing and reinforcing the importance of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) sounds quite topical and relevant. This research considers a number of explanations for Ukraine-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation as a key element of the EU policy towards its neighbors. Besides, the subject of the research is considered from different perspectives in order to show the diversity and complexity of the Ukraine-Romania relations in view of the fact that sharing common borders we are presumed to find common solutions. As the research has demonstrated, the Ukraine-Romania cross border cooperation is a pivotal factor of boosting geostrategic, economic, political and cultural development for each participant country, largely depending on the neighboring countries' cohesion and convergence. Significantly, there is an even stronger emphasis on the fact that while sharing the same borders, the countries share common interests and aspirations for economic thriving, cultural exchange, diplomatic ties and security, guaranteed by a legal framework. The findings of this study have a number of important implications for further development and enhancement of Ukraine-Romania cooperation. Accordingly, the research shows how imperative are the benefits of Romania as a strategic partner for outlining top priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy.

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**Keywords:** Ukraine, Romania, cross-border cooperation, interstate relations, Chernivtsi region, security, Europe.

### Пріоритети сталого розвитку україно-румунського транскордонного співробітництва (на прикладі Чернівецької області)

Стаття висвітлює проблему сталого транскордонного співробітництва як провідної моделі міждержавної співпраці, яка здійснюється в двох або більше сусідніх країнах, що поділяють спільний кордон. Основною метою дослідження є становлення та розвиток геостратегічного, економічного, культурного, наукового потенціалу україно-румунського співробітництва як основи забезпечення та зміцнення стабільності, безпеки і співробітництва у Європі. Дане дослідження артикулює проблему аспірацій України до утвердження, розвитку та диверсифікації двосторонніх добросусідських відносин з Румунією як на регіональному, так і на міжнародному рівнях. Головною метою статті є розвідка ініціатив України та Румунії щодо гармонізації та дієвої співпраці суб'єктів транскордонного співробітництва для розв'язання спільних проблем прикордонних регіонів, оскільки транскордонне співробітництво між вищезгаданими державами ґрунтується на невичерпних історичних, культурних та духовних зв'язках. Разом з тим, єдність чітких стратегічних пріоритетів України та Румунії є основою для поглиблення транскордонного співробітництва та міжкультурної дипломатії.

Здійснений аналіз на основі методів емпіричного та теоретичного досліджень уможливив дійти висновку, що україно-румунська транскордонна співпраця впливає не лише на багатовекторну зовнішню політику ЄС та України, але й має довгострокові глобальні перспективи. Важливими постають наступні запитання, що є підґрунтям та причинами низки криз, що виникають на східних кордонах Європейського Союзу? Яким чином транскордонне співробітництво здатне ефективно впливати на протиріччя та розбіжності інтересів прикордонних країн? Дане дослідження висвітлює низку обґрунтувань щодо транскордонного співробітництва між Україною та Румунією як ключового елементу політики ЄС відносно своїх сусідів. Автори глибоко переконані в тому, що транскордонне співробітництво є важливим об'єктом сучасної як регіональної, так і глобальної дієвої політики, адже розвиток транскордонних регіонів інтенсифікує багаторівневу взаємодію між усіма суб'єктами світового співтовариства. Окрім того, предмет дослідження розглядається з різних точок зору, щоб показати різноманітність та складність україно-румунських відносин з огляду на той факт, що наявність спільного кордону передбачає прийняття спільних рішень. Висновки даного дослідження містять ряд важливих умовиводів щодо подальшого розвитку та посилення співробітництва між Україною та Румунією. Дослідження розкриває переваги Румунії як стратегічного партнера для визначення основних пріоритетів зовнішньої політики України.

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Румунія, транскордонне співробітництво, міждержавні відносини, Чернівецька область, безпека, Європа.

#### *Introduction*

Noteworthy, 2019 marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement, the Law of Ukraine (from 21.02.2019) that enshrines authorities of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, President of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to implement Ukraine's strategic course towards acquisition of full membership of the European Union. What is more, the Law has become an effective step towards ultimate goal of the European integration of Ukraine. At the same time, European integration aspirations of Ukraine increased the topicality of convergent sustainable cross-border cooperation (CBC) as a distinctive model of coherent interstate collaboration, embedded in the neighboring borderland regions of two or more countries.

According to the latest research, the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries is considered the age of anxiety, unease and social malaise. Notably, our globe is currently witnessing cultural uncertainties, political cleavages, religious intolerance, economic recession and social injustice that eventually have led to unrests, terroristic attacks and warfare.

In the light of the current reality, the idea of introducing and reinforcing the importance of *Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC)* sounds quite topical and relevant. This research will consider a number of explanations for Ukraine-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation as a key element of the EU policy to-

wards its neighbors. Our strong conviction is that CBC has a powerful impact not only on the EU and on Ukraine multi-vector foreign policy, but it also has the longer-term global consequences. Besides, the subject of the research is considered from different perspectives in order to show the diversity and complexity of the Ukraine-Romania relations in view of the fact that sharing common borders we are presumed to find common solutions.

*The aim of the paper* is to investigate sustainable development of Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation (CBC) as a distinctive model of interstate collaboration, embedded in the neighboring borderland regions of two countries. The focus of the research revolves around the *establishment and further development* of geostrategic, economic and cultural capacity of the Ukrainian-Romanian partnership as a fundamental construct in ensuring and strengthening the stability, security and cooperation in Europe. Remarkably, Chernivtsi region is generating considerable interest in terms of Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation.

Since the mid of 1990's several recent reviews and book articles have been dealing with various aspects of thorough studying of topical issues of the border spaces, inter-territorial and cross-border cooperation in the Ukraine-Romania borderline. Scientists' focus has always revolved around the issues of cross-border cooperation as a topical construct for development priorities to enhance and deepen the cooperation environmentally, socially and economically. This perspective is supported by the relevant academic literature of (Purici (2007<sup>4</sup>); Brie and Horga (2010<sup>5</sup>); Brie (2006<sup>6</sup>; 2010<sup>7</sup>; 2017<sup>8</sup>); Troyan (2016<sup>9</sup>); Kruglashov (2013<sup>10</sup>; 2016<sup>11</sup>); Pyla (2006<sup>12</sup>); Levchuk (2016<sup>13</sup>); Hakman (2010<sup>14</sup>; 2012<sup>15</sup>); Luskalova (2016<sup>16</sup>)) in the domain of the sustainable development of cross-border cooperation as well as the activity and efficiency of the *Upper Prut* and the *Carpathian* Euroregions. The past decade has seen a considerable rise in studying of the cross-border cooperation development in the

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<sup>4</sup> Purici, Ș. (2007). Rumuno-ukraynskoe transhranychnoe sotrudnychestvo. Shahy k dobrososedstvu. [Romania-Ukraine Cross-border Cooperation: Towards Neighborhood Policy]. *Veche*, 6:74-87.

<sup>5</sup> Brie, M. and Horga, I. (2010). The Romanian-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation at the European instruments. *Ukraine-Romania-Moldova: historical, political and cultural aspects of their relations in the contemporary European processes context*, 302-318, Chernivtsi, Bukrek.

<sup>6</sup> Brie, M. (2006). From smaller to greater Europe: identity of the EU Eastern borders. *Eurotimes*: From smaller to Greater Europe: Border Identitary Testimonies, [edited by Mircea Brie and Gábor Kosma], 2:8-11. Oradea: Oradea University Press.

<sup>7</sup> Brie, M. (2010). *European Instruments of Cross-border cooperation. Case study: the Romanian-Ukrainian border*, [online], [Viewed 7 February 2018]. Available from [https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/44565/1/MPPA\\_paper\\_44565.pdf](https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/44565/1/MPPA_paper_44565.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Brie, M. (2017). The Cross-Border Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine in the Context of the Eastern Partnership (EPP) and Association Agreements. [online]. *Eurocity*, 11(2) [Viewed 5 November 2018: Available from: [http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie\\_11\\_2\\_2017.pdf](http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie_11_2_2017.pdf)].

<sup>9</sup> Troyan, S. (2016). Euroregional format of the Ukrainian-Romanian cross-border cooperation: the historical experience of formation. *Romanian-Ukrainian relations. History and Contemporaneity*, 475-487. Satu Mare, Muzeului Sătmărean, Cluj Napoca, Ecou Transilvan.

<sup>10</sup> Kruglashov, A. (2013). Euroregion Upper Prut: Studies and Activities, *Eurotimes*, 6:27-39.

<sup>11</sup> Kruglashov, A. (2016). Ukraine-Romania Dialogue: Moving ahead from Distrust and Suspicions. in: *The European Space Borders and Issues*, 319-333. Oradea University Press Debrecen University Press, Oradea, Debrecen.

<sup>12</sup> Pyla, V. et al. (2006). Suchasna rehionalna polityka i transkordonne spivrobotnytstvo. [Present regional policy and cross-border cooperation]. Khmelnytskyi, HUUP.

<sup>13</sup> Levchuk, V. (2016). Cross-border Impact on Cross-border Cooperation. PHD Thesis, Lutsk National Technical University.

<sup>14</sup> Hakman, S. (2010). The Romanian-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation at the European instruments. *Ukraine-Romania-Moldova: historical, political and cultural aspects of their relations in the contemporary European processes context*. 273-290. Chernivtsi, Bukrek.

<sup>15</sup> Hakman, S. (2012). Regional experience of implementing the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. In *Management and Administration*. Collection of scientific works. 2:218-237. Chernivtsi: Bukrek.

<sup>16</sup> Luskalova, K. (2016). Ukraine – Romania: modern tendencies of bilateral relations, *Zovnishnia polityka i dyplomatiia: tradytsii, trendy, dosvid*. 22:29-34 [External policy and diplomacy; traditions, trends, experience].

context of EU enlargement (Nechayeva-Yuriychuk (2011<sup>17</sup>); Melnychuk (2015<sup>18</sup>; 2017<sup>19</sup>). A renewed importance in the issue of the national minority was revealed in T. Rendyuk's research (2011<sup>20</sup>). Furthermore, the problem of national security at the border, in particular in the context of intergovernmental agreements, national legislation on issues of cross-border cooperation, agreements between local authorities and regional cross-border regulatory support are highlighted in the research of Chobal and Lalakulych (2020<sup>21</sup>) and Toca (2012<sup>22</sup>).

Available research includes essential background information detailing in Ukraine-Romania trans-border cooperation, ensuring a competitive economy Bărbulescu (2016<sup>23</sup>), and abovementioned researcher Brie (2017<sup>24</sup>), furthermore, some scholars forecast its further cooperation progressing and participants' mutual advancement. Theoretical, methodological, conceptual and legal frameworks on providing environmentally friendly long-term solutions for the region were the problems under study of Dumbrava (2013<sup>25</sup>), Dubovich and Vasylyshyn (2016<sup>26</sup>). However, few researchers have addressed economic and environmental objectives, notably with the aim of responding to possible environmental emergencies as well as the problem of eco-friendly economy, environmental policy and legal framework to reinforce small-scale cross-border cooperation, by privileging 'people to people' relations. Of particular interest for the research is the establishing of cultural and educational Ukraine-Romania cooperation and bridging the gap between the academic and political vision of the problem under study.

### Data and Methods

The present study has been developed in two stages and makes use of qualitative methods. The first phase of the research was based on the study of bibliographic materials and sources of secondary data (official studies, evaluation reports, program documents and website, promotional materials), which provided a framework for discussing the relation between cross-border cooperation development. The second stage uses the case study approach, the focus being mainly on the cross-border projects implemented in Chernivtsi region, analyzing their most significant results. It is worth mentioning that the

<sup>17</sup> Nechayeva-Yuriychuk, N. (2011). National Development beyond the Nation-State: Problems and Prospects. In *Ethnicity, Confession and Intercultural Dialogue at the European Union Eastern Border, Supplement of Eurolimes*, 433-449. (Edited by Mircea Brie, Ioan Horga, Sorin Şipoş). Oradea: Oradea University Press.

<sup>18</sup> Melnychuk, L. (2015). The Center for Romanian Studies as a Crucial Step to Effective Ukraine-Romania Relations, *Modern Historical and Political Issues*, **30-31**:19-22.

<sup>19</sup> Melnychuk, L. (2017). Prerequisites and Establishment of the Relations between Romania and the European Communities (1960-1970s). *Modern Historical and Political Issues*, [S.l.], n. 35-36:128-134. ISSN 2617-2372. [Viewed 15 November 2019]. Available from: doi: <https://doi.org/10.31861/mhpi2017.35-36.128-134>.

<sup>20</sup> Rendyuk, T. (2011). Prykordonne ta rehionalne spivrobitnytstvo mizh Ukrainoiu y Rumuniieiu z pytan natsionalnykh menshyn. [Ukraine-Romania cross-border and regional cooperation in the context of minority issues]. *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal*, **1**:123-136.

<sup>21</sup> Chobal, L., & Lalakulych, M. (2020). Problems and prospects of cooperation of the border regions of Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Slovakia. [online]. *Baltic Journal of Economic Studies*, **5**(5), 189-196. [Viewed 5 March 2020: Available from: <https://doi.org/10.30525/2256-0742/2019-5-5-189-196>.

<sup>22</sup> Toca, C. (2012). "Cross-border Cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe." *Review of: Central European Regional Policy and Human Geography*, Year II, no.1, 2012, HU ISSN 2062-8870, HU E-ISSN 2062-8889. In *Eurolimes 14, Enlargements, Borders and the Chances of EU Political Priorities*, edited by Ariane Landuyt, Dana Pantea, István Polgar, 192-196. Oradea: Oradea University Press.

<sup>23</sup> Bărbulescu, I. and Brie, M. (2016). Cooperarea transfrontalieră între România și Ucraina, respectiv între România și Republica Moldova [Romania-Ukraine Cross border Cooperation and respectively Romania-Republic of Moldova]. [online]. *Oportunități și provocări în perioada 2014-2020*, [Viewed 1 March 2018]. Available from: [http://ier.ro/sites/default/files/pdf/St%20Cooperarea%20transfrontaliera\\_final.pdf](http://ier.ro/sites/default/files/pdf/St%20Cooperarea%20transfrontaliera_final.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Brie, M. (2017). The Cross-Border Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine in the Context of the Eastern Partnership (EPP) and Association Agreements. [online]. *Europolity*, **11**(2) [Viewed 5 November 2018: Available from: [http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie\\_11\\_2\\_2017.pdf](http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie_11_2_2017.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Dumbrava, C. (2013). Rolling Back History: The Romanian Policy of Restoration of Citizenship to Former Citizens. [online]. [Viewed 15 December 2017]: Available from: <http://www.citsee.eu/citsee-story/rolling-back-history-romanian-policy-restoration-citizenship-former-citizens>.

<sup>26</sup> Dubovich, I. and Vasylyshyn, K. (2017). Suchasni ekoloho-ekonomiko-politychni ta pravovi problemy transkordonnoho spivrobitnytstva Ukrainy ta Rumunii. [Current state of ecological, economic, political and legal issues of Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation]. *Romanian-Ukrainian relations. History and Contemporaneity*.357-367. Satu Mare, Muzeului Sătmărean, Cluj Napoca, Ecou Transilvan.

authors used desk research and quantitative research to conclude that Ukraine-Romania CBC has a powerful impact not only on the EU and on Ukraine multi-vector foreign policy, but it also has the longer-term global consequences.

### ***Ukraine-Romania Relations Establishment***

Symbolically, 2017 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukraine-Romania diplomatic relations<sup>27</sup>. The then President of Ukraine P.Poroshenko, whilst evaluating the mutually-benefited partnership with Romania as well as highly appreciating our good-neighbor's support and assistance in protecting Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty and struggle against the external aggression, extended his gratitude to the Romanian part for the facilitation in the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of our country. Significantly, there is an even stronger emphasis on Romania being the first European state to ratify the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement<sup>28</sup>.

A striking feature of *Ukraine* is the fact that it serves as a cross-border locally and as a communicative subsystem globally. It is of paramount importance that Ukraine as a distinctive multi-lingual nation-state with poly-ethnic makeup, modelling 'marble cake' identity, poly-mentality, multiculturalism and multi-confessionalism should develop internal discourse for vigorous interethnic communication for national unity, and yield their own values. Furthermore, European Union has considered the importance of Ukraine as an integral part of common European space and elaborated special instruments for development the mutually beneficial relations. The EU and Ukraine have signed bilateral agreements; in addition, Ukraine has joined different European programs of assistance and cooperation. The main goals of this wide range of documents are to stimulate internal transformation of Ukraine as well as Ukraine's political, economic and social system should be complied with the European one. Therefore, there is a necessity to work together within Ukraine-EU dialogue for creating the area of stability, peace and tolerance, sustainable development and overwhelming social and economic progress on the EU external borders (Bohatyrets, 2017)<sup>29</sup>.

It is worth mentioning, experts have always seen Ukraine as an independent European state striving to establish, develop and diversify bilateral good-neighborly relations with Romania both regionally and internationally. In this study we aim to elucidate Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation initiatives inasmuch Ukraine-Romania CBC has been generating considerable interest in terms of its inexhaustible historical, cultural and spiritual ties. Furthermore, the similarity of the neighboring states' strategic orientations grounds the basis for development and enhancement of Ukraine-Romania cooperation. It is reasonable to take into account the fact that independent Ukraine has established multi-faceted deeply-rooted cooperation with its cross-bordering states, namely, Romania, Moldova, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, etc. The fundamental characteristics of such cooperation lay in multi-dimensional patterns and partnership agreement tools – sister cities agreements, interregional partnership, and Euro-regional cooperation.

Of particular importance for the research is Chernivtsi region (Ukraine) as it has been identified as a unique land, that historically incorporated Bessarabia and the Northern part of Bukovina, where Ukrainians, Romanians, Moldovans, Poles, Jews, Germans, Russians and other national groups harmoniously blend and coexist. The Chernivtsi region is an active participant in interregional and cross-border cooperation, which is clearly manifested through the prism of implementation of a variety of projects within the framework of border and territorial cooperation programs (Pavliuk, 2018)<sup>30</sup>. It appears that with Romania's accession to NATO and integration to the EU, the Ukrainian-Romanian

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<sup>27</sup> *Ukraine and Romania demonstrate mutual interest in the achievement of new results of cooperation – the countries celebrate the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations*, (2017). [online]. [Viewed 15 February 2017]. Available from: <http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-ta-rumuniya-demonstruyut-obopilnu-zacikavlenist-u-d-39858>.

<sup>28</sup> *Romania – Ukraine Relations* (2017). [online], [Viewed 21 February 2018]. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania-Ukraine\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania-Ukraine_relations).

<sup>29</sup> Bohatyrets, V. (2017). Tolerance as the core-concept of the national reconciliation. *Historical Panorama* [online]. Available from: [http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Istp\\_2017\\_24\\_9](http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Istp_2017_24_9).

<sup>30</sup> Pavliuk, M. (2018). Intensification of Trans border Cooperation in the Context of Chernivtsi Region Participation in *Romania-Ukraine* 2014-2020. Common Operational Program. *Modern Historical and Political Issues*, [S.l.], 37-38: 102-108. [online]. ISSN 2617-2372. [Viewed 15 April 2019]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.31861/mhpi2018.37-38.102-108>.

relations have gained a new perspective. Since 1992, there has been a rapid rise in the Ukraine-Romania relations establishing. Within the next few years, Romania has gradually become a key strategic partner of Ukraine. On January 8, 1992, Romania recognized Ukraine's independence and later on February 1, 1992 it established diplomatic relations with Ukraine. On September 24, 1992, the Embassy of Ukraine was founded in Romania. In December 2001, the Consulate General of Ukraine was opened in Suceava, but currently it has ceased its activities. The establishment of diplomatic relations stipulated the transformation of the Romanian Consulate General in Kyiv into the Romanian Embassy to Ukraine. Besides, the Consulates General of Romania operate in the cities of Chernivtsi, Odessa and Solotvyno. As far as EU works through European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) to foster stabilization, security and prosperity, it applies the tailor-made approach to assist differentiated partnerships. In terms of Ukrainian-Romanian partnership, legal and contractual feasibility (45 Articles) reinforced the principle of flexibility in accelerating assistance and ensuring better adaption to rapidly evolving political circumstances and priorities to eventually achieve the closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration by means of cooperation in all walks of life. Law 129/1997 establishes the cross-border cooperation relations in Romania and Ukraine based on the Treaty of Good Neighborhood and Cooperation between the two states, signed in Constanta on 2 June 1997 and ratified by Romania (Brie, 2017; p. 63)<sup>31</sup>.

Apropos, the Agreement on the local border traffic, signed in late 2014, created favorable conditions for a simplified border crossing of residents of the border regions of Ukraine and Romania living within a 30-kilometer zone from the common state border. 'Residents of the border area will receive free permits for a simplified border crossing with the right to stay in the border zone of another state for up to 90 days each time from the date of crossing the border'. The agreement covers 662 Ukrainian settlements in the Chernivtsi Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk and Odesa regions<sup>32</sup>.

The Treaty of Good Neighborhood and Cooperation between the two states, signed in Constanta, aimed at resolving border and related issues. Its 29 articles set out the stances and mutual obligations of both parties in relation to each other. In particular, in the preamble, the parties condemned 'unfair acts of totalitarian and military-dictatorial regimes, which in the past negatively affected the relations between the Ukrainians and Romanians. Simultaneously, the parties expressed their conviction that 'the elimination of the painful legacy of the past is possible only through the development of friendship relations and cooperation between the two peoples who strive for a united Europe'.

In view of that, it is difficult to assess all the efforts of the European Union's policy in CBC and its legal instruments to yield fruitful outcomes in the context of trans-border states. It is obvious, that the European instruments are certainly to have developed an effective legislative and institutional framework to enhance Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation.

### ***Cross-Border Cooperation from the Euroregions' perspective***

Most experts assert the European neighborhood and partnership instrument to be the crucial point in terms the economic convergence and political cooperation enhancement, providing the favorable conditions and solving common territory issues. Considering the topicality of taking new drastic steps to improve Ukraine geopolitical and geostrategic, economic as well as cultural state of affairs, it aspired to gain trust and reliability as well as strived to be recognized as a full-fledged partner of the European Union. Therefore, its initial step was concluding different agreements with trans-bordering European regions.

The Law of Ukraine 'On Cross-Border Cooperation', adopted on June 24, 2004, interprets cross-border cooperation as followed: '... joint actions aimed at deepening economic, social, scientific and technical, cultural and other relations between territorial communities and local executive authorities

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<sup>31</sup> Brie, M. (2017). The Cross-Border Cooperation between Romania and Ukraine in the Context of the Eastern Partnership (EPP) and Association Agreements. [online]. *Europolity*, 11(2) [Viewed 5 November 2018: Available from:[http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie\\_11\\_2\\_2017.pdf](http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Brie_11_2_2017.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> *Treaty between Romania and Ukraine on the Romanian-Ukrainian State border regime, collaboration and mutual assistance on border matters*, [online], [Viewed 2 February 2017]. Available from:<https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=08000002800743e5>

of Ukraine and territorial communities and relevant authorities of *neighboring* states within the competence defined by their national legislation<sup>33</sup>.

Its function suggests the ability to enhance and efficiently use the existing potential of the regions and to combine the potential for solving common problems in the trans-boundary region. Thus, cross-border cooperation proves to be the cooperation of neighboring territories of cross-border states. Trans-frontier co-operation is a push-pull factor in the process of the European integration and the creation of a Europe without internal borders. The main goal for all regions of Ukraine, involved in cross-border cooperation, is establishing of a single economic space for the joint activity of national enterprises and enterprises of neighboring countries, the organization of buffer zones on the way of transfer of productive resources to the internal and external markets, ensuring stabilization and growth of regions.

As far as relations with Ukraine are concerned, we will focus on Euroregion approach that proved to be very successful and with the support of legal provisions adopted by the Council of Europe; in addition, it became possible for local and regional authorities to work autonomously across borders. Geographically, the specificity of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Romania accounts for its vast territories, covered by institutionalized Euroregions: *the Carpathian* (Ukraine – Poland – Slovakia – Hungary – Romania), *Lower Danube* (Ukraine – Romania – Moldova), *the Upper Prut* (Ukraine – Romania – Moldova) and *the Black Sea* (Azerbaijan – Albania – Bulgaria – Greece – Georgia – Moldova – Russian Federation – Romania – Serbia – Turkey – Ukraine).

On February 14, 1993 in the city of Debrecen (Hungary), the state authorities and local governments of the transborder regions of Ukraine, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia created the ***Carpathian Euroregion (CE)***. In 1997, the Carpathian Euroregion included the border counties of Romania. The territory of the Euroregion comprises 162 thousand km<sup>2</sup> with a population of more than 16 million people. Geo-economic benefits of the border areas of the Carpathian Euroregion consist in their location at the crossroads of trans-European and Eurasian trade-economic, transport-infrastructure, production-cooperative, raw-energy and other streams.

One of the advantages of the Ukrainian-Romanian cooperation within the framework of the Carpathian Euroregion (CE) is the co-financing for mirror cross-border projects through the programs of PHARE in Romania and TACIS CBC in Ukraine. The European Commission gives assistance in upgrading facilities border crossing, establishing stable relationships and partnerships, identifying of the participants' weaknesses and strong point of their partners, understanding the motivations and the aims as well as working together to address common challenges in the fields of environment, public health, the prevention of and against organized crime; Ensuring secure and efficient borders. The CE's main objectives are as followed: to facilitate financing and constructing of the international crossing point 'Solotvyno-Sigetiu Marmatsii' in the Ukrainian-Romanian border area; to hold international fairs and exhibitions in the region borderline; to intensify territorial integration of cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation areas. The objective is based on further aspects of CBC efficacy such as organizing conferences for discussing common issues; facilitating higher educational establishments' cross-border initiatives; launching the Association of Universities of the Carpathian Euroregion; organizing summer schools to finally promote an increased interaction between people and communities living in the frontier zone. Currently, after the European Union enlargement, in addition to the signing the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, and its entering into force, the Carpathian Euroregion has been experiencing a turning of its development. Consequently, experts have challenged predominantly politico-declarative Euroregional cooperation to shift its activities to the priorities of economic cooperation and the implementation of specific joint economic transboundary projects<sup>34</sup>. To conclude, we can highlight the positive aspects of the Carpathian Euroregion's effectiveness and functioning. Taking into consideration Ukraine striving for EU integration, we can definitely argue, that new perspectives are open for all the Carpathian Euroregions' actors. Notwithstanding the fact, that it is still facing many common problems of social and economic backwardness, high unem-

<sup>33</sup> *Supreme Council of Ukraine 'On Cross-Border Cooperation, Law of Ukraine on June 24, 2004 № 1861-IV'*, [online]. Official site of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, [Viewed 3 March 2018]. Available from: <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1861-15>

<sup>34</sup> *Joint Operational Programme Romania – Ukraine 2014-2020*, [online], 2016, [Viewed 1 February 2018]. Available from: <http://www.ro-ua-md.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/0-Romania-Ukraine-JOP-approved.pdf>, p. 480.

ployment, the region's educated and young society brain drain growing regional, the *CE* is committed to challenge its capacity in meeting the particular needs of transborder residents, businesses, interest groups and other entities.

Another efficient tool of solving ecological bordering infrastructure's development of transportation and communication problems, the issues of rational usage of human resources and providing conditions for the development of national minorities was the establishment of *the Upper Prut Euro-region*. To the north, the Upper Prut Euroregion (UPR), established in December 22, 2000 in Botoșani, brings together Romanian (Botoșani and Suceava), Ukrainian Cernăuți (Chernivtsi) and Moldovan (Bălți and Edinet counties). This Euroregion started due to the Romanian initiative and were included in the Treaty on good-neighbourly relations and cooperation between Romania and Ukraine on 2 June 1997. Later in October 2003 Ivano-Frankivsk (Ukraine) joined the UPR. The Institute for Regional and Euro-Integration Studies together with the East-West Institute defined the general features of the Upper Prut Euroregion.

Overall, according to Kyfiak ((2008; p.67), the main objectives of the Upper Prut Euroregion are as followed:

1) enhancement and convergence of trade and economic relations; development of cross-border cooperation projects; 2) promotion of local interests of the involved regions by raising economic, cultural, scientific and tourist contacts in neighboring states; 3) application of advanced technologies; environmental protection, prevention of the Danube, Prut, Siret, Dniester and the Black Sea basins from pollution, 4) prevention from industrial accidents and natural disasters and elimination of their consequences, growth of environmentally friendly industries; 5) harmonization of infrastructure development, including energy safety, transport and communication networks development of cross-border relations and 6) expansion of cooperation in the spheres of legal support, science, education, culture, sports and youth; as well as full equality for the national minorities in accessing services in all walks of life.<sup>35</sup>

The objective of the Euroregion Upper Prut is targeting two main problems simultaneously, namely: establishing good-neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between the border administrative units of the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, which will promote their sustainable economic and social development and improve interethnic relations. In terms of Ukraine and EU cross-border regional policy and the development of NATO's effective mechanisms to achieve Ukraine secure integration into Europe.

There is still some considerable controversy surrounding the aspect whether the objectives of the Euroregion are implemented properly. Our strong conviction is that the main causes of the complex environmental and economic situation in both Ukraine and Romania are the disregard for the laws of the development of the economy, the inappropriate use of natural resources and the poor protection of the environment. The Ukrainian expert in cross-border cooperation, political scientist Dr. Kruglashov (2013; p.34)<sup>36</sup> asserts: '... the CBC agenda and Euroregional cooperation never gained momentum as state policy priority. The above-mentioned difficulties are even more exacerbated by as yet considerable gaps between the legal framework and administrative practices in Romania, Moldavia and Ukraine concerning CBC of local and regional authorities and other actors (businesses, NGOs, media, etc). Existing divergences negatively affect the Euroregion's advancement. Even some projects at the stage of implementation may be scrutinised differently in partner countries by local authorities, making the situation hardly tolerable'.

While it is reasonable to agree that, the EU Enlargement towards Eastern Europe helps overcoming numerous minority conflicts in the area in general, Ukraine-Romania borders including in particular (Pfetsch, 2007, p.18)<sup>37</sup>. As an outstanding Romanian scholar Brie outlined, the Euroregion falls into the category of those with potentially high functional level and requires the identification of solutions for the interconnection of two systems with common traditions, but different stances towards the EU. The main objectives of the UPE were to establish cross-border cooperation, enriched by interregional

<sup>35</sup> Kyfiak, V. (2008). Funktsionuvannia yevrorehionu Verkhonii Prut ta yoho rol v intehratsiinykh protsesakh Ukrainy', *Ekonomika Ukrainy* vol. 6:67.

<sup>36</sup> Kruglashov, A. (2013). Euroregion Upper Prut: Studies and Activities, *Eurolimes*, 6:27-39.

<sup>37</sup> Pfetsch, F. (2007). Borders Cause of Conflict or Catalyst for Peace? [online]. *Eurolimes*, 4:16-28. [Viewed 7 March 2018. Available from: [http://iser.rdsor.ro/main\\_page/Documents/Eurolimes/pdf/4\\_eurolimes.pdf](http://iser.rdsor.ro/main_page/Documents/Eurolimes/pdf/4_eurolimes.pdf).



and international experience, based on the legal framework, enjoying good-neighborly practices as well as financing of cross-border activities. The extension of the European Union favored the development of regional programs designed to stimulate cross-border cooperation between Romania and Ukraine. The implementation of common policies established by the constitutive agreements of the Euroregions, and operational development of cross-border cooperation resulted in the increase of contacts between Romanian and Ukrainian institutions (Brie, 2010; p.310)<sup>38</sup>.

To recapitulate, despite criticism that followed the signing of the Treaty, the Euroregion appeared to be a breakthrough, offering solutions to maintaining harmonious rapport with Romanian ethnicity on Ukrainian territory and solving problems of the Northeast part. Importantly, this perspective is supported by the relevant experience in solution of current issues concerning environmental protection and sustainable development of the economy in the Ukraine and Romania border areas. Consequently, Euroregions strategy should be one of the integral constructs of cross-border cooperation to create favorable conditions for the protection, preservation and reproduction of biodiversity, the guarantee of environmental safety and sustainable economic development.

#### ***Deepening of Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation (Chernivtsi region case study)***

Remarkably, the core regions of the Romania-Ukraine Joint Operational Programme 2014-2020 are indicated by the Programming document for EU support to ENI Cross-Border Cooperation and covers: Romania – 5 counties – Suceava, Botoșani, Satu-Mare, Maramureș, Tulcea; Ukraine – 4 oblasts – Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odessa, and **Chernivtsi**. In terms of proportionality, the Ukrainian eligible area is more than double in size compared to the Romanian territory. The total length of the border of the eligible area is of 649.4 km. The border varies in terms of type: mainland – 273.8 km, river – 343.9 km, and sea – 31.7 km. Furthermore, the Southern part of the Romanian-Ukrainian border divides the shared biosphere of the Danube Delta<sup>39</sup>.

It is not surprisingly that cross-border economic relations have entered a new qualitative level of its development. The focal point of such reforming is the gradual transformation of cross-country rivalry into rapprochement. The development of cross-border environmental, economic, political and legal cooperation is considered as one of the potent strategies for pursuing regional policy for both Ukraine and Romania. From the legal perspective, CBC covers the border area of Chernivtsi region (*Ukraine*) and Botoșani and Suceava (*Romania*), and contributes to the overall objective of the European Neighborhood Instrument: evolution towards a region of prosperity and good neighborliness, achieved through Cross Border *Cooperation* actions to the benefit of neighboring EU Member Cooperation.

The concluded cooperation covers all areas of the interregional development (infrastructure, health-care, tourism, employment, landscape protection, innovation and training). One of the development strategies of the Ukrainian-Romanian transborder region is the emphasis on the innovative entrepreneurship (Chernivtsi region), a competitive and innovation economy (Transcarpathian region), as well as the development of tourist and recreational areas (Ivano-Frankivsk region). Critically, Romania official websites provide all the information in Romanian, eventually we find it difficult to make an in-depth analysis of their strategic documents. Instead, the Ukrainian part is drawn an attention to at jointly arranged EU-Ukraine projects and programs. One of the main priorities of the Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation is Chernivtsi oblast development: the Chernivtsi region is an ecologically clean cross-border region with the European standards of living, high scientific potential, and a multicultural center of the country, a leader in the development of small and medium innovative business<sup>40</sup>.

The understanding of the most effective mechanism, which affects practical implementation of transboundary initiatives, has been nourished from several fronts, since the Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013 aimed at further developing the border economy,

<sup>38</sup> Brie, M. and Horga, I. (2010). The Romanian-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation at the European instruments. *Ukraine-Romania-Moldova: historical, political and cultural aspects of their relations in the contemporary European processes context*, 302-318, Chernivtsi, Bukrek.

<sup>39</sup> *Joint Operational Programme Romania – Ukraine 2014-2020*, [online], 2016, [Viewed 1 February 2018]. Available from: <http://www.ro-ua-md.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/0-Romania-Ukraine-JOP-approved.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> *Strategy of the Sustainable Development of Chernivtsi region by 2020*. (2015). [Viewed 12 March 2019]: Available from: [http://www.bukoda.gov.ua/sites/default/files/doc/PDF/proekt\\_strategiyi\\_rozvitku\\_oblasti\\_2020.pdf](http://www.bukoda.gov.ua/sites/default/files/doc/PDF/proekt_strategiyi_rozvitku_oblasti_2020.pdf).

confront environmental challenges and enhance their preparedness for emergency situations. The program also promoted closer interaction between people and communities living in the border areas<sup>41</sup>. In addition, in 2009 the Ukrainian-Romanian 'First Agrarian Cluster' was launched in Chernivtsi region. The cluster covered Chernivtsi region, as well as Khmelnytsky, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk regions (Ukraine), Botoșani and Suceava County (Romania) and Moldova. Broadly, cluster-based economic development strategies are designed to improve a cluster's performance by addressing the common needs of businesses of a definite geographic region. To be more precise, 'First Agrarian Cluster' has proved to increase the innovation agriculture, develop and effectively implement regional competitiveness in local self-government bodies, in the system of training highly-qualified personnel for the region agribusiness, providing the Ukrainian market with organic products in exchange of selling berries and mushrooms to Western Europe.

Evaluating Ukraine-Romania CBC in general and Chernivtsi region as a central actor of Ukraine-Romania Cooperation in particular, we draw a conclusion that differing conditions across the border can definitely benefit regional development in terms of social and economic convergence between the border regions. The analysis showed that promoting external cross-border cooperation was one of the priorities of the EU, therefore, Ukraine-Romania convergence is stipulated by investment projects, attracting financing and harmonizing regional development.

### ***Security and Cross-border Cooperation***

In the context of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Law of Ukraine on the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement, we should emphasize that the topic of convergence and synergy of Ukraine-Romania's cross-border cooperation increased the topicality of convergent sustainable cross-border cooperation (CBC) as a distinctive model of coherent interstate collaboration, embedded in the neighboring borderland regions. It is generally recognized, that stability and security are essential to economic and social development, for strengthening resilience and improving livelihood of the people. Noteworthy and fundamentally, The EU provides wide-ranging support in order to ensure the integrity of partner states and to guarantee the personal and cyber security and quality of life of citizens, notably through security sector reform, border management, confidence building measures, crisis prevention and civil protection against natural disasters. In addition, the EU's Cross-Border Cooperation program seeks to reinforce cooperation and reduce potential tensions between partner countries and between partner countries and EU Member States along the EU's external borders<sup>42</sup>.

Taking into consideration the state of affairs, the Ukraine crisis underway since November 2013 is a significant occurrence in a greater debate over what norms will prevail in the European – and global – security environment. According to Sullivan (2015; p.79)<sup>43</sup>.

'Ukraine has become a battleground in a greater debate over which norms will prevail in the European – and global – security environment. At stake are the liberal norms of democracy, multilateralism, partnership, and the rule of law that the EU is founded upon. Russia seems to have abandoned these principles in the Ukraine case, although it had promised to respect them under the Helsinki Final Act and the Budapest Memorandum. The growth of the European Union's commitment to compete with Russia over Ukraine indicates that the EU is willing to defend these values. It is more evident now than ever before that there is a deepening competition between the European Union and Russia, with Ukraine at the center.'

The crux of the matter is the benefits of Romania as a strategic partner for outlining top priorities of Ukraine's foreign policy, since Romania as the closest border of Ukraine serves as an EU-member and a guarantor of stability and security that are essential for economic and social development. Located on the Eastern border of the European Union, Romania has a direct interest in a stable and secure EU neighborhood, and it regards the advancement of European norms, values, and, eventually, institutions

<sup>41</sup> *Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova 2007-2013*, [online], [Viewed 7 February 2018]. Available from: <http://www.bilat-ukraina.eu/en/256.php>.

<sup>42</sup> EU Neighbours. East [online] Security, Cross-Border Cooperation & Border Management. [Viewed 5 November 2018]. Available from: <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/eu-in-action/security-cross-border-cooperation-border-management>.

<sup>43</sup> Sullivan, Kyle A. (2015). *The Russian-European Union Competition in Ukraine*. Naval Postgraduate School. Monterey, California. 104p. (Viewed April 15, 2019) Available from: <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a632407.pdf>.

there as a guarantee of its long-term stability. Importantly, having initially condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea and its destabilizing actions in Eastern Ukraine, Romania continues to be vocal in its condemnation of Russia's actions in the region (Osgood, 2014; p.78)<sup>44</sup>.

To summarize, Romania is well aware that its stance on the situation in Ukraine and Romania continues to support EU actions and initiatives in the region. It also backed NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine at the alliance's Bucharest summit in 2008, and has constantly pushed for closer cooperation between these countries and the EU. Together with Poland and the Baltic countries, Romania has also asked for increased security measures in the region, and it has fully supported and taken part in NATO operations in the region and in the Black Sea (Bohatyrets, Zoriy, <sup>45</sup>). Its air force has conducted joint exercises with the U.S. military, and assisted NATO in its air-policing efforts. In the context of strengthening regional security and improving cooperation between Ukraine and Romania were the first joint naval exercises conducted on the Danube River between Izmail and the Romanian port of Brăila. For three days, marines and marine border guards of both countries practiced joint actions on ensuring security for civilian traffic, rescue and inspection operations, and maneuvers in river navigation. These maneuvers will enable us to maintain stability in the region, ensure high-quality training of our forces and implement standards of cooperation between the marines<sup>46</sup>.

Thus, data from several studies suggest that experts have always seen Ukraine as an independent European state striving to establish, develop and diversify bilateral good-neighborly relations with Romania both regionally and internationally. What is more, the similarity of the neighboring states' strategic orientations grounds the basis for development and enhancement of Ukraine-Romania cooperation. The fundamental characteristics of such cooperation lay in multi-dimensional patterns and partnership agreement tools – sister cities agreements, interregional partnership, and cross-regional cooperation.

#### ***Cross-border cultural cooperation***

We find it imperative to articulate that the ultimate objective of cultural diplomacy aims to share the same values, to appreciate art while crossing ethnic and geographic borders of neighbors with different backgrounds and mentality. The triumphant public diplomacy has become of paramount importance in the present-day globalized world – the reality, where culture, knowledge and communication are the core constructs of technological advance and economic thriving as well as social cohesion and sustainable development. Cultural cooperation as a part of cultural diplomacy serves as a crucial step towards the sustainable development of harmonization of interstates' and evidenced by the significant number of cultural projects supported by the European Interregional programs. The impact of one of the most influential part of the cultural diplomacy – education is humongous.

The pivotal point of such cooperation has become the establishment of *the Centre for Romanian Studies (CRS)* on May 7, 2015. It should be articulated, that in 2019 it celebrated its fifth anniversary of fruitful, supportive and informative cooperation with Romanian institutions of higher education and other stakeholders. The Centre functions as a structural subdivision of the Faculty of History, Political Science and International Studies of Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University. It is important to note that the Centre's top priority is to bring together scientists from various fields interested in array of Romanian problems, vital significance of Romanian-Ukrainian relations as well as scientific exchange that drastically contributes to the educational process improvement, in particular through interaction with the universities of Romania, in particular Suceava, Iasi, Oradea. To accomplish its tasks, the Centre hosted and arranged a range of conferences covering topical issues of both trans-states as well as it proceeds with collaborating with other centers and organizations that share common goals and objectives; maintains international cooperation, and initiates the conclusion of relevant agreements. The problems under study encompass the following domains: 'Security at the eastern bor-

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<sup>44</sup> Osgood, C. (2014). NATO Deploys Ever Closer to Russia. *In Executive Intelligence Review*, p.78 [Viewed 17 February 2019]: [https://larouchepub.com/other/2014/4115nato\\_closer\\_russia.html](https://larouchepub.com/other/2014/4115nato_closer_russia.html),

<sup>45</sup> Bohatyrets, V. and Zoriy, Ya. (2016). Civil-Military Relations and Territorial Defense Issues. *Ante Portas – Studia nad Bezpieczeństwem*, 2(7): 289-298. Available from:[http://anteportas.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/AP.VII\\_Bohatyrets-Zoriy.pdf](http://anteportas.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/AP.VII_Bohatyrets-Zoriy.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Agency Report (8 September 2018). Ukraine and Romania Conduct Their First Joint Naval Exercises [online]. *Independent*. [Viewed 9 March 2019]. Available from: [https://www.independent.ng/ukraine-and-romania-conduct-their-first-joint-naval-exercises/?amp\\_markup=1](https://www.independent.ng/ukraine-and-romania-conduct-their-first-joint-naval-exercises/?amp_markup=1).

der of the EU: force and information factors’, ‘Current regional problems of the present: analysis, forecasting of regional phenomena and processes’, ‘European identity and cultural diversity on the eastern border of the European Union’, ‘Cross-Border regions: prospects and realities of CBC sustainable development’ (Melnychuk, 2015, p.19)<sup>47</sup>. Owing to the Centre of Romanian Studies and Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza (Iași) scholars and researchers participated in several international conferences, focused on interdisciplinary research and professional development within international context ‘Dezvoltare internațională și democratizare’. Such academic venues bring together different scholars to take advantage of continual process of developing ideas, arguing their case and contesting others’ ideas.

One of the latest achievements of such joint cooperation of Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza (Iași), Universitatea Ștefan cel Mare (Suceava) and Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University (Chernivtsi) has been the project “Jean Monnet Online Course of European Integration: Economic Development” (co-funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union). The course was coordinated and held by Professor Diego Varela, Chair holder of Jean Monnet Chair in European Political Economy). The Masters of IS and 3d-year students of IS grabbed an excellent opportunity to fulfill the course requirements and were certified for their active participation in lectures and seminars on ‘Open Online Course of European integration: the EU and its policies, economic issues of EU sustainable development’ and ‘European Integration: Strategic Communications’<sup>48</sup>. As an effective outcome of listening to the course, has become a video entitled ‘What the EU means for us’ recorded by the students<sup>49</sup>.

The mission of educational and cultural exchanges predetermines not only the increasing mutual understanding between people of the different countries but a huge impact on the economy and the development of peaceful relations. Taking Chernivtsi region as a paradigm, we can state that, the community attempts to create favorable, and predominantly, equally profited conditions for national and cultural revival and development of all national cultures.

Our research has prompted us to infer that crosscutting targets of CBC are territorial cohesion, cultural inter-enrichment, equal opportunities and sustainable development. In our opinion, Ukraine-Romania cross-border cultural cooperation as a powerful toolkit of enhancing opportunity and value of interstate relations prove to strengthen its regulatory environment, moreover, to remove barriers of existing borders, based on cultural similarities and on economic and social differences, and further integration into EU and effectively compete in the new globally connected community.

### **Conclusions**

Finally summing up, cross border cooperation at the external borders of the EU continues to represent a top priority for the European Union during the 2014-2020 programming period. Clearly there is need for a greater focus on the core policy objectives of Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation, namely, maintaining sustainable development along Ukraine-Romania’s external borders, minimizing discrepancy in living standards, facing the challenges and seizing the opportunities, deriving from the geographic proximity of cross-border regions. As the research has demonstrated, the Ukraine-Romania cross border cooperation is a pivotal factor of boosting geostrategic, economic, political and cultural development for each participant country, largely depending on the neighboring countries’ cohesion and convergence. Significantly, there is an even stronger emphasis on the fact that while sharing the same borders, the countries share common interests and aspirations for economic thriving, cultural exchange, diplomatic ties and security, guaranteed by a legal framework. To review, the cross-bordering communities proactively involved in the regional collaboration succeed in fostering communication and trust building, advancing their social and economic wellbeing and could avoid any negative effects that can occur on the borders. Although, it is difficult to assess all the efforts of the European Union’s policy in CBC and its legal instruments to yield fruitful outcomes in the context of

<sup>47</sup> Melnychuk, L. (2015). The Center for Romanian Studies as a Crucial Step to Effective Ukraine-Romania Relations, *Modern Historical and Political Issues*, **30-31**:19-22

<sup>48</sup> *Jean Monnet Open Online Course of European Integration: Economic Development [online]*. Available from: <http://www.eurosci.net/courses/jean-monnet-open-online-course-european-integration-economic-development>.

<sup>49</sup> What the EU means for us: video by students of Valentyna Bohatyrets at ChNU. [online]. *EUROSCI Network*. [Viewed 25 November 2018]. Available from: <https://www.eurosci.net/events/what-eu-means-us-video-students-valentyna-bohatyrets-chnu>

trans-border states, the European instruments are likely to have developed an effective legislative and institutional framework to enhance Ukraine-Romania cross-border cooperation. The wider implication from this study is that borderlands are subject to the same push- and pull-factors as other interstates. Our quantitative analysis traces the cross-border cooperation development and gives all grounds to assert that the accumulated experience has complimented to a better understanding of Ukraine's pro-European choice that will facilitate Ukraine's convergence with the world economy and policy.

The authors delved into Ukraine-Romania CBC aspect, which immensely developed and contributed to their understanding the importance of the effectiveness of the Euroregions that are enhancing the territories' economic booming, social problems resolving, in general, and Ukraine's compliance with the European standards, in particular. The following study illustrates that Romania's accession to the EU can definitely serve as a model for Ukraine to emulate in terms of its experience of cross-border cooperation and its border regions' sustainable development. Therefore, the authors put forward some guidelines of cross-border cooperation roadmap that might make a binding commitment to both CBC participants:

- to jointly facilitate favorable climate for foreign investments in the border regions;
- to provide a base for improving regulatory tax legislation; complying with the principles of transparency, openness and coherence of both parties in order to practice open business, while countering shady business and smuggling;
- to effectively fight against corruption; to co-operate in order to solve common environmental problems at the Carpathian regional level (issues of deforestation and a transboundary waters);
- to drastically develop border infrastructure and open new border crossing points along the borders to have easier and faster access for the catchment territory residents.

To recapitulate the value of Ukraine-Romania interstate relations is particularly verified by the dynamics of global and regional processes that suggest common actions aimed at ensuring regional security. The measures related to the thematic priorities of sustainable development of cross-border clusters are taken to profit from the potential of the Euroregions: the Carpathian Euroregion (Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania), the Lower Danube (Ukraine, Moldova, Romania) and the Upper Prut (Ukraine, Moldova, Romania). By all accounts, and with proven results, currently no cross-border cluster functions properly and efficiently. Notwithstanding, both Ukraine and Romania are aspiring to build a united and powerful Europe, strengthen a common space of democracy, freedom, security, and stability as well as develop beneficial good-neighborly relations. It is desirable that both parts should make great strides to increase the trust between experts and the civil society representatives, as well as the stakeholders in the field of democratic development and security, and contribute to development of joint regional actions that target both Ukraine and Romania.

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