
ON TRACK WITH THRACE: EXPLORING CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE EU'S SOUTH-EASTERN EXTERNAL BORDERS

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ABSTRACT

This study has been written in the light of my Masters Degree European Studies at the University of Twente and the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, under the authority of the Association of European Border Regions. This thesis was aimed at finding the current missing links in cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe on the basis of theory and best-practices. These missing links were based on three models: the theory of Paasi regarding the institutionalization of a region; the theory of Perkmann in relation to determinants of successful cross-border cooperation within the scope of policy entrepreneurship; and best-practices with regards to elements of successful cross-border cooperation provided by the Association of European Border Regions. These three models are elaborately described in the theoretical framework in this thesis.

The field research included looking at to what extent these models could be found in the practice of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe, more specifically Thrace. Thrace served as a case study as the region is representative for the past and contemporary problems in the entire area. The results were obtained by means of conducting a series of in-depth interviews of a qualitative nature (N=10).

As for my conclusions, the results indicated that cross-border cooperation is still at in a developing phase. At the moment, cross-border cooperation mainly revolves around ad-hoc, project oriented relations between municipal and regional authorities from across the borders. This can be attributed to a number of factors, of which the most important are the nature of the governmental systems, problems in trust and the fact that cross-border cooperation is a fairly new concept in South-East Europe. However, the respondents are hopeful for the future. On the basis of these results a number of specific recommendations were made, by which hopefully the current missing links in cross-border cooperation can be addressed.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

“Regional co-operation amongst the countries of South-East Europe (SEE) is a condition for closer integration with the European Union. It is also at the heart of economic development and stabilization in SEE. Cross-Border Cooperation between local actors (governmental, civic, and business) across national borders provides the practical underpinning to regional cooperation while catering to the particular needs and interests of local communities in border regions: it serves as an important tool for reinforcing institutions at local level, regional economic development as well as security and the peaceful coexistence of neighbouring peoples and states. Cross-border co-operation as a means for reconciliation and regional development, going back to the 50s of the last century, proved to be an important tool for the integration process in Europe after the 2nd world war. Following this experience, but also the experience and positive results achieved through cross-border co-operation and Euroregions on the external borders of the EU, especially towards the Central and East European countries after 1989 and the fall of the iron curtain, one can recognize the importance of supporting such local initiatives of cross-border co-operation” (Cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe, 2002:1).

This statement was made at the International Conference on *Cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe* in 2002. Therefore, it can be established that 7 years ago the importance and added value of cross-border cooperation in South Eastern Europe was already recognized. It is clear that cross-border cooperation is considered an important factor in the light of European integration, regional development and the overall rebuilding of relations and trust across Europe after the Second World War and more recently the Cold War. It is therefore not surprising that many scholars, researchers and policy makers have already committed themselves to the study of cross-border cooperation. From a theoretical and practice perspective it is therefore clear in what forms cross-border cooperation should take place; and more importantly, which specific structures, policy fields and activities and resource bases are optimal for successful cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, the extent of institutionalization of a (cross-border) region is considered a factor as well. On the one hand if a (cross-border) region is highly institutionalized the extent of and the possibilities for cross-border cooperation are substantially better; on the other hand if the extent of institutionalization is very low, the cross-border cooperation can be marked as a cooperation form between local and regional authorities across the border. Finally, on the basis of experiences of policy makers and

politicians participating in cross-border cooperation, it can be defined what makes cross-border cooperation successful.

In this study these three models – institutionalization of a (cross-border) region, theory and best-practices of cross-border cooperation – are used to look into the development of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe. Question remained to what extent these three models of successful cross-border cooperation can be found in this region. Therefore, within the framework of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe, Cross-Border Regions in the area of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey have been studied by applying the following question:

“To what extent can cross border cooperation in the regions in the South-East European external borders be improved?”

This question can be considered as the central research question in this study aimed at making recommendations for enhanced or better cross border cooperation in South Eastern Europe’s external borders on the basis of theory, best practices and empirical research. An important part of this study is in the form of field research. The field research was aimed at discovering the missing links in cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe and on the basis of these missing links tailor-made recommendations can be proposed.

In order to answer this central research question a specific set of sub-questions have been drafted:

1. ***“To what extent is the region of Thrace institutionalized as a cross-border region?”***
2. ***“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”***
3. ***“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best practices and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”***

These sub questions will be more elaborately addressed in paragraph 1.4 regarding the structure of this thesis.

Cross-border structures in South-East Europe are indicated on the map in Fig. 1 (The red areas are full AEBR Members):



FIGURE 1 CROSS-BORDER STRUCTURES SOUTH-EAST EUROPE, SOURCE: WWW.AEBR.NET, 2009

The specific area that has been approached is known as “Thrace”, and has existed since ancient times across the borders of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey. The cross-border cooperation structures that are subject of this study include numbers 175 to 180 (AEBR Website, 16 November 2009):

- 175: Euroregion Strymon-Strouma (BG/GR)
- 176: Euroregion Nestos-Mesta (BG/GR)
- 177: Euroregion Delta-Rhodopi (BG/GR)
- 178: Region East-Macedonia Thrace (GR)
- 179: Euroregion Network Polis-Kent (GR/TR)
- 180: Euroregion Evros – Meric – Maritsa (GR/BG/TR)

As one can see, they partly overlap each other; therefore the Euroregions are strongly connected amongst themselves and often include actors being active in multiple cross-border structures.

Reasons for choosing this specific area as a subject of this study from the range of areas in South-East Europe include the factor that Thrace can be considered an “ancient” region and therefore there should be some extent of regional awareness even though the area is divided over three countries. Therefore it is expected to include some extent of institutionalization of the region. Secondly, it is interesting to research a region that includes an “old”, a “new” EU Member and a candidate EU Member, which in the past has caused problems and probably in the future will as well. Furthermore, the exact borders of the area can be considered as relatively new, since only after the fall of the Ottoman Empire the current states have been formed, disputes over the exact borders are very much known in this area, and therefore there should be strong connections crossing over the borders among citizens. As a corollary, the citizens have a rich common history together, including wars, ethnic cleansings and accordingly should have a strong regional

identity. Finally, due to past tensions and current suspicions especially between Greece and Turkey, cross-border cooperation should contribute to the process of regaining trust between the three countries. It is therefore very important for Thrace that missing links in the current cross-border cooperation are discovered. In the next paragraph a profile of the region is sketched, by means of highlighting the history of Thrace.

1.2 HISTORY OF THE REGION

From literature, Thrace is considered to be a geographical and historical region in South-East Europe, spreading over Bulgaria (Northern Thrace), North-East Greece (Western Thrace) and European Turkey (Eastern Thrace). Furthermore, three seas shape the coastline of Thrace: the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara. The region is shaped by leafy mountains in the North and the long Aegean coastline in the South. Thrace is unique for its minorities: in Greek Thrace, a strong Turkish minority with its own language and culture is still very strong. Unfortunately, the Greek minority in Turkey has dwindled (Encyclopaedia State University, 2009; Armstrong et al. 2008:310:312). In this paragraph a short overview of the history of Thrace is provided including Ancient Times, the Middle Ages, the Ottoman Rule and the 20th Century turbulence in this beautiful region.

Today Thrace still has a principally agricultural economy. In Eastern Thrace, high-quality Turkish tobacco is the chief crop of the region. In Western Thrace corn and rice are grown in the lowlands of the Evros River and the lower planes. Furthermore, near Alexandroupoli, vineyards can be found where wine is produced. Oyster farming and eel fishing in Keramoti and Komotini are the primary form production and are exported to Central Europe. The manufacturing industries of Thrace are mainly driven by the processing of agricultural crops, tobacco curing, and wine production (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009).



FIGURE 2 MAP OF REGIONS IN ANCIENT TIMES

1.2.1 ANCIENT TIMES

Until the 4th Century BC, Thrace, as depicted in Fig. 2 in yellow, was home to a number of warring tribes. Their religion was also known as the cult of the Great Gods. It was a pagan religion which influenced the whole of Greece and started already in 1000 BC. In the 4th Century BC the Odrysian State was formed, which contained some form of political organization, since the Thracians organized themselves in petty kingdoms and tribes. These small units never achieved any form of national unity beyond short, dynastic rules at the height of the Greek classical period. The inhabitants were of Indo-European decent and had developed advanced forms of music, poetry and artistic crafts. The father of Thracian culture is considered to be Orpheus, who in modern times is still captivated in society. Furthermore, Thracian mercenaries were always in demand, as they were fierce fighters, although a bit expensive at times, and liable to switch sides (Armstrong et al. 2008:310; Encyclopaedia State University, 2009).

Early on Thracians came under the cultural influence of the ancient Greeks, preserving until a much later time, however, their language and culture. The first Greek colonies in Thrace were founded in the 6th century BC. Furthermore, Thracian infantry was heavily recruited by Greek states and large deposits of gold and silver were mined. The region was conquered by Philip II of Macedon in the 4th century BC and was ruled by the kingdom of Macedon for a century and a half. The destruction of the ruling parties in Macedonia destabilized their authority over Thrace, and its tribal authorities began to act once more on their own accord. However, when the Romans annexed the Macedonian Kingdom in 146 BC, they faced neighbouring Thrace and created conditions for their involvement in their affairs. After the Macedonian Wars (215 BC - 148 BC), Thrace came to acknowledge Roman rule. *Thracia* was established in AD 46, when the former Roman client state of Thrace was annexed by order of Emperor Claudius. (Encyclopaedia State University, 2009; Avramea 2003:135).

The period of Roman rule meant a definitive dissemination of Greek culture and civilization in Thrace. However, for centuries the Thracians had been recipients of the strong influence of Greek language and education, which they continued to follow (Triantaphyllos 2003:97). The roman civil administration brought changes to the geographical, ethnological and political boundaries of Thrace, by creating new provinces and adding and separating cities and islands off the coast of Thrace. Finally, during the Roman occupation the *Roman Limes* reached as far as the river Nestos (Avramea 2003:135). Another interesting fact is the following: the Romans did accept the political organization of Thrace, based on the Greek system. As a result, there was no direct administrative contact between the population of Thrace and the Romans. Thrace could

therefore maintain its political institutions during the period of Roman rule (Avramea 2003:147).

1.2.2 THE MIDDLE AGES (330-1453)

After the 4th Century AD division of the Roman Empire in East and West, Thrace became strategically significant, since it was part of the *Via Egnatia* trade route¹. From 330-1453 AD Thrace fell under the rule of the Eastern Roman Empire: the Byzantine Empire. Under this rule, Eastern Thrace was considered to be the '*the breadbasket of Constantinople*', which was an allusion to its wheat production, but also a reference to the fact that Thrace was of vital importance for the defence of the Byzantine capital. Thrace, surrounding and defending the heart of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, therefore became the victim of pillage and destruction. Thrace was "easy pickings" for marauding Goths, Huns, Vandals, Bulgars, and crusaders. Therefore, characteristic of the archaeology of Thrace is the small number of surviving monuments and the large numbers of ruins (Armstrong et al. 2008:312; Bakirtzis 2003:151).

The Byzantine Empire retained control over the region until the beginning of the 9th century when the larger part of Thrace was annexed by the Bulgarians. Constantinople regained Thrace in 972, only to lose it again to the Bulgarians at the end of the 12th century. Throughout the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century, the region oscillated between Bulgaria and the Byzantine Empire. A sudden destruction of the region came in 1265, when Thrace suffered a Mongol raid. Only in 1352, the Ottomans conducted their first incursion into the region subduing it completely within a matter of two decades and occupying it for five centuries. For Thrace – even though the citizens suffered from the occupation – it meant that for the first time since the division of the Roman Empire, it could enjoy some extended periods of peace and quiet (Armstrong et al 2008; Encyclopaedia State University, 2009).

1.2.3 OTTOMAN RULE (1354-1922)

When Gallipoli was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1354, the Ottomans had in fact conquered Thrace as well, since they now controlled the sea traffic between Europe and Asia through the Dardanelles. The invasion of the Turks into the heartland of Thrace forced the Greek population to seek refuge in the upland regions which were difficult to access. Mass settling of Muslims in modern Eastern Thrace took place as well. The Ottomans attempted to alter the ethnological

¹ The Via Egnatia was a Roman trade route built in the 3rd Century BC connecting the Roman colonies on the East coast of the Adriatic Sea with those at the other side of the Balkans, thereby connecting Byzantium with the rest of the Empire (Via Egnatia Foundation, 2009).

structure of the territory, by organizing this migration, while at the same time sending wealthy and powerful Thracian families to Karesi, located in Asia Minor. This resulted in a large scale Muslimization of Thrace, at the cost of the Christian population. The phenomenon of Muslimization in Thrace was accompanied by the violent displacement of the Christian element: a significant part of the population was obliged to convert to Islam, because otherwise it would be impossible to survive (Vakalopoulos 2003:211).

In the Struggle for Independence of 1821, the Thracians played a vital role. Thracian revolutionaries were active in villages surrounding the Saros Gulf and the mountains were ideal hiding places for Thracian rebels. However, the revolutionaries were not trained well enough and proved to be inexperienced in the art of war during the battle in Samothrace (1821). In the end, the Ottomans plundered and destructed villages in the whole of Thrace, massacring 700 men and enslaving many women and children. However, the Thracians continued their struggle for liberty and independence (Vakalopoulos 2003:220-221).

In the nineteenth century further disruptions in the area stemmed from an ecclesiastical issue in both the countryside as well as in the urban centres of Northern Thrace. The antagonism between Christian national groups was further exacerbated by Muslim fanaticism. The goals of the Bulgarian nationalist movement entailed the separation of the ecclesial jurisdiction of the Patriarchate² and thereby the founding of the independent Bulgarian Church and the promotion of Bulgarian language at schools. This crisis came to a climax in 1857 when a proposal concerning the foundation of new community regulations was rejected during the general assembly of the Christian community of Philippopolis. In 1861 the final separation of the two communities (Bulgarian and Greek) took place when the Bulgarians de facto occupied some churches and a school. Bulgarian education gradually got the upper hand in the province of Philippopolis. The Bulgarian nationalist movement was supported by Russia as well (Vakalopoulos 2003: 225-226).

The Eastern Crisis, which broke out in the Balkans (1875-1878), meant some substantial developments for the future status of Thrace as well. These developments became even clearer after the Bulgarian Revolt of 1876, including atrocities and massacres among citizens and the vehemence of Muslim fanaticism. In 1876 the Conference of Constantinople took place, which resulted in the provisions for the formation of a Bulgarian state, redrawing the borders of Thrace (and Macedonia as well) and including a large part of the Balkan mountain range. This measure mobilized Thracian Hellenism in all directions: it became clear for the Patriarchate and for official Greek policy, that the removal of the Greek provinces of Thrace to the future Slav

² The Patriarchate includes the highest ranking bishops in the Eastern Orthodox religion.

provinces was not an option. Only with the ending of the Russian-Turkish war, with the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano (1878) an autonomous Bulgarian state was founded, including extensive regions of Thrace, in practice starting the current division within the region. Finally, during the Congress of Berlin (1878), it was decided that Northern Thrace would be incorporated into the semi-autonomous Ottoman province of Eastern Rumelia, which finally united with Bulgaria in 1885 (Vakalopoulos 2003:227).

1.2.4 THE TURBULENT 20TH CENTURY

The first disruption in the 20th Century in the Thrace was caused by the Balkan Wars (1912-1918). The Balkan League fought against the Ottoman Empire and annexed most of its Western territory, among it Thrace. The Balkan Wars led to the destruction of cities and towns in Eastern Thrace, the extermination of Greeks in Adrianople and several other cities. While suffering from the occupation of the region by the Bulgarian army, the population also underwent reprisals from the Turkish army. In Greek Thrace, Bulgarian atrocities were unprecedented. During the second Balkan War, the Greek army liberated Western Thrace and Eastern Thrace was recaptured by the Ottomans. The Treaty of Bucharest (1913) reversed these territorial gains, assigning Western Thrace to Bulgaria again, subsequently leading to the mass departure of Greeks and Muslims to respectively Macedonia and Constantinople. The new Bulgarian occupation in Thrace led to a repetition of the events in the first Balkan War: violence against the population (Vakalopoulos 2003:238).

During the First World War, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey each forced respective minority populations out of the Thrace region they controlled. Whole communities of Greeks in Eastern Thrace, the Black Sea coasts and southern Bulgaria, were expelled to Greek-controlled Thrace. At the same time, a large number of Bulgarians was forced from the region into Bulgaria by the Greeks and Turks. Turkish populations in the area were also targeted by the Bulgarians and Greeks and forced to relocate in Eastern Thrace. By means of the Treaty of Neuilly (1919), and subsequent agreements, the status of the expelled populations was legitimized. The Treaty of Neuilly and the Treaty of Sevres defined the definitive borders of Thrace between Greece and Turkey. This was followed by a further population exchange which radically changed the demographics of the region: the ethnic character of Thrace had become more homogeneous during the 20th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009; Svolopoulos 2003:267).

The Turks in Greek (Western) Thrace were excluded from the Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923, while many of the Greeks from Anatolia were resettled in Western Thrace. A relatively small number of Turks from Bulgaria were resettled in Eastern Thrace. The Muslim population was exempted from repatriation to Turkey by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), but

many emigrated after the appropriation of their land in 1924 and subsequently continued to emigrate because of deteriorating relations between Greece and Turkey. During the second World War, Greek Thrace has been occupied by Bulgaria (1941-1944), since Bulgaria was part of the Axis powers, further changing the demographics of the region by arresting and deporting the Jews of the region to Germany and death camps (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009; Asia Minor, 2009).

1.2.5 CONCLUDING

This section described a long, but nevertheless very interesting history of the region of Thrace. Through this paragraph the reader should understand why this region is the subject of this study. The three parts of Thrace have a very long common history, which on the one hand creates a certain extent of common regional identity, while on the other hand perhaps an even greater extent of distrust among the inhabitants. The borders have changed hands so many times that it is even difficult for the researcher to understand; the people have suffered greatly; and the (ancient) architecture and landscape have been destroyed several times, not even so long ago. Therefore, it is even the more wonderful that local and regional authorities in Northern, Western and Eastern Thrace have found a way to cooperate with each other, overcoming the past's bad memories and creating hope for good relations in the future.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study consists of a literature study and qualitative research. The literature study is intended to provide the groundwork for my research and to sketch a theoretical framework with which can be worked. The theoretical framework provides the basis for the empirical part of the study, providing assumptions on the basis of theory by scholars and best-practices. The most important theories include those on the institutionalization of a region provided by Paasi (2009) and on the basis of the practice and politics of Euroregions provided by Perkmann (2007). The best-practices are provided by the *Association of European Border Regions*, developed on the basis of their long experience regarding cross-border cooperation. On the basis of this theoretical framework, the questionnaire has been drafted, by means of operationalization of the most important concepts and assumptions derived from theory and best-practices. These concepts included stages of institutionalization of a region, determinants for success and key elements of cross-border cooperation. The objective has been to explore to what extent these concepts are present in Cross-Border Regions in the EU's South-East external borders.

The most appropriate method to come to these recommendations would encompass qualitative field research. Qualitative research entails the *“non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships”* (Babbie 2003:370). This type of field research can provide researchers a comprehensive perspective, which is necessary to meet the objective of this research: *make recommendations for enhanced/better cross border cooperation in South Eastern Europe external borders on the basis of theory, best practices and empirical research*. Therefore, I left for North East Greece for Thrace in order to find my answers for my research questions. The object of research included formal organizations: Cross-Border Regions in South-East Europe. By means of field research answers in relation to my research question have been revealed that otherwise would not be apparent. The method that has been applied within the range of qualitative field research has been that of a *qualitative interview*. Qualitative interviews are based on a set of topics to be discussed based on a general plan. In essence it is a conversation. (Babbie 2003:300). In this case, these topics were based on the theoretical framework based on Paasi, Perkmann and best-practices provided by the AEBR.

Qualitative interviews seemed to be the most appropriate instrument to study the phenomenon of cross-border cooperation structures in South Eastern Europe since:

“Design in qualitative interviewing is iterative. That means that each time you repeat the basis process of gathering information, analyzing it, winnowing it, and testing it, you come closer to a

clear and convincing model of the phenomenon you are studying" (Rubin 1995: 46-47). The intentions of this study are to form a basic idea or model concerning the state of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe.

While qualitative research formally is shaped within the conversation itself and the interviewer does not provide a specific set of questions that must be answered with particular words or in a particular order, this actually has been done in this study (Babbie 2003:300). Since this study provides a clear framework regarding the success of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe, it would almost be a pity not to try to generate the appropriate answers. Therefore, by means of a questionnaire mostly including open questions – open for redirection – and some closed questions, an attempt has been made to answer the central question *"to what extent can cross border cooperation in the regions in the South Eastern European external borders be improved"*.

The respondents of the qualitative interviews included stakeholders and participants in cross-border cooperation. These respondents are involved in cross-border cooperation through their own organisations, including municipal and regional authorities, chambers of commerce, organisations promoting employment, development agencies and universities. Therefore, they can be considered as experts regarding cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe. In total, 10 people have been interviewed, from which 9 from Greece and 1 from Turkey³. Unfortunately, no respondents are included from Bulgaria due to physical accessibility problems – big mountains hindering the infrastructure between Greece and Bulgaria – and language problems – English is not commonly spoken in Bulgaria. However, even though unfortunately no Bulgarian respondents were available, the current results sketch a realistic vision on cross-border cooperation in Thrace. The results of the interviews have subsequently been analyzed and are presented as well in this study by means of quotes in the text, by means of graphs and tables. Finally, on the basis of the information gathered from the interviews plausible and realistic conclusions and recommendations are presented.

³ For this study I have interviewed 9 men and 1 woman. This can be explained by the predominantly male work-force, wherein women are significantly underrepresented (Armstrong et al Greece 2008:54).

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

Following the central research question, “*to what extent can cross border cooperation in the regions in the South Eastern European external borders be improved*”, a set of three sub-questions have been drafted that are directly linked to the chapters in this thesis. The three sub-questions include:

4. ***“To what extent is the region of Thrace institutionalized as a cross-border region?”***
5. ***“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”***
6. ***“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best practices and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”***

These sub-questions are dealt with in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. In Chapter 2, the theory regarding the institutionalization process of a region on the basis of Paasi is introduced. Furthermore, in Chapter 2 the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory (Perkmann) and on the basis of best-practices (AEBR) are presented, thereby elaborating on the theory used in all three sub-questions. Chapter 2 is therefore divided into three main parts, wherein all three models defining successful cross-border cooperation are presented:

- A. History and Geography on the basis of Paasi (2009);
- B. Practice and Politics on the basis of Perkmann (2007);
- C. Practice and Politics on the basis of key elements in successful cross-border cooperation (AEBR 2008).

In Chapter 3 the findings from the field research regarding the history and geography relating to the institutionalization process of a region are analyzed. In the conclusion of this chapter the first sub-question is answered and some recommendations for future cooperation will be presented. These recommendations are presented in the text in bold.

In Chapter 4, the results regarding determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory *and* best-practices will be presented. The choice for this lies in the simple reason that both theory and best-practices in cross-border cooperation relate to Practice and Politics, are therefore interrelated and should be presented in the same chapter. Therefore, answering sub-question 3 and 4 will be done in the conclusion of Chapter 4. As in Chapter 3, some

recommendations will be made in relation to the current missing links that have been found on the basis of the field research – they are printed in bold as well.

In the fifth and final Chapter of this thesis I will first of all reflect on some aspects of this study. Secondly, the respondents were asked in the last question of the questionnaire to provide the researcher with a final statement with regards to cross-border cooperation in general and in relation to their CBR in the future in particular. These statements will be presented in the concluding chapter in the light of *“The future of Cross-Border Cooperation in Thrace”*. Thirdly, and most importantly, the central research question is addressed. In the final part of the conclusion a bullet point list of recommendations is provided, directed for the AEHR and Euroregions in Thrace. These recommendations are based on the overall missing links, discovered in this study, with the intent to further improve the future of cross-border cooperation in Thrace specifically and the overall cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe.

CHAPTER II: THEORY

A HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY ON THE BASIS OF PAASI (2009):

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE REGION OF THRACE INSTITUTIONALIZED AS A CROSS-BORDER
REGION

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the theoretical framework I will discuss several facets of a region. Looking into these facets of a region is of importance for further research. Finally the focus will be on Thrace as a cross-border region. Since a cross-border region is a specific type of region, we will look into the concept of a region as well. In this section of the study some of the theoretical considerations of what constitutes a region will be explained. I will attempt to define the concept of a region, as well as four specific criteria that define the institutionalization process of region in general. Finally I will provide a short conclusion before looking into the practice and politics of Cross-Border Regions in South-East Europe.

2.1.2 THEORIES ON A “REGION”

Theoretical perspectives on what we will try to define a “region” can be described as *regionalism*. Broadly defined, regionalism can be seen as preferential trade agreements among a sub-set of nations (Bhagwati et. al. 1999:3). Within the theory of regionalism, multiple perspectives are possible, providing different definitions regarding a region and angles towards the drivers of regional trade agreements. Furthermore, the development of two trends in regionalism has been visible in the last and current century, these aspects and perspectives will be discussed in the next section.

After the Cold War, the balance of power shifted from a bipolar, to a multipolar world. By means of this shift, the number of regional organisations strongly increased; more and more regionalist projects were initiated, which were increasingly shaped “from below” by the interests of actors, such as domestic civil society, in addition to states themselves. On the basis of this movement, a distinction could be made between “old” and “new” regionalism: *“the old form of regionalism tended toward protectionist economic blocs, where trade between member countries was encouraged but trade with countries outside the bloc was discouraged by external trade barriers. In contrast, the new regionalism was of a more open form, where the preferential treatment accorded to member states was also open to countries from outside the region”* (Budzugan 2006a).

Additionally, old or “traditional regionalism” is based on popular identification with a well established region, while new regionalism is closely linked to nation-state policies (Terlouw 2008:105). Furthermore, new regionalism seeks to explain this process of regionalism, which exhibits qualitative differences from the processes of regionalism that took place soon after World War II. This theory of regionalism envisages the region as a complex construct, including attributes such as geography, politics, economics, and culture that are consistently created or reshaped by human activity. Contextually, regionalism represents a multi-faceted process that interacts with processes of global transformations in the world order.

In relation to old and new regionalism, we shall discuss several perspectives on regionalism (Budzugan 2006b) Firstly, the neo-functionalist perspective deals with the question as to why sovereign nation-states choose to integrate in such a manner resulting in a transfer of some extent of their sovereignty for the authority of regional institutions. Key concepts herein are spill-over effects and the interests of national and supranational political actors; eventually this will lead to sectoral integration between regions.

Similarly, neoliberal institutionalists emphasize the role of institutions in the formation of regional organizations. Rationale behind this includes the idea that transaction costs are lowered by means of increased cooperation. Regional institutions, it is argued, may provide the transparency, unified expectations and the mechanisms to avert cheating because they play a coordinating role at the supranational level, such as in the case of the EU (Budzugan 2006b).

Neorealist accounts of regionalism, however, argue that integration is dependent on the (sub-) nations and is concerned with their own security from external threats. The underlying constraint to integration is related to the relative gains and losses of the involved states. As states are concerned with the relative gains from cooperation, an uneven distribution of gains, where some states experience losses relative to others, will affect their security and hinder efforts to form and maintain regional arrangements. In addition, the role of a hegemonic power (a state with the military and economic resources, as well as the impetus to impose order— both at the global and regional level) may affect the creation and dynamics of regional institutions (Budzugan 2006b).

2.1.3 DEFINITION OF A REGION

An important step in this respect is answering the question to what extent from a theoretical perspective Thrace can be defined as a region. In the previous paragraph we have seen the theoretical approaches towards a region. In this section, we will discuss the theoretical aspects of what “makes” a region. The assumption herein is that Thrace – comprising of both north-east Greece and south-east Bulgaria – indeed can be defined as a region. If this assumption is true we can approach Thrace as a (cross-border) region, as opposed to merely cooperation between two separate regional entities.

However, several difficulties arise when trying to come up with a suitable definition of “a region”. A clear universal definition of a region is difficult to find: usually definitions are contextual (Paasi 2009:126). The traditional concept of a region is related to a “*bounded space*” at a sub-state level, but has meanwhile been challenged (Paasi 2002:807; Paasi 2009:122). So, what defines a region? According to Encyclopaedia Britannica a region “*in social science [is], a cohesive area that is homogeneous in selected defining criteria and is distinguished from neighbouring areas or regions by those criteria. It is an intellectual construct created by the selection of features relevant to a particular problem and the disregard of other features considered to be irrelevant. A region is distinguished from an area, which is usually a broader concept designating a portion of the surface of the Earth. Area boundaries are arbitrary, established for convenience. Regional boundaries are determined by the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the section*” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 21 Apr. 09). This seems to be a comprehensive idea of what defines a region.

When it comes specifically to a cross-border region, it appears that the “*regionness*” of a cross-border region cannot be taken for granted but has to be understood as the outcome of a process of social construction. Perkmann (2003) therefore defines a cross-border region (CBR) as a “*bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in cross-border cooperation*”. This implies that a CBR is not just understood as a functional space, but also as a socio-territorial unit equipped with a certain degree of strategic capacity on the basis of certain *organizational arrangements* (Perkmann 2003: 157). Further aspects of a cross-border region and these organizational arrangements will be dealt with more extensively in section B of the Chapter on Theory. Furthermore, regions can be understood as institutional structures – “*institutional facts*” for that matter – because they are dependent on human agreement and institutions, such as the media, the education system, political organization, governance and economics (Paasi 2002:805).

The emergence of a region can also be understood as a historically contingent process. Once a region is “established”, it is continually reproduced and gradually transformed in the course of

practices - and through these practices - by individuals as well as institutions (MacLeod 1998: 834-835). Furthermore, a region may not have spatially defined borders: it can refer to a single neighbourhood, a city or municipality, an entire country or even a nation state. A *region* is an abstract that cannot be reduced to a) a given administrative unit; b) a given scale, without considerations with regards to socio-spatial connections; or c) a concrete or practical area. Instead, a region should be perceived as the result of a “*complex history of economic, political, and social processes into a specific cultural image*”. Therefore, a region is an institutional construction reflecting the collective history of an area, influencing the everyday lives of its citizens (Paasi 1991:243; Macleod 1998:836)

2.1.4 DEFINING CRITERIA OF A REGION

In the previous chapter we have seen that whether or not a *bounded space* can be defined as a *region* is dependent upon the *corresponding criteria*. In this section, we will discuss the defining criteria that determine whether or not Thrace can be seen as a region, and, more specifically, as a cross-border region. According to the Council of Europe (1995) a cross-border region “*is a potential region, inherent in geography, history, ecology, ethnic groups, and economic possibilities and so on, but disrupted by the sovereignty of the governments ruling on each side of the frontier*”. So, in effect a cross-border region could become a region as a whole. Therefore, it is important to look into the extent to which Thrace can be seen as a region. However, in order to make a clear distinction on this point, clearer and more unambiguous criteria are necessary.

Paasi (2009) provides a solution for this problem. He presents a theory with regards to the *institutionalization of regions*, which sheds a light on the process of region-building. Regions are herein conceptualized as the results of historically contingent processes. If one wishes to study the process of the institutionalization of a region, four stages can be distinguished for analytical purposes. However, these stages may not occur consecutively in a fixed order: their order can vary and some stages can even occur simultaneously (Paasi 2009:134).

In practice, these stages are related to the extent of social-cultural and economic cohesion. Social-cultural cohesion refers to the extent to which a shared *identity* is created. A high level of social-cultural cohesion is often the result of common historical and cultural roots or a shared language within the region. However, social-cultural cohesion can be hampered by negative memories resulting from past conflicts, for instance military conflicts or political tension, as well as from different cultural and linguistic settings. Economic cohesion on the other hand depends on the intensity and quality of the economic contacts within the region itself and the extent to which a *regional labour market exists*- which is able to cross borders. A high extent of economic

cohesion includes a well developed labour market, commuting over the border as well, and contacts among individuals that contribute to inter-cultural learning and understanding. In regions with a low extent of economic cohesion, these aspects are not or only partially developed. These aspects are of importance, since they define the extent of (future) cross-border integration (AEBR 2008:87-88).

2.1.4.1 TERRITORIAL SHAPING

The first stage that can be distinguished is *territorial shape*. This territorial shaping can have a historical basis, or can be decided ad hoc. Furthermore, this shape is often used to distinguish the region from others in social classification and is normally based on a combination of functional, political, economic, cultural and administrative practices. Effectively, territorial shaping refers to the emergence of boundaries of a regional entity: the geography of a region. To analyse this stage, one has to localize social practices – such as economy, politics and administration – and the “reach of power relations”, by which regional transformation takes place, before one can identify the region as a bounded space in the larger spatial structure. (Paasi 2009:134; Macleod 1998:837; Reynolds 1994).

2.1.4.2 SYMBOLIC SHAPING

The second stage comprises a *symbolic shaping* of the region. In this stage of the process of the institutionalization of a region, a creation of additional symbols takes place. In most cases, these symbols express and strengthen the idea of the specific region and more importantly, regional identity. One of the most important aspects of symbolic shaping of a region includes “*naming*”. This aspect brings cultural, historical and political interests together and furthermore, is an expression of the regions mentioned power relations we discussed earlier. By means of symbolic shaping, a collective identity among the citizens of a region can be created, whether or not divided by a border (Paasi 2009:135).

More specifically:

“Territorial symbols are often abstract expressions of supposed group solidarity, embodying the actions of political, economic, administrative and cultural institutions in the continual reproduction and legitimization of the system of practices that constitute and demarcate the territorial unit concerned. Thus symbols are instrumental in the sense that they serve to evoke powerful emotions of identification with territorial groupings and can generate action. Symbols are ‘keywords’ in the dominating story of a territorially based community” (Paasi 1996:34).

2.4.1.3 INSTITUTIONAL SHAPING

Institutional shaping is the third stage of the institutionalization process of a region. This stage includes the development of informal and formal institutions that are needed to produce and reproduce other shapes. Informal institutions include a common dialect, or common regional traditions. Formal institutions on the other hand include social and political organizations that dedicate themselves to the advancement of the region. More specifically, these formal institutions include educational and legal institutions, the media as well as local or regional political practices, economics, administrative structures and culture. Institutional shaping supports the stage of symbolic shaping, by providing additional symbolism by means of establishing more institutions. Such processes provide “*effective means of reproducing the material and [a] mental existence of the territories*” (Paasi 1991:246; Paasi 2009:135; Macleod 1998:837).

2.4.1.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGION

Finally, the *establishment of a region* refers to the acceptance of the regional system and broader social consciousness. At different levels this stage has a different meaning: at the supra-state level it is the institutional functioning of the unit that provides legitimacy; at state level the establishment of a region requires that the sovereignty of the regional entity is recognized; and on sub-national level the establishment of a region is based on the administrative status within the broader system of the regional system. This administrative status provides the opportunity for the region to act rationally with these others administrative levels. When a region has literally “established” itself, it becomes a “*localized social structure*”. (Paasi 2009:136; Macleod 1998:838; Cox and Mair 1991). Therefore it follows that the establishment of a region is dependent upon the regional (self-) proclamation of the region itself. By means of for instance a regional administrative body or government, the legitimacy, sovereignty and administrative status of the region is provided for.

2.1.5 CONCLUSION

In this first section we have discussed theoretical perspectives with regards to a region. These theories can be conceptualized as “regionalism”, and explain trends, movements and drivers with regards to regional importance and integration. Defining the concept of a region appeared to be more difficult than expected: the definition of a region is dependent upon the context and criteria of a region. However, on the basis of criteria provided by Paasi, we can transform what we perceive as a region into an analysable unit. With these criteria, we will provide an

analysis of the region Thrace in Chapter 3. In that Chapter we will look into the history of the region and determine to what extent the process of institutionalization of a region has taken place in Thrace, i.e. to what extent the processes of territorial, symbolic and institutional shaping, and the establishment of a region have occurred.

Stage of Institutionalization of Region	Operationalization
Territorial shaping	Geography and existence of boundaries of a regional entity
Symbolic shaping	Abstract expressions of supposed group solidarity, that constitute a collective identity
Institutional shaping	Development of informal and formal institutions
Establishment of a region	Acceptation of regional systems and broader social consciousness

Table 1: Stages of Institutionalization of a Region and operationalization

B PRACTICE AND POLITICS ON THE BASIS OF PERKMANN

WHAT ARE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF THEORY AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THESE DETERMINANTS PRESENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN QUESTION?

2.2.2 CROSS-BORDER REGIONS AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATIONS IN EUROPE

In the previous section we have explained theoretical perspectives on what comprises a region. In this part and in the rest of the study, the focus will primarily be directed to one specific kind of region, the so-called Cross-Border Region (CBR). As earlier defined, a Cross-Border Region is *“bounded territorial unit composed of the territories of authorities participating in a cross-border cooperation”*. Therefore a CBR should be interpreted as socio-territorial unit equipped with a certain extent of strategic capacity and organizational arrangements (Perkmann 2003:157).

However, for the sake of clarity and understanding, it will be useful to further demarcate the concept of a Cross-Border Region. Originally, Cross-Border Regions in Europe, or *“Euroregions”*,⁴ were denoted as formal collaborations between municipalities; involving a council, a president, a

⁴ Euroregions will be further elaborated on in sub-paragraph 2.2.3.

secretariat and subject-oriented working groups. These cooperation forms have emerged from a need to better manage cross-border interests, by meeting the interests of local residents directly. Meanwhile, apart from local authorities, the actors involved in a Cross-Border Region are comprised of other public authorities and agencies, such as chambers of commerce, educational institutions and health care organizations. Taking this into account, a Cross-Border Region can be distinguished as “*a territorial unit that has historical, socio-economic and cultural commonalities, as well as, at least tentatively, its own regional identity and autonomous institutions and therefore claims its needs and interests which it is capable to articulate and defend*” (Perkmann 1999:658; Raich 1995:25; Säre 200x).

In relation to section A, cross-border regions are part of the “new regionalism” perspective on regions. They are considered a reaction on the competitive pressures of globalization and the related rescaling of the nation-state. In the case of CBR’s, new regionalism is part of the process of decentralization of the nation state, overall European integration; and the growing importance of policy networks, location policies, inter-municipal cooperation and urban alliances (Terlouw 2008:105).

However, the term Cross-Border Region (CBR), is often used in a similar way as Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC). However, cross-border cooperation is a broader term than “cross-border region”: cross-border cooperation can be defined as “*a more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous sub-national authorities across national borders*”. In practice, a Cross-Border Cooperation has four basic characteristics (Perkmann 2003:157):

1. It’s main protagonists are always public authorities, since CBC’s must be located in the public realm;
2. The collaboration within the CBC consists of regional or local authorities in different countries, providing that these actors in normal circumstances are not subject to international law;
3. The CBC is mostly concerned with practical problem-solving with regards to a broad range of issues concerning administrative life;
4. The CBC includes a certain extent of stabilization of cross-border contacts over time.

So, in effect, a CBR is always a CBC; however, since a CBC covers a much broader range of collaborations and does not include several aspects present in a cross-border region, a CBC is not necessarily a CBR. One of the most important reasons for this is that other – not necessarily public – authorities may be protagonists of cross-border cooperation in the region as well and a CBR is territorially defined; a CBR has certain characteristics that are not found in a CBC. These

are in fact always present in Euroregions. Therefore, when discussing the Euroregions we will be referring to them as Cross-Border Regions.

When analyzing CBR’s three dimensions are of importance (Perkmann 2003:159):

1. *Geographical scope*: small CBC initiatives **vs.** working communities including five or more regions;
2. *Intensity of the cooperation*: strategic capacity and an autonomous CBR, with common permanent secretariat, developed documented strategy and a broad scope of cooperation **vs.** a dependent and non-autonomous vis-à-vis central state and other authorities, with loose cooperation, arrangements without a permanent secretariat and development plans for comprehensive cooperation;
3. *Type of actors*: driven by local municipal authorities **vs.** driven by regional (meso-level) authorities.

On the basis of these three dimensions, Perkmann (2003) is able to construct a typology of CBR’s (p.160):

Geographical Scope	Small	Large
High cooperation intensity	Integrated micro-CBR’s Euroregions	Scandinavian groupings Oresund Council/Committee
Low cooperation intensity	Emerging micro- CBR’s Transmanche region	Working Communities Arge Alp

TABLE 2: TYPOLOGY OF CBR’S

Even though three dimensions are mentioned, the typology is equipped with only two dimensions. In my opinion, this can be attributed to the fact that the third dimension is implicitly related to the geographical scale: assumption herein is that a CBR driven by local municipal authorities is automatically considered “small”, as opposed to a CBR that is supported by meso-level authorities which would be considered “large”.

2.2.3 EUROREGIONS

In the previous section we have looked into the concept of Cross-Border Regions. The type of CBR we will be analyzing in this thesis can be considered as *integrated micro-CBR* and therefore a “*Euroregion*”. Euroregions represent a particular and special type of CBR. They are small-scale groupings of contiguous public authorities across one or more nation-state borders, they have specific objectives, with a desire for permanent collaboration in beforehand agreed areas, rather than ad hoc arrangements; are organized forms of cross-border cooperation (Perkmann 2007:2;

Turnock 2002:29-31; Yoder 2003:91). Furthermore, Euroregions usually do not correspond to any existing legislative or governmental institution, they do not possess political power and their activities are limited to the competences of the local and regional authorities which constitute them. The organizational structure is aimed at promoting common interests across the border and cooperation for the common good of the border populations (<http://knowledge.rush.com/kr/encyclopedia/Euroregion/>, May 18 2009).

The characteristics of a possible Euroregion have been defined by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) (http://www.coe.int/T/E/Legal_Affairs/Local_and_regional_Democracy/Transfrontier_co-operation/Euroregions/2Definition.asp, May 18, 2009):

- An association of local and regional authorities on either side of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly;
- A cross-border association with a permanent secretariat and a technical and administrative team with own resources;
- Of private law nature, based on non-profit-making associations or foundations on either side of the border in accordance with the respective national law in force;
- Of public law nature, based on inter-state agreements dealing, among other things, with the participation of territorial authorities.

On the one hand taking European integration into account, and on the other the increasing trend towards regionalization, Euroregions have the potential to make a big and unique contribution in integrating “old” and “new” Member States, as well as providing a further extent of integration between the EU and sub-national levels of politics and society. The most important goal of a Euroregion is to *“promote cooperation, trust and [cross-]border development in a number of spheres, namely economic, social, cultural, spatial planning, the environment and transportation and communication infrastructures”* (Yoder 2003:91).

2.2.4 CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN THE EXTERNAL BORDERS

Especially for former CEEC-countries, Euroregions appeared to be a solution for a number of problems, because of the former communist regimes. First of all, by engaging in cross-border cooperation, the borders could be transformed from a line of separation into a space where communication between neighbours took place and where it was possible to engage in the process of European integration. Secondly, mutual prejudices – stemming from historical

relations – among inhabitants of both sides of the border within a specific region could be overcome. Thirdly, by the establishment of a cross-border region democracy is strengthened and development of operational public administration structures is stimulated. Fourthly, economic growth is promoted and living standards should be improved. Fifthly, CBR's have significantly contributed to the development of regional policies and spatial planning perspectives in these countries. Finally, establishing CBR's has boosted economic development in border areas, which includes overcoming the problems caused by economic imbalances (Säre 200x; Turnock 2002:34; Euro East, 21 January 1997).

Cross-border cooperation on the external borders of the EU is funded by means of two instruments: countries that are part of the *European Neighbourhood Policy*,⁵ are funded by the *European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument*, while for countries that are either candidate or pre-candidate members, the *Instrument for Pre-Accession* is utilized to establish cross-border cooperation contacts (*Cross-Border Cooperation within IPA 2007-13 INTERACT Conference* 2006:1; Seminar on European Territorial Cooperation 2005).

⁵ European Neighbourhood Policy is a policy developed in 2004, aiming at avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all parties involved (http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm, 25 May 2009)

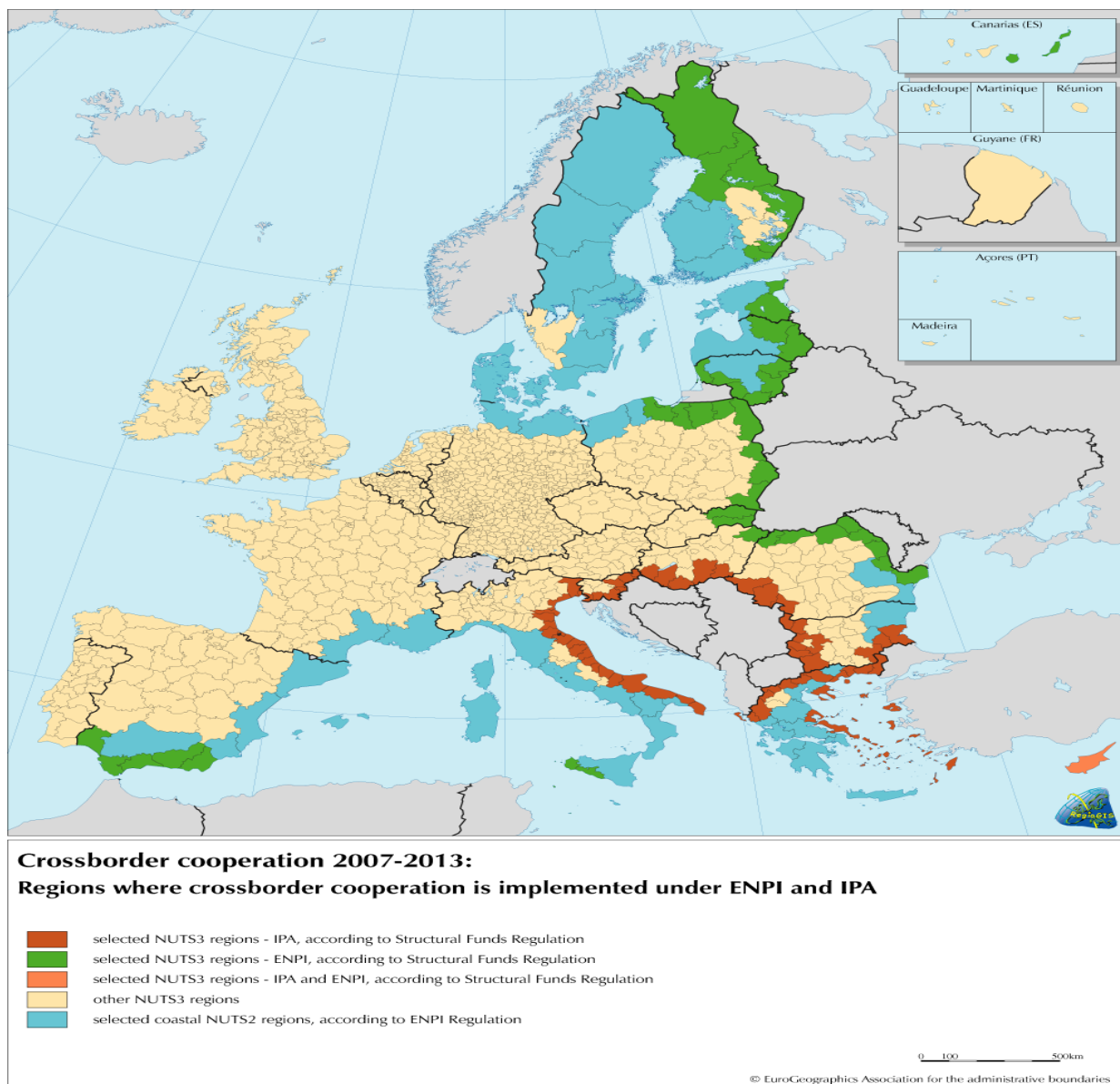


FIGURE 3 CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN EXTERNAL BORDERS

2.2.5 DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN EUROREGIONS

2.2.5.1 FRAMEWORK

The degree of cross-border cooperation within Euroregions varies greatly. The extent of the collaboration – and thereby the success of the CBR *an sich* – is dependent upon specific factors. These factors can be placed within a political-administrative context. Therefore, these factors are considered of influence on the practices and politics within the Euroregion. By means of these factors, one can assess the functioning of a Euroregion as an *organization* with a certain

extent of autonomy in relation to its participating member local and regional authorities (Perkmann 2007:3, 7-8).

The development of Euroregions can therefore in this perspective be seen as an *organization-building process*. In the process of organization-building, the concept of policy entrepreneurship is an important element for analysis of one or multiple CBR's. *Policy entrepreneurs* are political actors who "*seek to initiate dynamic policy change*" by winning support for their ideas for policy innovation. They can play a key role in identifying policy problems, by attracting the attention of decision-makers, and at the same time indicating appropriate policy responses (Mintrom 1997:739; Perkmann 2007:10). So in effect, policy entrepreneurship entails a group of political actors who take the initiative to promote and eventually induce new policy ideas and changes.

Policy entrepreneurship is an important element of the *Stream model* of Kingdon (1984). Kingdon's model, which mainly focuses on the flow and timing of policy action, is useful in analyzing complexities and realities of policy-making. The model tries to explain why some issues and problems become prominent on the policy agenda and in time are translated into concrete policies, while others do not. In his model, Kingdon distinguishes three streams, which are separate and independent (Kingdon 1984;

<http://www.metagora.org/training/encyclopedia/streams.html>, 26 May 2009):

- a) *the stream of problems*, which represent the specific problems in a given situation on which people concentrate on - if these problems are not envisaged, the problems/issues will of course never be converted into a policy;
- b) *the stream of policies*, explains how an issue rises or falls on an agenda and it includes the formulation of policy alternatives and proposals;
- c) *the stream of politics*, political events, can lead to a given topic or policy to be included in, to be excluded from or to change the political agenda – furthermore, consensus is usually obtained as a result of bargaining rather than persuasion.

Furthermore, the stream of problem recognition, the formulation of policy proposals, and political events each has its own dynamic and pace. However, policy change cannot take place if beforehand the *Window of Opportunity* has not opened. When it comes to connecting the streams, policy entrepreneurs play a key role in generating policy changes. A policy entrepreneur is not so much involved in solving the problem, but his/her goal is rather the execution of a strategically interesting solution. Therefore, according to Kingdon (1995) a policy entrepreneur can also be considered as a *strategic reasoning actor* (Van Koperen 2007:21-22; Kingdon 1995).

Returning to Cross-Border Regions and determinants of successful cross-border cooperation, the framework of policy entrepreneurship can be used in the sense that Euroregions can indeed be considered as policy entrepreneurs. However, two amendments have to be made with respect to applying policy entrepreneurship in Euroregions (Perkmann 2007:866-867; Kingdon 1984):

1. While policy entrepreneurs are mainly seen as *individual agents*, in the case of Euroregions policy entrepreneurship is viewed in the context of *organisations*;
2. Next to creating windows of opportunity, Euroregions will simultaneously be engaged in the process of organization building.

In addition to the considerations above, Euroregions have to engage in policy entrepreneurship – we have considered the properties of these types of agents in the section above – for the following reasons. First of all, Euroregions are not public sector organisations: they consist of informal or private-law arrangements. The organizational arrangements of Euroregions are policy innovations *an sich*. Furthermore, these organizational arrangements were developed over time and within the context of legal uncertainty and novelty. Secondly, the resource bases of most Euroregions are not guaranteed by statutory income flows, are mostly secured only on the short term and are derived from multiple sources.

Therefore, for a CBR to survive good strategic alternatives are necessary. Thirdly, the responsibilities of Euroregions were not defined a priori, but are the result of a complex search-process within the overall theme and goals of cross-border cooperation. Therefore, Euroregions should behave in an entrepreneurial fashion, because they have a large extent of policy discretion in their decisions. In corollary, the Euroregion can be considered *successful if they engage actively in policy entrepreneurship within the field of cross-border cooperation, thereby fully exploiting windows of opportunity and simultaneously expanding their organizational base* (Boekema 2000:8; Perkmann 2007:867, 871). Perkmann (2007) operationalized the concept of policy entrepreneurship in three criteria: organizational development, diversification of resource base and appropriation of cross-border cooperation (CBC) activities. These criteria will be further elaborated on in the following three sub-paragraphs.

2.2.5.2 ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organizational development refers in general to *"an effort (1) planned, (2) organization-wide, (3) managed from the top, to (4) increase organization effectiveness and health through (5) planned interventions in the organization's 'processes', using behavioural-science knowledge"* (Beckhard 1969:9). In this sense, organizational development can be considered as a planned system of change (Rouda & Kusy 1995). However, Perkmann (2007), - and for the sake of this thesis I'll do the same - operationalizes this concept as the extent of acquiring *"a relative degree of strategic*

and operational autonomy vis-à-vis 'ordinary' border authorities", since successful Euroregions need to develop as independent organisations with a clear specialization in cross-border cooperation relation issues (Perkmann 2007:867). Therefore, the organizational development of Euroregions, in this thesis refers to the extent the development of the organizational basis. More specifically, we will look into the organizational size, and "on the one hand the relative autonomy they [Euroregions] have achieved within local and vertical networks of public authorities concerned with cross-border policies, and on the other whether or not they have widened their range of activities by taking on related tasks and competences within their context" (Perkmann 2007:871).

2.2.5.3 DIVERSIFICATION OF RESOURCE BASE

Looking at the resource base of a Euroregion one may determine the strategic resources available to the specific CBR. This method of analysis is based on the *resource based* view of an organization. In this context a resource based view is concerned with the success of an organization, which can be attributed to the application of the full range of valuable resources at the organizations disposal (Wernerfelt 1984:172; Rumelt 1984:557-558). In general, resources refer to *"all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, [organizational] attributes, information, knowledge, etc; controlled by a[n] [organization] that enable the [organization] to conceive of and implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness"* (Barney 1991:101). However, in this study we will limit the definition of "resource" merely to *funding* (Perkmann 2007:867).

On the one hand, Euroregions can be distinguished that solely rely on INTERREG⁶ funding for their resources and their activities are therefore reduced to merely implementing a specific type of EU regional policy; as such they become an instrument for implementing EU regional policy . On the other hand, successful Euroregions are expected to have a more diversified resource base; by for instance, asking or demanding a membership fee from its' participating authorities and thereby they are able to engage in other policy activities related to cross-border cooperation (Perkmann 2007:867)⁷. By realizing their own alternative resources, the organizations' survival is better secured and their range of activities and involvement in cross-border issues can be

⁶ INTERREG is a European subsidy program intended to promote cross-border cooperation and European integration within Euroregions on a project-basis, in the field of sustainable regional development. It is designed to lessen development differences between the European regions and to strengthen economic solidarity. For more information I refer to the following link: http://www.deutschland-nederland.eu/seiten/interreg/was_ist_interreg.cfm

⁷ Of course INTERREG remains a very important source of income for cross-border projects, without this program many or even most projects could not have been realized in Euroregions with a diversified resource base as well. However, INTERREG does cause a shift of attention from social-cultural contacts within Euroregions to institutionalized social-economic cross-border contacts. The net result is that Euroregions tend to change their range of activities, because of EU funding.

broadened as well. A diverse resource base is therefore considered very important. So when looking at the aspect of policy entrepreneurship regarding “diversification of resource base”, in practice in this study we will look at “*the extent to which Euroregional organisations have diversified their resource base away from the INTERREG subsidy program*” (Perkmann 2007:872).

2.2.5.4 APPROPRIATION OF CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

According to Perkmann (2007), successful Euroregions establish themselves as important players within the overall context of cross-border strategies in a given border area. These cross-border strategies can be pursued by other public or semi-public authorities, commercial organisations, or civil society organisations as well. The Euroregions can play a role in this process by appropriating or influencing the cross-border strategies of the other players in the cross-border arena and by being recognized as the legitimate and competent authority in this field by the other players (Perkmann 2007:867).

In practice, the final aspect of policy entrepreneurship – and therefore successful development of a CBR - refers to the extent to which Euroregions succeed to appropriate other cross-border policy activities in the field of cross-border cooperation in general. More specifically, this aspect relates to *the extent to which a Euroregions are “involved as protagonists, or....participants, in other policy activities aimed at promoting cross-border integration”* (Perkmann 2007:873).

More specifically, these policy activities consist of: cross-border economic and regional policy; encouraging cooperation between enterprises; fostering technologies of the future; intensification of cross-border spatial planning; harmonizing their legal and administrative systems; development of cross-border infrastructure and communications systems; improving knowledge of one's neighbour; solving environmental problems; intensifying cooperation among educational and research institutes within the CBR; promoting cross-border networks; improving and intensifying cross-border forms of organization; improving the quality of human resources; and overall improving the exploitation of a region's specific development potential (AEBR 2008:49; Kowalke 1997:25; Yoder 2003:94).

2.2.6 CONCLUSION

In this part of the theoretical chapter, we have looked into the many facets of cross-border cooperation. We have discussed the difference between a Cross-Border Region and a Cross-Border Cooperation; we have looked into the different types of CBR's; and defined what type of CBR we were discussing: the Euroregion. We looked into what a Euroregion entails, what its goals and characteristics are, and what place it has in the *grand picture* of cross-border cooperation. In the continuation of Euroregions in general, we have looked into the function and development of Euroregions in the external borders, since the focus of this study lies in South-East Europe. Finally, we have explained how the (potential) success of CBR's can be determined by means of the concept of "policy entrepreneurship". The concept has been operationalized into three aspects: organizational development, diversification of the resource base and the appropriation of cross-border activities. In effect, these three aspects determine the (potential) success of a CBR. In the empirical part we shall look into the second part of the sub-question proposed in the beginning of this part of the theoretical chapter, and establish to what extent these aspects are present in the Euroregion we will analyze.

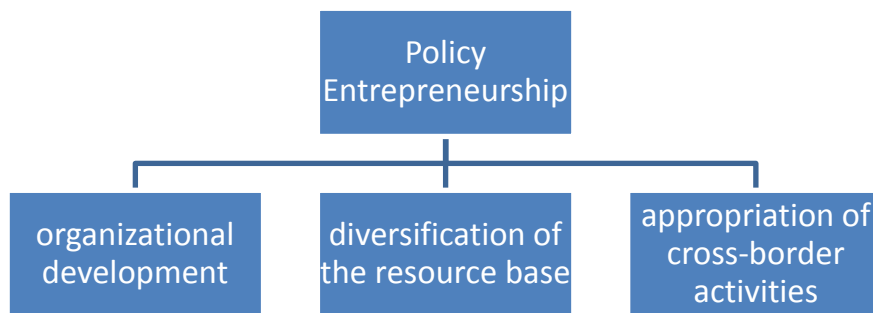


FIGURE 4 OPERATIONALIZATION OF "POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP"

Criteria of policy entrepreneurship	Operationalization
Organizational development	Degree of strategic and operational autonomy vis-à-vis 'ordinary' border authorities, organizational size and range of activities by taking on related tasks and competences within their context
Diversification of resource base	The extent to which Euroregional organisations have diversified their resource base <i>away</i> from the INTERREG subsidy

	program
Appropriation of cross-border cooperation activities	The extent to which Euroregions are involved as protagonists, or participants, in other policy activities aimed at promoting cross-border integration

TABLE 3: OPERATIONALIZATION OF CRITERIA OF POLICY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

C PRACTICE AND POLITICS ON THE BASIS OF KEY ELEMENTS IN SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION (AEBR 2008)

WHAT ARE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF BEST PRACTICES AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THESE DETERMINANTS PRESENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN QUESTION?

2.3.1 AEBR

In the previous part we have looked into determinants of successful cross-border cooperation in CBR's on the basis of theory. In this part of the thesis, we will do practically the same, with the only difference being that these determinants will be based on *best practices*. Best practices are those “*processes, practices, and systems identified in public and private organizations that [perform] exceptionally well and are widely recognized as improving an organization's performance and efficiency in specific areas*” (BPR Glossary, 27 May 2009). In this case, the best practices with regards to determinants of successful cross-border cooperation are based on the experiences of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).

In 1965 – when cross-border cooperation was already present in Western-Europe for almost 10 years – the idea of establishing a “*union for border regions*” was put forward at the *International Regional Planning Conference*. Finally, in 1971 the “*Association of European Border Regions*” was established by 10 border regions at the *Standing Conference of European Border Regions*; the AEBR consists of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee and a Secretary General. 10 Years later, in 1981 the AEBR adopted the *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions*, by which the writers hoped to “*establish the goals of CBR's and cross-border cooperation, to establish the political background, provide some historical perspectives on the subject, as well as future challenges and perspectives*”⁸. The AEBR is located in Gronau, at the joint secretariat of the EUREGIO⁹ and its objectives are set out in its Statutes (AEBR 2008:16, 23-24; European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions 1981; www.aebr.net, 27 May 2009). The AEBR dedicates itself to achieve the following on behalf of Europe's border and cross-border regions (AEBR 2008:23):

- To highlight their special problems, opportunities, responsibilities and activities;

⁸ Jens Gabbe: author of European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (1981)

⁹ The EUREGIO is the first Euroregion in Europe in the region Twente/Achterhoek on the side of the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia and Lower Saxony on the German side. It was founded in 1958 and is considered a protagonist in the field of cross-border cooperation. For more information see: www.euregio.nl

- To represent their common interests vis-à-vis national and international parliaments, bodies, authorities, and institutions;
- To initiate, support, and coordinate cooperation between them throughout Europe;
- To promote exchanges of experience and information with a view to identifying and coordinating common interests among the diverse range of cross-border problems and opportunities and coming up with possible solutions.

Meanwhile, the AEBR has evolved itself into a platform where experience, information, and problems can be exchanged with regards to cross-border issues. Furthermore, on European level it is the most important institution to represent the interests of cross-border regions and 90 out of the 115 working cross-border regions are members of the AEBR(AEBR 2008:28, www.aebr.net, 27 May 2009).

2.3.2 CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN EUROREGIONS

In the previous part we have looked into what constitutes CBR's, cross-border cooperation and Euroregions on the basis of theory. While we already have a clear view of these concepts, CBR's and cross-border cooperation are viewed slightly differently from the perspective of best-practices. Accordingly, one goal of CBR's is to *"develop cooperative structures, procedures and instruments that facilitate the removal of obstacles and foster the elimination of divisive factors"*. Furthermore, the ultimate objective is to *"transcend borders and reduce their significance to that of mere administrative boundaries"* (AEBR 2008:15). Summarizing, the aim of cross-border cooperation is therefore *"to remove the obstacles and divisive factors found in these regions, and ultimately to transcend the border or reduce its importance to that of a mere administrative demarcation"* (European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions 1981:4). These views of cross-border cooperation and CBR's are considered as an addition and supplementary to the definitions provided by theory, not as a replacement. Furthermore, in the framework of best-practices, Euroregions or similar structures are not considered to be a new administrative level, but much more a cross-border platform and impetus for a solution for all cross-border tasks and contacts (AEBR 2008:62).

Organisation

- amalgamation of regional and local authorities from both sides of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly;
- cross-border organisations with a permanent secretariat and experts and administrative staff;
- according to private law based on national associations or foundations from both sides of the border according to the applicable public law.
- in accordance with public law based on international treaties which also regulate the membership of regional authorities.

Method of working

- development and strategy-oriented cooperation, no measures based on individual cases;
- always cross-border-oriented, not as national border region
- no new administrative level;
- hub for cross-border relations; citizens, politicians, institutions, economy, social partners, organizers of cultural events etc.;
- balancing between different structures and powers on both sides of the border and with regard to psychological issues;
- partnership cooperation, vertically (European, governmental, regional, local) as well as horizontally beyond the border;
- implementation of cross-border decisions at national level and according to procedures applicable on both sides of the border (avoidance of competence and structural power conflicts);
- cross-border participation of citizens, institutions and social partners in programmes, projects and decision-making processes;
- direct initiatives and the use of own resources as preconditions for help and support of third parties.

Content of cross-border cooperation

- definition of fields of action according to joint interests (e.g. infrastructure, economy, culture)
- cooperation in all areas of life: living, work, leisure time, culture etc.;
- equal emphasis on social-cultural cooperation as on economic-infrastructure cooperation;
- implementation of treaties and agreements and concluded at European level between countries to achieve cross-border practice;
- advice, assistance and co-ordination of cross-border cooperation, particularly in the following fields:
 - economic development;
 - transport and traffic;
 - regional development;
 - environmental protection
 - and nature conservation;
 - culture and sports;
 - health affairs;
 - energy;
 - waste disposal;
 - tourism and leisure;
 - agricultural development;
 - innovation and technology transfer
 - schools and education;
 - social cooperation;
 - emergency services and
 - disaster prevention;
 - communications;
 - public security.

FIGURE 5 OVERVIEW OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BASED ON BEST-PRACTICES

In addition to this overview of a Euroregion according to the AEBR, this organization also provides a *typology* which tries to classify existing cross-border regions. In section A we have already mentioned the first dimension of this typology: *the extent of cross-border integration*. Cross-border integration is the result of *socio-cultural* and *economic cohesion*. The second dimension refers to the *intensity of cross-border cooperation*. The intensity of cross-border cooperation is conditioned by the following aspects (AEBR 2008:88-89):

- The degree of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation between local/ regional authorities and the legal capacity of working methods/cooperation structures;
- The scope of actors involved in cross-border cooperation and the range of themes covered by general cross-border cooperation activities;
- The extent to which the cross border structures are directly involved in the management of EU cross-border support programmes and the extent to which there truly is cross-border cooperation in the context of EU-funded projects.

By weighing the two dimensions separately with “*high, medium and low*”, the extent of social-cultural and economic cohesion can be established, as well as the intensity of cross-border cooperation. In this manner the following typology is realized:

Type of CBR in Europe	Extent of overall cross-border integration
Type 1: Integration Forerunners	High degree of overall cross-border integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A high level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion -A high level of cross-border cooperation intensity
Type 2: Areas catching up to integration forerunners	Medium-High degree of overall cross-border integration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A high level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity - A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity

Type 3: Integration Candidates	Medium degree of overall cross-border integration -A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion -A medium level of cross-border cooperation intensity
Type 4: Areas catching up to integration candidates	Medium-low degree of overall cross-border integration - A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity - A low level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity
Type 5: Areas still searching for Integration perspectives	A low degree of overall cross-border integration -A low level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion -A low level of cross-border cooperation intensity

TABLE 4: TYPOLOGY OF CBR'S IN EUROPE ON THE BASIS OF BEST-PRACTICES

This typology has three practical uses: first of all, it can serve as a *reference framework* for positioning cross-border areas in a European-wide context; secondly, it can serve as an *orientation framework* for establishing cooperation between Euroregions; finally it can serve as a *conceptual framework* for guiding future research on and/or evaluation of practical cross-border cooperation in Europe (AEBR 2008:90-91).

2.3.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Furthermore, on the basis of best practices the AEBR has developed *key elements of successful cross-border cooperation*. We will use these elements in assessing whether and to what extent they are present in the CBR's in South-East Europe, to determine what the current missing links in those Euroregions are. We will discuss them in the following sub-sections.

2.3.3.1 PROXIMITY TO THE CITIZENS

The first element in successful cross-border cooperation refers to the *proximity to the citizens*. This proximity to the public can be understood as the cooperation being involved with “*all aspects of daily life in the border regions, including economy, work, leisure, culture, social affairs, housing, planning*” (AEBR 2008:61, AEBR 2000:13). In corollary, the issues that are dealt with in the CBR should be issues of concern to the everyday life of the citizens of the region. Furthermore, proximity to citizens is also related to the extent of participation of citizens; and the extent of the contact between citizens and the CBR in question.

2.3.3.2 INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

It is important that in the CBR in question, *politicians* on both sides of the border are involved with the policy-making because politicians are necessary for policy making. Furthermore, by means of involvement of politicians, networks – including local, regional, national and international – can better be exploited. Furthermore, these politicians can advocate the case of the CBR in other tiers of government and administration and help put the particular Euroregion in the public eye. In sum, involvement of politicians is necessary and essential, necessary to create broadly based support in the region and essential in the further development of the Euroregion. In the end this will lead to better cross-border acceptance and competence (AEBR 2008:61-62; Godfried 2009:90, 93). This element of successful cross-border cooperation speaks for itself and therefore does not have to be operationalized any further.

2.3.3.3 PARTNERSHIP AND SUBSIDIARITY

With regards to *partnership* and *subsidiarity*, the following can be stated. As far as subsidiarity is concerned, this principle is defined in Article 5 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (Europa Glossary, 2 June 2009):

“It is intended to ensure that decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen and that constant checks are made as to whether action at Community level is justified in the light of the possibilities available at national, regional or local level. Specifically, it is the principle whereby the Union does not take action (except in the areas which fall within its exclusive competence) unless it is more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. It is closely bound up with the principles of proportionality and necessity, which require that any action by the Union should not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaty.”

The principle of subsidiarity is essential, since best-practices have shown that the best and most successful cross-border cooperation takes place at a regional or local level (AEBR 2008:61)

On the other hand, the principle of partnership refers to both external and internal partnership. External partnership can be divided in vertical partnership, with European, national, regional

and local authorities; and in horizontal partnership, which refers to partnership between equal authorities across the border. In internal partnership actors on both sides of the border, within the CBR itself, are involved in cross-border cooperation. By means of partnership and subsidiarity the necessary knowledge of all involved actors can be mobilized, to contribute to cross-border cooperation (AEBR 2008:61-62).

2.3.3.4 CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION STRUCTURES

The final key element of successful cross-border cooperation within Euroregions involves the creation of *cross-border cooperation structures*. These structures are necessary to generate long-term, purposeful cross-border cooperation within the CBR. These cross-border structures include the following: joint bodies, a joint office or secretariat, and a joint budget. These structures should be viewed as an instrument for enhanced cooperation. The structures should include technical/administrative, financial and decision-making instruments, in line with their growing responsibilities. Furthermore, it is essential, that there is an equal representation – independent of the region's size, population and competence – from both sides of the border, in the case of decision-making committees with political or managerial responsibilities within the organizational structure of the CBR (AEBR 2008:60-61).

There are several factors that influence the emergence and development of cross-border cooperation structures, both negative and positive (AEBR 2008:61):

Positive factors:

- Extensive experience in cross-border cooperation;
- Specific purpose agreements;
- Framework agreements (bilateral treaties);
- Availability of funding programs supporting cross-border actions.

Negative factors:

- Public law limitations on local/ regional authorities imposed by national legislation;
- Differences in structures and powers of different levels of agreement and administration on either side of the border;
- Lack of political will, especially at national level, to remove existing constraints, e.g. through new national legislation or bilateral treaties.

Summarizing, when inquiring into the existence and development of cross-border structures we will be looking at existing joint bodies, offices and budget in the CBR in question.

2.3.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have elaborated on the ideas and conceptions of cross-border cooperation and Cross-Border Regions on the basis of best practices. On the basis of best-practices the AEBC has been able to build an overview of what “*makes*” a Euroregion or a similar structure.

Moreover, in this overview the organizational features, methods of working and cross-border cooperation are provided. Meanwhile, on the basis of a typology the AEBC is able to analyze the development of CBR’s in Europe and at the same time offer a contribution to improving cross-border cooperation in general in Europe.

More importantly, we have discussed the key elements that are necessary for successful cross-border cooperation, and what they mean in practice. By means of empirical research we will look into the extent to which these elements are apparent in the CBR’s that we analyze.

Key element of successful cross-border cooperation: Operationalization:

Proximity to citizens	Issues dealt with in the CBR are of concern in the everyday life of the citizens of the region; extent of participation of citizens; extent of contact with citizens
Involvement of politicians	Involvement of politicians in CBR
Partnership and subsidiarity	Extent of internal and external partnership in relation to other authorities; and decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen
Cross-border cooperation structures	Existing joint bodies, offices and budget in the CBR

TABLE 5: OPERATIONALIZATION KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

D CONCLUSION

In this chapter of the thesis we have systematically looked in the theoretical aspects of cross-border cooperation in Cross-Border Regions in Europe. These aspects including the perception of a region and the perception of a cross-border region on the basis of theory and on the basis of best-practices.

More specifically, with regards to the sections A, B and C, we can say the following. In the first section, we inquired into the theoretical aspects of the question regarding the extent of institutionalization of the region of Thrace as a cross-border region. First of all, it appeared difficult to find a proper definition of the concept of a “*region*”. A region should be approached as the result of a complex historic process, consisting of economic, political and social aspects within a specific cultural image. The so-called “*regionness*” of a certain bounded space or territory, is dependent upon its defining criteria. The defining criteria we used are provided by Paasi (2009) and include in this case *territorial shaping*, *symbolic shaping*, *institutional shaping* and *the establishment of a region*. By means of these criteria, we can approach a region as an analyzable unit. These criteria will enable us to make an analysis with regards to the *regionness* of Thrace. These stages of institutionalization of a region refer to social-cultural and economic cohesion and are of importance since they define the extent to which cross-border integration is possible.

In section B, we looked into the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory. First of all, we defined and demarcated the concepts of a Cross-Border Region (CBR) and cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory, since they are not quite the same, although often similarly used. We have provided a typology in order to analyze Cross-Border Regions looking at three dimensions: *geographical scope*, *intensity of cooperation* and *type of actors*. In corollary, the type of CBR we will look at is a *Euroregion*, which can be considered as an integrated micro-CBR. Furthermore, we have seen how CBR’s can contribute on the external borders of the EU, but most importantly we have defined the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation within a political-administrative context, by looking at a CBR’s ability to engage in *policy entrepreneurship*. By perceiving these Euroregions as policy entrepreneurs, Perkmann (2009) is able to establish determinants for successful cross-border cooperation. These include: *organizational development*, *diversification of their resource base* and *appropriation of cross-border activities*. By operationalizing these criteria of policy entrepreneurship, we will be able to measure the ability of CBR’s to engage in policy entrepreneurship. If the extent of policy entrepreneurship is high in a CBR, we can determine

whether the cross-border cooperation in the CBR is successful. More importantly, we will be able to define the current missing links in the CBR in question.

In addition to looking at practice and politics on the basis of theory, in this chapter we looked into determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best-practices (section C). The concepts with regards to cross-border cooperation and Cross-Border Regions provided by the AEBR (2008) can be perceived as an addition to the knowledge of these concepts on the basis of theory. Furthermore, we have seen how the AEBR envisages a Euroregion regarding its organization, method of working and the content of cross-border cooperation. The AEBR also provides a typology to classify CBR's in Europe. This typology is however based on only two dimensions: *the extent of cross-border integration* and *the intensity of cross-border cooperation*. This framework can be used in three ways: 1) as a reference framework, 2) as an orientation framework and 3) as a conceptual framework. While it is useful for placing a CBR in the right classification, this typology does not really define the success in cross-border cooperation in a CBR; rather it is an indicator of the development of the CBR in question; and provides a good framework for comparing CBR's in Europe among them.

However, the AEBR does provide us with what they call *key elements in success in cross-border cooperation*. These elements include *proximity to citizens, involvement of politicians, partnership and subsidiarity, and cross-border cooperation structures*. These elements are very closely linked to the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory and even overlap to some extent. Therefore, we will not deal with them separately in the empirical part of this thesis. Finally, on the basis of determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory *and* best-practices, it should be possible to ascertain what the potential and current missing links are in CBR's in the region of Thrace in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey respectively.

CHAPTER III: HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE REGION

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE REGION OF THRACE INSTITUTIONALIZED AS A CROSS-BORDER REGION?

3.1: INTRODUCTION

In paragraph A of the Chapter regarding the Theory used in this study, we have looked at how the concept of a region could be analyzed. By means of the theory of Paasi (2009), we have been able to transfer this rather ambiguous concept into a concrete instrument to analyze the process of institutionalization of the region of Thrace. In this chapter, we will use the data we have collected from the qualitative research to answer questions regarding the stages¹⁰ involving territorial shape, symbolic and institutional shaping and finally the establishment of the region. By means of open questions, as well as questions employing the multiple-choice method, answers were generated regarding the “regionness” of modern Thrace on the basis of the model of Paasi. We will discuss the separate stages of the institutionalization process in each paragraph. Finally, in the conclusion of this chapter an attempt will be made to answer the sub-question: *“To what extent is the region of Thrace institutionalized as a cross-border region?”*.

To recap the specific topics we were studying, the following table is offered:

Stage of Institutionalization of Region	Operationalization
Territorial shaping	Geography and existence of boundaries of a regional entity
Symbolic shaping	Abstract expressions of supposed group solidarity, that constitute a collective identity
Institutional shaping	The development of informal and formal institutions
Establishment of a region	The acceptance of the regional system and broader social consciousness

¹⁰ Two respondents have considered these questions regarding the Cross-Border Region of Thrace as “not applicable” to their situation.

3.2: TERRITORIAL SHAPE

When researching the territorial shape of the region of Thrace, the specific focus was on the geography and existing boundaries of the region of Thrace. Historically and geographically Thrace can be considered a “region”. However, the historical boundaries have varied over the years. Still at an early date, the ancient Greeks employed the term “Thrace” to refer to all of the territory which lay north of Thessaly, and that was inhabited by the “*Thracians*”. The region “*had no definite boundaries*” and other regions were added (Smith 1870:1176; Swinburne 1838:56). However, what is striking about the region of Thrace is that in modern times, the region is divided in “Northern”, “Western”, and “Eastern” Thrace, divided among Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey respectively. Furthermore, the borders of the countries and the physique of the landscape nullify the region’s coherence. For instance, the borders are so strong, especially between Turkey and Greece, that the region itself is weakened. Furthermore, the mountains between Greece and Bulgaria form a natural border within the region itself. A very important question is therefore whether this modern Thrace can still be considered as “one” coherent region. To be clear, by “Thrace” we refer to the following the geographic area:



FIGURE 6 REGION OF THRACE

To analyze the question to what extent Thrace is still a region today, we asked the respondents to indicate – in their perception of course and without foreknowledge – what they considered to be the borders of Thrace on a map (Appendix 1). Half of the respondents indicated that they perceive the entire Cross-Border Region as “Thrace”, but most of them still made distinction

between “Western”, “Northern” and “Eastern” Thrace. The rest of the respondents associated the concept “*the region of Thrace*” with their own nation’s region.

3.3: SYMBOLIC SHAPING

When analyzing the symbolic shaping of a region, one looks at the abstract expressions of collective identity among the inhabitants of this region. Therefore, we looked into the question, to what extent the name “*Thrace*” nowadays is still applicable, “*even though after the Treaty’s [Lausanne] it was divided in East, West and North region*” (R2, 2009). Almost all respondents agree that the name “*Thrace*” for the region as indicated above is applicable to a great extent. With regards to the specific geographical territory the name should actually cover, the opinions of the respondents are divided: “*the name “Thrace” is just applicable for Greece and Bulgaria, Turkey is “Eastern Thrace”*”; “*the area [Thrace] that encompasses Turkey and Greece, but not for the “Bulgarian Thrace”*” (R6 and R10, 2009). Furthermore, there seems to be no consensus with regards to the question whether “*Thrace*” is the name of a contemporary region, a purely geographical indication of a specific area, or a historic or “*ancient*” region:

- R8: “*it [Thrace] can be considered as a historical region*”;
- R9: “*[Thrace] is a purely geographic region. Whether it is a historical region as well is not clear*”;
- R3: “*As I see it, Thrace is a historical region and it should be developed into a “full” region. Furthermore, in my perspective it is not country specific*”;
- R2: “*The borders are still strong, but in the past years Thrace has become a whole region*”.

From here we can conclude that the indication of the area or region that is considered “*Thrace*”, is perceived differently by the various respondents. Furthermore, there is no real consensus with regards to how the name should be employed. Nonetheless, the name is still perceived to be applicable. Finally, whether Thrace should be regarded as a region “*in the make*” or already an existing region is still rather obscure.

3.4: INSTITUTIONAL SHAPING

When looking at the institutional shaping of a region, the focus lies on the development of informal and formal institutions that are needed to produce and reproduce other shapes. In order to effectively study this stage of institutionalization of a region, the first distinction that has been made in practice was between formal and informal institutions. Since these formal institutions were very elaborate, a distinction has been made with regards to the *type* of formal institutions. On the one hand we consider formal institutions with respect to education, culture, law and the media; on the other hand, formal institutions that are connected to local or regional political practices relating to economic and administrative structures. The informal institutions within this stage of institutionalization consist in practice of a common language or common dialect, a regional flag and traditions. We have looked at all these aspects by asking the respondents to what extent they thought that these types of institutions were present in the whole of Thrace. Furthermore, they were asked that to give an example of the institutions present. The concrete outcomes are presented in the following three tables:

TABLE 6: FORMAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Formal institutions with regards to
education, culture, law and the media

Not present	0
Not sufficiently present	4
Sufficiently present	4
More than sufficiently present	0
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

Formal institutions with regards to local or regional political practices in relation to economic and administrative structures

Not present	0
Not sufficiently present	4
Sufficiently present	4
More than sufficiently present	0
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

TABLE 7 FORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

Informal institutions, such as language, a flag and regional traditions

Not present	2
Not sufficiently present	2
Sufficiently present	2
More than sufficiently present	2
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

TABLE 8: INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS

As one can see, when it comes to formal institutions in Thrace, the respondents believe that the specific types of institutions are either “*not sufficiently present*” or just “*sufficiently present*”. This can be attributed to the fact that cross-border cooperation within the cross-border region of Thrace is fairly new; therefore, these types of institutions are still underdeveloped. Examples of formal institutions are all related to education and culture: “*Thrace Democritus University*”, “*networks concerning cities and organizational twinnings*”, “*Gymnastic academies and departments of Philosophy*”, “*Research Institutes*”.

As for local or regional political practices regarding economic and administrative structures, these institutions are also barely developed; R10 states, “*We should reinforce these institutions*”. However, there are some cross-border administrative centres established in Komotini. Normally, authorities from both sides of the border would cooperate with regards to economic and administrative structures. However in the case of Thrace, it was the CBR’s which implemented the programs, provided flexibility, and experience to the involved authorities in the regions with regards to CBC projects.

As for informal institutions, the respondents were asked to what extent in their perception informal institutions, such as mentioned above, were present in the Cross-Border Region of Thrace. However, as can be seen above in Table 8, no decisive conclusions can be drawn from these results:

- 20 percent of the respondents thought these types of institutions were “*not present*”;
- 20 percent thought they were “*not sufficiently present*”;
- 20 percent thought they were just “*sufficiently present*”;
- 20 percent thought the mentioned institutions were “*more than sufficiently present*”;
- And 20 percent considered the question not applicable.

The respondents mentioned cultural initiatives, such as South-East European cultural heritage organisations meeting about 5 to 10 times a year. Furthermore, the Department for Language, Culture and Philology of the Black Sea countries is very active in the region of Thrace. Collective identity on the basis of informal institutions is for the majority of the inhabitants by their shared Eastern/Greek Orthodox religion, their common Byzantine heritage, and based on their common memory of Ottoman occupation. Furthermore, the minorities in Thrace are strongly interconnected: they have similar ethnic problems in their nation of residence, since their common characteristics are not accepted by the Eastern and Greek orthodox majority. “*The Roma and Pomaks¹¹ are distinctive groups within the Muslim community. The common informal institutions in these communities are very different from the mainstream practices of the Muslim community*” (R10, 2009). Informal institutions within cross-border cooperation with Turkey as well seem non-existent. This can be explained by conflicts in the past between Turkey on the one hand, and Greece (and Bulgaria) on the other. Furthermore, there are still a-sympathetic feelings towards the Turks due to the Ottoman occupation.



FIGURE 7 TRADITIONAL THRACIAN CLOTHING, SOURCE WWW.EMTHRACE.ORG, 2009

¹¹ The Pomaks are a homogeneous population, who lived in the Thracian highlands, speak a Slav dialect peppered with Greek and Turkish words and have converted to Islam since the 17th Century. The Pomaks are closely bound to their land and observe ancient customs and are supposed to be descendents of the ancient Thracian tribe the *Agriani* (Bakirtzis 2003:171).

3.5: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGION

The establishment of the region refers to the acceptance of the regional system and broader social consciousness. Therefore, the establishment of a region is dependent upon regional (self-) proclamation. When looking at this aspect of the process of institutionalization, Thrace can be distinguished as a localized social structure. Focus was laid on 1) *the administrative status of the cross-border region of Thrace* and 2) *the cross-border region of Thrace is present in the minds of its citizens*.

When asking the respondents about their ideas regarding the administrative status of Thrace, their answers are very similar: they view the administrative status as very low, to practically non-existent. These following statements reflect their opinions regarding the administrative status:

- *“The administrative status is just at the beginning, Euroregions are just now being created. So the level of the status is quite low. Now Bulgaria is included in the EU and the borders are (gone) [open]. [Meanwhile,] we can engage in extensive cooperation by means of INTERREG. This is however different in the case of Turkey” (R5, 2009).*
- *“The administrative status is at a primitive stage... However, by means of INTERREG we work intensively together by means of joint organisations, [hoping] to solve common practical problems” (R10, 2009).*
- *“The administrative status is not unified. There are many disagreements regarding procedures. Even in the CBR Bulgaria/Greece the administrative status is practically non-existent” (R6, 2009).*

The causes for this underdeveloped administrative status can be found in the fact that Euroregions have not existed for more than a decade in the region of Thrace and do not possess the institutionalized structures and procedures other CBR's have, because of their age and experience. The other cause for a low administrative status can be found in the nature of the systems of the three countries: *“all countries are very centralized” (R7, 2009)*. Furthermore, *“the prefectural and local authorities do not have any legislative powers. Therefore, the status of the administrative capacity at the regional level can be considered still [as] low” (R9, 2009)*. As a result of this centralized system, *the regional governments are the state representatives in the area* and in effect *“the central state is in full control of CBC” (R7, 2009)*.

As for social consciousness of the region itself among the inhabitants of the CBR Thrace, the opinions are divided: half of the respondents are under the impression that the Cross-Border Region Thrace is not (actively) in the minds of its citizens, while the other half is not. In the

perception of the ones who think the CBR Thrace does not exist in the minds of its citizens, *the region "Thrace" is divided between three countries [Greece, Bulgaria Turkey]. Furthermore, according to them, the citizens in the region lack a common identity. "People see Thrace as "Greek Thrace", "Turkish Thrace", etc" (R5; R6, 2009). The most one can say about this subject is that "Thrace is an area of strong connected partnership, but not a region" and that "citizens associate CBC with tourist flows between Bulgaria and Greece" (R1; R9, 2009).*

On the other hand, the opposing view contends that citizens are aware of the Cross-Border Region of Thrace. Furthermore, the public supports the idea and feel affiliated with their region. On the one hand this can be attributed to the fact that *"in the last years our CBR has gotten a greater role", since it is considered "an important area for building a bridge between Greece and the Black Sea area" (R7, 2009). Meanwhile, "an increase of economic and social life could take place on the basis of familiarities and differences" (R2, 2009). Touristic flows could become a stimulus for economic advancement: "to a great extent our income is dependent upon this sector" (R10, 2009).*

3.6: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have looked at the stages of institutionalization of the Cross-Border Region of Thrace. First of all, looking at the territorial shape of the region of Thrace, one should conclude that above all, Thrace is a “region of regions”. Because of the Lausanne Treaty following the First World War, the contemporary borders in South-East Europe have been established. This provided the circumstances to create “Greek Thrace/ Western-Thrace”, “Bulgarian Thrace/ Northern-Thrace” and “Turkish Thrace/ Eastern-Thrace”; thereby indeed creating a “region of regions”. Secondly, the symbolic shape – referring to the process of “naming” of a region – is established in the sense that, meanwhile “Thrace” mainly refers to the historical and geographical region in the area. Contemporary use of the name to indicate the region as a whole is limited: there is a distinction within the region covering the three countries.

Defining the institutional shape in the process of institutionalization of the region of Thrace has proven rather difficult. As for formal institutions, only education seems sufficiently embedded in the whole region of Thrace: higher educational institutions cooperate intensively. Cultural cooperation takes place through partnerships between cities and networks across the border. Examples of institutions concerning law and media are not mentioned, which leads to conclusions that they either do not exist, or do not create a distinct profile for themselves.

As for economic and administrative structures, these structures are considered to be underdeveloped. However, by the work of the Euroregions, these structures can be improved and further institutionalized. Only limited conclusions can be drawn with regards to informal institutional shaping in the region of Thrace: there is no consensus among the respondents in relation to this subject and therefore no clear outcome. However, the informal institutions that have formed in the region of Thrace include the common heritage of the citizens, their shared religion (Bulgaria and Greece), and their shared history. Furthermore, the connections among related minorities between the three countries are very strong. These minorities are united by their similar problems.

Finally, when making an analysis of the establishment of the region, the results are disappointing and speaking for myself unexpected: the administrative status of the region is considered to be at a very low to a non-existent level. In the future, the administrative status could be strengthened by means of the implementation of INTERREG; for, the implementation of this cross-border subsidy programme is attributed to local and regional levels. By implementing cross-border projects, local and regional authorities within CBR's have the opportunity to establish and institutionalize themselves more strongly. As for social consciousness among citizens regarding the whole region of Thrace, no common position was found. Cross-border

projects could have a positive effect on the awareness of cross-border cooperation amongst the public. Furthermore, the current and future tourist flows could also have a positive effect on the social consciousness among the citizens. For, even though inhabitants of Thrace would initially associate their Cross-Border Region with “an increase of tourism”, this sector could in the future help to create more awareness *an sich* about the region itself.

Summarizing, the sub-question with regards to the institutionalization process should be addressed: “*To what extent is the region of Thrace institutionalized as a cross-border region?*”. On the basis of the results of the qualitative research, one can conclude that the institutionalization process of the region of Thrace is mainly confined in those stages concerning territorial and symbolic shaping. The other two stages are only very limitedly developed, but show progress and promise.

Therefore, in the future – to further ensure the institutionalization of the region of Thrace, local and regional authorities in the form of Euroregions, should focus their attention on improving cross-border economic and administrative structures and create social-cultural cooperation structures among the citizens. Furthermore, these authorities should try to improve the administrative status of the region. This could be achieved by focusing on ensuring the implementation of INTERREG projects. Finally, by encouraging the touristic potential of the region as a whole, the social consciousness of citizens regarding the CBR Thrace could be improved.

CHAPTER IV: PRACTICE AND POLITICS OF THE CBR'S IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

1) WHAT ARE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF THEORY AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THESE DETERMINANTS PRESENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN QUESTION?

2) WHAT ARE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE BASIS OF BEST PRACTICES AND TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THESE DETERMINANTS PRESENT IN THE CROSS-BORDER REGIONS IN QUESTION?"

4.1: INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2B, we have already looked into the theoretical determinants of successful cross-border cooperation. In this chapter, we will elaborate on what extent these determinants are present in the CBR's. The practice and politics of a Euroregion are based on two frameworks: theory of Perkmann on the one hand, and on the other hand on the basis of elements of successful cross-border cooperation provided by the AEER.

The first aspect of analysis we have looked into by means of the field research, was an investigation with regards to the assumption that the unit of analysis, in effect included a CBR. Using the three dimensions provided by typology of the CBR, an analysis could be made regarding the geographical scope, the intensity of the cooperation and the type of actors that are involved. This will be discussed in paragraph 4.2.

Paragraph 4.3 to 4.10 will focus on the results of the determinants in successful cross-border cooperation as present in CBR's in Thrace. Since these determinants relate to the same results, theory and best-practices are combined in this chapter. The determinants on the basis of theory represent how the Euroregions "score" as policy entrepreneurs. The determinants on the basis of best-practices reflect what the AEER considers "key elements of cross-border cooperation". The results will be presented either in tables, graphs or by means of citations resulting from open questions. On the basis of these results an interpretation and some implications will be provided, trying to explain the data within the appropriate context. Finally, in paragraph 4.11 conclusions with regards to these determinants will be presented, as well as an attempt to answer the sub-questions will be provided.

In the case of some questions, the respondents were asked to provide a mark from 1 to 5. For the sake of understanding a table will be provided explaining the conclusions with regards to these questions:

Average Mark	Translation of this mark
1-2	Low
2-3	Under average
3-4	Above average
4-5	Good

TABLE 9: INTERPRETATION OF MARKS

4.2: DIMENSIONS OF A CROSS-BORDER REGION

As stated in Chapter 2, when analyzing a CBR, the previously stated three dimensions are of importance. In practice, the respondents were asked to provide a mark of appreciation regarding their CBR from 1 to 5, with respect to characteristics of their CBR. To make a recapitulation, the characteristics represented the operationalization of the following dimensions:

4. *Geographical scope*: small CBC initiatives **vs.** working communities including five or more regions;
5. *Intensity of the cooperation*: strategic capacity and an autonomous CBR, with common permanent secretariat, developed documented strategy and a broad scope of cooperation **vs.** a dependent and in-autonomous vis-à-vis central state and other authorities, with loose cooperation, arrangements without a permanent secretariat and development plans for comprehensive cooperation;
6. *Type of actors*: driven by local municipal authorities **vs.** driven by regional (meso-level) authorities.

The results can be summarized as follows:

Operationalization of the dimension of CBR	Average Mark
Strategic capacity	2
Extent of cooperation	3
Independence in relation to other authorities	2.3
Development of documentation plans	2.6
Regional vs. municipal actors involved	3.6

TABLE 10: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CBR'S

Again, the dimensions we wish to analyze make it possible to provide the Euroregions in South-East Europe the rightful place in the typology of Perkmann:

Geographical Scope	Small	Large
High cooperation intensity	Integrated micro-CBR's	Scandinavian groupings
Low cooperation intensity	Emerging micro- CBR's	Working Communities

TABLE 11: TYPOLOGY OF CBR'S

With regards to the first dimension, it can be concluded that the geographic scope is *small*. For, the qualitative CBC initiatives in South-East Europe consist of cooperation between municipalities from both sides of the border and/ or one or more regional authorities.

The second dimension refers to the intensity of cooperation. The intensity of cooperation has been measured through the appreciation of the respondents with regards to the strategic capacity of their CBR, the extent of cooperation within the CBR, their independence in relation to other authorities and the extent of development of their documented plans. The strategic capacity of most CBR's can be described as predominantly low and underdeveloped. The extent of cooperation can be regarded as neither loose, nor broad. Furthermore, to a large extent most CBR's seem to a large extent to be dependent upon other authorities. This can be explained by the centralized government systems employed in this region. However, the implementation and execution of CBC programs mostly lie in the hands of the CBR's themselves. As for the development of documentation plans, from the data it can be derived that the Euroregions have to make improvements with regards to this aspect. Summarizing, the intensity of cooperation can be considered as predominantly low. While the scope of cooperation is rated sufficiently, the other aspects need considerable improvement.

The types of political actors that are mostly involved in cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe are municipal actors. Regional authorities are concerned with the implementation of certain INTERREG programs, while the CBR's themselves are mainly driven by local actors, such as mayors.

Concluding, the CBR's that have been studied should be considered as *Emerging micro-CBR's*, rather than *Integrated micro-CBR's* on the basis of the typology of Perkmann. An explanation can be found in cooperation in this region only existing for something more than a decade, while in Western-Europe – for which Perkmann has build his analysis, the first Euroregions have already been established in the fifties. However, since in practice the CBR's that have been analyzed *are* recognized as full Euroregions, we will consider them as such this study as well.

4.3: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The organizational development of Euroregions is expressed in their degree of strategic and operational autonomy vis-à-vis “ordinary” border authorities such as municipalities and regional authorities. Furthermore, their organizational size and range of activities are looked into relation to tasks and competences. The results and implications on the basis of the field research with regards to organizational development will be discussed in this paragraph.

The first aspect regarding the organizational dependence of the Cross-Border Regions in Thrace included their appreciation of their CBR in terms of independence in relation with other border authorities. The results are displayed in this table:

Aspect of organizational development	Average mark
Strategic independence vis-à-vis other border authorities	2.5
Operational independence vis-à-vis other border authorities	2.8

TABLE 12: STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE CBR'S

On the basis of these grades, one can conclude that even though the CBR's in question already possess some form of independence in relation to other border authorities. However, their operational independence is better developed than their strategic independence. The lower strategic independence can be explained by the lack of institutionalization of CBR's in Thrace, as has been seen in the previous chapter; and by the centralized system of government, leaving few competences to decentralized government bodies. The relatively low operational independence can be explained by the organizational size. First of all, only 4 out of 10 CBR's¹², have a permanent secretariat and administrative staff. This immediately decreases the capabilities,

¹² 2 Respondents did not answer this question or found the question not applicable in their case

expertise and knowledge within the operational structures of cross-border cooperation. Secondly, on average only 3.2 people are employed at the permanent secretariat. In comparison, at the EUREGIO 42 people are working at the secretariat. As for the members of the CBR's in Thrace, on average a CBR has 21.5 members. However, while the EUREGIO has significantly more members (131), the ratio of employees working in the secretariat in relation to the number of members, leaves the staff of the secretariat in Thrace with relatively much more work to do, with much less human capital. This explains why regarding operational structures and procedures, CBR's in Thrace are still operationally dependent upon other border authorities (EUREGIO website, 29 October 2009).

4.4: DIVERSIFICATION OF RESOURCE BASE

Euroregions can receive funding from the EU within the framework of INTERREG. However, by means of realizing their own alternative resources, the survival and future of the CBR's are better secured; while at the same time their range of activities and involvement in cross-border issues can be broadened as well. A diverse resource base is therefore considered very important. The respondents were asked to what extent they had access to other resources than INTERREG in terms of funding. Only two of the stakeholders in cross-border cooperation claim they have a steady cash flow secured for their CBR by raising membership fees. Moreover, in Thrace, Euroregions seem to be dependent upon funding and donations from municipalities and regional authorities: *"we receive donations from prefectures, regional and municipal authorities"* (R1, 2009) and *"we also receive funding from municipalities and regional authorities"* (R10, 2009). Still, despite these alternate resources, all Euroregions in Thrace are still highly dependent upon European funding, whether they include INTERREG or not:

- *"We receive funding from the DG environment of the EU and from Europaid"* (R6, 2009);
- *"We have PHARE-CBC for cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria"* (R2, 2009);
- *"We have run co-financed projects by INTERREG and implemented sub-contracted activities within co-financed projects run by LRA. However, we have no steady cash flows"* (R9, 2009).

Therefore, conclusions indicate that the diversification of the resource base has only been partly achieved. Euroregions are still highly dependent upon EU funding, including alternatives from the INTERREG program; the organisations try to make a claim for other types of EU funding for their cross-border projects. However, most of the CBR's in Thrace are still not raising membership fees. As a corollary, they are to some extent endangering their own organizational survival and certainly limiting their options for cross-border activities.

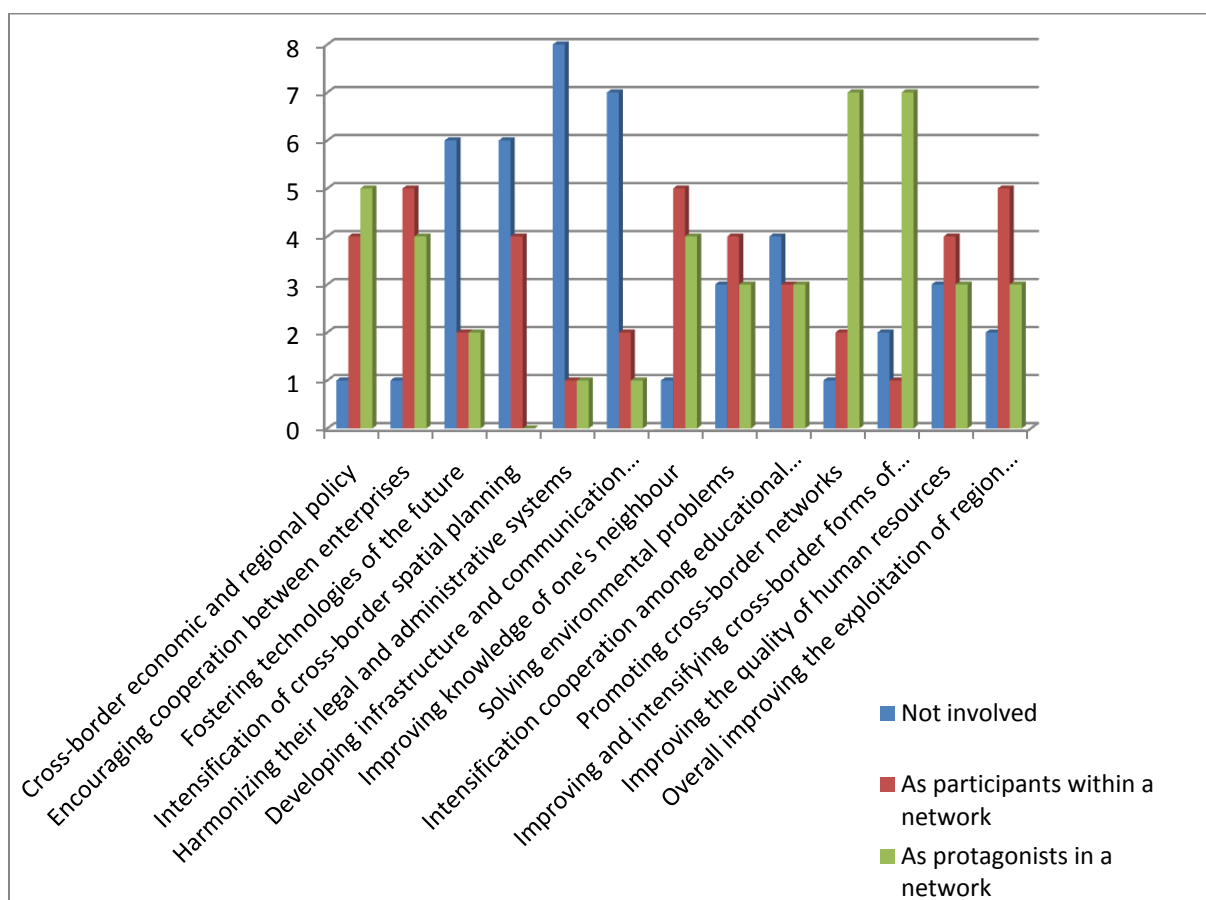
4.5: APPROPRIATION OF CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

Finally, successful Euroregions establish themselves as important players within the overall context of cross-border strategies in a given border area. Euroregions are assumed to be appropriating or influencing the cross-border strategies of the other players in the cross-border arena. Therefore, they are being recognized as the legitimate and competent authority in this field by the other players, such as border authorities and chambers of commerce. In order to receive conclusive answers with respect to this element of policy entrepreneurship, the respondents were asked to indicate, in their perception to what extent their CBR was involved in specific cross-border policy activities. Furthermore, if they were involved in that specific policy activity, they were asked to indicate whether it was either as a protagonist, or as a participant within a network. The policy activity fields that have been presented to the respondents are the following:

- cross-border economic and regional policy;
- encouraging cooperation between enterprises;
- fostering technologies of the future;
- intensification of cross-border spatial planning;
- harmonizing their legal and administrative systems;
- development infrastructure and communications systems;
- improvement knowledge of one's neighbour;
- solving environmental problems;
- and intensification cooperation among educational and research institutes within the CBR;
- promoting cross-border networks;
- improving and intensifying cross-border forms of organization;
- improving the quality of human resources;
- and overall improving the exploitation of region specific development potential

The results are displayed in the following graph:

GRAPH 1: RESULTS APPROPRIATION OF CBC ACTIVITIES



The results indicate that the top three fields in which the CBR's consider themselves as protagonists include *promoting cross-border networks, improving and intensifying cross-border forms of organizations* and *cross-border economic and regional policy*. The three fields that stand out in terms of CBR's participating in a network consist of *encouraging cooperation between enterprises, improving knowledge of one's neighbour* and *overall improving the exploitation of region specific development potential*. The cross-border cooperation activities in which CBR's in Thrace are least concerned in within a network consist of *harmonization of their legal and administrative systems, developing infrastructure and communications systems, fostering technologies of the future* and *intensification of cross-border spatial planning*.

From the results derived from analyzing the appropriation of cross-border activities in the Cross-Border Region of Thrace, one can conclude that the activities primarily revolve around economic and regional development. This can be concluded by totalling the cross-border activities in which CBR's act as protagonists *or* as participants within a cross-border network.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Euregions should be regarded as experts within that network when it comes to cross-border economic and regional cooperation. However, they lack

substantial authority in relation to cross-border infrastructure and communication, harmonization of legislation and administrative systems, technological development and cross-border spatial planning. In my opinion, this is a loss of their potential. Especially looking at reconnecting the three countries in the region, one can argue that physical and communicational accessibility is quite important. While these fields may lie in the hands of the national governments – again herein becomes the nature of the governmental systems as part of the problem – taking a role as advocates for these basic elements of cooperation may prove beneficial in the (near) future. By putting these problems on the national agenda, their region's own potential would increase.

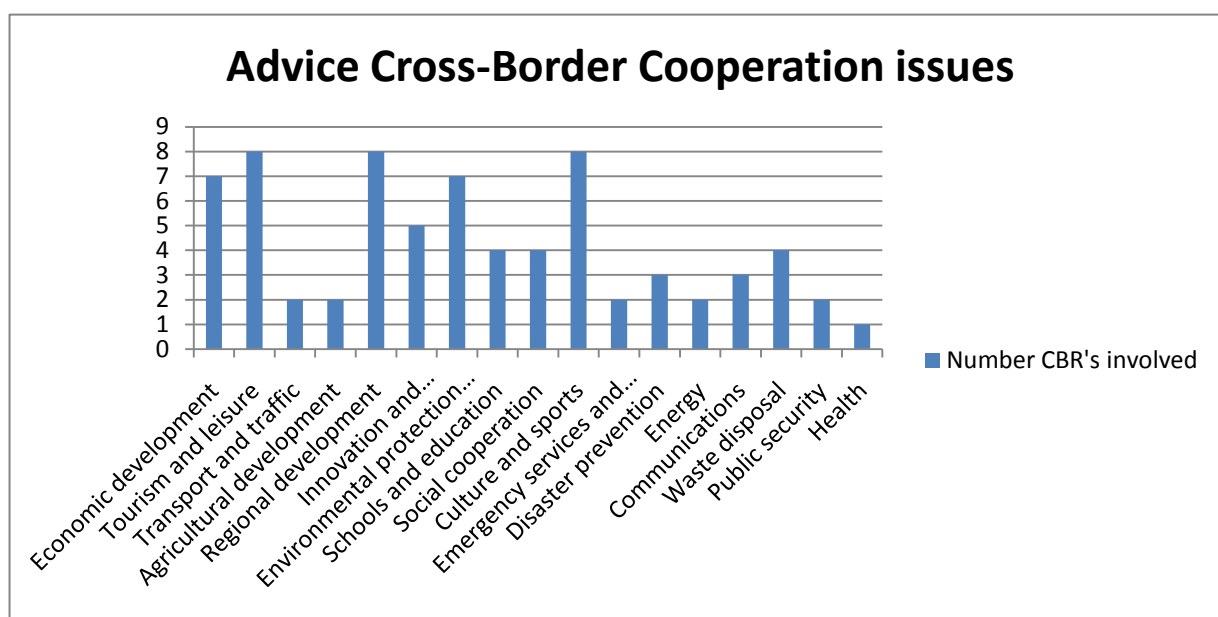
However, substantial improvements are in the make, such as the development rail road system in Northern-Thrace, connecting Xanthi to the main rail-road system. As for harmonization of legislation and administrative systems, Bulgaria becoming a member of the EU should diminish the current problems. In comparison, the EUREGIO has proven in the past that Euroregions can bring practical problems to the surface regarding differences in legislation and administration. For, these types of problems are most apparent in the border areas.

4.6: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FIELDS ON THE BASIS OF BEST-PRACTICES

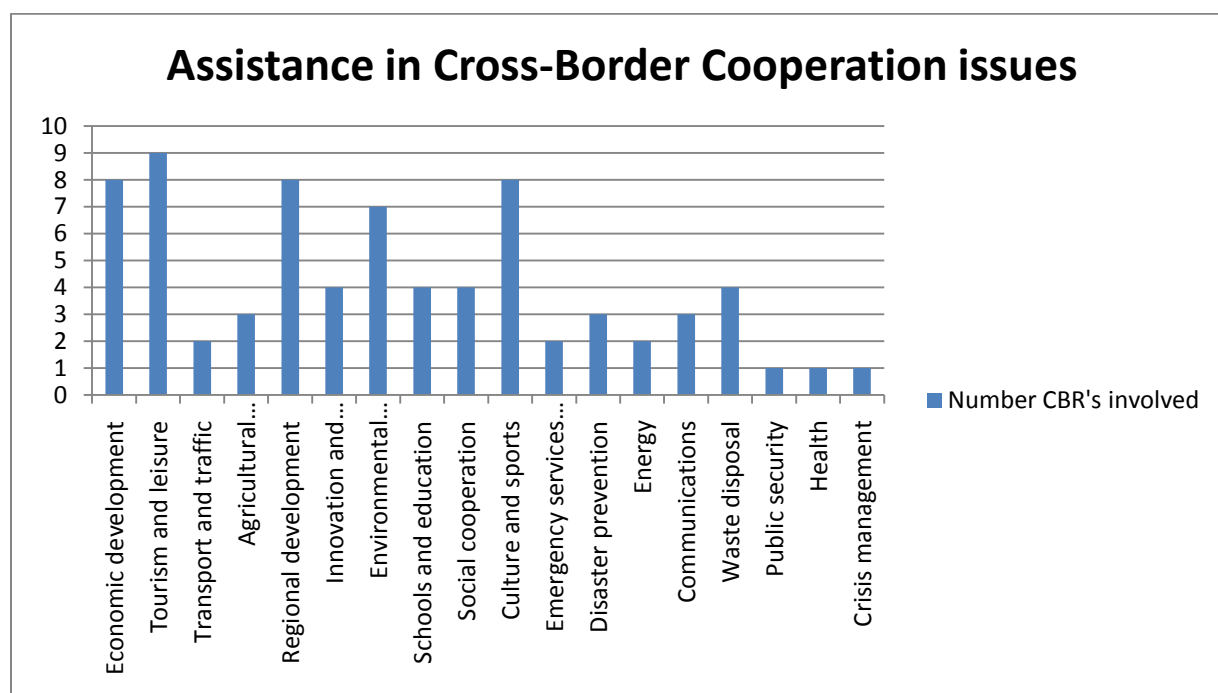
The next paragraphs include the key elements in cross-border cooperation provided by the AEBR. As for the range of cross-border cooperation fields on the basis of best-practices, the respondents were asked on which themes their CBR provided respectively advice, assistance and coordination with respect to a certain range of cross-border fields. These fields were derived from the scheme provided by the AEBR (2008:63) and consist of:

- *economic development;*
- *tourism and leisure;*
- *transport and traffic;*
- *agricultural development;*
- *regional development;*
- *innovation and technology transfer;*
- *environmental protection and nature conservation*
- *schools and education;*
- *social cooperation;*
- *culture and sports;*
- *emergency services and health affairs;*

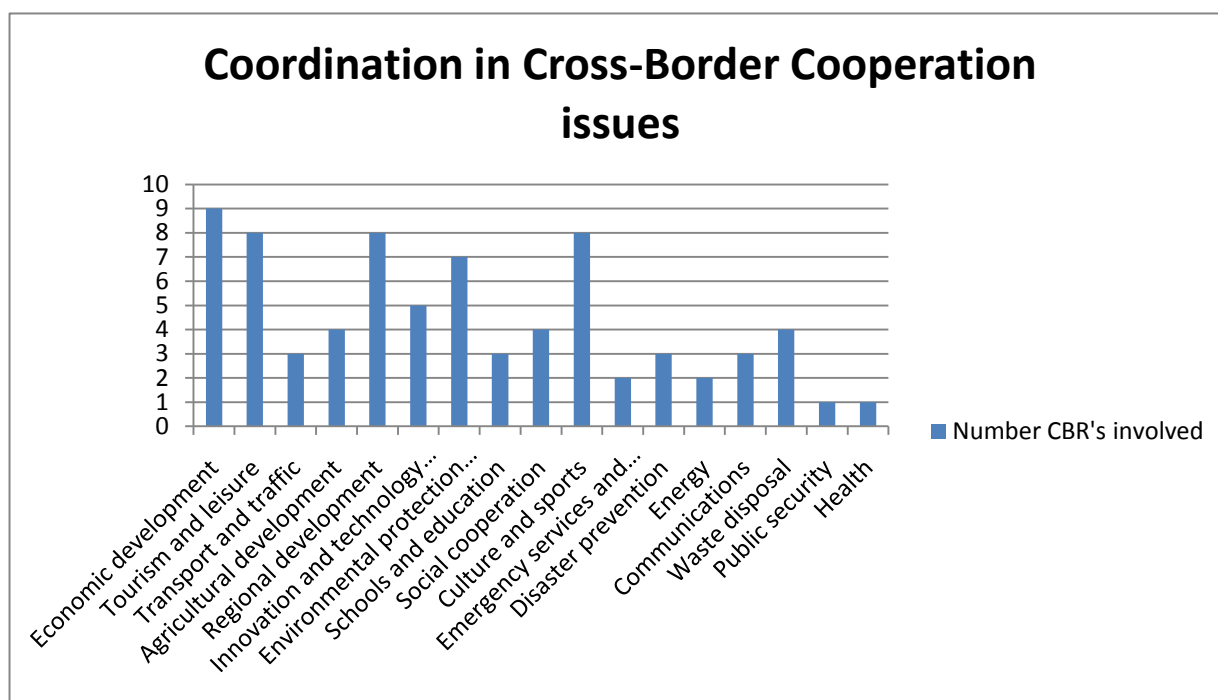
- *disaster prevention;*
- *energy;*
- *communications;*
- *waste disposal;*
- *public security.*



GRAPH 2: ADVICE IN CBC ISSUES



GRAPH 3: ASSISTANCE IN CBC ISSUES



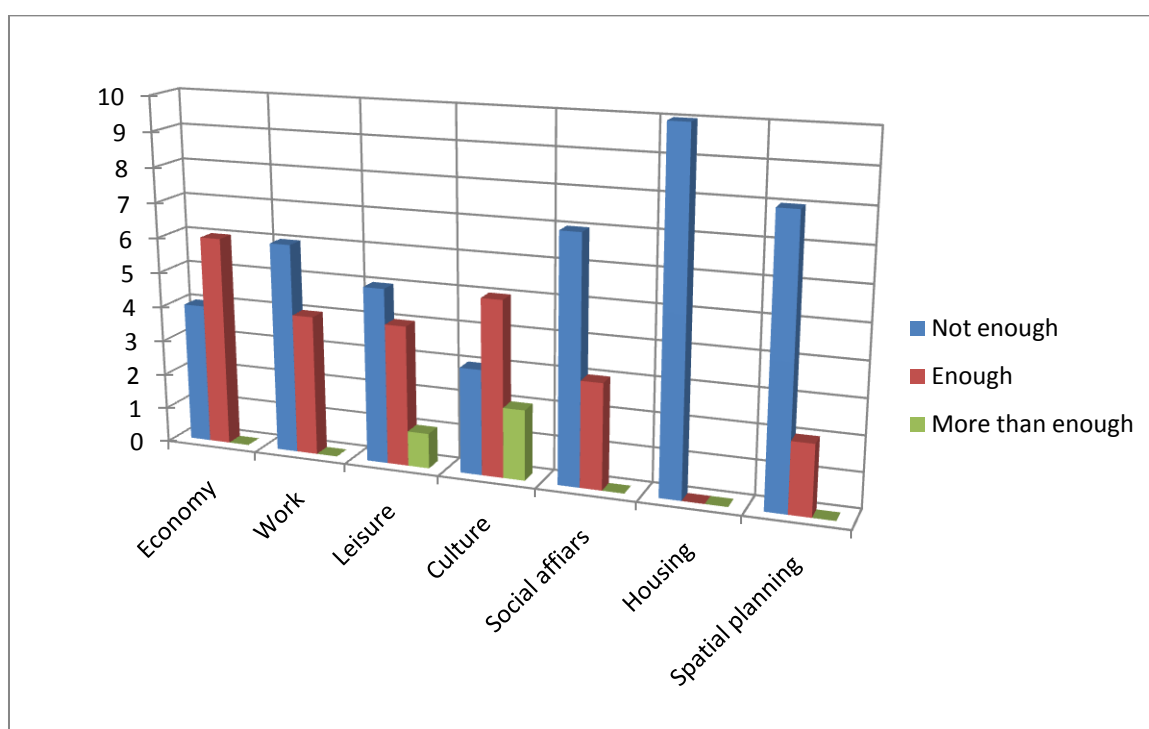
GRAPH 4: COORDINATION IN CBC ISSUES

From these graphs, it can be derived the cross-border themes in Thrace which are paid most attention to are economic development, tourism and leisure, regional development, environmental protection and nature conservation, and culture and sports. Therefore, the subjects that are the highest on the agenda of CBR's in Thrace consist of issues relating to social, cultural and economic development on the one hand, and the environment on the other. The issues that they are least involved in are emergency services and health affairs, energy and public security. While energy and public security can be issued as affairs of national government, it leaves for speculation why cooperation does not take place in the fields of emergency services and health affairs. One explanation could be that the legislation of the three countries does not allow for this type of cooperation. Furthermore, it appears that in the case that a CBR provides advice on a certain cross-border activity, it provides assistance and co-ordination on the subject in almost all cases as well. Resulting in *if* a CBR commits itself to a cross-border activity, an integral approach is applied¹³.

¹³ On another note, respondents were furthermore asked if there were other issues they were involved in. One respondent answered their CBR engaged in cooperation in health, and one with crisis-management.

4.7: PROXIMITY TO THE CITIZENS

Aside from working to promote the cross-border area's potential when it comes to economic and regional aspects, the Euregions should commit themselves to engaging in activities that directly relate to the public. These activities would improve the daily life of the public and therefore includes economy and work, but also leisure, culture, social affairs, housing and spatial planning. By looking at to what extent the respondents feel their Euroregions have committed themselves to actively promoting these issues, an image is created reflecting how close the Euroregions *themselves* are to their citizens. The respondents were asked to indicate to what extent their Cross-Border Region dealt with the previously mentioned activities. The results are displayed in the following graph:



GRAPH 5: INVOLVEMENT OF CBR'S IN ISSUES OF THE DAILY LIVES OF CITIZENS

Clearly, the fields in which the Cross-Border Regions in Thrace are least involved in include housing, spatial planning and social affairs. The explanation can be found in the opinion that “we [the Euroregions] *lack the competence to commit ourselves to these issues. Spatial planning is controlled by the central government*” (R9, 2009). Again, the centralized systems form an impediment in cross-border cooperation at border level, “[the] *region’s capacity and authority as a legal entity to deal with these issues is insufficient. This should change*” (R5, 2009). Furthermore,

it appears that *“social affairs are still difficult to engage in, since there is still much suspicion between Bulgaria and Greece”* (R7, 2009). Housing and work related issues score barely sufficient in the perspective of the respondents CBR’s; these issues are a *“different actor’s game”* (R1, 2009).

The lack of proximity to citizens within a CBR can also be explained by the perspective that *“it is still too early to fully integrate and get closer with our neighbours on several of these subjects. We have to work on these subjects and give people the opportunity to accept our CBR”* (R8, 2009). For, *“CBC can be considered as a new perception and concept. It has just been developed, and this new way of thinking takes several steps and time to reach the appropriate level for [satisfaction of these] issues”* (R10, 2009). In the future, the respondents hope to get the opportunity to commit themselves to all these themes and these hopes are high: *“we hope to develop CBC culture in all these fields”* and *“when the borders really open, we hope things will change”* (R3, 2009; R5, 2009).

Looking at the cumulative of “enough” and “more than enough” attention to issues within the daily life of citizens, it can be concluded that the main fields of focus include economy, culture and leisure. These fields could contribute to knowledge’s of the citizen’s neighbours, enrich the cultural life of the citizens, promote the region’s potential and overall create a greater extent of acceptance by the citizens regarding cross-border cooperation in Thrace.

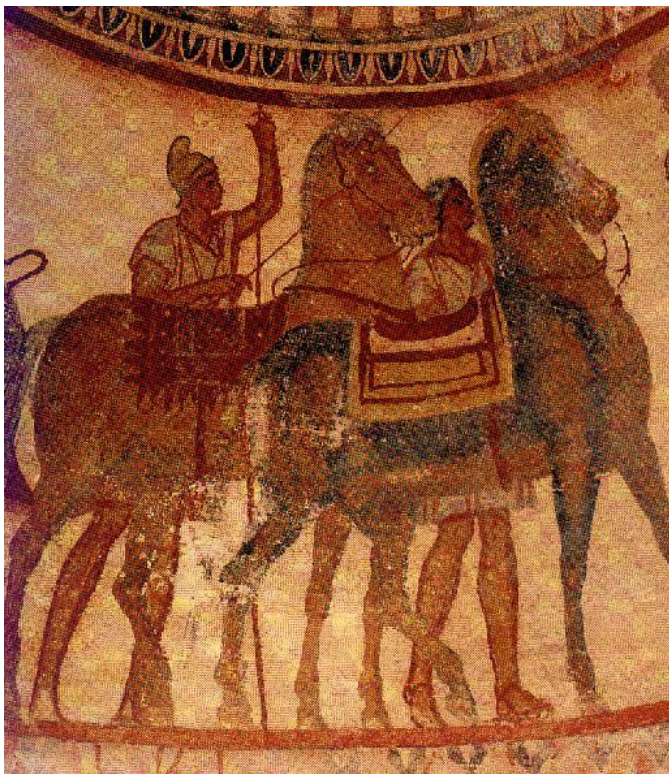


FIGURE 8: PROMOTION OF THRACE’S RICH CULTURE (THRACIAN TOMB OF KAZANLAK)

4.8: INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

In Chapter 2 we have inquired into the reason as to why involvement of politicians is necessary. It could be summarized as follows: *involvement of politicians is necessary to create broadly based support in the region and essential in the further development of the Euroregion*. Therefore, the respondents were asked to what extent local and regional politicians were involved in participation within their Cross-Border Region. Overall, the results indicated that politicians from local, regional and national level are indeed involved in the promotion of and commitment to cross-border cooperation: *“the willingness to participate is present in all politicians from all levels*. (R5, 2009); and *“politicians from local, prefectural and regional authorities are very much involved at a good and high level. Without their involvement nothing could be achieved, because they are concerned with the implementation of cross-border policies”* (R10, 2009). Only one respondent is sceptical about the involvement of politicians regarding cross-border cooperation: *“in my experience, politicians participate depending on the results of the initiative, so it varies”* (R2, 2009). Setting this dissenting opinion aside, the stakeholders of cross-border cooperation in Thrace do see the added value of involving politicians in achieving their cross-border cooperation in terms of their objectives.

However, it appears that politicians from a local level are most involved: *the strongest involvement comes from local politicians. At a regional level some politicians are involved as well* (R7, 2009); and *“only politicians from a local level are involved at the moment”* (R3, 2009). This phenomenon is visible in practice, since cross-border cooperation in Thrace generally takes form in twinnings of cities and cooperation between chambers of commerce.

On the whole, the results indicate that local, but also regional politicians are most involved in promoting cross-border work. However, the national governments position regarding cross-border cooperation still remains ambiguous: *“the policy making begins at a central level, since the national level determines the direction of CBC. However, on a local level, the concept of CBC exists more”* (R5, 2009). Furthermore, another respondent claims that the national government is not involved at all when it comes to cross-border cooperation in Thrace. Another respondent claims that *“at a national level, authorities are afraid of and sceptical about CBC in the current form”* (R6, 2009; R7, 2009). Still, in order to create an efficient network aimed at putting cross-border problems on the agenda, involvement of politicians from a national level is very much necessary.

As a corollary to the involvement of politicians, the respondents were asked if in their perspective there were differences among politicians from Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey in terms of their support of cross-border cooperation. Half of the respondents claim there are no differences, while the other half claims there are. These differences can be attributed to various

factors. First of all, the Greek politicians that are involved in cross-border cooperation *“have more experience in dealing with EU projects and are on the whole motivated in the cross-border work. Bulgaria is starting to develop an open mind towards CBC in general, while Turkey is only open to the concept to some extent”*. For, the cross-border cooperation that includes Turkey mainly revolves around themes including *“environment, social affairs, immigration and water. In the future, we can expand the cooperation to other fields of common interest”* (R10, 2009).

However, the prospects regarding these aspects are good, since Bulgaria joined the EU and therefore have gained more experience in these matters. However, Turkey remains a problem in terms of experience in cross-border work (R8, 2009). Secondly, *“the willingness to participate depends on the policy of the country and on the political climate. Elections and the chosen political parties in government very much influence the extent of cooperation”* (R2, 2009). Furthermore, it appears that the Turkish politicians are most influenced by the political trends as set by the government, since they require approval from their national ministers when it comes to decisions affecting cross-border cooperation (R6, 2009). Finally, there are differences in the involvement among politicians when it comes to the relations *an sich*: *“good relations exist between Bulgaria and Greece. However, we do have difficulties with Turkey... These problems are both of a historical basis, as well as contemporary”*. These specific problems find their origins in Turkey’s military regime and their military plans. As a consequence, problems arise when it comes to trust, immediately affecting the quality of their relations (R3, 2009).



FIGURE 9 BORDER PROBLEMS BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY, SOURCE: THE AMERICAN VIEW, 2009

However, the other half of the respondents claim there are no differences and that there are many similarities among the politicians regarding their extent of involvement in the Cross-

Border Region. This can especially be seen at a local level and among Greek and Bulgarian politicians (R4, 2009). However, even these respondents admit that aside from there being no differences in *involvement* among politicians, differences are apparent in the practical cross-border work. First of all, there are however some differences noticeable when it comes to culture and policies, but this supposedly does not affect the quality of the relations (R1, 2009). Secondly, while the politicians may be equally dedicated and equally represented in the Cross-Border Region, in practice the Greeks have the most influence on the trends of the cross-border cooperation (R7, 2009). This can be attributed to the factor that the Greek politicians have the most experience in cross-border work and are therefore perceived to have the most expertise and knowledge. Thirdly, while the intentions to cooperate may be equal, the Bulgarians often lack the technical capacity to design and implement projects.

Furthermore, as we have seen in the above the Turkish politicians have the least autonomy when it comes to their actions. As a result, Turkish politicians cannot act on their own initiative (R9, 2009). Moreover, possible differences in the extent of involvement can be attributed to the personal dedication of the politicians in terms of their involvement, as opposed to the origin of the country. Finally, there differences are caused by *the educational level of the involved politicians and their involvement in EU affairs in general, which leads to differences in knowledge and experience* (R6, 2009).

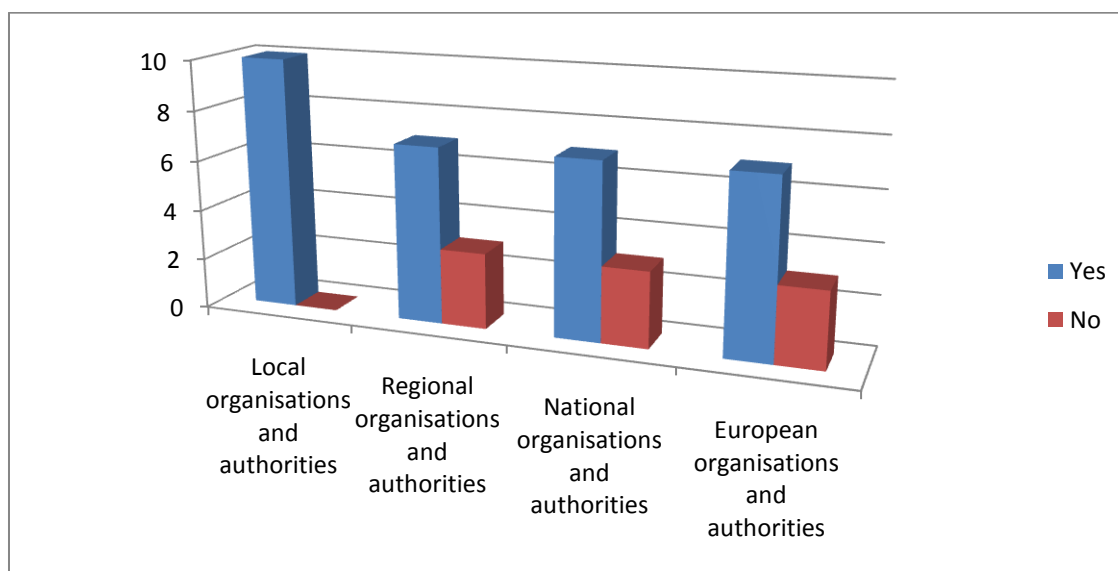
Summarizing, differences in the extent of participation of politicians in cross-border cooperation can be attributed to experience and knowledge, the political climate and historical relations leading to trust problems. Furthermore, even if there are no differences among politicians from Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey in terms of the *extent* of their involvement, differences remain visible in the practice of cross-border cooperation stemming from culture, political climate, education, experience and autonomy of politicians in relation to their national governments.

4.9: PARTNERSHIP AND SUBSIDIARITY

On the basis of best-practices partnership and subsidiarity have been proven to be essential elements in successful in cross-border cooperation. On the basis of broad partnerships, both external and internal, create a broad based network for promoting and implementing cross-border cooperation. Subsidiarity creates successful cross-border cooperation, since on the basis of this principle affairs that *can* be attributed to local and regional level, should be regulated at those levels of government. In this study we have looked at both concepts.

4.9.1 EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership has been divided in external and internal partnership: external partnership refers to vertical and horizontal networks including local, regional, national and European organisations and authorities of both sides of the border; internal partnership includes actors on both sides of the border, within the CBR itself, who are involved in cross-border cooperation. First, the results regarding external partnership in the cross-border area of Thrace will be presented.



GRAPH 6: OVERVIEW EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

As one can see from the graph, all the CBR's are involved in partnerships with local organisations and authorities; these organisations and authorities include: *"Members; EU Info Reky Office; Municipalities of Petritsi, Iraklion and cities in South Bulgaria; INTERREG projects, European Euroled initiatives, cultural ties (twinnings); Members and stakeholders; Water management authority Nestos-Mesta, Municipalities of Gorse Delchev and Xanthi"* (Data, 2009). In the case of regional, national and European organisations and authorities, the majority of the respondents indicate that they are involved in partnerships with those organisations and authorities. Examples of partners include (Data, 2009):

- Regional organisations and authorities: *"Association REMTh; Chamber Network; Unions; INTERREG projects, European Euroled initiatives, cultural ties (twinnings); Managers of INTERREG; Members and stakeholders; Water division department of Natural Resources of East Macedonia, Thrace and Bulgaria"*;

- National organisations and authorities: *“VWF Greece; EC Delegation in Turkey, TOBB, ABGS; bilateral or unilateral agreements on energy and oil; organisations for legal aspects; Ministry of development in Greece”*;
- European organisations and authorities: *“AEBR; Euro-chambers, Enterprise of Europe Network, ARGE 28; EU organisations Europe Direct Network; Organisations for funding of programs; AEBR and Committee of the Regions”*.

Remarkably enough, when the respondents were asked to give an example of a partnership at a European level, the AEBR was only named twice out of seven, while the CBR's that are part of this study are all full members of the AEBR.

Besides solely looking at whether the CBR's in Thrace were involved in partnerships in the first place, the respondents were also asked to indicate how intensive they perceive those partnerships to be. All but one of the respondents, say that in the partnerships that they are part of, are (very) intensive:

- *“The partnerships with municipalities and regional authorities are very good and of an intensive nature. Our partners can on the one the hand, help us promote programmes, on the other solve difficulties and publish projects. By means of this we can deepen our links with citizens”* (R10, 2009);
- *“We very much want to participate in these partnerships, because we are eager to learn”* (R8, 2009);
- *“Our partnerships are intensive, they are not of an occasional basis and we believe in these partnerships”* (R3, 2009);
- *“Our partnerships are intensive. However we still have to take many steps until our goals are reached”* (R1, 2009).

However, there are still some remarks regarding the intensity of the partnerships. For instance Respondent 5 (2009) states that *“there are differences between partnerships regarding CBC with Bulgaria and Turkey; the partnerships between Greece and Bulgaria are more intensive, than partnerships concerned with CBC between Greece and Turkey”*. This can be explained by the fact that Bulgaria is part of the EU, while Turkey is not and of historical and contemporary (bad) relations. Therefore, it has been proven less difficult to engage in partnerships with Bulgaria. Additionally, the respondent that claims that the partnerships are not so intensive furthermore tells us that *“we [CBR's, SRG] do not have a very productive lobby network. The networks work for politicians and the interests of the Member States. We remain the uninformed party, except when we are involved in projects”* (R6, 2009). However, on the whole it can be concluded that in terms of external partnerships, the CBR's in Thrace do have the capability to create an effective

network. This network includes intensive partnerships organisations and authorities from local, regional, national and European levels.

4.9.2 INTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

As for internal partnership, the respondents were asked to indicate to what extent actors from both sides of the border were involved in partnerships within their Cross-Border Region. It appears that the actors that are involved in cross-border cooperation in Thrace are from local and regional levels. These actors mostly include – aside from municipal and regional authorities – NGO's, chambers of commerce and development agencies. However, the hopes are high for the future in relation to internal partnerships: *"we [CBR's] are looking into partnerships between Bulgarian and Greek schools; partnerships in mass-media hoping to developing CBC media; intermunicipal organisations; and cooperation between organizations for handicapped persons"* (R3, 2009). These actors are involved in the promotion and implementation of cross-border cooperation and are eager to participate. This can be explained that through the framework of cross-border cooperation they can implement projects within the scope of their own objectives that otherwise would not be possible (R9, 2009).

Furthermore, remarkably enough, none of the respondents claim that actors from national levels are involved, even though the three countries in question are very much centralized. They claim that *"at a national level, they do not understand the problems in our CBC"* (R2, 2009) and that *"the local actors understand and know the problems of the area in Bulgaria and Greece"* (R10, 2009). The fact that Turkey is not mentioned on the subject of involvement of actors in CBC, can be explained that, besides the existence of chambers of commerce, Turkey is still very much underdeveloped when it comes to an authentic civil society, which is fully democratic and its fundamental human rights duly respected by the government (Aras & Karamann 2000:58).

Alike in the paragraph regarding the involvement of politicians, we looked into what extent there were differences apparent regarding the extent of involvement among actors of respectively Greece, Bulgaria and Greece. The majority of the respondents think that there are differences with regards to the involvement among actors of the three countries. This can mainly be attributed to two factors: the language barrier and the underdeveloped civil society in Turkey and, as some claim, Bulgaria as well: *"in Greece there is only little involvement of civil society outside of cross-border work. In Bulgaria the involvement is even less and in Turkey civil society does not even exist"* (R2, R1, R5, R6, R9, 2009). However, other factors seem to be of influence as well: *"first of all, the Greek side seems to be much more interested in CBC topics such as cooperation, investment etc"* (R4, 2009). Secondly *"the military culture in Turkey and post-*

communism in Bulgaria” create trust problems among the actors and affect their method of thinking, creating differences; for instance in the way they operate (R8, R9, 2009).

The respondents who claim that there are no differences responded to this question that:

- *“In our projects, all partners are equal on a formal level” (R3, 2009);*
- *“Our cultures are strongly connected and the Bulgarians and Greeks have a good and friendly attitude towards each other” (R7, 2009);*
- *“The involvement and participation of Greek and Bulgarian actors is at a similar level – there are no differences. They are equal partners and perceptive of the problems in the area. Furthermore, they actively take part in collaboration to solve the problem” (R10, 2009).*

That Turkey is not named in respond to this question can be explained that Turkey lacks a profound civil society and that therefore there is no involvement from actors. Furthermore, Turkey is not part of the EU and forming partnerships is more difficult; and physical access to the countries is impeded by “real” borders. Concluding with regards to internal partnerships, one may say that Cross-Border Regions are on the right path regarding actor involvement in Thrace. However, it is still very narrow, mainly including organisations aimed at regional and economic development.

4.9.3 SUBSIDIARITY

With regards to subsidiarity, the question was raised to what extent the policy process involving cross-border cooperation takes place at a regional or local level within the respondent’s CBR’s. The results indicate that while the national governments may sketch the framework in which cross-border cooperation takes place; in the perception of the majority of the respondents the actual policy process does take place at a local and regional level:

- *“At both sides of the border [Bulgaria and Greece, SRG], the policy process takes place at a national level. However, local and regional authorities are autonomous to act within the policy framework set at a national level. Furthermore, wide consultation with lower layers of government takes place, but in the end the national governments take the decisions” (R9, 2009).*
- *“Some of the input in the policy process comes from a national level, but in general cross-border policies stem from local and regional needs. They have better understanding of the needs of the region and therefore promote CBC schemes” (R10, 2009);*

- *“Initiatives and large scale projects such as oil and gas are regulated on a national level. However, everyday issues are attributed to local and regional level CBC authorities” (R1, 2009);*
- *“Both, regional and local authorities give advice to national levels of government when it comes to policy making. The situation in the CBC area is also analyzed from a regional and local level” (R2, 2009).*

In interesting note can be made with regards to the level of policy making in Turkey on the subject of cross-border cooperation, *“in Turkey, it depends on the political party who has the power at the moment; [some are more inclined to decentralization of CBC than others, SRG]” (R6, 2009).* Therefore, the consistency regarding the principle of subsidiarity in relation to cross-border cooperation is affected and difficulties are raised to the policy making process within cross-border cooperation involving Turkey. Furthermore, aside from including municipalities and regions in Thrace, the Prefectures are involved in the policy process of cross-border cooperation as well: *“the policy process takes to some extent place at a prefectural level as well, since this authority has full control over the activities of the area” (R7, 2009).*

Moreover, some of the respondents even claim the national governments are not involved *at all* and that the policy process solely involves regional and local authorities (R3, R5, R6, R8, 2009). This is remarkable, since we are dealing with three highly centralized countries. A plausible explanation would be that while the national government may provide the general vision on direction of cross-border cooperation, the implementation lies in the hands of lower levels of government. As cross-border cooperation seems to be very project-oriented, the respondents would associate the “policy process” of cross-border cooperation with the implementation of cross-border projects and thus would claim that the policy process does *not* include the national government. Setting this irregularity aside – since it does not affect the question whether the principle of subsidiarity is met, on the basis of the interviews it can be concluded that the principle of subsidiarity is sufficiently satisfied.

4.10: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION STRUCTURES

As seen in Chapter 2, cross-border structures are necessary to generate long-term purposeful cross-border cooperation within the CBR. The cross-border structures that were subject of analysis included joint bodies, a joint office or secretariat, and a joint budget. The results are presented in the following three tables (Data, 2009):

Joint office

Yes	2
No	6
No answer/ NAP	2

TABLE 13: JOINT OFFICE

Joint bodies

Yes	4
No	4
No answer/ NAP	2

TABLE 14: JOINT BODIES

Joint budget

Yes	2
No	6
No answer/ NAP	2

TABLE 15: JOINT BUDGET

As can be seen from the tables looking at the valid answers, the majority of the CBR's does not have a joint office or a joint budget. Furthermore, only half of the respondents make use of joint bodies when engaging in cross-border affairs. As a corollary, the respondents were asked to specify the reasons why their Cross-Border Region did not employ one or more of those cross-border structures. The reasons with regards to why CBR's in Thrace do have cross-border structures vary:

- *"We have no joint budget, because the initiative in our border area is mainly supported by the Greek side" (R2, 2009), this is supported by the fact that "INTERREG C for Greece and Turkey has been suspended due to lack of cooperation from the Turkish side" (R1, 2009);*
- *"Our Bulgarian partners did not understand the importance of a strategic approach towards CBC, so we do not have joint bodies. In the future we hope to get a joint budget" (R3, 2009);*
- *"Common structures are difficult to establish because the limited funding resources" (R6, 2009);*

- *“Due to the geographic features of the area we cannot sustain a joint office for Greek and Bulgarian cross-border cooperation. Therefore, we have two offices to maintain the balance in the involvement between Bulgaria and Greece. As for the budget, this could be achieved in the future perhaps by means of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)” (R7, 2009);*
- *“Since the three countries have different national policies, and the governmental structures are different, it is difficult to commit ourselves to common structures. However, we have a very strong joint network, by which we manage to communicate” (R9, 2009).*

Other answers regarding lacking one or more type of cross-border structure are similar to those five as mentioned above. However, the prospects for the future are hopeful: *“At the moment there is no joint secretariat. Our CBR is very new and was initiated less than a decade ago. Politicians are changing their attitude, so we keep improving our situation. With regards to the lack of a joint budget, the new INTERREGA creates a mirror budget, before we had to deal with two programs: PHARE and INTERREG when dealing with Bulgaria and Greece” (R1, 2009).*

4.11: CONCLUSION

In this paragraph the following sub-questions will be addressed on the basis of the above presented results:

- 1) *“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”;*
- 2) *“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best practices and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”.*

4.11.1 PRACTICE AND POLITICS ON THE BASIS OF THEORY

First of all, we looked at the dimensions of a Cross-Border Region including the geographical scope, the intensity of cooperation and the type of actors. On the basis of these three dimensions, Perkmann has constructed a typology in which the Cross-Border Region's of South-East Europe can be placed. The results indicate that CBR's in this region should be regarded as *Emerging Micro-CBR's*, while in practice these CBR's are viewed as *Integrated Micro-CBR's*, also known as Euroregions.

The other aspect that was of importance within the scope of Practice and Politics on the basis of Perkmann has been the ability of CBR's in Thrace to act as policy entrepreneurs. For, Perkmann claims that, the Euroregion can be considered successful if it can engage actively in policy entrepreneurship within the field of cross-border cooperation, thereby fully exploiting windows of opportunity and simultaneously expanding their organizational base. The three determinants within the framework of policy entrepreneurship that have been analyzed were the organizational development, the diversification of resource base and the extent of appropriation of cross-border activities. Policy entrepreneurship relates to the first sub-question, *“What are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of theory and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”*. The first part of the question has been answered in Chapter 2; however the question to what extent these determinants of successful cross-border cooperation are present in CBR's in South-East Europe will be addressed in the following sections.

First of all, the organizational development of Cross-Border Regions in South-East Europe was tested by asking the respondents to give a mark in relation to the performance of their CBR in terms of operational and strategic independence vis-à-vis other border authorities. The operational independence seems to be better developed, than the strategic independence; still they are both predominantly low. The lower strategic independence can be explained by the lack

of institutionalization of CBR's in Thrace and by the centralized system of government. The relatively low operational independence can be explained by the relatively small organizational sizes. While the strategic independence should be fought for hardly since it will help overcome ad hoc relations, it will prove difficult; it is very hopeful that CBR's in the region of Thrace should at least improve their operational independence. By improving their operational independence their commitment for cross-border work will be improved and their own position in relation to other border authorities will be stronger. Their lacking in operational independence can be explained by their lack of finances, which is directly linked to the next aspect: the diversification of their resource base.

The second determinant of successful cross-border cooperation within the framework of policy entrepreneurship is the diversification of resource base. From the results, it has been affirmed that most CBR's in Thrace are still very dependent upon funds from the EU – whether or not INTERREG. Even though some CBR's already ask for membership fees, and others do receive some type of funding or funds from local and municipal authorities. However, in general, it can be stated that CBR's in South-East Europe do not have steady cash flows, except for EU subsidies. Therefore, the diversification of the resource bases is regarded as low. Therefore, if CBR's in Thrace wish to engage in better policy entrepreneurship in the future, they should raise some type of membership fee; this, in order to secure their cash flows and thereby their organization's survival.

The final determinant of successful cross-border cooperation in the light of policy entrepreneurship that has been tested is the appropriation of cross-border activities. This aspect relates to the extent to which the CBR's in question have been able to establish themselves as important players in cross-border networks within the scope of a set of specific cross-border activities. The respondents could indicate whether their CBR committed itself to a cross-border activity either as a protagonist in a network, a participant in a network or not at all. The objective was to establish to what extent CBR's in Thrace are recognized as the legitimate and competent authority in this field by other players, such as border authorities and chambers of commerce. Of course, the more often CBR's promote themselves as protagonists in a network, the more they are considered as experts in cross-border cooperation.

The results indicated that the appropriation of cross-border activities in the Cross-Border Region of Thrace primarily revolves around economic and regional development. This has been established by looking at cross-border activities in which CBR's engage in, both as protagonists and as participants within a cross-border network. While this is already a start, CBR's in South-East Europe should keep in mind to commit themselves to cross-border activities in the social-

cultural, infrastructural, communicational and spatial planning fields more strongly. Additionally, CBR's in this region create a more integral approach in relation to cross-border activities in general and regarding their specific expertises as well. As a corollary, a greater extent of regional awareness is created among citizens in general and will help overcome current trust problems in particular. For example, by organizing sports matches or music festivals for citizens and students from across the border, people can meet in an informal setting and bond amongst themselves. This has already been tried in the EUREGIO in the past – and will be employed in the future as well – and has had very positive results. In relation to infrastructure, spatial planning and communication, CBR's should take up a role as advocates for these basic elements of cooperation. This will prove beneficial in the (near) future. By putting these problems on the national agenda, their region's potential would increase. Finally, regarding harmonization of legislation and administrative systems, Euroregions can easily detect practical problems, since differences in national legislation and administration are most apparent in the border areas. The CBR's in South-East Europe should strive to play an important part in recognizing and reporting these types of practical problems.

On the whole, it can be concluded that when it comes to the ability to engage in policy entrepreneurship, CBR's in Thrace are in a development phase. The organizational development is still predominantly low due to specific factors which cannot always be overcome – centralized systems of government, for instance; the diversification of resource base is not very well developed and as a consequence, the CBR's in South-East Europe are still highly dependent upon EU funding; and the cross-border activities in which these CBR's are engaged in, do not entail an integral approach. However, the cross-border cooperation is relatively new of course, and this should be kept in mind. I expect that in time, the extent of policy entrepreneurship of these cross-border cooperation will be improved and CBR's will have a more broadly based support, as they are better institutionalized in the region. Hopefully, the recommendations in this study can make a contribution to this process.

4.11.3 PRACTICE AND POLITICS ON THE BASIS OF BEST-PRACTICES

The second sub-question that has been inquired into involves, *“what are determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best practices and to what extent are these determinants present in the Cross-Border Regions in question?”*. Alike in the previous sub-questions, the first part of the question has been addressed in Chapter 2. The determinants that have been elaborated on, on the basis of best-practices provided by the AEER, include the proximity to citizens, involvement of politicians, partnership and subsidiarity, and cross-border

cooperation structures. In the following sections the most important conclusions and recommendations with regards to these determinants will be presented. After addressing these determinants an effort will be made to provide some conclusions in relation to above-mentioned sub-question.

First of all, in order to introduce the determinants of best-practices on the basis of the AEBR, we looked at the *cross-border cooperation fields on the basis of best-practices*. The respondents were asked to indicate on which fields their CBR provided respectively advice, assistance and coordination with respect to certain cross-border themes. The results pointed to cross-border cooperation primarily revolve around issues relating to social, cultural and economic development on the one hand, and the environment on the other. The cross-border cooperation fields in which CBR's in Thrace are least involved in include emergency services and health affairs, energy and public security. Moreover, *if* a CBR commits itself to a cross-border field, an integral approach is applied in relation to the subject, including providing advice, assistance *and* coordination in relation to the issue. In order to create a substantive integral approach regarding cross-border cooperation fields – as opposed to a structural integral approach – in the future, the possibilities for cooperation in relation to health care, security, energy and emergency services should be researched.

Secondly, the proximity to citizens in terms of activities, which directly relate to the public have been elaborated on. On the whole, almost all activities were not paid enough attention to from the CBR's – with the exceptions of activities regarding economy, culture and leisure. These activities create understanding for the citizen's neighbours, enrich the cultural life of the citizens, and promote the region's potential and overall creating a greater extent of acceptance by the citizens regarding cross-border cooperation in Thrace. It is therefore highly recommended that besides developing the other issues involving the daily life of citizens, the focus should not be shifted from culture, leisure and economy, but should be supplemented by the other issues.

Thirdly, the involvement of politicians in cross-border cooperation has been subject of analysis. Involvement of politicians is necessary to create broadly based support in the region and essential in the development of the Euroregions. While local and regional politicians are most active in their involvement regarding cross-border cooperation in the implementation and development of policy, the framework in which can be worked is provided by the national government. However, the commitment of national politicians should be stronger, since they possess the legal authority, competence and power to broaden the scope of the current issues in

cross-border cooperation. Therefore, Cross-Border Regions should aim to create more involvement from politicians from a national level, by means of political parties and connections.

The involvement of politicians did not only relate to their involvement *an sich*, but also included the extent of differences among the involvement of politicians of the three countries. The answer to this question remains ambivalent, since there was no clear consensus among the respondents. Supposed differences stem from experience and knowledge regarding cross-border cooperation, the nature of the political and governmental system of the countries in question and the quality of the relations among the politicians themselves. More importantly, even the respondents who claim there are no differences in the *involvement* among politicians, do see differences when it comes to the *practical cross-border work*. These differences can be attributed to differences in culture and policies, the extent of influence that is exerted and the extent of technical capacity for the designing and implementation of projects. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are differences when it comes to the countries of origin of the politician; perhaps regarding their involvement, but most certainly in terms of the practical cross-border work. Therefore, the Greek politicians should aim at sharing their experience and knowledge regarding cross-border work with the politicians from Bulgaria and Turkey. By means of meetings, conferences and seminars the existing and future knowledge and experience could be shared, overall improving the relations and the quality of cross-border work, and overcoming existing problems stemming from distrust.

Fourthly, best-practices indicated that the extent of participation of CBR's in internal and external partnership was of importance. From the results it can be derived that when it comes to external partnerships, all CBR's are involved in partnerships with local organisations. Moreover, the majority is involved in partnerships with regional, national and European organisations as well. Furthermore, the partnerships to which the CBR's commit themselves can be labelled as "intensive". However, when the respondents were asked to give an example of a partnership at a European level, the AEBC was only named twice out of seven, while the CBR's that are part of this study are all full members of the AEBC. From here it can be concluded that the AEBC should look into methods to better promote their organization and objectives.

As for internal partnership, the respondents were asked, to what extent actors from both sides of the border are involved in partnerships within their Cross-Border Region. It appears that the actors that are involved in cross-border cooperation in Thrace stem from local and regional levels. These actors primarily include NGO's, chambers of commerce and development agencies. Furthermore, remarkably enough, none of the respondents claim that actors from national levels are involved – even though the three countries in question are highly centralized. This can be

explained by national actors not understanding the border related problems and underdeveloped civil society on the whole. Differences in the involvement among actors from Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey can primarily be attributed to the extent of the development of civil society in the respective countries. Still, Cross-Border Regions are on the right path regarding actor involvement in Thrace. However, it is still very narrow, mainly including organisations aimed at regional and economic development. In the future, civil society organisations that are aimed at social and cultural development should be included in cross-border cooperation. That way, the scope can be broadened and thereby creating stronger connections to citizens. However, this requires a substantial development of civil society in general, which apparently outside Greece, is practically non-existent.

The subsidiarity principle referred to the question to which the extent the policy process, regarding cross-border cooperation, took place at a regional or local level within the respondent's CBR's. It appears that while the national governments may sketch the framework wherein cross-border cooperation takes place, in the perception of the majority of the respondents the actual policy process does take place at a local and regional level. This policy process mainly revolves around the implementation of projects. Concluding, from the results it appears that the subsidiarity principle regarding cross-border cooperation has been met in Thrace. In the future, the possibilities for better cooperation with the national levels could be improved. By the involvement of the national government in the policy process, the position of CBR's within the broader scope of administrative levels could improve.

Finally, as for cross-border cooperation structures, the results indicate that the majority of the CBR's in Thrace do not possess a joint office or joint budget; and only half of the CBR's make use of joint bodies as part of their cross-border cooperation structures. Reasons in relation to these can be found in the following five reasons:

1. The cooperation is mainly supported by the Greek side;
2. Lack of understanding for the need of a strategic approach;
3. Limited funding;
4. Geographical hindrances and impediments;
5. Differences in national policies and governmental structures.

Though it is understandable that until now these cross-border structures have not been established, it is highly recommended that the CBR's dedicate themselves intensively to create cross-border structures in order to overcome the current tendency of ad-hoc project oriented cross-border cooperation.

Concluding, in relation to the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation on the basis of best-practices, it can be stated that while most determinants are present to a certain extent in the cross-border cooperation in Thrace, but should be further developed in the future. A substantive and structural integral approach should be aspired for by CBR's in Thrace regarding the cross-border fields to which they commit themselves and to issues they deal with regarding the daily lives of citizens. Politicians from national levels should be more involved in the policy process regarding cross-border cooperation. The existing partnerships with organisations from all levels seem to be intensive. However, the AEHR should commit themselves more to promote their organization in South-East Europe. Moreover, civil society organisations committed to social and cultural life of citizens, should be involved in the CBR's more intensively. Most importantly however, to ensure successful cross-border cooperation that overcomes the current trend of ad hoc, project based cross-border cooperation CBR's in South-East Europe, cross-border cooperation structures should be established. In the future this could result in sustainable, purposeful and efficient long-term connections in the cross-border area of Thrace.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 REFLECTIONS

In this section I want to reflect some more on the research process, the use of the theory and the models, the problems I encountered and provide a retrospective of my research methods. These reflections should be useful for myself for possible future research or work, since apart from the obvious objective of writing this thesis, this project has been a huge learning experience as well.

First of all, the research process itself has worked out fairly smoothly. I have been able to work independently and understood what was expected of me. The interviews in Thrace were difficult to organize, and it was disappointing that I have not been able to conduct an interview with a Bulgarian stakeholder. However, the field research itself went well and I have gained more experience with qualitative research. Furthermore, the data was sufficient to draw explicit conclusions and make recommendations for improvement.

As for the theory and models used in this thesis, I have chosen three models that together provide a coherent and integral approach towards cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe. By using on the one hand a model describing the history and geography of the region on the basis of Paasi, the expectations regarding the future extent of cross-border integration could be analyzed. The second aspect of analysis of the CBR's in Thrace consisted of describing the practice and politics within these CBR's. By using both theory and best-practices a more integral approach regarding the organization of cross-border cooperation, as well as policy fields and activities could be provided. Of course, if other models or theories would be used, the results would be different. However, with these three models I believe I have been able to sketch a realistic view of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe.

Furthermore, as most countries in this geographic area deal with similar (historic) problems, my conclusions should have a high extent of external validity for the whole region of South-East Europe. However, what was strongly apparent was that these theories I used are quite formal and that in reality they could only be applied to a limited extent. This can be attributed to the fact that cross-border cooperation in this area is still in a developing phase; in the future the scope of cross-border cooperation will be broadened and by that time these models should be clearer on the practice of cross-border cooperation as well.

The most obvious problem I encountered when conducting my research, was my not being able to arrange for a Bulgarian respondent. One may therefore ask how representative my research is. However, the respondents I have interviewed had good insights into the vision on cross-border cooperation from the Bulgarian side, so I strongly believe that, looking at the current results, this bias has been overcome.

Finally, looking at my research methods I can state that I am satisfied with the use of a questionnaire with a qualitative nature. The models were included in the questionnaire and it did provide the information necessary to answer the questions I was looking into. Furthermore, besides creating an image of the scope of cross-border cooperation in relation to its content, I was able to find answers to the question why cross-border cooperation in Thrace occurs in the current forms. Especially the historical context in which the cooperation currently takes place has become apparent, which to a great extent explains the current trends in cross-border cooperation for most of South-East Europe. All in all, I can say that I am satisfied with my role within the research process of this study, the models and theories I have used, how I overcame the problems that occurred and my research method.

5.2 THE FUTURE OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THRACE

As a final question the respondents were asked for their vision on cross-border cooperation in Thrace in the future. In this paragraph, their statements will be discussed. In general, the respondents foresee a bright future for cross-border cooperation in the region, while taking into account that the current situation needs much improvement; *“I believe that in the future there may be a much friendlier environment concerning CBC, if we can reconnect the experience from cohabitation of all the people in the region in the past decades and centuries. It is a difficult process, sometimes slow due to some traumatic historical events and various political factors”* (R4, 2009). Furthermore, another respondent claims that *“in my opinion the future of CBC looks quite good in relation to Greece and Bulgaria. In the case of Greece and Turkey, things should improve fundamentally, because otherwise CBC would not be possible. For, CBC is not possible if two countries are at each other’s throat. Furthermore, we need a steady source of funding. The EGTC would be a means to improve CBC between Bulgaria and Greece. On all levels we need to take initiatives to advance the further process of CBC in the area. However, there is still a lot of criticism and reserve towards CBC. Furthermore, we are now in a phase that the CBC process is of an open nature. The old guard of CBC should be reinforced and gradually replaced by new people, because at the moment we always see the same people”* (R9, 2009). Fortunately the politicians at municipal, prefectural and regional level understand the CBC thought; otherwise CBC could not be

developed. We especially need to invest in soft cross-border projects, now all the money goes to infrastructure (R3, 2009).

Moreover, all respondents recognize the added value of cross-border cooperation in their region: *“by means of cooperation on local and regional level we enhance the relations with our neighbours. By means of CBC, the EU supports the chance for people in border areas to meet more easily” (R2, 2009). “In the last decades, the initiatives have been initiated among the CBC countries. These types of bodies have created a very important connection with the other side of the border” (R1, 2009).*

Meanwhile, there are still some clear problems to be solved in the light of cross-border cooperation in Thrace before the cross-border cooperation in this region is optimized;

- *“At the moment Bulgaria suffers from “accessibility problems”. When we are looking at Turkey we are talking about “border problems”. These are major differences. The programmes designed for CBC with Turkey have never been implemented” (R9, 2009);*
- *“First of all, we have to change the way of thinking. The perception of the “other side of the border” is very negative. Especially in Greece this is a problem” (R10, 2009);*
- *“CBC in our area is at an infantile state. This is because of five reasons. First of all, our northern neighbours are post-communist countries; cooperation with them is therefore not easy. Secondly, there is still suspicion among the countries stemming from historical reasons. Thirdly, the physique of the landscape is an impediment for cooperation and the area is scarcely populated. Fourthly, the economy in the area is still underdeveloped. And fifthly, the existing cooperation is of an opportunistic nature” (R7, 2009);*
- *“The EU does not have a concrete policy for this area. It takes three governments to develop CBC policy. The EU should develop more concrete ideas with regards to their plans for CBC with Bulgaria and Turkey. They should develop a more clear vision for the area. While CBC in our area is in need of many things, most importantly we should establish common structures” (R6, 2009);*
- *“At EU level, CBC with Bulgaria has been intensified at a greater level. Most important is the infrastructure and transport connection, so that citizens can become closer to one another. When this is fully possible, it will become inevitable to cooperate. When it comes to Turkey, we can say that the political situation affects the lack of CBC at all levels. Once the political situation is stabilized, we can engage in better cross-border cooperation with Turkey” (R5, 2009);*
- *“We have worked with the Bulgarians for 2-3 years; we have initiated CBR projects with South Bulgaria. We have expressed our interest for all common problems in the cross-*

border area, hoping to develop cross-border services. Nowadays, these services are not present. Our budget is insufficient, and all funding goes to infrastructural goals. There is no room for solutions regarding “soft” common problems. Furthermore, we lack a culture of CBC; this is the same in all these countries [Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, FYROM, SRG]. People do not understand that CBC can solve historical problems. We believe in CBC, but it’s not enough” (R3, 2009);

- *“The borders are still very strong; we have problems with the regime in Turkey and post-communism in Bulgaria. Even though we have a very fruitful CBC, we do not see a sign for a solution with regards to Turkey in the nearby future” (R1, 2009).*

From the statements above, it can be concluded that there are still several problems in cross-border cooperation in Thrace specifically and South-East Europe in general. While some problems cannot be solved within the scope of this thesis – border problems – I do believe that in time the majority of these problems can be overcome, especially when both the public and, perhaps more importantly, the national governments see the added value of cross-border cooperation for the development of peripheral regions. However, one has to keep in mind that we are dealing with an area which has been turbulent for centuries, leading to problems in trust among the countries. It appears that the prospects for cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria and Greece are more favorable, than relations that also include Turkey. This can be attributed to the fact that Turkey employs a strong border policy and previous bad relations with both Greece and Bulgaria. Hopefully, in the future this will change, thereby giving cross-border cooperation a greater chance to develop in Thrace.

5.3 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND ANSWERS TO CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION

In this paragraph the central research question will be addressed on the basis of the previous results. To recapitulate, the central research theme in this thesis referred to the question *“To what extent can cross-border cooperation in the regions in the South-East European external borders be improved?”*. This question will be answered by means of an overview or summary, since it is the central theme of this study. The concrete recommendations in relation to these conclusions are listed in the next paragraph.

First of all, as for the extent of institutionalization of the region of Thrace – predicting the future extent of cross-border integration on the basis of social and economic cohesion, by means of analyzing the stages of institutionalization – the results indicate that the “regionness” of Thrace can mainly be found in its territorial shape and its symbolic shape. The institutional shape is

only well developed with regards to education and culture. Informal institutional ties in Thrace exist due to the common historical heritage, shared religion and shared history. However, economic and administrative structures remain underdeveloped. At this time, the establishment of the region and the social consciousness are underdeveloped as well and the same applies to the administrative bodies if existent at all. However, through the implementation of cross-border projects the administrative status could be strengthened and improved, while at the same time enhancing the regional social consciousness of the citizens of Thrace. So the conclusion for this part of the research question is that one should work towards improvements regarding the institutional shape and the extent of establishment of the region itself.

Secondly, determinants of successful cross-border cooperation were tested in practice, in order to see to what extent policy entrepreneurship, as described in the formal model by Perkmann (2007), was present in Cross-Border Regions in Thrace. While at the moment CBR's in Thrace can be marked as *Emerging Micro-CBR's*, it is expected that in the future they will evolve into *Integrated Micro-CBR's*.

The determinants that I have analyzed include the organizational development, the diversification of the resource bases and the appropriation of cross-border activities. The organizational development is still predominantly low due to low strategic and operational independence. This can be explained first and foremost as a consequence of the nature of the national systems: they are highly centralized and leave few competences for lower levels of government. The other explanation is that CBR's in South-East Europe still lack institutionalization, which is supported by the "regionness" of Thrace still lacking a substantial extent of institutional shape and establishment as a region. In practice, this translates into cross-border projects being initiated on a project basis and through ad hoc relations. This aspect therefore needs substantial improvement, but the question remains how much is possible in practice; the policies that would directly generate these improvements, should be adapted at the national level.

The diversification of the resource basis is also insufficient to ensure organizational survival for CBR's in Thrace. The CBR's in this region appear to be highly dependent on European funding. While at the moment their resource base is secured, the future is always uncertain. By providing for their own resources, CBR's in South-East Europe can secure sustainable and long-term development of the cross-border cooperation in their regions, while at the same time ensuring their own organizational survival.

The final determinant of successful cross-border cooperation within the framework of policy entrepreneurship included the appropriation of cross-border activities. The current activities of

CBR's in Thrace mainly revolve around economic and regional development. This was concluded by investigating to what extent those CBR's were involved in cross-border networks either as participants, or as protagonists. While these activities are a start of course, CBR's should also commit themselves in other fields. From social and cultural cross-border activities, CBR's in South-East Europe could receive more public support, thereby enhancing social consciousness among citizens with regards to their own region. Furthermore, CBR's in Thrace should become advocates for basic elements of cross-border cooperation, including better infrastructure and communication systems. Furthermore, they should report practical problems stemming from differences in legislation and administration systems between the countries involved. Such improvements – including those regarding organizational development and the diversification of resource bases – will enable CBR's in South-East Europe to engage more actively in policy entrepreneurship and change the current political dynamics. Furthermore, they will be better prepared for such tasks as identifying border policy problems, and indicating appropriate policy responses to these border-related problems.

The second set of determinants that have been tested were derived from best-practices provided by the AEBR (2008). These determinants consisted of an analysis of the state of cross-border cooperation in relation to cross-border cooperation fields, the proximity to citizens, the involvement of politicians, internal and external partnerships, and cross-border cooperation structures. As opposed to the appropriation of cross-border activities, the policy fields in which CBR's are involved do include social and cultural aspects, for which they provide advice, assistance and coordination. Furthermore, environmental and economic development takes a prominent place within the scope of cross-border cooperation policies. However, a substantive, integral approach, in terms of policies regarding cross-border cooperation is still missing. How this can be improved in practice will be discussed in the next paragraph with recommendations.

As for proximity to citizens, activities related to the daily lives of citizens that are initiated by CBR's in Thrace, mainly include activities related to the economy, culture and leisure. The other types of activities are still underdeveloped; this should be improved since it will enhance the overall acceptance by the citizens of the region of cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe.

Involvement in the cross-border cooperations in this region comes mainly from politicians from local and regional levels. However, the framework in which cross-border cooperation takes place is provided by the national government. It is therefore important that steps should be taken to get national politicians more involved. Furthermore, support of politicians supposedly varies with respect to the level of their involvement *an sich*, but it definitely varies when it

comes to practical cross-border work. This can be explained by differences in experience and knowledge, the nature of the political and governmental systems, the quality of the relations amongst the politicians, differences in culture and policies, the extent of influence that politicians can exert and finally, their technical capacity. Therefore, to improve the involvement of politicians several measures should be taken. These measures will be specified in the next paragraph.

When looking at external partnerships, it is found that all CBR's in Thrace engage intensively in partnerships with local authorities and organisations and the majority does participate actively in partnerships with regional, national and European organisations and authorities as well. However, the AEHR seems to be fairly unknown amongst them; this is highly unexpected and this lack of familiarity with the AEHR should be addressed. Additionally, internal partnerships predominantly involve actors from local and regional level from both sides of the borders. These actors are involved on a daily basis with border-related problems and are well-informed about them; so they understand the types of problems CBR's come across. The actors include chambers of commerce, NGO's and development agencies; these organizations are mainly involved in economic and regional development. Differences in the involvement of actors can be attributed to the extent of the development of civil society among the three countries in question. However, in the future, when civil society is better developed organizations aimed at social and cultural development should be involved in the cross-border work as well.

The subsidiarity principle - ensuring that decisions are taken as close as possible by those directly involved - is sufficiently met. While national governments may sketch the framework in which cross-border cooperation takes place, the actual policy process - mainly revolving around implementation of projects - takes place at local and regional level. This can be explained by cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe being all about the implementation of cross-border projects.

Finally, with regards to cross-border cooperation structures, the majority of CBR's in Thrace do not have access to a joint office or joint budget, and only half of them employ joint bodies within the scope of cross-border cooperation in this region. Although it is understandable that until now these cross-border structures have been difficult to establish, it is a point that should be improved as soon as possible. Only then, the current trend of ad hoc, project based cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe can be overcome.

In the previous sections, we have looked at how cross-border cooperation in the EU's South-East external borders can be improved. It appears that with regards to the institutionalization process of the region of Thrace attention should be paid to the institutional shape and the

establishment of the region itself. With regards to the determinants of successful cross-border cooperation that have been tested in practice, the results indicate that almost all determinants are present in CBR's in Thrace to a limited extent only. Of course, these are formal models; however they do indicate the improvements that are needed in practice. By implementing the recommendations, given in the next paragraph, cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe can transform into sustainable, long-term and broadly-scoped cross-border cooperation; which contributes to both regional development in South-East Europe, and European integration as a whole.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS IN RELATION TO MISSING LINKS

To conclude this thesis I list a number of recommendations for improvement of cross-border cooperation in Thrace. Implementation of these recommendations will lead to improvement in the institutionalization process of the region of Thrace and the practice and politics within the CBR's in this region. Furthermore, they will help transform the current trend in cross-border cooperation in South-East Europe to a sustainable and long-term purposeful cooperation.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE REGION

- **Regional and local organisations in Thrace should promote the region among the public and national governments;**
- **To further ensure the institutionalization of the region of Thrace, local and regional authorities in the form of Euroregions, should focus their attention on improving cross-border economic and administrative structures and create social-cultural cooperation structures among the citizens;**
- **Border authorities should try to improve the administrative status of the region, by focusing on ensuring the implementation of INTERREG projects; and finally by encouraging the touristic potential of the region as a whole;**

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **CBR's in Thrace should pay attention to developing their documentation plans; thus they can evolve into *Integrated Micro-CBR's*;**

- **By strengthening the strategic capacity of their organization, the CBR's independence with regards to other border authorities would improve;**
- **CBR's in Thrace should try to improve their operational independence in relation to other border authorities;**

DIVERSIFICATION OF RESOURCE BASE

- **CBR's in Thrace should raise some type of membership fee. This will secure their cash flows and thereby their organization's survival;**

APPROPRIATION OF CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

- **CBR's in South-East Europe should commit themselves more strongly to cross-border activities in the social-cultural, infrastructural, communicational and spatial planning fields;**
- **In relation to infrastructure, spatial planning and communication, CBR's should take up a role as advocates for these basic elements of cooperation;**
- **The CBR's in South-East Europe should strive to play an important part in recognizing and reporting practical problems in cross-border cooperation stemming from differences in national legislation and administrative systems amongst the countries involved;**

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION FIELDS

- **In order to create a integral approach regarding cross-border cooperation fields the possibilities for cooperation in the fields of health care, security, energy and emergency services should be investigated;**

PROXIMITY TO CITIZENS

- **It is highly recommended that focus should not shift away from culture, leisure and economy when developing other issues involving the daily life of citizens. Rather it should be supplemented by these other issues;**

INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

- **Cross-Border Regions should aim to create more involvement from politicians from a national level, by means of political parties and their political connections;**
- **Greek politicians should aim at sharing their experience and knowledge regarding cross-border work with politicians from Bulgaria and Turkey. Through meetings, conferences and seminars the existing knowledge and experience can be shared and expanded; at the same time this will lead to improved relations and higher quality of cross-border work, and it will help to overcome existing problems stemming from distrust;**

PARTNERSHIPS AND SUBSIDIARITY

- **The AEBR should look into methods to better promote its organization and objectives;**
- **To broaden the scope of cross-border cooperation and to create stronger connections to citizens CBR's should aim to involve civil society organisations that focus on social and cultural development;**
- **Cooperation with the national levels should be improved; involving national levels of government in the policy process will also improve the position of CBR's within the broader scope of civil administration;**

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION STRUCTURES

- **CBR's should focus on creating cross-border structures in order to overcome the current tendency of ad-hoc project oriented cross-border cooperation. Instead they should aim for sustainable, purposeful and efficient long-term connections**

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE

REGION OF THRACE

Q 1: Please indicate the borders of the region of “Thrace” on the map below:

A1:



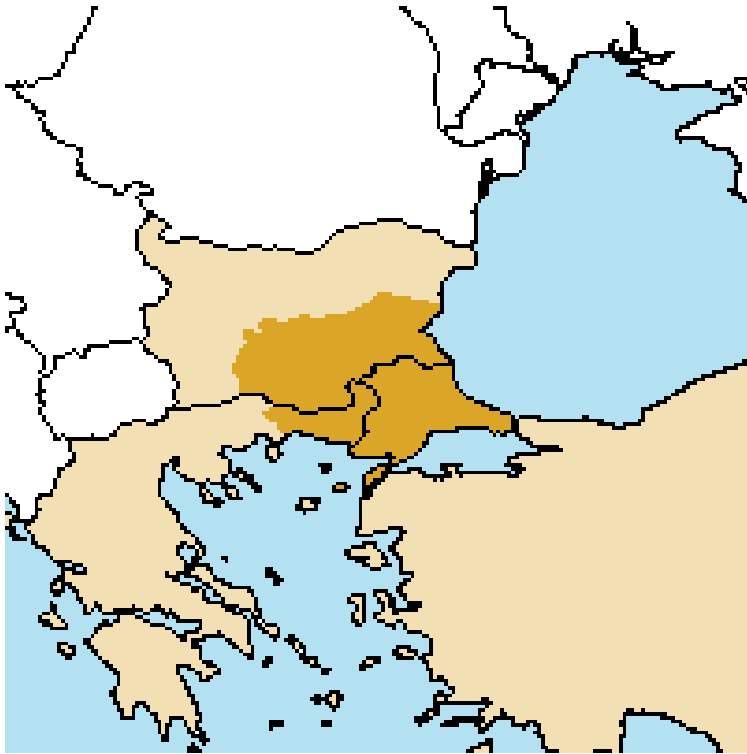
Only Western Thrace: 4

Only Northern Thrace: 0

Only Eastern Thrace: 1

Entire CBR: 5

IN THIS STUDY WE ARE CONSIDERING “THRACE” AS THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CROSS-BORDER REGION, INCLUDING PARTS OF GREECE, BULGARIA AND TURKEY. YOU CAN SEE THE REGION MARKED IN YELLOW ON THE FOLLOWING MAP:



Please consider in the following questions the region of Thrace as the above indicated cross-border region.

Q2: Is the name Thrace for the region as indicated in the map above still applicable? Why yes, why not?

A2:

R1: Yes, but divided by the countries in Northern, Eastern and Western Thrace. Ancient Thrace was much larger than just the Greek part, with a long history and culture.

R2: Yes, Thrace can be considered a “whole” area, even though that after the Treaty’s (Lausanne red.) it was divided in East, West and North region. The borders are still strong, but in the past years Thrace has become a whole region.

R3: As I see it, Thrace is a historical region and it can be seen as an objective to develop it into a “full” region. Furthermore, in my perspective it is not country specific.

R4: No answer

R5: Nowadays, the name Thrace is not applicable for other countries outside Greece; there it has no administrative meaning. If you look at it as an extended region outside of Greece, you would have to define it by the historical era, for Greece has consisted of city-states and small kingdoms, which define the area.

R6: Yes, for the area that encompasses Turkey and Greece, but not for the “Bulgarian Thrace”. This is merely a historical region.

R7: Yes, the geographic name of the area has existed for many centuries. However, in the last decades the term has lost its value.

R8: Yes, it can be considered as a historical region

R9: Yes, it is a purely geographic region. Whether it is a historical region as well is not clear; the common history of the region is not what makes Thrace.

R10: Yes, however, the name “Thrace” is just applicable for Greece and Bulgaria; Turkey is “Eastern Thrace”. If we are talking in geographical terms, we should make a distinction between “Western Thrace” for Greece and “Eastern Thrace” for Turkey.

Q3: In your perception, to what extent are in the cross-border region of Thrace *formal* institutions with regards to education, culture, law and the media, present?

Formal institutions with regards to education, culture, law and the media

Not present	0
Not sufficiently present	4
Sufficiently present	4
More than sufficiently present	0
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

IF: Sufficiently or more than sufficiently, please give an example:

Educational Institutions and judicial institutions: Thrace Democritus University → stated in Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria; Many networks concerning cities and organizational twinings; Universities, Gymnastic Academies and departments of Philosophy; Universities and Research Institutes

Q4: In your perception, to what extent are in the cross-border region of Thrace *formal* institutions with regards to local or regional political practices in relation to economic and administrative structures present?

Formal institutions with regards to local or regional political practices in relation to economic and administrative structures

Not present	0
Not sufficiently present	4
Sufficiently present	4
More than sufficiently present	0
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

IF: Sufficiently or more than sufficiently, please give an example:

Structural and administrative centers in Komotini; theoretically regional authorities and *whole society capacity (?)*; Euroregions co-financed programs flexibility and experience of local authorities to implement CBC projects; R10: "We should reinforce these institutions by".

Q5: In your perception, to what extent are, in the cross-border region of Thrace *informal* institutions, such as language, a flag and regional traditions, nowadays present?

Informal institutions, such as language, a flag and regional traditions	
Not present	2
Not sufficiently present	2
Sufficiently present	2
More than sufficiently present	2
Don't know/ Not applicable	2

IF: Sufficiently or more than sufficiently, please give an example:

Cultural initiatives, Bulgaria cultural heritage 5 to 10 times a year, Department for language, culture and philology of the Black Sea countries; interconnected countries; ethnic and national problems, common characteristics are not accepted; Muslim community of Pomak origin, orthodox religion, Byzantine heritage, memory of Ottoman occupation.

R9: The Roma and Pomaks are distinctive groups within the Muslim community. The common informal institutions in these communities are very different from the mainstream practices of the Muslim community.

Q6: How would you characterize the administrative status of the cross-border region of Thrace in the broader system of the regional systems in Europe?

A6:

R1: It is difficult to determine the administrative area since the CBR is part of the “administrative system”. The NUTS I, II, III levels do not apply, so at the moment we are not exactly in the place where we want to be. Improvements should be made; problem is that Bulgaria and Greece are Member States of the EU, but Turkey is not.

R2: We have relations and cooperation with administration in Thrace region of Turkey and Greece. But we must develop this relation and increase the contacts of business and public life. These relations will affect and increase economic and social life of the countries

R3: No answer

R4: No answer

R5: The administrative status is just at the beginning, Euroregions are just now being created. So the level of the status is quite low. Now Bulgaria is included in the EU and the borders are gone we can engage in extensive cooperation by means of INTERREG. This is however different in the case of Bulgaria

R6: The administrative status is not unified. There are many disagreements regarding procedures. Even in the CBR Bulgaria/Greece the administrative status is practically non-existent.

R7: All countries are very centralized, local government structure does not really exist in Greece. Regional governments are the state representatives in the area. As a result, the central state is in full control of CBC.

R8: The bureaucracy in general is very strong in all three countries, so if we want to implement policy as a CBR we need a stronger structure.

R9: Greece has a tradition of centralized administrative system. The prefectural and local authorities do not have any legislative powers. Therefore, the status of the administrative capacity at the regional level can be considered still low. However, the demand for cooperation with the other side of the border has grown. The CBR is therefore progressing, we have new possibilities and the relations between Bulgaria and Greece are very good. Herein lays the advantage of EU CBC programs, where the implementation lies with the lower governments.

R10: The administrative status is at a primitive stage. Regional authorities collaborate amongst each other to prevent flooding and other environmental problems. However we still have to take many steps in the future to achieve a satisfactory level. However, by means of INTERREG we work intensively together by means of joint organisations, looking to solve common practical problems such as water management.

Q7: In your perception, is the cross-border region of Thrace present in the minds of its citizens? Why yes, why not? Please give an example.

A7:

R1: No, the ancient idea still applies, and Thrace could be in the mind of some nationalists perhaps. Nowadays, Thrace is an area of strong connected partnership, but not a region. This

connected partnership is feasible in the Muslim minority in Xanthi, since the Treaty of Lausanne Turkish Muslims live there. They have strong ties with their motherland.

R2: Yes, they know and feel affiliated with the name. The citizens know it because the area was separated by the Treaties; they know their past. Beyond our (Turkish red.) border, one can see cooperation and integration. An increase of economic and social life could take place on the basis of familiarities and differences. For instance, we already participate in EU educational programmes, and see the benefits of it.

R3: No answer

R4: No answer

R5: No, in Greece the idea of Thrace does not exist outside of the Greek border. In the cross-border perception, the region "Thrace" is divided between three countries (Greece, Bulgaria Turkey red.).

R6: No, a common identity is non-existent. People see Thrace as "Greek Thrace", "Turkish Thrace", etc.

R7: Yes, the CBR is in the minds of the citizens because of two reasons. First of all, in the last years our CBR has gotten a greater role. It is an important area for building a bridge between Greece and the Black Sea area. Secondly, the CBR has been of major significance within the energy network and this has resulted in bigger publicity for the CBR.

R8: People are starting to think about CBC. It has been implemented for the past ten years, and now we have the experience and can exchange our know-how with the citizens.

R9: The issue is not actively in their mind, they forget what CBC is about. Nowadays, citizens associate CBC with tourist flows between Bulgaria and Greece. Another theme that is known by the people is business exchange. Although it is a main theme, it has become of secondary importance and is not as important as before. This is because there has been a big development in tourist activities, but is independent from CBC. However, the promotion of tourism has played a role in co-financed projects and was a factor in opening the borders. Nowadays, CBC is more open to the rest of society, before few people were monopolizing the cross-border work. Still, our CBC is not widely known to the public.

R10: Since the borders are open Greece has been flooded with tourists from Bulgaria. Here in Thrace, to a great extent our income is dependent upon this sector. Therefore, we have to establish good relations with our neighbours strengthen the existing links and on the whole become more open to one another.

PRACTICE AND POLITICS OF THE CROSS-BORDER REGION

IN THIS PART OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE PRACTICES AND POLITICS WITHIN YOUR CROSS-BORDER REGION.

Q8: *I will now name some characteristics that could apply to your Cross-Border Region. Please indicate by means of a grade from 1 to 5, which characteristic is most appropriate to describe your Cross-Border Region in terms of:*

Weakly developed strategic capacity (1) vs.	Strong strategic capacity (5)	2
Loose cooperation (1) vs.	Broad scope of cooperation (5)	3
Dependent in relation to other authorities (1) vs.	Autonomous in relation to other authorities (5)	2,3
Weakly developed development plans (1) vs.	Well developed documented strategy plans (5)	2,6
Mainly driven by regional authorities (1) vs.	Mainly driven by municipalities (5)	3,6

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the aspects I wish to look into with regards to your Cross-Border Region is the organizational development of the Cross-Border Region. The next questions will be related with this topic.

Q10: *I will now name some characteristics that could apply to your Cross-Border Region. Please indicate by means of a grade from 1 to 5, which characteristic is most appropriate to describe your Cross-Border Region in terms of:*

Strategically dependent in relation other to other border authorities (1) vs.	Strategically autonomous in relation to border authorities (5)	2,5
Operationally dependent in relation to other border authorities (1) vs.	Operationally autonomous in relation to other border authorities (5)	2,8

Q11: Does your Cross-Border Region have a permanent secretariat and administrative staff?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Permanent secretariat and administrative staff

Yes	4
No	4
No answer/ NAP	2

Q12: How many people does the permanent secretariat of your Cross-Border Region employ? 3,2

Q13: How many members, local and regional authorities, does your Cross-Border Region have? 21,5

Q14: Please indicate below if your Cross-Border Region provides advice regarding cross-border cooperation in the fields below (*Multiple answers are possible*):

Policy field	Number CBR's involved
Economic development	7
Tourism and leisure	8
Transport and traffic	2
Agricultural development	2
Regional development	8
Innovation and technology transfer	5
Environmental protection and nature conservation	7
Schools and education	4
Social cooperation	4
Culture and sports	8
Emergency services and health affairs	2
Disaster prevention	3
Energy	2
Communications	3
Waste disposal	4
Public security	2
Health	1

Q15: Please indicate below if your Cross-Border Region provides assistance regarding cross-border cooperation in the fields below *(Multiple answers are possible)*:

Policy field	Number CBR's involved
Economic development	8
Tourism and leisure	9
Transport and traffic	2
Agricultural development	3
Regional development	8
Innovation and technology transfer	4
Environmental protection and nature conservation	7
Schools and education	4
Social cooperation	4
Culture and sports	8
Emergency services and health affairs	2
Disaster prevention	3
Energy	2
Communications	3
Waste disposal	4
Public security	1
Health	1
Crisis management	1

Q16: Please indicate below if your Cross-Border Region provides coordination regarding cross-border cooperation in the fields below *(Multiple answers are possible)*:

Policy field	Number CBR's involved
Economic development	9
Tourism and leisure	8
Transport and traffic	3
Agricultural development	4
Regional development	8
Innovation and technology transfer	5
Environmental protection and nature conservation	7
Schools and education	3
Social cooperation	4
Culture and sports	8
Emergency services and health affairs	2
Disaster prevention	3
Energy	2
Communications	3
Waste disposal	4
Public security	1
Health	1

APPROPRIATION OF CROSS-BORDER ACTIVITIES

Q17: How is your Cross-Border Region involved in the following policy activities (Please put a cross in the appropriate box):

(“Participants in a network” refers to “going with the flow”, while “protagonists within a network” refers to “taking initiatives”)

Policy activity	Not involved	As participants within in a network	As protagonists within a network
cross-border economic and regional policy	1	4	5
encouraging cooperation between enterprises	1	5	4
fostering technologies of the future	6	2	2
intensification of cross-border spatial planning	6	4	0
harmonizing their legal and administrative systems;	8	1	1
developing infrastructure and communications systems	7	2	1

improving knowledge of one's neighbour	1	5	4
solving environmental problems	3	4	3
intensification cooperation among educational and research institutes within the CBR	4	3	3
promoting cross-border networks	1	2	7
improving and intensifying cross-border forms of organization	2	1	7
improving the quality of human resources	3	4	3
overall improving the exploitation of region specific development potential	2	5	3

--- DIVERSIFICATION OF RESOURCE BASE ---

Q18: Apart from INTERREG (A) funds, what other resources in terms of funding does your Cross-Border Region have?

A18:

R1: Before Bulgaria became a Member State PHARE-CBC, ENP-MED, Black Sea, INTERREG IVC and INTERREG IVA. We only ask registration fees from our Members and we receive donations from prefectures, regional and municipal authority's → *however no stable extra sources of income except donations*

R2: We do not have INTERREG; we have PHARE-CBC for cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria. We also have access to IPA, a pre-accession instrument for candidate members of the EU and we ask membership fees

R3: We have no other funding; we invest in elaborate community projects. So we get funding for community projects, we receive membership fees. For the future we have several ideas, for which we hope to receive funding from the MED programme.

R4: No answer

R5: Directorate General's Projects and FP-7 Projects on the DG's initiative

R6: We are our own organization. We receive funding from the DG environment of the EU and from Europaid. We do not ask any membership fees.

R7: Except for EU funding for transnational programs and PHARE, we impose membership fees. So we have our own sources of funding.

R8: We also receive funding from the MED-C program EU Funding

R9: We have run co-financed projects by INTERREG and implemented sub-contracted activities within co-financed projects run by LRA. However, we have no steady cash flows.

R10: We receive INTERREG-C for the Sude/Southern Region. Besides EU funding, we also receive funding from municipalities and regional authorities.

PROXIMITY TO CITIZENS

Proximity to citizens within a Cross-Border Region refers to dealing with the cross-border issues that affect the daily lives of citizens in the region.

Q19: Could you please estimate how many questions from citizens you get on a monthly basis, by e-mails, telephone, fax and letters regarding cross-border issues?

A19:

On average, 10

R3: "luxury" R5: "Not responsible authority" R4: NA R6: "Mostly from people with enterprises involved in commerce" R9: "few" R10: NAP

Q20: How many face-to-face contact hours with citizens does your cross-border region provide on a monthly basis?

A20:

Number CBR with walk in hours: 4

R1: "conferences and seminars" R3: "We only have contact with political actors" R4: NA

R9: "About once a month people who are involved come by" R5: NAP R6: "Ad hoc basis"

R10: NAP

Q21: And how many of these face-to-face contact hours are made use of? (Percentage)

NAP

Q22A: To what extent, do you feel, you deal as a Cross-Border Region with issues such as economy, work, leisure, culture, social affairs, housing and spatial planning?

	Not enough	Enough	More than enough
Economy	4	6	0
Work	6	4	0
Leisure	5	4	1
Culture	3	5	2
Social affairs	7	3	0

Housing	10	0	0
Spatial planning	8	2	0

Q22B: Could you please explain your answers from the previous question?

A22B:

R1: It is the question whether it is the role of the CBR to engage in these activities: work issues are for instance attributed to a national level. The issues in which we do not engage are a different actor's game. However, we would like the opportunity to engage herein.

R2: First and foremost, we are a Chamber of Commerce so we have other priorities: economic and work life, but also tourism.

R3: Our common denominator is to develop local micro-partnership and local employment. We seek opportunities to improve, develop and create employment. So therefore we do not engage in these other activities; however we hope to develop CBC culture in all these fields.

R4: No answer

R5: The regions capacity and authority as a legal entity to deal with these issues is insufficient. This should change. When the borders really open, we hope things will change. However, EU policies would still be implemented at a national level.

R6: Housing and spatial planning require specific characteristic knowledge. Furthermore, we have no common administrative system; so many projects regarding social issues in CBC have failed.

R7: Housing is not an issue we are involved in. Social affairs are still difficult to engage in, since there is still much suspicion between Bulgaria and Greece. Furthermore, labour related topics are centrally controlled.

R8: It is still too early to fully integrate and get closer with our neighbours on several of these subjects. We have to work on these subjects and give people the opportunity to accept our CBR. However, there are still several grudged because of World War II between the countries. New generations will find CBC easier to accept.

R9: We lack the competence to commit ourselves to these issues. Spatial planning is controlled by the central government. Furthermore, we are just more oriented towards some themes more than others. For instance, we are very active in the field of environment.

R10: CBC can be considered as a new perception and concept. It has just been developed, and this new way of thinking takes several steps and time to reach the appropriate level for satisfying these issues. For instance, up until a few years ago Bulgaria has been a closed country for decennia. Luckily, in the recent years this has improved. As for our CBR, we are trying to get the most funding that is available, to try to address all these issues. This is not always the case in other CBR's, where they are more specialized in certain themes.

Q23: To what extent are citizens directly and indirectly participating in your Cross-Border Region?

A23:

R1: Everyone is invited; we participate in many participation missions. Citizens can meet each other in initiatives.

R2: We have good contacts with the citizens. Our activities are open and have a public invitation to our members and we publish and announce our activities in the newspapers. Often the media is also present at our activities.

R3: Our communication with citizens is mainly through mayors of municipalities. It is of an indirect basis, because otherwise it would be more difficult and an elaborate process to have these contacts.

R4: No answer

R5: Citizens have a low extent of influence on a regional level, only in general elections. We have an extremely centralized system in Greece. However, the region sponsors most activities for citizens. Therefore, they are indirectly affecting policy.

R6: Citizens participate in relation to their economic interest. Therefore, we have established a network of enterprises. Therefore, we have indirect citizen participation. However, most citizens do not attend meetings regarding CBC issues.

R7: Citizens are both directly and indirectly involved. An example of direct participation is student exchanges between educational institutions; indirect participation is visible in the promotion of tourism, cultural events and economic projects.

R8: Citizens mainly participate through programs. These participants are owners of companies in Greece and Bulgaria, but also individuals.

R9: Citizens can participate indirectly through the authorities that are our members. Direct involvement mainly takes place through capitalizing the local expertise in our CBR.

R10: Our CBR involves citizens with the cross-border work by means of publishing press releases and organizing conferences promoting the idea of CBC. However we do not directly involve citizens with our day to day issues. We do inform and use the media, by promoting our work and funding. However, looking at results in tourism, infrastructure, the overall improvement of the way of life, one should not underestimate the results of CBC.

INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

Q25: To what extent are politicians – local, regional and national – of both sides of the border involved in participating in your Cross-Border Region?

A25:

R1: Among politicians, the mayors of Haskovo and Edirne have initiated many CBC meetings. Our CBR has very good relations with politicians.

R2: In my experience, politicians participate depending on the results of the initiative, so it varies.

R3: Only politicians from a local level are involved at the moment. We have no other political contacts at the moment.

R4: No answer

R5: The willingness to participate is present in all politicians from all levels. The policy making begins at a central level, since the national level determines the direction of CBC. However, on a local level, the concept of CBC exists more.

R6: In all major decisions, all local and regional politicians are fully involved. However, the national government however is not.

R7: The strongest involvement comes from local politicians. At a regional level some politicians are involved as well. However, at a national level, authorities are afraid of and sceptical about CBC in the current form.

R8: The politicians at all levels make good efforts and communicate well with each other. However, the current elaborate bureaucracy is a big problem.

R9: Mainly, local and regional politicians are involved. Furthermore, they are very positively inclined towards CBC.

R10: Politicians from local, prefectural and regional authorities are very much involved at a good and high level. Without their involvement nothing could be achieved, because they are concerned with the implementation of cross-border policies.

Q26: Are there differences among Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish politicians when it comes to involvement and participation within your Cross-Border Region? Please explain.

A26:

R1: There are no differences. Of course there are differences in culture and policies, but on the whole we have good relations and are strongly connected amongst ourselves and with each other.

R2: The willingness to participate depends on the policy of the country and on the political climate. Elections and the chosen political parties in government very much influence the extent of cooperation.

R3: Good relations exist between Bulgaria and Greece. However, we do have difficulties with Turkey and FYROM. These problems are both of a historical basis, as well as contemporary. With FYROM we have the problem of the name [Macedonia, SRG], so CBC will not be possible with this country, although common programs *do* exist. With Turkey we have problems with their military regime and the military plains; therefore trust problems occur.

R4: At the local level there are many similarities among Greek and Bulgarian politicians concerning their extent of involvement in the Cross-Border Region. However, this could still be characterized as not enough, given the fact that we are mainly at the beginning of this process.

R5: There are no differences; the involvement of politicians depends in all three countries on the *personal dedication* in CBC. There are however differences in the educational level of the involved politicians and their involvement in EU affairs in general, which leads to differences in knowledge and experience.

R6: There are differences. The Turkish politicians are more influenced by their national government. The politicians need approval from their minister of those affairs. However, when it comes to practical issues these differences are less apparent.

R7: I cannot comment on the Turkish side. However, the Bulgarians and the Greeks are equally dedicated and equally represented in our CBR. However, we have to deal with primitive systems and have to avoid certain issues, such as environment. We only deal with issues that we can manage and have consensus about. The votes in our CBR are equally divided, but the Greeks have more influence than the Bulgarians.

R8: There are differences. The Greeks have the best experience in CBC [in comparison with the other two countries SRG]. Turkey is just evolving on this subject. However, since Bulgaria joined the EU they have gained more experience in these matters and are further in the process than the Turks.

R9: No, when looking at their intentions I would say that politicians from both sides of the borders want contact with the other side. The Greek politicians have a very positive attitude towards CBC, but are not always consistent in their actions. The Bulgarians are also very willing to cooperate, but often lack the technical capacity to design and implement projects. The Turkish politicians on the other hand have very little autonomy. They are the least autonomous in relation to their central government in comparison with the other two partners. As a result, Turkish politicians cannot act on their own initiative.

R10: There are differences. The Greek politicians have more experience in dealing with EU projects and are on the whole motivated in the cross-border work. Bulgaria is starting to develop an open mind towards CBC in general, while Turkey is only open to the concept to some extent. Meanwhile, cooperation mainly revolves around problems regarding environment, social affairs, immigration and water. In the future, we can expand the cooperation to other fields of common interest.

PARTNERSHIP AND SUBSIDIARITY

Q27: To what extent does the policy process regarding cross-border cooperation within your Cross-Border Region take place at a regional or local level?

A27:

R1: Initiatives and large scale projects such as oil and gas are regulated on a national level. However, everyday issues are attributed to local and regional level CBC authorities.

R2: Both, regional and local authorities give advice to national levels of government when it comes to policy making. The situation in the CBC area is also analyzed from a regional and local level.

R3: In our CBR the policy process regarding CBC only takes place on a local level.

R4: No answer

R5: The policy process regarding cross-border cooperation in our CBC takes place at both regional and local level.

R6: On the Greek side, there is no involvement of national politicians in the policy process; the process is attributed to a municipal level, the mayors. For the Bulgarian case this is the same, there are many twinning networks and Muslim networks. However in Turkey, it depends on the

political party who has the power at the moment; *some are more inclined to decentralization of CBC than others.*

R7: The policy process mainly takes place at a local level, since we are not a NUTSII area. The policy process takes to some extent place at a prefectural level as well, since this authority has full control over the activities of the area.

R8: The policy process in relation to CBC solely takes place at a regional and local level. We do not get any directions from the national governments.

R9: At both sides of the border [Bulgaria and Greece, SRG], the policy process takes place at a national level. However, local and regional authorities are autonomous to act within the policy framework set at a national level. Furthermore, wide consultation with lower layers of government takes place, but in the end the national governments take the decisions.

R10: Some of the input in the policy process comes from a national level, but in general cross-border policies stem from local and regional needs. They have better understanding of the needs of the region and therefore promote CBC schemes.

Q28: Is your Cross-Border Region involved in partnerships with local, regional, national and European authorities and organisations?

	Yes	No	IF: Yes, please give an example
Local organisations and authorities	10	0	Members; EU Info Reky Office; Members; Municipalities of Petritsi, Iraklion and cities in South Bulgaria; INTERREG projects, European Euroled initiatives, cultural ties (twinings); Members; Members and stakeholders; Water management authority Nestos-Mesta, Municipalities of Gorse Delchev and Xanthi
Regional organisations and authorities	7	3	Association REMTh; Chamber Network; Unions; INTERREG projects, European Euroled initiatives, cultural ties (twinings); Managers of INTERREG; Members and stakeholders; Water division department of Natural Resources of East Macedonia, Thrace and Bulgaria
National organisations and authorities	7	3	VWF Greece; EC Delegation in Turkey, TOBB, ABGS; bilateral or unilateral agreements on energy and oil;

			organisations for legal aspects; Ministry of development in Greece
European organisations and authorities	7	3	AEBR; Euro-chambers, Enterprise of Europe Network, ARGE 28; EU organisations Europe Direct Network; Organisations for funding of programs; AEBR and Committee of the Regions

Q29: How intensive are the partnerships your Cross-Border Region is involved in?

A29:

R1: Our partnerships are intensive. However we still have to take many steps until our goals are reached.

R2: Intensive, for instance, we follow training from ETCF projects and Euro-chambers

R3: Our partnerships are intensive, they are not of an occasional basis and we believe in these partnerships.

R4: No answer

R5: There are differences between partnerships regarding CBC with Bulgaria and Turkey; the partnerships between Greece and Bulgaria are more intensive, than partnerships concerned with CBC between Greece and Turkey.

R6: The partnerships in which we are involved are not so intensive. We do not have a very productive lobby network. The networks work for politicians and the interests of the Member States. We remain the uninformed party, except when we are involved in projects. This is the same for the basis networks.

R7: Considering the entire range of CBC activities in Greece, I would say that the partnerships are intensive. However on an international level the partnerships are less intensive.

R8: We very much want to participate in these partnerships, because we are eager to learn.

R9: We are active members of the AEBR and the Committee of the Regions.

R10: The partnerships with municipalities and regional authorities are very good and of an intensive nature. Our partners can on the one the hand, help us promote programmes, on the other solve difficulties and publish projects. By means of this we can deepen our links with citizens. Secondly, by means of these partnerships we can engage in a more applicable approach, as in our region we are very results oriented. Greece and Bulgaria have a very applicated oriented interest in cross-border work. For instance, the focus has very much been on improving the technical infrastructure in the region, such as improving waste management.

Q30: To what extent are actors – on local, regional and national level– of both sides of the border involved in participating in your Cross-Border Region?

A30:

R1: All municipal authorities of the Evros-Rhodopi Grand Prefecture are very much involved. Furthermore in Greece, some economically engaged NGO's, all Chambers of Commerce of Evros are participating. In Bulgaria, it is the same.

R2: The actors that are involved in CBC are from a local and regional level in the border area. At a national level, they do not understand the problems in our CBC.

R3: We try to find similar partners concerning our CBC ideas. We are looking into partnerships between Bulgarian and Greek schools; partnerships in mass-media hoping to developing CBC media; intermunicipal organisations; and cooperation between organizations for handicapped persons.

R4: To a small extent. Actually we are at the first steps of cooperation between local actors – both public and administrative ones – in the region.

R5: Actors involved in business and cultural affairs are quite intensively involved. These actors are from all levels. However, on a national level, actors involved in CBC are mainly concerned with energy and economy: “gas and oil”. On a local and regional level, most actors concern themselves with culture and micro-economic issues.

R6: The actors, who are involved, are mainly local politicians who promote CBC projects. Some NGO's and development agencies – *such as themselves* – are involved, and some industrial organisations, but mostly politicians.

R7: Actors in the area show a strong level of participation. The actors that are involved stem mostly from a local level, a good example is the *Association of Teachers*.

R8: We mainly deal with regional and local organisations, Chambers of Commerce and development agencies.

R9: Most actors involved in our CBR are from local and regional levels. They are interested in CBC means to implement projects, that otherwise they would not be able to implement. They very much show a willingness to cooperate and show a great interest in CBC matters.

R10: In my experience, NGO's are very well involved in our CBR. The local actors understand and know the problems of the area in Bulgaria and Greece.

Q31: Are there differences among Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish actors when it comes to involvement and participation within your Cross-Border Region? Please explain.

A31:

R1: Yes, in the last decades the countries have changed into new positions EU-wise. They now have different regimes, however we always manage to adapt to the differences among the CBC-countries. The Turks have become more involved, more autonomous and have adapted their legislation. However they still have a long way to go.

R2: Yes, it depends on the programs and the capacity of the authority in question. Language is a big problem; few speak English → *especially in Bulgaria and Turkey*

R3: In our projects, all partners are equal on a formal level. This is obligatory, however in practice we have to try to achieve this as well now.

R4: The Greek side seems to be much more interested in CBC topics such as cooperation, investment etc.

R5: There are differences. Turkish actors are much less involved, because of their political situation. However, at a national level there are some areas of common interest for actors from all three countries, namely energy and economy.

R6: The basic actors who are involved are politicians, so it is the same as in earlier questions [There are differences, SRG]. But some Greek NGO's and network related actors are also active in our region. However, these types of structures are not developed in Bulgaria and Turkey.

R7: Again, on Turkey I cannot comment. However, I would say that there are no differences. Our cultures are strongly connected and the Bulgarians and Greeks have a good and friendly attitude towards each other.

R8: There are differences between the actors of the three countries, especially in the way of thinking. There is still a lot of suspicion among them, because of the military culture in Turkey and post-communism in Bulgaria. By getting to know one another, these tensions could be eased off. However, this takes time.

R9: Each actor from a different country has its own way of operating. However they do not ask many questions, because the other authorities do not have time or are indiscrete. In Greece there is only little involvement of civil society outside of cross-border work. In Bulgaria the involvement is even less and in Turkey civil society does not even exist.

R10: The involvement and participation of Greek and Bulgarian actors is at a similar level –there are no differences. They are equal partners and perceptive of the problems in the area. Furthermore, they actively take part in collaboration to solve the problem. For instance, Bulgarian NGO's are equally active in arguing for the solution of environmental problems.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION STRUCTURES

In previous questions I have already asked whether you have a permanent secretariat with administrative staff. The following questions refer to joint cross-border cooperation structures within your Cross-Border Region.

Q32: Does your Cross-Border Region have a joint office?

- Yes 2
 2 offices"

R2: "Orestiada"

R5:NAP

R7: "We have

- No 6

R10: NAP

Joint office

Yes	2
No	6
No answer/ NAP	2

Q33: Does your Cross-Border Region have joint bodies?

- ☐ Yes 4 R1: "Youth Network with over 50 bodies" R5:NAP
- ☐ No 4 R10: NAP

Joint bodies

Yes	4
No	4
No answer/ NAP	2

Q34: Does your Cross-Border Region have a joint budget?

- ☐ Yes 2 R3: "For the future" R5:NAP R10: NAP
- ☐ No 7

Joint budget

Yes	2
No	6
No answer/ NAP	2

Q35: If you have answered no in any of the questions 31-33, could you please explain why your Cross-Border Region does not have that kind of cross-border structure?

A35:

R1: At the moment there is no joint secretariat. Our CBR is very new and was initiated less than a decade ago. Politicians are changing their attitude, so we keep improving our situation. With regards to the lack of a joint budget, the new INTERREGA creates a mirror budget, before we had to deal with two programs: PHARE and INTERREG when dealing with Bulgaria and Greece. Sadly, INTERREG C for Greece and Turkey has been suspended due to lack of cooperation from the Turkish side.

R2: We have no joint budget, because the initiative in our border area is mainly supported by the Greek side.

R3: Our Bulgarian partners did not understand the importance of a strategic approach towards CBC, so we do not have joint bodies. In the future we hope to get a joint budget.

R4: No answer

R5: NAP

R6: Common structures are difficult to establish because the limited funding resources.

R7: Due to the geographic features of the area we cannot sustain a joint office for Greek and Bulgarian cross-border cooperation. Therefore, we have two offices to maintain the balance in the involvement between Bulgaria and Greece. As for the budget, this could be achieved in the future perhaps by means of the *European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation* (EGTC).

R8: Since the three countries have different national policies, and the governmental structures are different, it is difficult to commit ourselves to common structures. However, we have a very strong joint network, by which we manage to communicate.

R9: Our main source of funding is INTERREG. We therefore have no available opportunities to finance these structures.

R10: NAP

Q36: Do you have any questions, comments or a final statement in relation to the future with regards to this questionnaire, or Cross-Border Cooperation in between Greece-Bulgaria-Turkey in general?

A36:

R1: In the last decades, the initiatives have been born among the CBC countries. These types of bodies have created a very important connection with the other side of the border. The borders are still very strong; we have problems with the (military) regime in Turkey and post-communism in Bulgaria. Even though we have a very fruitful CBC, we do not see a sign for a solution with regards to Turkey in the nearby future.

R2: By means of cooperation on local and regional level we enhance the relations with our neighbours. By means of CBC, the EU supports the chance for people in border areas to meet more easily.

R3: We are an intermunicipal association. We have worked with the Bulgarians for 2-3 years; we initiate CBR projects with South Bulgaria. We express our interest for all common problems in the cross-border area, hoping to develop cross-border services. Nowadays, these services are not present. Our budget is insufficient, and all funding goes to infrastructural goals. There is no room for solutions regarding “soft” common problems. Furthermore, we lack a culture of CBC; this is the same in all these countries [Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, FYROM, SRG]. People do not understand that CBC can solve historical problems. We believe in CBC, but it’s not enough. Fortunately the politicians at municipal, prefectural and regional level understand the CBC thought; otherwise CBC could not be developed. We especially need to invest in soft cross-border projects, now all the money goes to infrastructure.

R4: I believe that in the future there may be a much friendlier environment concerning CBC, if we can reconnect the experience from cohabitation of all the people in the region in the past decades and centuries. It is a difficult process, sometimes slow due to some traumatic historical events and various political factors. Fostering a culture for European policies and cooperation could be a solution for better understanding among people [in the Cross-Border Region, SRG].

R5: At EU level, CBC with Bulgaria has been intensified at a greater level. Most important is the infrastructure and transport connection, so that citizens can become closer to one another. When this is fully possible, it will become inevitable not to operate. When it comes to Turkey, we

can say that the political situation affects the lack of CBC at all levels. Once the political situation is stabilized, we can engage in better cross-border cooperation with Turkey.

R6: The EU does not have a concrete policy for this area. It takes three governments to develop CBC policy. The EU should develop more concrete ideas with regards to their plans for CBC with Bulgaria and Turkey. They should develop a more clear vision for the area. While CBC in our area is in need of many things, most importantly we should establish common structures.

R7: CBC in our area is at an infantile state. This is because of five reasons. First of all, our northern neighbours are post-communist countries; cooperation with them is therefore not easy. Secondly, there is still suspicion among the countries stemming from historical reasons. Thirdly, the physique of the landscape is an impediment for cooperation and the area is scarcely populated. Fourthly, the economic development of the area is still underdeveloped. And fifthly, the existing cooperation is of an opportunistic nature. For the future I foresee that the cooperation will remain the same for a long period. The EGTC will make some improvements for the CBC between Greece and Bulgaria. However, for Turkey it will take much longer, although nowadays we do have common programmes.

R8: As a Chamber, we support the effort to create CBC in order to come closer to our neighbours and to overcome our peripheral location. In the end we hope to create a strong network for entrepreneurs.

R9: At the moment Bulgaria suffers from “accessibility problems”. When we are looking at Turkey we are talking about “border problems”. These are major differences. The programmes designed for CBC with Turkey have never been implemented. For, by using INTERREG for these problems, it would mean for Turkey that they are implying to recognize the borders with Greece. More specifically, according to Turkey international maritime law does not apply in the Aegean Sea. Therefore, in short, according to Turkey, Greece is not entitled to have any maritime borders.

However, in my opinion the future of CBC looks quite good in relation to Greece and Bulgaria. In the case of Greece and Turkey, things should improve fundamentally, because otherwise CBC would not be possible. For, CBC is not possible if two countries are at each other’s throat. Furthermore, we need a steady source of funding. The EGTC would be a mean to improve CBC between Bulgaria and Greece. On all levels we need to take initiatives to advance the further process of CBC in the area. However, there is still a lot of criticism and reserve towards CBC. Furthermore, we are now in a phase that the CBC process is of an open nature. The old guard of CBC should be reinforced and gradually replaced by new people, because at the moment we always see the same people. We should indeed make an effort to improve the current situation; the means are at least available.

R10: First of all, we have to change the way of thinking. The perception of the “other side of the border” is very negative. Especially in Greece this is a problem. A good example is the problems around the Nestos River

APPENDIX II: TABLE OVERVIEW

CHAPTER 2

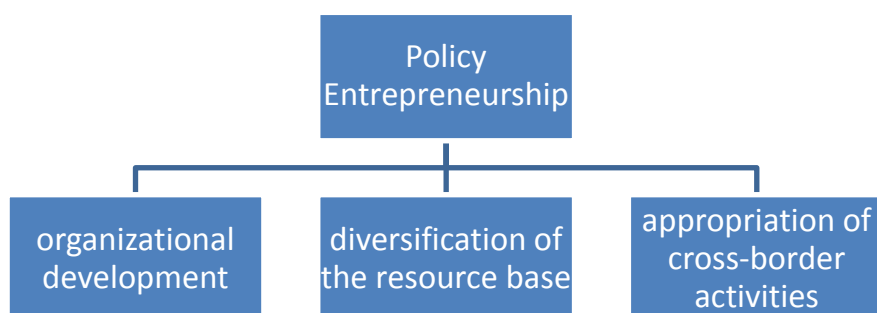
1. Institutionalization stages of a Region:

Stage of Institutionalization of Region	Operationalization
Territorial shaping	Geography and existence of boundaries of a regional entity
Symbolic shaping	abstract expressions of supposed group solidarity, that constitute a collective identity
Institutional shaping	the development of informal and formal institutions
Establishment of a region	the acceptance of the regional system and broader social consciousness

2. Typology of a CBR on the basis of theory (Perkmann 2007):

Geographical Scope	Small	Large
High cooperation intensity	Integrated micro-CBR's Euroregions	Scandinavian groupings Oresund Council/Committee
Low cooperation intensity	Emerging micro-CBR's Transmanche region	Working Communities Arge Alp

3. Operationalization of Policy Entrepreneurship:



4. Operationalization of criteria of policy entrepreneurship:

Criteria of policy entrepreneurship	Operationalization
Organizational development	Degree of strategic and operational autonomy vis-à-vis 'ordinary' border authorities, organizational size and range of activities by taking on related tasks and competences within their context
Diversification of resource base	The extent to which Euroregional organisations have diversified their resource base <i>away</i> from the INTERREG subsidy program
Appropriation of cross-border cooperation activities	The extent to which a Euroregions are involved as protagonists, or participants, in other policy activities aimed at promoting cross-border integration

5. Typology of CBR's on the basis of best-practices (AEBR 2008)

Type of CBR in Europe	Extent of overall cross-border integration
Type 1: Integration Forerunners	High degree of overall cross-border integration: -A high level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion

Type 2: Areas catching up to integration Forerunners

-A high level of cross-border cooperation intensity

Medium-High degree of overall cross-border integration

- A high level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity

- A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity

Type 3: Integration Candidates

Medium degree of overall cross-border integration

-A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion

-A medium level of cross-border cooperation intensity

Type 4: Areas catching up to integration candidates

Medium-low degree of overall cross-border integration

- A medium level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity

- A low level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion or cross-border cooperation intensity

Type 5: Areas still searching for Integration perspectives

A low degree of overall cross-border integration

-A low level of socio-cultural/economic cohesion

-A low level of cross-border cooperation intensity

6. Operationalization of key elements of successful cross-border cooperation:

Key element of successful cross-border cooperation: **Operationalization:**

Proximity to citizens	issues dealt with in the CBR concern issues in the everyday life of the citizens of the region; extent of participation of citizens; extent of contact with citizens
Involvement of politicians	Involvement of politicians in CBR
Partnership and subsidiarity	Extent of internal and external partnership in relation to other authorities; and decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen
Cross-border cooperation structures	Existing joint bodies, offices and budget in the CBR