

CROSS BORDER TERRITORIAL SYSTEMS OF THE ROMANIAN-MOLDAVIAN-UKRAINIAN COOPERATION PLACED AT THE EXTERNAL BORDER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PARADOXES OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL REFORMS

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Résumé: *Systèmes territoriaux frontaliers de la coopération Roumaine – Moldavie - Ukraine placée à la frontière externe de l'Union Européenne et des paradoxes des réformes administratives territoriales.* La position géographique de la Roumanie dans l'architecture européenne a causée des profonds changements en ce qui concerne le rôle de frontières. À ce moment, après 19 ans depuis l'effondrement du système qui a favorisé et a maintenu la frontière d'enfermer, on peut détecter une évolution distinctive au sujet de la compatibilité des unités administratives territorial. Cet aspect reflète la coopération frontalière de tous les types et principalement il reflète celui de l'euro régional. Le long de ce contexte nous avons proposé une analyse de l'évolution des structures territorial administratives de Roumanie et République de Moldavie, du degré de compatibilité au sujet de l'aspect administratif et du nombre d'acteurs impliqué en déterminant quelques systèmes frontaliers d'un degré élevé fonctionnel. Cette situation est le résultat des changements fréquents dans la structure territorial administrative de la République de Moldavie, car elle suit: dans 1994 la République de Moldavie présente dans le système administratif la conception de la » commune », en 1998 au lieu des zones soviétiques sont rétablis les comtés, et, en 2001, une nouvelle réforme territorial administrative dans la République de Moldavie a supprimé les comtés et a rapporté comme premier plan la vieille structure du type détail de rayonne au système soviétique et compatible avec ceux d'Ukraine, mais elle préserve une structure commune.

Mots-clés: Roumanie, Republique de Moldavie, euroregions, unités administratives

After the collapse of the communist system the perception of the borders' and cross border areas' role have completely changed. Beginning with discrepancy areas, having mainly a military and defensive function, it changed into convergence areas and into cross border cooperation promoting ones. The geographical position of Romania within the European architecture caused within this context deep shifting regarding the borders' role. At this moment, after 19 years since the collapse of the system which has promoted and maintained the enclose border, one can detect a distinctive evolution concerning the compatibility of the administrative-territorial units. This aspect reflects the cross border cooperation of all types and mainly it reflects the euro-regional one.

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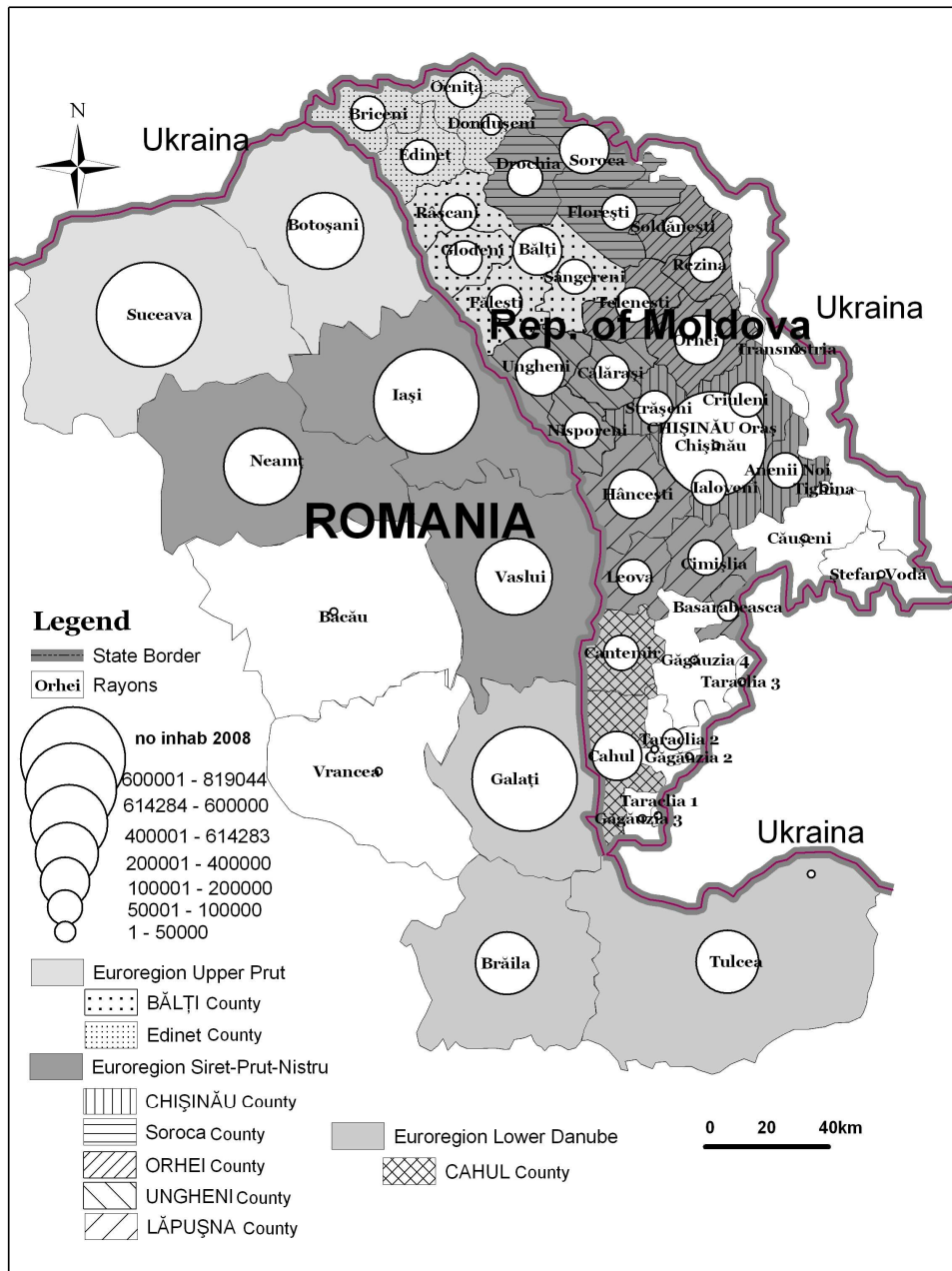


Figure 1. The old and new administrative division of Republic of Moldova (and number of inhabitants) before/after the last administrative reform (2004) in the area included in Romanian-Moldavian Euroregions

“The Upper Prut River” Euro-region. Territorial-administrative and demographic peculiarities specific to the year 2002 (source: the population’s and the Romanian habitation’s census, 2002; www.insee.ro ; The census of the Moldavia Republic population 2001; www.mapl.gov.md ; The census of the Ukraine population, 2001; www.ukrstat.gov.ua).

Table 1.

	<i>Romanian Counties</i>	<i>Area sqkm</i>	<i>No inhab</i>	<i>Moldavian Counties</i>	<i>Area sqkm</i>	<i>No inhab</i>	<i>Moldavians Rayons</i>	<i>Area sqkm</i>	<i>No inhab</i>
A	UPPER PRUT EUROREGION								
1	Botoşani	4.986	454.023	Bălţi	4.081	500.900	Briceni	814	78.027
2	Suceava	8.553	690.941				Donduşeni	645	46.442
3				Edineţ	3.187	279.100	Edineţ	932,9	81.390
4							Ocnîţa	597	56.510
B	SIRET-PRUT-NISTRU EUROREGION								
1	Iaşi	5.476	819.044	Chişinău	2.780	382.400	Anenii Noi	892	81.710
2							Criuleni	688	72.254
3							Ialoveni	783	97.704
4							Străşeni	729	88.900
5	Neamţ	5.896	557.084	Lăpuşna	3.436	276.300	Basarabeasca	294,5	28.978
6							Cimişlia	922,8	60.925
7							Hînceşti	1483,4	119.762
8							Leova	775	51.056
9	Vaslui	5.318	4555.550	Orhei	2.850	300.400	Orhei	1228	116.271
10							Rezina	621	48.105
11							Teleneşti	848,6	74.900
12				Soroca	3.162	274.600	Drochia	999,9	87.092
13							Floreşti	1108,2	89.389
14							Soroca	1043	94.986
15				Ungheni	2.516	260.300	Călăraşi	753,5	75.075
16							Nisporeni	629	64.924
17							Ungheni	1083	118.545
C	LOWER DANUBE EUROREGION								
1	Brăila	4.766	373.174	Cahul	2.438	190.800	Cahul	1545	119.231
2	Galaţi	4.466	619.556				Cantemir	870	60.001
3	Tulcea	8.499	256.492						

From the multitude of the cooperation and interlinking forms of the contiguous cross border systems, those euro-regional types are the most affected by the administrative-territorial reforms through the reduction or multiplication of the partner institutions number, institutions which may be of the same degree or of different hierarchical standing. All these have as purpose the creation of some common social-economical structures able to figure on trust and mutual advantage. Also, the problems in performing these structures are prescribed by the differences of the economical policy of Romania and Moldavia Republic, by their position towards the European Union.

Along this context we have proposed an analysis of the evolution of the territorial-administrative structures from Romania and Moldavia Republic, of the compatibility degree concerning the administrative aspect and of the actors number involved in determining some cross border systems of a functional high degree.

This situation is the result of the frequent changes within the territorial-administrative structure of the Moldavia Republic, as it follows: in 1994 (the law no. 3006-XIII) the Moldavia Republic introduces in the administrative system the conception of the “commune”, in 1998 (the law 191-XIV) instead of the Soviet districts are re-established the counties. Between 1998 and February 2003, Republic of Moldova was divided into 12 territorial units (1 municipality, 1 autonomus territorial units, 1 territorial unit and 9

counties. In 2001, applied in 2003 a new territorial-administrative reform in the Moldavia Republic (the law 764-XV) abolished the counties and brought back as foreground the old structure of the rayon⁴ type specific to the Soviet system and compatible with those from Ukraine, but it preserves the commune structure (MAEM source).

Euroregion “Upper Prut”. The first structure of the cross border cooperation placed at the Eastern border of Romania having a trilateral participation, Romanian, Moldavian and Ukrainian respectively, is the Euroregion the “Upper Prut”, whose area generally laps over the upper basin of this hydrographical artery. Placed in the North-Western part of Romania (figure 1), this Euroregion laps over a complex natural background, including mountainous units in the Western part, having over 1000 m altitude, and a plateau area in the central part having 500-700 m high, a less higher plateau respectively, similar to a field in the Eastern part having less than 300 m high. From the morphological point of view the region is characterized as complementary, characteristic determined by the stepped disposal of the major relief units within its area. It is a Euro-regional structure of the cross border cooperation, which initially has based on a territorial-administrative unit of a high degree, the European equivalent of the NUTS 3 system and which, regarding the partner countries level, they are 2nd degree units, lower to the state structure. In these conditions, the partnership was realized on the level of the County Councils for Romania and Moldavia Republic, and Regional Councils for Ukraine respectively, based on an Agreement signed on the 22nd of September 2000, in Botosani, Romania. After this step which means also “the birth certificate” of the Euro-region, there has been adopted its Statute and there has been set up The Secretariat and The Working Committee, the prior activity directions, the operating code regulations (MAE source, Romania, 2003).

Based on the agreement of establishing the Euro-region, the administrative structure which ensure its functionality is composed from: (source: the Constitution Agreement, 2000): the Euroregion’s Council, considered as the supreme component part of leadership, it is composed from the presidents of the member county councils and it is headed by a president in practice, chosen by rotation from the Council’s members. It is added also other lower structures as the Euro-region’s Council Secretariat, Working Commissions of activity fields and experts groups.

The territorial enlargement and the attached territorial structures. The Euroregion “Upper Prut” is a structure of cross border cooperation whose associated field laps over the territorial-administrative structures of a superior level, those associated to the European statistical level NUTS III respectively. Within these, based on the public administration law specific to each state there are territorial-administrative structures of a lower level for oaths to develop bilateral or versatile regional associations or cross border associations through the local councils’ decisions and those of the city hall. The Euro-region’s founder nucleus, based on territorial-administrative structures specific to each participant state, have included the following units at that moment when the Constitution Agreement was signed (table 1 and the figure 1): Botoșani and Suceava counties in Romania, Bălți and Edineț

⁴ Moldavia Republic, according to its new territorial-administrative structure, it is divided into 32 rayon, 3 municipalities (Chișinău, Bălți și Tighina), one autonomous region (Găgăuzia) and a region with a disputed statute, Transnistria which, de jure, it would contain 5 rayons if it would have been under the state sovereignty (M.A.E.R.M. source, 2009). Territorial-administrative structures specific to the ex-soviet area and whose territorial enlargement may be associated as an intermediary between the counties and the cities/communes from Romania and Moldavia Republic.

counties in Moldavia Republic, Cernăuți region in Ukraine divided into 10 rayon. The second stage, that of the territorial enlargement of the Euro-region took place on the 12th of December 2002, when the demand of the Ukrainian region Ivano-Frankivsk association and integration was accepted. This region is divided into 15 rayon.

The first “disturbances” within the administrative scheme of the Euro-region appeared in 2003 by multiplying actors number coming from Moldavia Republic, from 2 counties to 8 rayon and one municipality - Bălți (fig.1), the new participant structures having the same number.

If by the time the Euro-region was made from the administrative point of view there existed the municipalities, the cities and the communes, within the Romanian and Moldavian Areas, while within the Ukrainian area there were the rayon, the urban structures (cities of a national rank, cities and urban settlements) and rural structures (rural localities similar to the communes), nowadays the territorial-administrative organization in Moldavia Republic have changed within the 3rd rank level, the counties have restructured regarding the rayon level (with a less population and a surface more reduced), preserving although the lower level specific to the cities and to the communes.

In the Romanian Euro-regional area there are a number of 170 administrative-territorial units inferior to the county (municipalities, cities and communes) which based on the public administration law in force (in 2001) there are for oaths to realize cross border associations and cooperation at the local Council and city hall level. These units administer 733 localities. In the same situation there are 158 territorial-administrative units on the Moldavian side (15 cities and 391 communes) which administer 391 localities in all. In the Moldavian area the two counties were substituted by 8 rayon and one municipality (fig. 1).

Regarding the urban centers level (chart no. 1) the most important are those placed in the Ukrainian area, followed by the municipality Bălți and the two residential counties from Romania, all these having over 100.000 inhabitants, being also the main nucleus of polarization on the cross border cooperation structure level along the initial situations of constituting the Euro-region. After the administrative reform in Moldavia Republic (in 2001), the territorial-administrative centers of polarization have multiplied from two residential counties to 8 residential rayon and one municipality which determined also the magnifying of the complexity of the Euro-regional cross border territorial system. It is added to these other 15 cities of small sizes, less than 50.000 inhabitants and relatively distributed in equilibrium within the territory having the role of local centers of polarization.

The Euro-region Siret-Prut-Nistru. In 2002 the “Romanian-Moldavian” cross border cooperation system became a complete one following the initiative of some County Councils from Romania and Moldavia Republic in forming the Euro-region “*Siret-Prut-Nistru*”, this activity being materialized at Iași in 2002. Initially, it has been formed from territorial-administrative structures of a superior rank, the counties respectively, having a high degree of compatibility regarding all the decisional levels and for oaths to develop cross border cooperation relationships based on an out of nucleus political system supported by the public administration Law within the associated states. In comparison with the other constituted Euro-regions having a Romanian participation, this new Euro-regional system has some advantages which increase the system’s functioning. It is about a common history, about the fact that there is a single spoken language, that of Romanian Language, being actually the most important element which is the basis for the communication with direct implications in understanding all the functioning mechanisms of the cross border cooperation system and the advantage of the compatibility of the territorial-administrative

organizing systems of the two states. There are three essential attributes that represents the basis of constitution, development and functionality of this cross border cooperation structure of the Euro-regional type.

The geographical and administrative frame. A geological synthesis of an ancient age, the physic-geographical frame of the Euro-regional area is fundamentally a plateau, with altitudes less than 600 meters high, strongly fragmented by valleys having the aspect of a canyon oriented dominantly on the North-Southern direction as well as the flow direction of the principal three hydrographical arteries which also give the name of the Euro-region, from the West to the East successively: the Siret, Prut and Nistru rivers. The present-day shape of the Euro-region “*Siret-Prut-Nistru*” have been constituted in 2002, but along two stages (figure no.1, Table no. 1): in the first stage, along September-October respectively it has born the nucleus of initiative formed from: the counties Iași, Neamț and Vaslui on the Romanian side; the counties Chișinău, Ungheni and Lăpușna on the Moldavian side; the second stage, in December, when the Euro-regional area expanded by integrating another two counties from the Moldavian Republic: Orhei and Soroca placed in the North-Eastern part of this state. This cross border structure is the single one having a Romanian participation which includes in its area, without being member, also a state capital, Chișinău municipality respectively, the capital of the Moldavia Republic.

Structural particularities. Regarding the territorial extending this Euro-region enrolls in the category of a medium value and concerning the shape it approaches that of a territorial structure with a high degree of functionality. It is a bilateral inter-states cooperation structure and it bases on similar territorial-administrative structures with a high degree of compatibility. Also, as we mentioned before it includes in its area a human community with a common history and identical cultural-ethno-linguistic particularities. The sizes concerning the surface and the population are alike in percentage on each national territorial unit (table 1). As surface and population the area of Moldavia Republic represents about a half from the whole country’s surface and inhabitants, while the Romanian area represents less than 10 percent in both situations.

Having as basis the public administration law in force in both countries, which establishes that the associations on the cross border cooperation level may be realized on the county councils’ level, local councils’ level and city hall level, in the Euro-regional area there are 238 institutions (12 cities and 226 communes) which administer 1,236 localities, and on the Moldavian side 29 cities and 333 communes that administer 788 localities. The latest administrative reform from Moldavia Republic changed this structure by replacing the 5 counties with 18 rayon, and those 5 decision poles became 18 (table 1 and the fig. 1).

The Euro-region of “The Lower Danube” . The cross border cooperation at the Eastern border of Romania started off beginning with 1997, from its initiative, launching the project of forming the Euro-region of “The Lower Danube”. This cross border structure is based on the trilateral agreement and includes territorial-administrative structures from Romania, Moldavia Republic and Ukraine. Concerning its geographical position it occupies an area in the Central-Eastern part of Romania, the South of Moldavia Republic and the South-Western part of Ukraine. An important aspect is that of grafting this cross border cooperation structure within the lower reservoir of Danube, the inclusion of its maritime domain into its area respectively.

In 1997, in Romania it was launched the project of the Euro-region, and in 1998, in Galați, it was signed by the three associated participants “the Agreement regarding the constitution of the Euro-region of “The Lower Danube”, this situation determined then the State’s approval which defines the legal and organizing frame of this structure’s

functioning.. As a matter of fact this is the moment when the Euro-region was born officially. The Council of the Euro-region of “The Lower Danube” – as a main organism, with power of decision and of which includes three members from each participant, being representatives of the regional public authorities. We can add to this the *Coordination Center and 9 Commissions on domains*.

The territorial structure. Through its size and position within the Central and East-European political assembly, the Euro-region of “The Lower Danube” has a shape similar to the ideal one of a territorial structure, which may ensure an increased functionality to itself. Regarding the size aspect it has a medium value both as a territorial extension and as the number of the inhabitants. Including into this the lower reservoir of the Danube and an important part of the Black Sea’s coastline represents essential attributes which may stimulate the steps for the functional integration of the Euro-regional area and also its connection to the economical system of the Black Sea’s coastline with access to the whole Planet Ocean.

One of the problems that hinders the ensuring of a system of advantageous mutual relationships between the integrated political assembly derives from the difficulty of compatibility between the territorial-administrative systems of the associated states. If in the case of the Moldavia Republic this shortcoming was eliminated at the constitution data through the return within this state to a territorial-administrative organization based on counties, compatibles from the point of view of the territorial extension, demographical potential and leading institutions, in the case of Ukraine the situation is identical with that which functioned in the Soviet Union . So it is about regions and rayon, the first having a great surface and the second category being between counties and communes. Although it is considerable the initiative to cooperate in this area, where in 2007 it was traced the external border of the European Union, and in 2004 it is also NATO border, and from the point of view of the ethnical structure this area is populated dominantly by the Romanian community. From this point of view we may affirm that this is a cross border cooperation structure having Romanian-Ukrainian interference separated by three political borders.

The main territorial structures of the Euro-region are (figure 1, table.1):in Romania, Brăila, Galați and Tulcea counties; in Moldavia Republic – Cahul County (including the ex-rayon Cahul, Cantemir and Vulcănești); in Ukraine – Odessa Region. The same administrative reform of the Moldavia Republic determined in this case too the replacement of Cahul county with the rayon of Cahul and Cantemir.

The *malfunction* regarding the cross border cooperation from the administrative territorial structure’s point of view are obvious at the level of this Euro-region where the association of the “county” structures, specific to the Romanian and Moldavian areas, with those of the “region” structures, specific to the Ukrainian area, determined a structure marked by “a lack of equilibrium” within the territorial level and concerning the aspect of the demographical potential. Therefore, Odessa Region, one of the largest in Ukraine occupies at this Euro-region level about 62.00 percent from the whole surface and 63.00 percent as inhabitants. (chart no. 1). Within this Euro-region, there are great disparities concerning the “territorial participation” of the Moldavia Republic with only 4.5 % of the territory and Ukraine with 62.2 %.

The configuration of the Euro-regional territory concerning the functional aspect leads to the delineation within the Ukrainian territory of two distinct areas: the first specific to the Danube side, corresponding to the ex-Moldavian area, made up from 9 rayon and which would have as a polarization center the Izmail city, the second area is larger than the first, including 17 rayon and having the polarization center in Odessa. The limit between

the two may be traced on the Nistru level. Officially, the Ukrainian side integrated in the Euro-region it overlaps completely to the administrative Region of Odessa.

The most important urban centers of the Euro-region and which represents also the main regional polarization centers are Odessa, Ilicivsk, Bilgorod-Dnistrovski, Kotovsk and Izmail within the Ukrainian area; Cahul in Moldavia Republic; Galați, Brăila and Tulcea in Romania. In this case too we may identify two groups: a Danubian one including Galați, Brăila, Tulcea, Izmail, Chilia and Cahul which at their turn they identify themselves with the main regional polarization centers; a second group placed around Odessa and towards which revolve the Northern and the Central parts of the region, too.

As a conclusion, the position of external border within the European Union, that traced along Prut River and then along the Danube respectively, complicates more and more the relationships system, more exactly their unroll mechanisms, between the human and economical systems, separated nowadays by the political borders which maintain their separation function within this European region. The progresses realized during the time at the Euro-region's level, based on a great inter-states cooperation, may improve the mechanisms of cooperation and training of this area for a possible extension of the European Union towards East. If at the Romania's level the decentralization is a process in execution, at the other two partners states' level it dominates "the decision coming from the center", which complicates very much the identification of some solutions in order to make compatible the three political and economical systems in the purpose of the economical and lasting development having regional implications.

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