

Petr Hlaváček

University of J.E. Purkyně in Ústí nad Labem

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROREGIONS ON THE CZECH-SAXON BORDER

1. History

The idea of Euroregions connecting the neighbouring states appeared after the WWII initiated by the West European countries bordering Germany. The first Euroregion called Gronau was established in 1958 on the German-Dutch border. The point of this act was to diminish distrust among neighbouring nations and to develop a partnership. Euroregions were animated by local authorities, self-governing bodies of public service. Positive experience encouraged the establishment of new similar Euroregions among other West European countries.

In the Central and Eastern European countries the regional cross-border partnership began developing at the beginning of 1990s. Early cross-border activities were focused on coping with common regional problems. This was an informal cooperation without any institutionalized support. After the fall of the Iron Curtain the Euroregions in the Central and Eastern countries eased off the socio-cultural barriers in the border areas. Nowadays there are plenty of cross-border activities among regions which operate in all the EU countries and in the approaching member countries as well.

The only condition for the establishment of Euroregions is that a part of the territory must belong to an EU country. A typical feature of Euroregions is that they emerge as a result of a subsidiary principle and of an activity of local governments. Activity of local governments in a cross-border development corresponds to other kind of partnership among municipalities within a country. The microregions of an association of municipalities are established here. They cope with development

problems in similar areas (development both of a soft and heavy infrastructure, networking). They work on similar principles or executive principles as Euroregions. Traditional dominance of national states in regional and local development subsidies to lower territorial units (in the Czech Republic represented by regions and microregions) thus implementing the principle of subsidiarity in decision making about the development of border areas of the states.

2. Euroregions on the Czech-Saxon Border

Euroregions were established as a voluntary decision of towns and municipalities along the borders of the Czech Republic. Their goal is to cooperate with towns and municipalities of the bordering regions of neighbouring countries. There are 11 Euroregions in the Czech Republic which connect border territories with border regions of our neighbours. There are four Euroregions out of these eleven on the Czech-Saxon borders. They are as follows: the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa, Euroregion Elbe/Labe, Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebire and the Euroregion Egrensis.

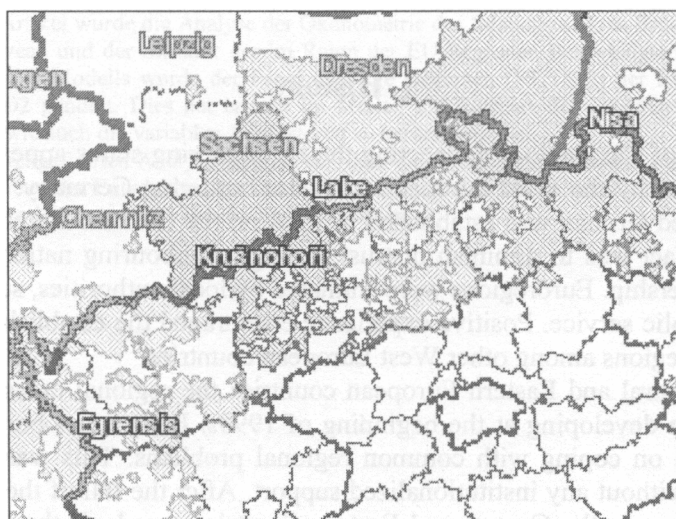


Fig. 1. Euroregions on the Czech-Saxon border

Source: regional information server.

Euroregion Egrensis

Since 1991 before the actual establishment of Euroregions there were three autonomous work association Euroregion Egrensis – Bohemia, Bavaria and Vogtland/Western Krušnohoří which was united in 1993 as a new Euroregion

called Euroregion Ergensis¹. The supreme institution of Euroregion Ergensis is a common presidency presided by a president. This presidency consists of three presidential representatives representing individual associations.

The Euroregion is focused on an initiation and support of all the forms of cooperation among cities, municipalities, institutions, organizations and individuals in the bordering regions of Bohemia, Bavaria and Saxony/Durynk. The Euroregions coordinate and support the partnership mainly in travel industry, tourism and spa industry, economy, transport, labour market, environment, agriculture, education, culture, sport and other sectors developing the Egrensis region and could be used by the partners.

Table 1. Character of the Euroregion Egrensis (2004)

Euroregion Egrensis	Total	Czech part		German part		Saxony		Thuringen		Bayern	
		abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %
Area (on km ²)	15 783.0	2282.2	15	13 501.0	85	1940.3	12	1992.0	12	9568.8	61
Population (in th.)	1971.9	269.5	14	1702.4	86	395.8	23	212.6	13	1094.0	64
Towns and municip.	532.0	79.0	15	453.0	85	139.0	69	139.0	15	245.0	245
Average pop.in. munic.	3706.0	3412.0		3758.0		2848.0		3080.0		4465.0	
Pop. density (on km ²)	125.0	118.0		113.0		204.0		107.0		114.0	

Source: Czech Statistical Office, own research.

The Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge

The Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge consists of the Euroregion Krušnohoří and the Euroregion Erzgebirge. They made an agreement about a partnership and mutual aid in 1993. Czech part represents an association of towns and municipalities from the districts of Chomutov, Most, Louny, Teplice and Litoměřice whereas the German part represents the districts of Mittlere, Erzgebirgskreis, Annaberg, Freiberg and Stollberg in Saxony.

The activity of the Euroregion is focused on the environmental issues and recovery of the Krušnohoří, land and regional planning, improvement of the cross-border traffic, economic development, culture, sport, education, tourism and protection against natural disasters.

¹ The term EGRENSIS is derived from a historic name for the territory around the city of Cheb (Eger in German language).

Table 2. Character of the Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge (2004)

Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge	Total	Czech part		Saxon part	
		abs.	in %	abs.	in %
Area (on km ²)	5202	2214	41.1	2214	58.9
Population (in th.)	709 522	297 444	41.9	412 078	58.0
Towns and municip.	156	74	47.4	82	52.6
Average pop. size of munic. Municipality	4548	4016		5025	
Pop. density (on km ²)	188.8	192.6		186.1	

Source: Czech Statistical Office, own research.

The Euroregion Elbe/Labe

The Euroregion Elbe/Labe consists of two statutory community syndicates. They are as follows: communal association of the Euroregion Horní(Upper) Polabí/Východní (Eastern) Krušnohoří² including the city Dresden and cities and municipalities Míšeň, Saxon Switzerland and Weisseritzkreis and syndicate of municipalities of the Euroregion Labe – towns and municipalities of the districts Ústí nad Labem, Teplice, Litoměřice and Děčín.

Table 3. Character of the Euroregion Elbe/Labe (2004)

Euroregion Elbe/Labe	Total	Czech part		Saxon part	
		abs.	in %	abs.	in %
Area (on km ²)	4267	1653	38.7	2614	61.3
Population (in th.)	1 287 243	385 176	29.9	902 067	70.1
Towns and municip.	162	103	77.3	59	22.7
Average pop. size of munic.	7946	3740		15 289	
Density (on km ²)	301	233		345	

Source: Czech Statistical Office, own research.

The Council of EEL is the supreme social-consulting and coordinating body of the Euroregion Elbe/Labe and its presidency. Nowadays there are seven professional work groups: regional and economic development, transport, environment, tourism, health care and social care, culture, education and sport, disaster – protection against natural disasters.

² Kommunalgemeinschaft Euroregion Oberes Elbtal/Osterzgebirge e.V.

The Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa

The association consists of three community districts, towns and municipalities in Bohemian, Polish and German area. The supreme body of the Euroregion is the Council and the Presidency which is represented by equal number of representatives from individual parts of the Euroregion. They are elected by regional conferences. The executive body of the Euroregion are the Regional secretariats in Liberec, Zittau and Jelenia G6rza. They coordinate an activity of work parties and sort out professional problems within the individual areas of the Euroregion's activities. They draw up the proposals and recommendations for the Council.

The Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa was established as a support of a border area by the means of mutual partnership which goes beyond the frontiers. The Euroregion supports the development of the partnership in the border areas with the land-planning, environment issues, economic development, growth of life standard, development and adjusting the infrastructure going beyond the state borders, cooperation with a disposal of natural and fire disasters, cooperation in development of cross-border tourism, culture care and exchange, mutual culture heritage, cooperation in social care.

Table 4. Character of the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa

Euroregion Nisa	Total	Czech part		Polish part		Saxon part	
		abs.	in %	abs.	in %	abs.	in %
Area (on km ²)	12 572	2703	21.5	5372	42.8	4497	35.8
Population	1 674 480	441659	26.4	583441	34.8	649380	38.8
Towns and municip.	328	145	44.2	51	15.6	132	40.2
Average pop. size of munic	5105.1	3045.9		11440.0		4919.5	
Pop. density (on km ²)	133.2	163.4		108.6		144.4	

Source: Czech Statistical Office, own research.

3. The Euroregions Evaluation

When evaluating the Euroregions on the Czech-Polish border the indicators are of geographic and economic. Therefore we monitor the Euroregions' size, number of member municipalities and their population activities.

The largest Euroregion is the Euroregion Egrensis (1 578 329 km²), followed by the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa (13 132 km²). The Euroregions Krušnohoří and Elbe/Labe are of similar size (about 5000 km²). There are big differences among the regions when it comes to their size. In the Euroregion Egrensis dominates the Saxon part (61% of the area). In the Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge dominates the Saxon

part as well (61.3% of the area). Population size shows similar discrepancies caused by the area size and similar density of the national parts of individual Euroregions.

Table 5. The order of Euroregions according to the selected indicators

Euroregion	Area (km ²)	Population	Municipalities	Average size of the municipalities	Density of the population (km ²)	Urbanisation rate
Nisa-Niesse-Nysa	2.	2.	2.	2.	3.	3.
Elbe/Labe	4.	3.	3.	1.	1.	1.
Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge	3.	4.	4.	3.	2.	2.
Egrensis	1.	1.	1.	4.	4.	4.

Source: own data research.

The population density for all regions varies from 133 to 301 people per km². However, the figures within individual regions are similar. This fact confirms the cross-border character of the development tendencies in municipalities.

As for the number of member municipalities, the Euroregion Egrensis comes first with its 532 member municipalities, followed by the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa (328 municipalities), then comes the Euroregion Elbe/Labe (162 municipalities) and the Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge (156 municipalities). The population density among individual national parts of Euroregions doesn't vary significantly. However, there are rather relevant discrepancies in administrative systems of the municipalities and towns. The Euroregion Egrensis has the lowest figure with its average settlements size of 3706 Nisa-Niesse-Nysa people. Saxon part of the Euroregion Elbe/Labe has the highest figure (15 289 people) and the Polish part of the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa with the average 11 440 people per settlement. In the Saxon part this situation is influenced by the city of Dresden with almost half a million people, however, in Saxony prevails higher average settlement size. In the Polish part this figure is higher than the figure for Poland. The indicator of an average population figure correlates with the urbanisation rate and population density. There is a certain relation between these indicators. The Euroregion Egrensis shows the lowest indicators (average populational settlement size is 3706 people, urbanisation rate 68% and population density is 125) whereas the Euroregion Elbe/Labe has the highest indicators (5105 – 87.9% – 301).

When it comes to socio-economic processes is it essential to say that an economic efficiency of German parts of Euroregions shows higher standard. However, from the long-term perspective the economic growth is lower than in Czech cross-border areas. The migration gains are also positive only in the Czech part of the Euroregions. Migration per 1000 people shows the highest drop in the Saxon parts of the Euroregions with the highest drop in the Eastern Saxony districts (apart from Dresden) where the figures vary from 7 to 27 people.

There is an alternative point of view on Euroregions which is the evaluation of institutional structures and the Euroregions activities. Euroregions can be categorized according to the institutional frame of member subjects:

- a) membership restricted only to towns and municipalities,
- b) membership restricted only to associations/syndicates of municipalities,
- c) membership restricted to towns, municipalities and other legal entities.

In general, any border settlement or town can become a member of an Euroregion provided they voluntarily apply. They can sign out from an Euroregion any time as well. As for the third category, a member can become another legal entity operating in the Euroregion. It can be either a public or private entity. These may be for instance from enterprise subjects and other economic and/or social entities or public sector. For instance membership in the Euroregion Nisa-Niesse-Nysa is granted to districts and legal entities from the Euroregion's area. However, this is not true for the Euroregion Elbe/Labe where the membership is granted only to towns, municipalities and in the case of Euroregion Egrensis also their alliances. Whereas in the Euroregion Krušnohoří/Erzgebirge the number of other legal entities represents a fifth of their members (apart from towns and municipalities). They are local development agencies, joint-stock companies, union trades and research and development institutes.

There is legitimate question which of these models are more beneficial for the cross-border development. Modern, institution-bound approach in the regional development (see Blažek, Uhlíř) supports the development of institutionalized inter-branch ties, net-working. It means these are instruments to ease up the transfer of data, know-how and innovations. That is why it is a disadvantage to close up the Euroregion only for the local government as this devitalized other relevant participants in the regional and local development.

4. The Role of Euroregions Nowadays

Euroregions support the projects which diminish the outbacks of being a bordering area, develop new relations and create new economic and social partnership between the public sector, enterprise subjects and NGO. These organizations carry out the social, cultural, economic, infrastructure and environmental projects that enhance the cross-border integration and harmonisation of the regional development on both sides of the border. Euroregions can possibly carry out the EU regional policy aimed at border areas (Perkmann, 2002).

Main development is given by the character of relations between cross-border participants. Relations mentioned above are supported by a traditional vertical regional policy which expands this horizontal cross-border partnership (Maskell) created by regional and local participants. Cross-border activities, which are carried out due to the Euroregional projects, are determined chiefly by the will and capability to communicate with potential partners from German or Polish cross-border

regions. Common cross-border activities are of different sorts and are carried out in various fields: from 'hard' infrastructure projects to 'soft' projects focused on culture development, education, exchange visits etc. Thanks to the cross-border initiatives it is possible to make a new partnership between municipalities and organisations. It is also possible to learn from new partners how to develop and innovate education and other strategic partnerships. New contacts and ties can be transformed from the first level of Euroregional partnership onto the second level of the relations between the Euroregion members (towns, municipalities, private and public sector) and onto the third level of contacts and cooperation among non-member organisations that work within the Euroregions. That is why it is disadvantages to close up the Euroregion only for the local government as this devitalize other relevant participants in the regional and local development. This passivity results in:

- waste of an economic potential of the area,
- restriction of a complex development of the area,
- job opportunities,
- lower competition.

Euroregions as such are a further innovative instrument in integrating Europe that goes beyond the current EU territory. At the same time the cross-border partnership among towns and municipalities connects the Czech and cross-border areas in common social and economic structures. The aim of Euroregions is to create a convenient environment for new chances of development in a complex cross-border partnership. This chance is a premise for a further internal integration of the current EU members and of the external integration in the EU areas with non-member cross-border countries.

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ROZWÓJ EUROREGIONÓW NA GRANICY CZESKO-SAKSOŃSKIEJ

Streszczenie

Niniejszy referat analizuje euroregiony na granicy czesko-saksońskiej przy użyciu podstawowych społeczno-ekonomicznych i geograficznych wskaźników. Euroregiony można podzielić według ram instytucjonalnych podmiotów członkowskich na trzy grupy – członkostwo ograniczone wyłącznie dla miast i gmin miejskich, członkostwo zarezerwowane tylko dla miejskich stowarzyszeń /syndykatów oraz członkostwo ograniczone dla miast, gmin miejskich i innych podmiotów gospodarczych.

Instytucjonalne teorie rozwoju regionalnego preferują *net-working*, tworzenie regionów uczących się itp. Oznacza to, że są tu wykorzystywane instrumenty służące ułatwieniu transferu danych, *know-how* oraz innowacji. Dlatego też nie jest wskazane zamykanie euroregionu wyłącznie dla władz lokalnych, gdyż to pozbawia możliwości współdziałania innych podmiotów w rozwoju regionalnym i lokalnym.

ROZVOJ EUROREGIONŮ NA ČESKO-SASKÉ HRANICI

Anotace

Příspěvek analyzuje euroregiony na česko-saské hranici s využitím základních socioekonomických a geografických indikátorů. Euroregiony dále kategorizuje podle složení členské základny do třech skupin, kdy jsou členy jsou pouze města a obce, členy jsou sdružení/spolky obcí a členy jsou města, obce a další právnické osoby.

Institucionálně orientované teorie regionálního rozvoje preferují síťování, budování učících se regionů a podporu transferu informací, znalostí a inovací. Z tohoto hlediska je pro euroregion nevýhodné uzavírat se pouze pro místní samosprávu, protože není aktivizován potenciál dalších aktérů regionálního a lokálního rozvoje.

ENTWICKLUNG DER EUROREGIONEN AN DER TSCHECHISCH-SÄCHSISCHEN GRENZE

Zusammenfassung

Das obige Referat analysiert die Euroregionen an der tschechisch-sächsischen Grenze bei Anwendung der grundlegenden gesellschaftlich-ökonomischen und geografischen Indikatoren. Die Euroregionen können nach institutionellen Rahmen der Mitglieder in drei Gruppen eingeteilt werden – die begrenzte Mitgliedschaft ausschließlich für die Städte und Stadtgemeinden, die nur für die Stadtvereine / das Konsortium reservierte Mitgliedschaft sowie für die Städte, Stadtgemeinden und andere Wirtschaftssubjekte begrenzte Mitgliedschaft.

Die institutionellen Theorien der regionalen Entwicklung begünstigen net-working, die Gründung der lernenden Regionen usw. Das heißt, dass hier Instrumente zwecks Erleichterung des Datentransfers, Know-how sowie der Innovationen genutzt werden. Deswegen auch ist es nicht angebracht die Euroregion nur für die lokalen Behörden zu schließen, denn dies bietet keine Möglichkeiten für das Mitwirken anderer Subjekte in der regionalen und lokalen Entwicklung.