

- Visegrad Fund



Europeanisation of Visegrad countries through cross-border cooperation – experiences of the last 15 years

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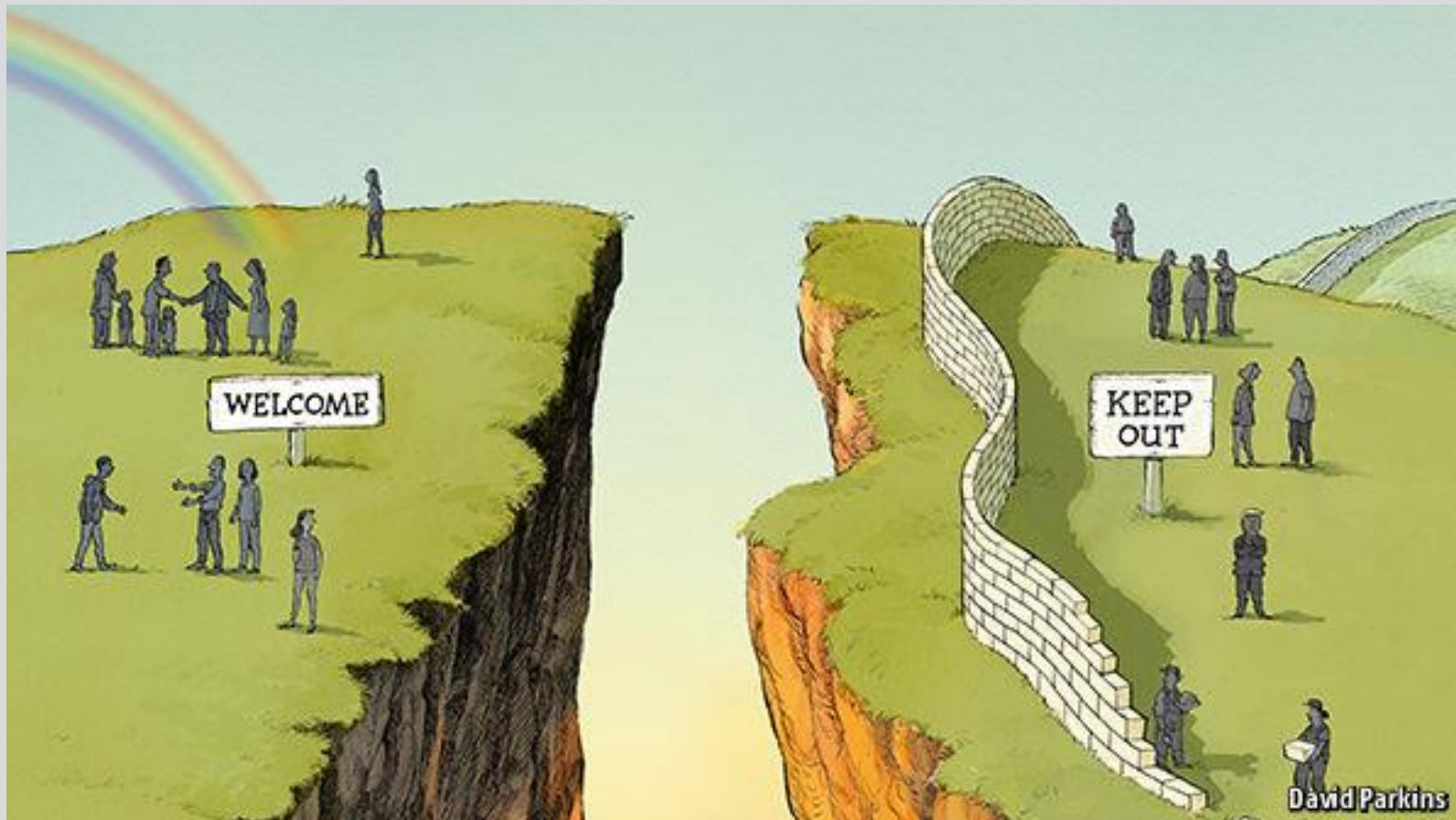


Content

- CBC as a Holly Grail
- 5 roles of CBC
- Evidence from the CZ-PL borderland



Globalism Vs Localism



The CBC in Europe

- the increase of cross-border flows and interactions has been a normative and almost unquestioned policy paradigm.
- Free border crossing and developed cross-border co-operation became one of the principle EU narratives (Scott 2016).
- Multi-level governance, EU regional cohesion policies, the Europe of Regions discourse and an increase of para-diplomatic activities of sub-nation state authorities supported a consensus on rescaling Europe with an increasing influence of regional and local actors from a cross-border perspective.

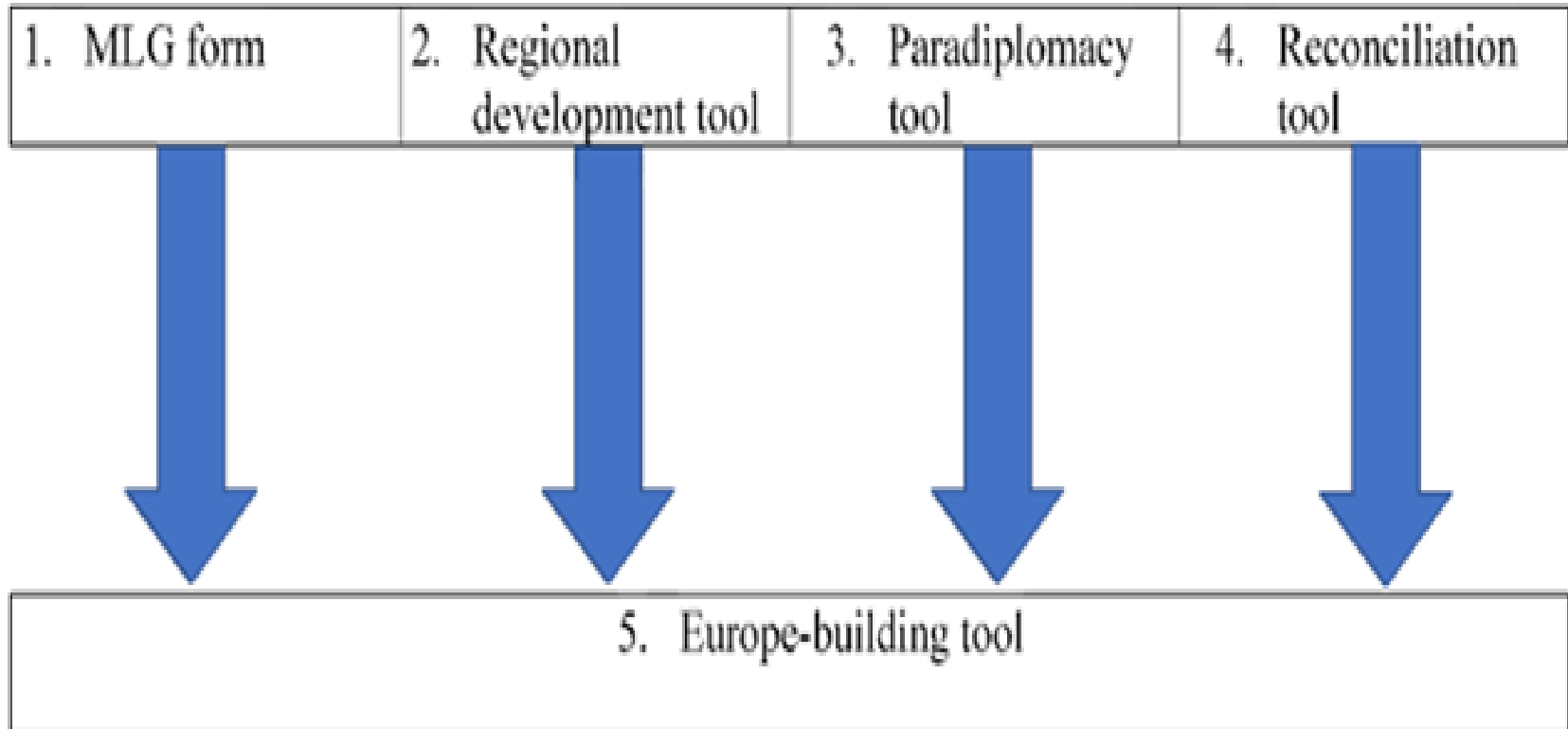


Border region residents behaviour

- European policies encouraged border region residents to exploit the free movement and actively engage in creating cross-border living spaces.
- Increasing trade flows and cross-border labour markets was intended to increase the attractiveness of border regions and the quality of life of borderlanders understood as a set of indicators describing objective and subjective well-being.
- **The extensions of the EU after the millennium were supposed to include former neighbours in a commonwealth of prosperity.**
- Than the COVID-19 came...



5 principle roles of the CBC



MLG

- Multi-level governance has its theoretical anchoring in postmodern theories of international relations-
INTERDEPENDENCE
- The concept responded to the need to harmonise the interaction of national, regional and European levels in the conditions of the European institutions.
- de facto introduced by the subsidiarity principle in the Maastricht Treaty encouraging a share of policy making between the regional, national and the EU-level of governance
- the importance of lower vertical levels of government to ensure the functioning of European structural policy



Regional development based on mutual complementarities

- One of the important contributions of the CBC is its ability to identify potential complementarities in all fields of human activities in the border regions
- Their use has a potential to ease daily life of inhabitants of European border territories, which are in most – but not all – cases considered periphery.
- Cross-border public services
- Cross-border commuting, positively influenced by the existence of economic differentials between the territories on either side of the border, presents another example of the use of complementarities.



Paradiplomacy

„Designating or relating to diplomatic activities which are ancillary to those officially sanctioned or recognized; that is additional to or beyond the scope of normal diplomacy.“

- It respects the autonomy of local political actors and legitimise cross-border cooperation as a tool to achieve the objectives of these actors.
- Cross-border regionalism helps to create new political entities.
- The cross-border region needs its executive unit that coordinates the cooperation – agency is a keyword here
- Key role of INTERREG and microprojects

Reconciliation instrument

- Borders as “scars of history”. These should remind us of the wounds caused by the military conflicts in Europe, which resulted in creation of border lines, which separated territories, which historically formed one unit.
- Cross-border co-operation is not always primarily focused on conflict resolution or peace-making. The international situation of borders is complex and often characterized more by border disputes than by efforts of cross-border cooperation.
- Cross-border co-operation can be used as a tool to achieve mutual reconciliation.
- Peacekeeping and reconciliation are the very ideas of European integration: they acted as the driving forces behind the European integration process and formed the key motivation for the founders.



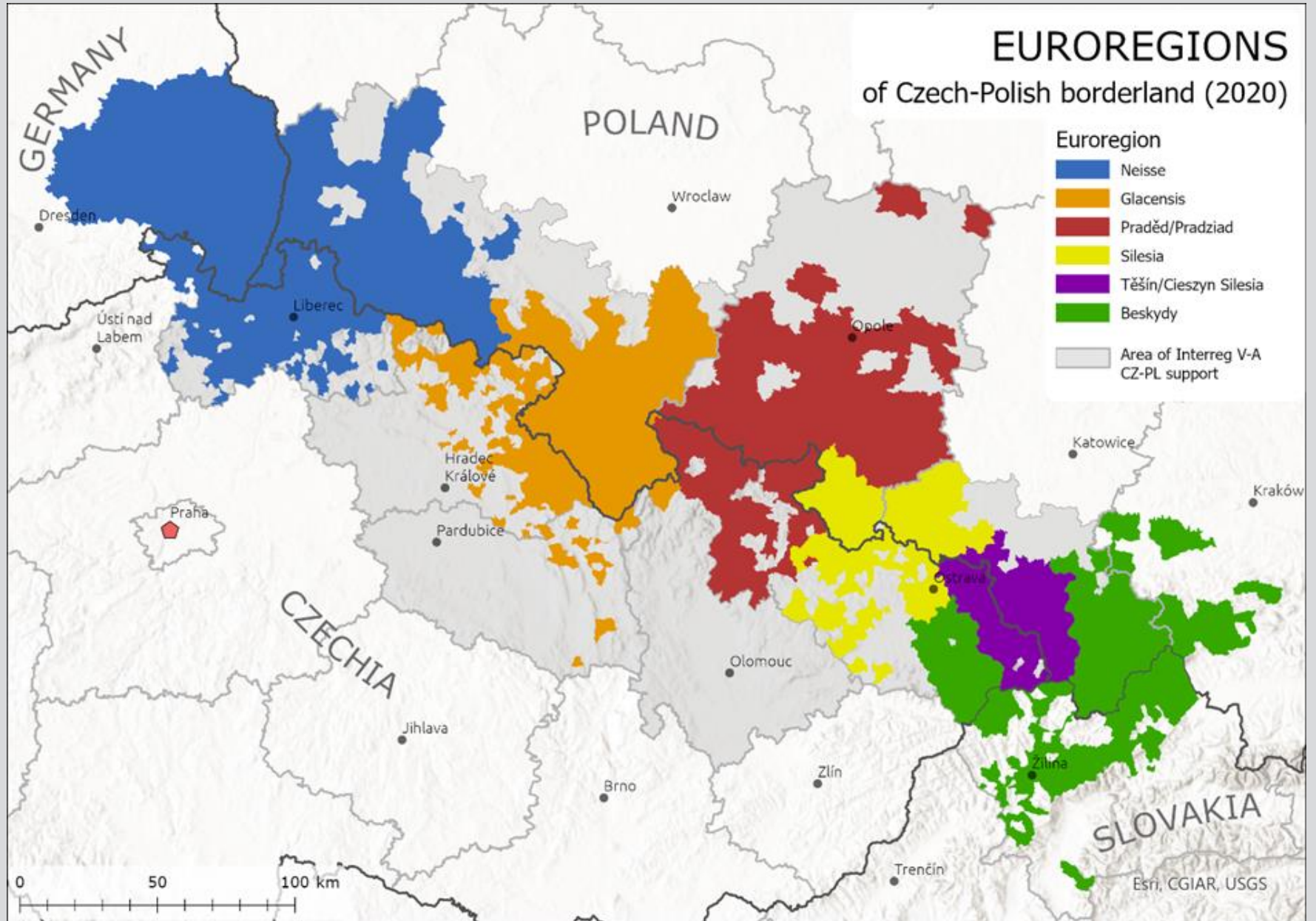
European dimension

- Cross-border regions are often labelled as the laboratory of European integration at a microscale
- CB territories are contributing a specific horizontal function to the European integration
- All four previous roles should mitigate the barrier effect of the national border. They support the mutual interdependence of neighbours and comply with the principle ideas of European integration.
- Hence, we can conclude that cross-border cooperation is a Europe-building element, because it contributes to the political, economic as well as cultural integration of Europe at local and regional level



EUROREGIONS

of Czech-Polish borderland (2020)



Absolute Europeanization

„Czech-Polish paradiplomacy is also the most visible “European” element of the agenda of smaller municipalities. The vital importance of the microprojects offered comparison with overview of 10 municipalities outside of the INTERREG programme territory and/or very far from the borderline: their paradiplomacy was non-existing or very modest. This instrument is absolutely indispensable, its eventual cancelation would dramatically limit the entire scope of paradiplomacy activities.“

Example from Moravia-Silesia

- the Eurobarometer surveys, mapping the opinions of European citizens on topical issues, rank the Czechs amongst the most Eurosceptical nations. For a sizeable part of the Czech voters, giving up the country's membership in the EU and hermetically closing its borders is the best solution for the future development of the country, as shown by the parliamentary elections held in October 2017.
- The populist SPD /Freedom and Direct Democracy is a successful political party in the whole country and it scores above the average, mainly in the east of the country, in the Moravian-Silesian Region.



Paradiplomacy of Moravian-Silesian public actors

Main accent laid on CBC with neighbours by large.

The entity of „INTERREG“ people at a regional and local levels as well as within universities and civic society organisations.

The creation of sophisticated CBC projects/networks/solutions

The message that CBC means Europe should be conveyed.



No euroscepticism in practice

- The behaviour of the analysed Moravian-Silesian Regional administration is not eurosceptical at all: the international activities of the regional administration are predominantly European. Even non-European partners, mainly two Chinese provinces, appreciate the Moravian-Silesian Region as a EU partner.
- Since 2000, all regional administrations focussed mainly on developing cross-border relations with neighbours and using INTERREG funds to support these relations by concrete projects.
- The current administration seems to be more aware of the need to talk to European institutions and tries to intensify its contacts with the Ruhr Region, as well as with European institutions in Brussels.
- Possible “Czexit” would dramatically reduce the volume of regional paradiplomacy to limited contacts with neighbours, most likely without any external financial support.



CBC as the „holly triple helix“ success story narrative

- Roaming...
- Peace-keeping
- Erasmus
- Borderless Europe



- Visegrad Fund



Thanks for your attention

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