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# **The Carpathian Euroregion project**

## **Short STUDY**



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June, 2015



Source: <http://www.tradecarp.com/>

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## List of abbreviations

AA	Association Agreement
AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
AER	Assembly of European Regions
ACRU	Association of Carpathian Region Universities
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CC	Carpathian Convention
CECICN	Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CER	Carpathian Euroregion
CESCI	Central-European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives
CF	Carpathian Foundation
CFI	Carpathian Foundation International
CoE	Council of Europe
CoER	Council of EuroRegion
CoP	Conference of Parties
CSCE	Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EEA	European Economic Area
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
EUSBSR	European Strategy for Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	European Strategy for Danube Region
EWI	East-West Institute
FLAPP	Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy
FMS	Foundation for the Mid South
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HUF	Hungarian Forint
INTERREG	Inter Regional
IRC	Inter-Regional Cooperation
LSG	Local Self-Government
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MRS	Macro Regional Strategy
NEA	National Cooperation Fund Hungary
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NUTS	Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics
PHARE	Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring Economies
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UAH	Ukrainian Hrivna
WWII	Second World War

## 1. Introduction

The Carpathian Euroregion project (CER) was the first one, which was established after the fall of the Iron Curtain in Central Europe. Members of this project were non-EU member countries. Its main mission was “conflict prevention through cooperation over the borders”. Taking into account the size of the territory, number of inhabitants living in the territory and number of the participating parties the CER is one of the biggest euroregional structures which were established in Europe. It covers regions from five countries: Poland, Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

The territory of CER represents a unique region in Europe with heterogeneous ethnic, cultural and religious situation as well as difficult history of frequent changes of borders. In addition, regions of South-Eastern Poland, North-Eastern Hungary, North-Western Romania, Western Ukraine and Eastern Slovakia have become territories lagging behind areas in their home countries.

The project officially started in February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993 in Debrecen, when founding documents were signed by the top official representatives of three countries – Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. Slovakia and Romania became full members of the project later. In that festive event, the representatives from the Council of Europe and East-West Institute were invited and presented.

Since the beginning, unusual size of the CER was questioned and this ubiquitous question mark was many times discussed

during its history. Similar euroregional structures, which were established in Western Europe after the Second World War (WWII) mostly consisted of border regions from two or maximum three countries. From that point of view it was not clear whether such large euroregional-type cooperation would function well. There are still lot of questions on the Carpathian Euroregion project after 22 years of its existence – how does it work, is it still useful structure and/or has the main mission been fulfilled, etc.

In order to answer those questions this short study was elaborated. It consists of a brief history of the project, basic characteristics of the territory, description of the project, the present situation in the respective participating countries, the role of the Carpathian Foundation in CER, the project assessment. Moreover other opportunities are opened, like CESCO might take up in order to intensify its work in the field of cross border cooperation in the context of Euroregional activities in the Carpathian territory are described.

In terms of methodology, the study is based on intensive Internet research and it adopts a mix of primary and secondary evidence published by the CER parties, other cross-border cooperation (CBC) bodies and the European institutions. Additional evidence was gathered from some policy documents and secondary materials. 15 interviews were carried out with individuals involved in the CER project.

## 2. Short history of the Carpathian Euroregion project

The idea of the CER project was launched in 1991. To answer the question where is the exact origin of this trans-border cooperation in the Carpathians and who was the initiator of the project is not easy to clearly identify. Some point out that the idea emerged during the tenth anniversary conference of the EastWest Institute (EWI) held in Bardejov on June 1991<sup>1</sup> (Ičo, 1992). Some point out that the original idea emerged in Hungary, referring to the project elaborated by the Hungarian Academy of Science, which was presented at the conference in Nyíregyháza on May 1992. The third proposal was presented by the EWI on the same conference, which followed the Regio Basiliensis model.

At the international conference in Nyíregyháza in May 1992, which was sponsored by the EWI, countries were represented on different political level, like Poland, Ukraine and Hungary were represented through their government officials, while Slovakia was represented only by local leaders from Košice, Prešov and Bardejov, and Romania had no representation at all. The proposal presented by the Hungarian Academy of Science encompassed six Polish, two Slovak, three Hungarians, seven Romanian and five Ukrainian regions. The total area would have encompassed 193.900 km<sup>2</sup> and included population of 18 million. The Hungarian Academy of Science published a map of a “Carpathian-Tisza Working Community” in early 1992 with the same territorial definition as the Hungarian Monarchy (Hudak V. 1996). Subsequently, the Ministry of Interior in Hungary initiated and financially supported the creation of “Carpathian-Tisza Foundation” in Nyíregyháza with the purpose to promote cross-border cooperation with Hungarian communities on the other side of the border of Hungary.

In comparison with the Hungarian proposal, EWI presented modest plan, which supposed that parties should have the same weight in territory and population within the euroregion. This model was preferred by the participants of the conference. According to the report prepared by the Slovak Carpathian Region Association in January 1993 a compromise was achieved up to in Uzhgorod in June 1992 – participants of the meeting accepted EWI model and asked the institute to assist in establishment of the CER (Duleba, 2000). One of the initiator of the CER project was Professor Roman Kuzniar in Poland (Rebisz, 2001, 37).

Basic documents of the project – “Statute of the Interregional Association Carpathian Euroregion” and “Joint Statement” were signed in Debrecen on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993. The Statute was signed by three countries, which approved full membership in the project and were represented there by Ministers of Foreign Affairs - Hungary (Gejza Jeszensky), Ukraine (Anatolij Zlenko) and Poland (Krisztof Skubiszewski). However, the Slovak Government did not approve full membership in the project, but sent its envoy, Mr. Igor Kosir to Debrecen. Romania was represented in Debrecen only by observers, mostly people from the local governments. In such

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<sup>1</sup> Presidents of Poland (Lech Walesa), Czechoslovakia (Vaclav Havel), Hungary (Árpád Göncz) participated at the Conference, known as “Bardejov Summit of the Presidents”



a diverse situation, an “associative membership” was envisaged as a political compromise not to exclude potential future members at the beginning of the project. In that festive event the Council of Europe was represented by Madam Catherine Laloumière, Secretary General and the East-West Institute was represented by Mr. John Edwin Mroz. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Pál Virág from Hungary.



Opening ceremony: Debrecen, 14th of February 1993

*Source: Süli-Zakar István (2014)*

Both documents expressed that the CER is not a supra-national or supra-state organization, but it is an initiative which promotes interregional cooperation among parties. The following objects were laid down in the founding documents: coordination of the joint activities, promotion of cooperation in the field of economy, science, ecology, education, culture and sport; support of joint cross-border projects, encouragement of mutual cooperation with international institutions and organizations. Documents mentioned values like free communication and cooperation, permanent relations based on traditional European democratic political and cultural values and principles of market economy. The agreed documents referred to several international documents, like the final act from the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in Helsinki 1975; the Charter of Paris for a New Europe from 1990; and other Commission of Security and Cooperation in Europe documents. The signatories also declared their openness for future Slovak and Romanian full membership.

Slovakia and Romania were only associate members of the CER project during the first years. But they could take part in all CER activities and they had three-member representation in the Council and a Chairman of the delegation.

## Role of the EastWest Institute

The EastWest Institute, originally known as the Institute for East-West Security Studies<sup>2</sup>, played an important role in creating the CER project. The EWI was led that time by the CEO Mr. J.E.Mroz, who was very active in preparation of the project. Philosophy of the EWI underlined „*lasting peace and stability would only become possible when democratic principles and values are actively promoted and have successfully taken root throughout the region*“. Euroregional structure was thought as a preventive tool to eliminate tensions among people living long time behind the impermeable borders. Such an approach was already successfully applied after the WWII on the border of the German-French regions.

Main activities of the EWI's Transfrontier Cooperation Programme encourage local development, building of transnational institutions, providing common visions and strategies to facilitate economic development, initiating cross-border networks. In order to fulfill these programs and aims, the EWI had cooperated not only with central governments, but with local governments and NGOs too.

Mr. J.E.Mroz and his associate Mr. Vazil Hudák were present on several preparatory activities before the official start of the project. The most important were the international conference, "The regions in international cooperation", which took place in Michalovce in Slovakia, in November 1991 and the international conference, "The Carpathian Euroregion", in Nyíregyháza in May 1992.

## Main milestones

*Table: Main milestones*

1991 June	EWI conference with Václav Havel, Árpád Göncz, Jan K. Bielecki (Poland), Dan Quayle (USA), John E. Mroz (EWI) in Bardejov
1991 November	The regions in international cooperation – international conference in Michalovce (Slovakia)
1992 February	CBC conference in Krosno organized by President Lech Walesa
1992 May	"The Carpathian Euroregion" - international conference in Nyíregyháza
1992 June	Meeting in Uzhgorod

<sup>2</sup> The East-West Institute is a non-for-profit, think-and-do tank focusing on conflict prevention in different areas, including preventive diplomacy, strategic trust-building, regional economic security, cyber security and others. EWI was founded in 1980 in New York and it has offices in Brussels and Moscow too. The first CEOs were Mr. John Edwin Mroz (died in 2014) and Ira David Wallach (died in 2007). EWI organizes conferences, launches studies and publications and provides consultations throughout the world. [www.ewi.info](http://www.ewi.info)



1993 February	Official start of the CER project by signing of the founding documents in Debrecen
1993 February	First regional exhibition in Jaslo (Poland)
1994 May	Meeting of rectors of universities located in the CER territory in Košice
1994	Creation of the Carpathian Euroregion Development Fund
1994	Established cooperation with the Euroregion Mass-Rhine
1994 August	First conference of leaders of industrial units, reunion of the association of chambers of commerce
1995	The Carpathian Foundation International was established in Košice
1995	The Association of Carpathian Region Universities was established
1997 May	Romania became a full member of CER project
1999	Slovakia became a full member of CER project
1999	The Carpathian Foundation Poland was established in Sanok

### 3. Basic characteristics of the CER territory

The CER territory is covered by the Carpathian Mountains, which are “the largest, longest and most twisted and fragmented mountain chain in Europe” (CoE, 2007).



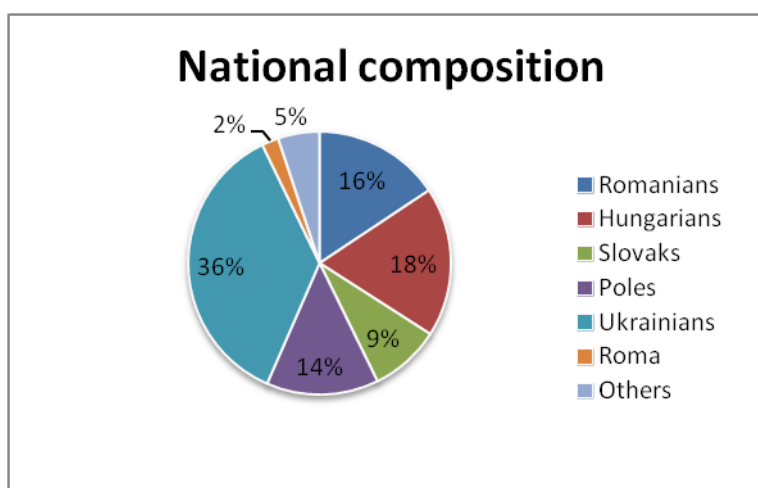
Source: [www.carpathianconvention.org](http://www.carpathianconvention.org)

The mountainous area belong to the Carpathian Euroregion, consists of series of mountains. It starts with the High Tetra's in the West, laying in the Polish and Slovak part of the CER territory with the highest peak “Gerlach” - 2655 m (Gerlachfalvi, Gerlachovský štít), Eastwards there are the Eastern Carpathians with low Eastern Beskids – Lőcsei mountains, the Csergő and Sadecky

Beskids. The lower lying northern side of the Eastern Beskids in Poland is called “Bieszczady Mountains”. There are a lot of natural parks in Ukrainian part like Carpathian National Natural Park, National Park Huculszczyzna, National Park Synewir and others. Between the Eastern Beskids and the Maramureş mountains lay Uzsoki saddle and Vereckeï saddle. The Eastern Carpathians starts at the Borsa saddle, Prislop pass (1413 m). There are gorgeous gigantic mountains such as the Rodna Mountains (highest peak: Pietrosul Rodnei 2303 m), the Bargau (Borgoi) Mountains, the Caliman (Kelemen) Mountains, the Bistritei (Besztercei) Mountains, the Giurgeu (Gyergyoi) Mountains, the Ciucului (Csiki) Mountains and the Harghita.

One of the motives to establish the CER project was that a lot nationalities and ethnic groups live in the simple natural space of the Carpathian territory and they should be linked to each other. Let us look at the ethnic and religious composition of the area.

The biggest ethnic group in the CER territory is the Ukrainians – 36.26%, the Hungarians – 18.41%, the Romanians – 15.65%, the Poles – 13.81%, the Slovaks – 8.68%. The Roma minority has 2.07% and other ethnic groups have 5.11% share in the population.



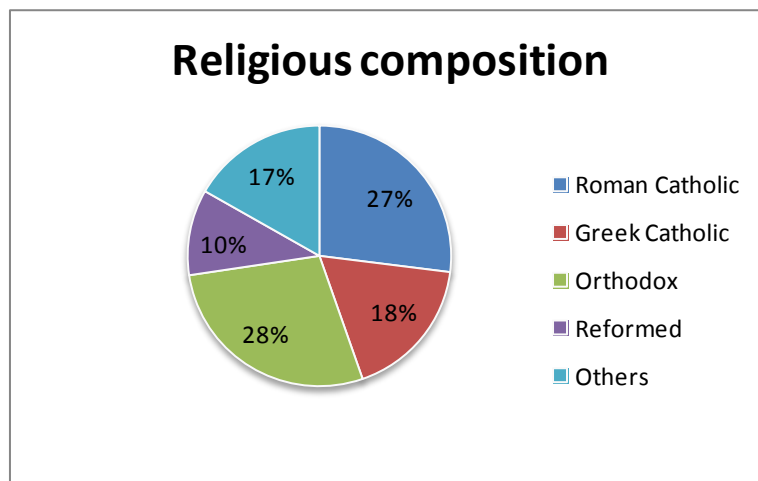
Source: own elaboration

In Poland the situation is simple, 99.8 % of people identify themselves as Poles.

In Ukraine, 89.1 % of people identify themselves as the Ukrainians, 2.69 % are the Romanians, 2.42 % the Hungarians, 0.31 % the Poles and 0.22 % the Roma people. In the Slovak regions 82.22 % of people identify themselves as the Slovaks, 4.63 % are the Hungarians (9.3 % in Košice region and 0.1% in Prešov region), 4.65% belong to the Roma people and 0.41% are the Ukrainians. In Hungary 80.41% of people are the Hungarians, 5.92% are the Roma people, 0.62% are the Romanians, 0.23% the Slovaks. In Romania there is 74.01% of Romanians, 20.8% of Hungarians, 2.81% Roma people, 1.47% Ukrainians and 0.26% are Slovaks.

These collected data are the latest ones taken from Eurostat and from the statistical offices of respective countries<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, the real situation might differ because of the identification of the Roma and the Ruthenia minorities.

Religious composition of the CER territory is shown in the next graph.



*Source: own elaboration*

44.64% of people declare themselves as Catholics (26.98% Rome-Catholics and 17.67% Greek-Catholics), 27.99% belong to Orthodox denominations, 10.58% are Reformed (Calvinists, Lutherans, Evangelic etc.) and 16.79% don't belong to any previous denomination.

The religious situation in the Polish regions is once again very simple: 89.7% declare themselves as Roman-Catholics and there is no other strong denomination. In the Ukrainian regions there are 44.65 % the Catholics (26.98% Roman, 17.67% Greek), 27.99% Orthodox, 10.58% reformed and 16.79% others<sup>4</sup>. In the Eastern Slovakia, the composition is the following, 72.12% are the Catholics (59.32% Roman, 12.8% Greek), 2.87% are orthodox, 7.07% are reformed and 17.95% believe in some other religion. In Hungarian regions there are 33.65% the Catholics (27.91% Roman, 5.74% Greek), 0.07% the Orthodox, 22.65% the Reformed and 43.63% others. In the Romanian districts there are 14.57% the Catholics (11.96% Roman, 2.67% Greek), 68.41% the Orthodox, 9.1% the Reformed and 7.93% others.

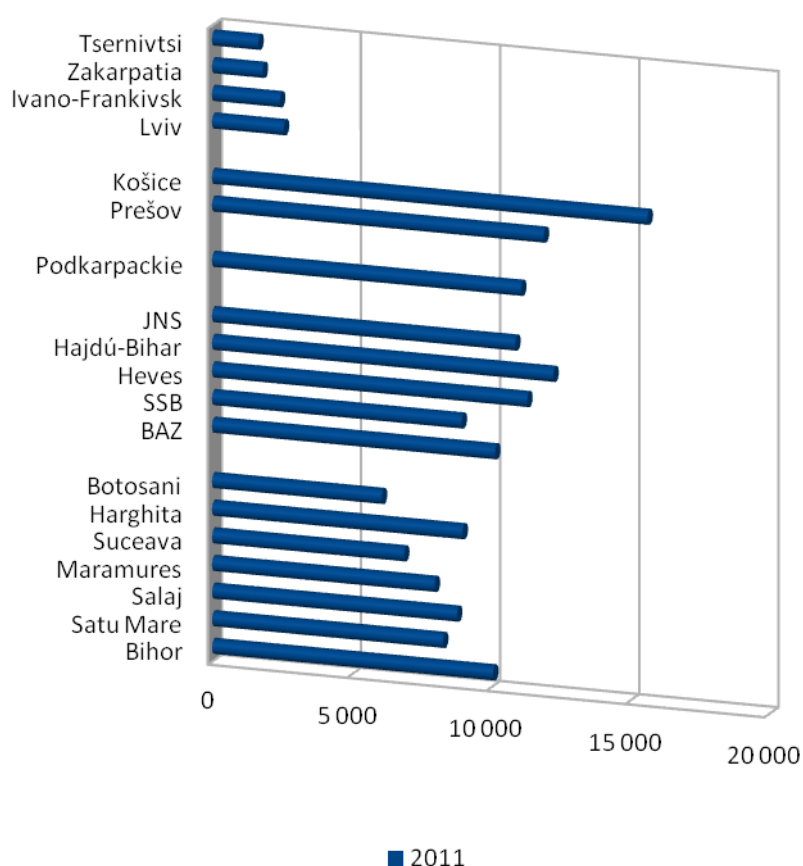
From economic point of view, all member regions of the CER are peripheral and lagging behind in their own countries. Gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices in purchasing power standard per capita in percentage of the EU average in respective regions of the CER territory can be seen in the next graph (in Euro, 2011)<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/RSI/#?vis=nuts3.economy>, [www.risu.org.ua](http://www.risu.org.ua), [www.statistics.sk](http://www.statistics.sk), [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu), [www.insse.ro](http://www.insse.ro), [www.edrc.ro](http://www.edrc.ro)

<sup>4</sup> Methodology of Religious-Informational Service of Ukraine is different from Eurostat, Ukrainian data are based on number of religious organizations

<sup>5</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/RSI/#?vis=nuts2.economy>

## GDP in PPS per capita



*Source: own elaboration*

Position of respective regions of EU countries is in the bottom of the list of European regions – NUTS II or NUTS III level and Ukrainian regions are even worst.

## 4. Euroregions in the context of the European regional policy

Comprehension of importance of cooperation over the borders and elimination of border barriers in the new European history started immediately after the WWII. Researchers and practitioners understood that cooperation through borders is the only way to eliminate possible tensions between nations and ethnic groups, to develop the lagging border areas and to strengthen European cohesion. New cross-border regions started to emerge, the first institutionalized type of cross-border cooperation was “Euroregio” (first euroregion), which was established in 1958 on the Dutch-German border in the area of Enschede and Gronau. Later on more than one hundred cross-



border types of cooperation were established throughout Europe, operating under different names and terms such as “Euroregios”, Euroregions”, and “Working Communities”<sup>6</sup>.

Working communities are larger; they usually involve five or more regions. This form of cooperation has weaker cooperation intensity and consists mostly of regional government bodies. Euroregions and Euroregios are geographically smaller entities; cooperation is more intensive and it consists of local authorities (Perkmann, 2002, p. 7). From that point of view, the Carpathian Euroregion should be rather understood as a working community than a euroregion (Hungarian Academy of Science proposed to create a working community). The concept of “cooperation intensity” refers to the level of autonomy, structure and activities. Working communities usually have neither permanent secretariat, nor common integrated development plan. Consequently, they serve mostly for exchange of information and they perform “light” forms of cooperation.

Euroregions usually have a Council, President, permanent secretariat, and working committees, own development plan and they try to obtain financial resources for projects to implement development strategy on their territories. In accordance to AEBC catalogue of criteria, Euroregions are “long-term integrated cross-border structures with political decision-making tier” (AEBC and EC 1998: p.14). Perkmann (2002, p 12) notes *“Euroregions are better suited to taking an active role in implementing EU policy measures than the larger Working Communities that suffer from coordination drawbacks due to the higher number of participating authorities as well as their diversity in terms of legal-administrative competencies.”* From that point of view the CER is a certain mixture of euroregional and working community features, thus standing somewhere between these two types of CBC. The cooperation has some euroregional advantages but the fact that it involves five parties with different legal competencies, it causes same drawbacks.

The first association “Association of European Border Regions” (AEBC) was established in 1971 in Bonn. This and other such type of peak trans-European associations (e.g.: AER, CEMR, CECICN etc.) try to advocate interests of their members, offer some services in regional and urban matters and represent members on the European level. Among other activities, AEBC published the European Charter for Border and Cross-border Regions in 1981 with articulation of CBC objectives; it stressed the added value of CBC and enforced CBC as one of the European political objective. The Charter was updated in 1995, 2004 and 2011. The latest version recognized borders as meeting places and spoke about new quality of the borders and that ““back-to-back” existence must be transformed into a “face-to-face” relationship by dismantling barriers and impediments at the borders” (AEBC, 2001).

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<sup>6</sup> With reference to (Kordela-Borczyk, 1996) Euroregion, it started as a result of a dramatic episode along the Dutch-German border in 1958, when a young man was stricken with internal bleeding. Although there was a hospital less than a kilometer across the German border, the man had to be driven more than 100 km to the closest hospital in its own country. He died during the long ambulance ride.

The first official legal document about CBC was the Madrid Outline Convention, initiated by the Council of Europe and adopted in 1980. The Convention was signed with more than 20 countries and had three Additional Protocols. It provides a legal framework for public law agreements among sub national level of governments. Transfrontier cooperation in the Convention is defined in Article 2 as “any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighborly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose”.

Not only the Council of Europe, but the Commission of the EU as a supranational body, has influenced the conditions for cooperation across borders. EU launched the INTERREG Community Initiative to support CBC-related activities financially. The main target was to diminish the influence of national borders and to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion throughout the whole territory of the EU. INTERREG is made up of three strands: A – cross-border cooperation, B – transnational cooperation, C – interregional cooperation.

In the programming period between 2007-2013 an objective was identified, namely *“to support the European territorial cooperation”*, and this was among the three main objectives of the EU. This goal was focused on strengthening cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives, promoting trans-national cooperation through activities aiming at integrated territorial development and fostering inter-regional cooperation and exchange of experience on appropriate territorial level. From the financial point of view, the third objective of the EU – European territorial cooperation had more than 8.8 billion € from the EU budget, what was 2.5 % from the whole budget. Nevertheless, there is a slight increase in the programming period 2014 - 2020, specifically 8.94 billion € are allocated to European territorial cooperation which represents 2.8%<sup>7</sup> of the budget.

Moreover, on the EU external border, covering the territory of the CER in the previous programming period 2007-2013, there was the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) policy as an opportunity to obtain financial sources for the objectives of the CER. In the present programming period 2014 - 2020, this instrument was replaced by the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) with the budget over 15 billion € for the whole external border of the EU. CBC in ENI promotes economic development and addresses the shared challenges in fields like health, environment, and education.

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union mentions CBC in connection with the Committee of the Regions (CoR) (art. 305 – 307), where the CoR, as a consultative body for the European Parliament, should be consulted in particular with CBC issues, with judicial cooperation and public health issue. The CoR gathers representatives from all sub-national self-governing tiers and serves as a biggest platform not only for consultative purposes but for exchange of information among their members too.

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2014)

## 5. Carpathian Euroregion project

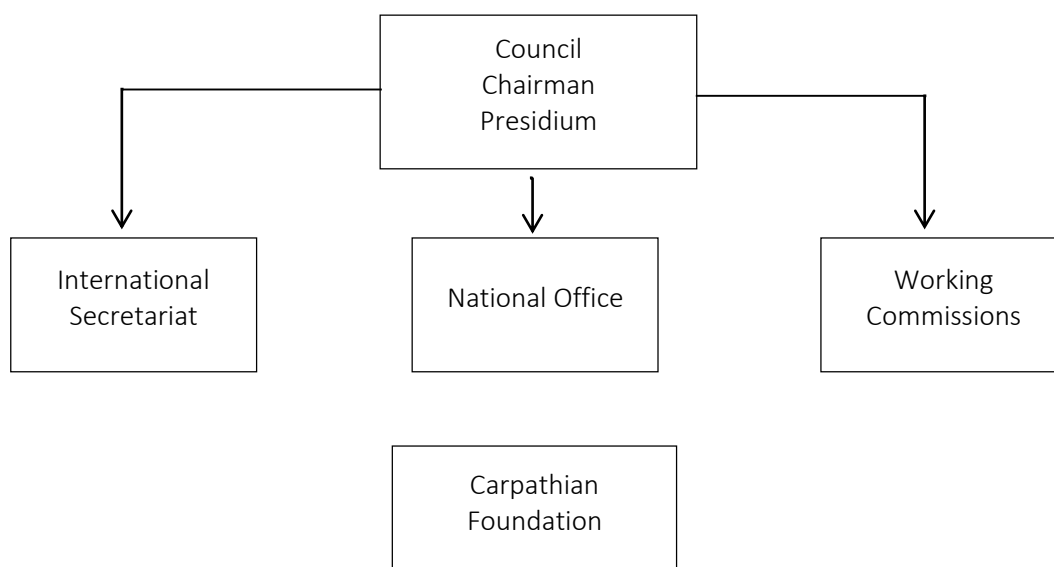
The composition of the CER International Association has varied upon several times. At the beginning, there were member regions from only three parties which had a full membership: the Polish voivodeship, four Hungarian counties and Ukrainian Trans-Carpathian oblast. While the Slovak and Romanian local representatives participated in all activities as associate members. Later other regions entered into the project and associate membership was shifted into full one. The territorial structure of the CER in 2003 is in the next table:

*Table: Territorial structure in the CER project in 2003, January*

Country	Regions	Area km <sup>2</sup>	Number of inhabitants
Poland	Wojewódstwo Podkarpackie	17 926	2.127 860
Ukraine	Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, Tsernovtsi oblasti	56 660	6.429 900
Slovakia	Prešovský a Košický kraj	15 746	1.543 000
Hungary	Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties	28 639	2.616 000
Romania	Bihor, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Maramureş, Harghita, Suceava, Botoşani counties	42 281	3.351 000
<b>Total</b>		<b>161 192</b>	<b>16.051 000</b>

### Governing structures

The CER project has the following institutional structure, which was approved at the beginning and it can be explicitly found in the Statute:



The **Council of the Euroregion** is the supreme decision-making body of the Carpathian Euroregion and it identifies the strategic objectives and planning. The Council has 15 members, i.e. every party delegate three members. Members represent the national Delegations of the Euroregion. All decisions of the Council must be unanimous. A Chairperson of the Council is elected for a two-year term following the principle of rotation among national Delegations. The 40<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council was held in Nyíregyháza in February 14, 2014.

The **Presidium of the Council** is responsible for implementing decisions of the Council. It is chaired by the Chairman of the Council and includes the Heads of the national delegations. Present Chairman of the Presidium is Mr. Jozef Jodlowski from Poland who holds this office from February 14, 2014.

The **International Secretariat** is the executive and administrative body of the Euroregion. Each national part of the Euroregion is represented by its Permanent National Representative, who is also a member of the national delegation to the Council. The Secretariat is managed by an Executive Director, who is a full-time employee of the Euroregion and is appointed by the Council. The seat of the international secretariat had been regularly rotated in Sanok (Poland) 1993-1994, then in Debrecen 1994-1995, Uzhgorod 1995-1997, Krosno 1997-1999 and it has been located in Nyíregyháza since 1999,.

**National Offices** have been established in each part of the Euroregion, and are responsible for the coordination of cross-border activities in their respective territories. National Offices are headed by each country's Permanent National Representative.

Several **Working Commissions** were created by decision of the Council in order to improve cross-border cooperation. They focused on specific areas of interregional cooperation. A Special Working Commission on Audit and Financial Control supervised the management of the Euroregion. The Regional and Economic Development Commission was run by the Hungarian delegation. Three prime areas for regional development in the Carpathian Euroregion had been identified by this Commission: environmental protection, water management and technical assistance. The Cross-Border Trade Commission was run by the Romanian delegation. The Commission encouraged business-to-business cooperation within the Euroregion through fairs, commercial exhibitions and other events. Furthermore, the Tourism and Environment Commission was run by the Polish delegation. The Commission had identified a lack of infrastructure and strategy as the main obstacles to tourism development. The Social Infrastructure Commission was run by the Ukrainian delegation, and it was charged with encouraging and coordinating cross-border cooperation in the fields of education and culture. In 1994, the Commission established the Association of Carpathian Region Universities (ACRU). ACRU worked to expand academic, cultural and scientific cooperation in the region by encouraging scholarship exchanges and by organizing academic events that focused on issues related to the Euroregion. Finally, the Commission for the Prevention of Natural Disasters was run by the Slovak delegation and it was established after the disastrous floods in 1998 and 2000. The Commission wanted to improve civil emergency planning and joint-action military



capabilities. It initiated a veterinary sub-commission in 2001, which was coordinated the monitoring and prevention of BSE<sup>8</sup> in the Euroregion.

These working commissions did not work now and they were replaced by bilateral ministerial commissions.

## Mission

The mission of the CER is to encourage, facilitate and coordinate multi-sectorial cross-border cooperation among people living in the Carpathian territory in the fields of science, culture, economy, education, environment, trade and tourism. Establishment of the CER was motivated by attempts to improve general conditions for the people living in the territory and to eliminate barriers caused by borders.

The Carpathian area has broad heterogeneous ethnic structure, its history is characterized by frequent changes of borders, and thus there is a clear security issue there. Subsequently, the question of security was one of the primary motives of project which was in the centre of attention in the first years of the project existence. Moreover, the cooperation attempted to deal with the issues of cross-border crime, illegal (economic) migration, issues related to the Roma minority and environmental security. After countries entered into the EU, NATO and Schengen space (except Ukraine) these issues diminished, because a new security situation was created in Europe as a whole.

*Table: List of representing organizations, seat of secretariats and key persons in each party*

Country	Name of representing organization	Secretariat seat	Key persons
Poland	Stowarzyszenie Euroregion Karpacki Polska <sup>9</sup>	Rzeszów	Józef Jodlowski – president of CER association David Lasek - vice-president Andrzej Wyczawski - vice-president
Ukraine	Karpatskij Evroregion <sup>10</sup>	Užhorod	Volodimir Gorbovij - president Galina Litvin – executive director
Slovakia	Karpatský euroregion Slovensko <sup>11</sup>	Košice	Renáta Lenártová – president Eduard Buráš – director
Hungary	Kárpátok Eurorégió <sup>12</sup>	Nyíregyháza	Seszták Oszkár - president Majorné László Brigitta – executive director
Romania	Uniunea Partea Romana Euroregiunea Carpatice <sup>13</sup>	Baia Mare	Gheorge Marcas - president

<sup>8</sup> Bovine spongiform encephalopathy, commonly referred to as „mad cow disease“

<sup>9</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)

<sup>10</sup> [www.euroregionkarpaty.com.ua](http://www.euroregionkarpaty.com.ua)

<sup>11</sup> [www.ker.sk](http://www.ker.sk)

<sup>12</sup> [www.carpathianeuroregion.org](http://www.carpathianeuroregion.org)

<sup>13</sup> [www.uprec.ro](http://www.uprec.ro)

## Schengen border

Four countries from five in the CER are now members of the EU except Ukraine. After establishing Schengen area<sup>14</sup> in the EU, a new barrier was created.

After the Schengen II came into force the number of illegal migrants significantly dropped and the border became one of the best-guarded land borderlines in the Schengen area (Benč, 2014). Changes in the EU visa policy caused that the number of all travelers, who crossed the Ukrainian-Slovak border since 2009, dramatically dropped down. That means this decrease meant 1.5 million persons within five years, while the number of the migrants was 3 374 989 in 2008, and 1 869 425 in 2013.

Although, the situation might change in the future. The “Association Agreement” (AA) between the EU and Ukraine was signed in March 2014 and its economic part including “Deep and comprehensive free trade area” (DCFTA) was signed on June 27, 2014. Implementation of the AA should help Ukraine to reach a visa-free regime between the EU and Ukraine; it may establish DCFTA and move forward the processes of the integration of Ukraine into the EU. However, all these processes should go in line with the consolidation of situation in the Eastern part of Ukraine.

## Existing strategies

During the CER project existence there were several development strategies for the territory elaborated. In the recent years the most important were:

1. The strategic development programme of the CER for 2007-2013 period managed by Prof. Süli-Zakar István in 2007 and updated for 2014-2020 programming period issued in 2014 (Süli-Zakar István, 2014)
2. The CER development strategy “Carpathian Horizon 2020” managed by Mr. Dawid Lasek issued in 2013 (Euroregion Karpacki, 2013)

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<sup>14</sup> Schengen area is a result of the Schengen agreement, which was named after the Luxemburg town of Schengen, where on June 14, 1985 a treaty among France, Germany and Benelux countries was signed. This treaty is called as First Schengen agreement (Schengen I) and consists of 33 articles and contains short-term and long-term measures to regulate thorough controls at the outer borders. On June 19, 1990 a supplementary treaty was signed, known as the Schengen Agreement II (Schengen II). This treaty needs ratification and in the Amsterdam agreement (Protocol B), signed in 1997 became a part of the EU law. The main goal of the Schengen agreement is free movement of people across the borders within the Schengen area. It is implicitly inherent that the outer borders require enforcement, which adds a barrier function to the border as such. (Angelovic, 2014)

## 1. The strategic development programme of the CER

This strategy is based on a detailed SWOT analysis, articulated vision of future and set of principles (partnership, additionality, programming, subsidiarity and sustainability). Objectives of a programme were identified as:

- promotion of the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine,
- harmonized development of human resources,
- improvement of accessibility,
- creating of a competitive economic structure,
- improvements in the fields of environmental protection and nature conservation,
- complex development of tourism,
- development of health care, social and cultural environment,
- strengthening of external relations.

The suggested strategy solves perspectives and mission for the CER Interregional Association and it suggests financial sources for implementation of objectives defined in the strategic programme.

## 2. Carpathian Horizon 2020

This strategy was prepared with the aim to enable the macro-regional strategy (MRS) of the Carpathian region. The MRS study suggests that Carpathian MRS belongs to such set of MRS, where MRS can be a potential instrument for tackling uneven development. The concept of the Carpathian Horizon 2020 was first time presented in 2005 at the meeting with the Commissioner of Regional Development Mrs. Danita Hübner. After that meeting, the Polish members undertook a lot of organizational, promotional and lobbying activities in order to support the initiative. In January 2013, the Karpacki Horizon 2020 Association drafted a Working document with the same name. The strategy outlined four key challenges:

- to create environment promoting innovation and enterprise development,
- to enable the development of social and human capital in the region,
- to enhance uniform development of all areas in the region and improved access to it,
- to enhance institutional interrelations within the area and to increase movement of ideas and know-how.

On the basis of the working document, those challenges were identified by stakeholders from all parties of the CER project. The main focus is given to economics with the aim to overcome the wide economic/social disparities, improvement of networks and ensuring sustainability of transport modes and on internal institutional relations to support development of the region. It has to be underlined that the suggested MRS includes also Ukraine as a non-EU country.

## 6. Situation in respective parties

### Poland

Two Polish cities Przemyśl and Krosno are members of the CER project since its foundation, the city of Rzeszów entered in October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1994 and Tarnow town became a member in October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1997. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1999 Podkarpackie voivodeship became a member.

The Polish Carpathian Euroregion association was established in July 2000. The association has three functions: creation of structures, coordination and development of the territory. It serves as a platform for municipalities, coordinates crossborder activities and it serves as a technical secretariat for the European funds (PHARE CBC, INTERREG III, TACIS, and ENPI). The association is a part of the CER Interregional Association.

The association has now 61 members – districts, cities, towns and villages (gminy, powiaty, miasta) and has a seat in Rzeszów. In May 2012, the association established the “Carpathian Agency for regional development” in order to coordinate better activities in the Polish-Slovak border region. The association cooperates with Maas-Rheine euroregion and with the Oresund euroregion. The current President of the association is Mr. Józef Jodlowski, Mayor of the city of Rzeszów. The Vice-president is Mr. Dawid Lasek.

During its existence the association implemented more than 290 CBC projects with total budget approximately 6 million Euros (till 2010). The most important was the “Carpathian Horizon 2020”, which was an attempt to prepare a MRS on the European level similar like the EU strategy for the Danube region or the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region. The interesting project is “Carpathian Mark”, whose aim is create its own brand mark to promote the CER territory as a touristic destination.



*Table: Chosen recent projects*

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget (Euro)
1	Tourism without borders	Promote atractivities of Polish-Slovak border region <sup>15</sup>	2009-2011	83 820
2	Carpathian Agency for the regional development	Creation of umbrella agency responsible for the development of the border region <sup>16</sup>	2011-2012	303 570
3	Innovative platform of six CER cities cooperation	Strengthening and professionalization cooperation among 6 Polish cities in the CER territory <sup>17</sup>	2011-2012	354 050

<sup>15</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)

<sup>16</sup> [www.karr.com.pl](http://www.karr.com.pl)

<sup>17</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)



	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget (Euro)
4	Fortress of Przemyśl	Promotion of a common historical and cultural heritage of Poland and Ukraine; economic and tourist development of CB region <sup>18</sup>	2012	541 772
5	Alps-Carpathian Bridge of Cooperation	To stimulate innovative economic processes, create a system of support and transfer Swiss experience in supporting local, regional and international partnership for development policy	2011-2014	5 247 090
6	Strategy of the development of health tourism	Analysis of the potential of micro natural and cultural heritage and development of health tourism promotion tools on the Polish-Ukrainian border <sup>19</sup>	2014-2015	49 332
7	ABC education and job in Poland	To analyze the needs in Belarus, the Ukrainian labor market and to improve chances for education and jobs in Poland <sup>20</sup>	2014	44 465
8	Fundament of the strategy	Identification of the most effective Swiss innovative tourism solutions in public and NGO sectors for the Carpathians <sup>21</sup>	2015	36 103
9	Carpathian Horizon 2020	Attempt to create a macro regional strategy at European level and special operational programme "Carpathian spatial programme" for 2014-2020 programming period <sup>22</sup>	2005-2014	
10	Carpathian Mark	Creation of Carpathian brand strategy according the tool Brand Foundations DDB Worldwide <sup>23</sup>	2014	

### Carpathian Foundation - Poland

The Polish "Fundacja karpacka" has its mission to support socio-economic development of the mountain areas of the Podkarpackie region. They stimulate activities of self-governments, NGOs and small local businesses. It was established in 1999, until that time it was the "Carpathian euroregion development fund", which operated in the Podkarpackie voivodeship. During the period 1999-2011 they had a total budget 5,461 523 \$ and they supported more than 220 projects. Except the above mentioned sponsors, it had sources from the EEA Grants, the Batory Foundation, and the Polish-American-Ukrainian Cooperation Initiative. Within the period 2012-2014, they had a total budget 1,165 335 € and they allocated it to more than 300 grants to support tourism, local production, organizing internships, etc. The biggest project was the "The People-friendly Carpathians – a Local Partnership Initiative for the Sustainable Use and

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/contract.php?id=108>

<sup>19</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)

<sup>20</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)

<sup>21</sup> [www.karpacki.pl](http://www.karpacki.pl)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.karpacki.pl/karpacki-horyzont-2020/cele-i-zalozenie/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.karpacki.pl/marka-carpathia/marka-carpathia/>

Protection of Mountain Areas of the Podkarpackie Voivodeship” with total amount of 766 763 Euros. The project was funded from the Swiss-Polish cooperation. It was a part of “Alpy Karpatom”<sup>24</sup> programme, whose main objectives were to unleash the economic potential of the mountain areas through transfer of the Swiss experience and it had a budget more than 3,5 million €. Carpathian Foundation Poland is currently led by Mrs. Zofia Kordela-Borczyk and the organization has nine employees.

## Ukraine

The Ukrainian regions (oblast) are members of the CER project since the beginning. Zakarpattia region is a member since February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993, while Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Tsernovtsi regions are members since November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

The association of local governments, “the Carpathian Euroregion - Ukraine”, was established in 2007 with the aim to promote CBC and IRC particularly in enterprise development, tourism, environment sector, development of transport and border infrastructure. Association unites 66 local authorities and their associations Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernovtsy regions. The present Chairman of the Board is Volodimir Gorbovij and the Executive Director is Galina Litvin.

*Table: Chosen projects*

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
1	Energy Carpathians	Improving the quality of public services in the field of energy through analysis and use of domestic resources <sup>25</sup>	2008-2010	USAID, Telenor, Finland embassy
2	School for members of local communities councils	Training, courses for members of local councils too promote efficiency, improve professional level, exchange experience etc. <sup>26</sup>	2011-2012	Foundation for Democracy
3	CBC for health tourism	<sup>27</sup>	2012	643778 PL-BY-UA
4	Local Development Network	<sup>28</sup>	2013-2014	V4 fund
5	Carpathian Culinary Heritage Network	To present, conserve and popularize the role and range of the different traditional Carpathian food products and cuisines as a catalyst for sustainable regional development <sup>29</sup>	2012-2014	428220

<sup>24</sup> [www.alpykarpatom.pl](http://www.alpykarpatom.pl)

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.euroregionkarpaty.com.ua/2010-03-21-01-23-17/120-q-q.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.euroregionkarpaty.com.ua/2010-03-21-01-23-17/174-shkola-mis-rozv.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.pl-by-ua.eu/contract.php?id=115>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.celdn.euroregionkarpaty.com.ua/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.culinaryheritage.org/en/>

## Carpathian Foundation – Ukraine

Ukrainian “Karpatskij fond” stresses the issue of local democracy, civil society, their development, institutional strengthening of local governments and NGOs, development of CBC and inter-ethnic cooperation, encouraging citizens to participate in local and regional development. They had a budget of 4,024 944 hrivnas, i.e. approximately 400 000 € in 2010. The biggest project, which started in 2002 with a financial support of Cooperating Netherlands Fund, was the “Social transition program in Western Ukraine”. The main objective was to support vulnerable groups of population - foster families and family-type children’s homes to reduce poverty. They supported 15 projects with a support of 220 000 €. In 2009, the whole budget of the Ukrainian CF was 3,973 000 UAH and in 2011 it was 6,500 000 UAH. The most important programmes and projects in last years were the following: “Buddy program: It takes two” – the project designed to help/improve the inclusion of children with disabilities; “Social transition program in Western Ukraine and Foster care program” – the program supported innovative and pro-active approach towards local social problem solution; “Truly together” – the project aimed to develop civic society in Western Ukraine by transferring the Slovak experience and by trainings local NGOs operating in rural areas. Carpathian Foundation Ukraine is led by Mr. Ruslan Zhylenko and it employs six people.

## Slovakia

Six Slovakian towns, like Bardejov, Svidník, Trebišov, Michalovce, Vranov nad Topľou and Humenné started their membership in the beginning of February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993. The cities of Košice and Prešov entered into the project later, in June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1993. After establishment of the NUTS III statistical level Košice and Prešov, both regions entered into the project as the state administration bodies in November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1999 (Ičo Tibor, 2013). After establishment of the regional self-government in Slovakia in 2001, the Košice self-governing region entered into the CER project in 2002, but the Prešov self-governing region entered into the another euroregion in its territory – the Tatry Euroregion.

The first association, “Association of the Carpathians” (Združenie Karpaty), involved more than 800 newly created municipalities, villages, towns, cities. It was established in 1992, but it was transformed and renamed as “Carpathian Euroregion Slovakia” in 1999. Only in 1999, the Slovak Government supported full membership in the CER project. Subsequently, the Chairman of the Slovak delegation, namely Mr. István Zachariáš, Mayor of Moldava nad Bodvou, asked the Council for full membership for Slovakia and the Council approved the request. The main goal has been to support cross-border and interregional cooperation among adjacent areas in the CER territory. The seat of the Association is in Košice and it is a national secretariat of the CER project too.

The Association has more than 60 members, mostly municipalities from “Slovakia-East” - NUTS II region. However, on NUTS III level, “Prešov self-governing region” was never a member of the CER (he entered into the Tatry Euroregion) and “Košice self-governing region” resigned after its 12-year-long membership in 2014. The biggest city of Košice is still a member, but its

support for the project is questionable. The current President of the Association is Mrs. Renáta Lenártová, Vice-Mayor of the city of Košice and its Director is Mr. Eduard Buráš.

Because of the lack of political support from Košice region after 1995, a new association, called as “Carpathian Euroregion North” (Karpatský Euroregion Sever), was established as a civic association led by Mr. Jozef Polačko. It implemented several small soft projects in cooperation with Polish municipalities and districts. Nevertheless, this Euroregion does not perform any activity nowadays.

The CER Slovakia association is a member of “Euroregional Forum Slovakia”, which gathers representatives of the Slovak euroregions. Association also launches a printed magazine (Magazine) twice a year.

After Slovakia became a full member of the CER project, the Association implemented several small projects in areas of culture, tourism, transport, etc. The most important project was the creation of a new developmental strategy for the CER territory financed through ENPI programme.

*Table: The most important projects in the last years*

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
1	Carpathian train	Promotion of Košice and Miskolc narrow-gauge line railway <sup>30</sup>	2012	5000
2	Focus Gothic Route	Presentation of CB Slovak-Hungarian gothic route	2012	20 000
3	Promote our carst beauties to the whole world	Promotion of tourist attraction in Slovak Carst and Agtelek Carst	2014	20 000
4	Florian’s bike road (the 3 <sup>rd</sup> project)	A new 30 km long bike road from Bardejovské kúpele thru castle Zborov, Makovica till Svidník	2014	20 000
5	Space Emergency system	Creation a CB information system for prediction of natural disasters in HU, RO, SK, UA <sup>31</sup>	2014-2015	537.610 Kablak Natalija
6	Sustainable Development of Border Regions provided by effective functioning the Carpathian Euroregion	Creation a new macro-strategy for the CER territory <sup>32</sup>	2013-2015	537 610 468.018 (ENPI contribution)

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.detskazeleznica.sk/www.vasutimenetrend.hu>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/project-database/397>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/project-database/313>



### Carpathian Foundation - Slovakia

The Slovak “Karpatská nadácia” has three main fields of activities: financial support, education and consultancy. It is active in diminishing social indigence and it works with local communities. During the period 1995-2011, it supported 344 projects with 1,650 000 €. Main donors of the Foundation are U. S. Steel Košice, VSE holding, T-Systems Slovakia, RWE IT, NESS KDC and others. The Foundation supported 49 projects with 132,878 € in 2011, 26 projects with 79,138 € in 2012 and 37 projects with 115,082 € in 2013. The main programmes are “Together for region”, “Free Time Zones Support”, “Symbiosis Programme”, “Carpathian Trek” etc. CF Slovakia is led by Mrs. Laura Dittel, the current Director is Mrs. Katarína Minárová. The Foundation has six people.

### Hungary

Four Hungarian counties, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar and cities of regional status: Debrecen, Eger, Miskolc, Nyíregyháza are members of the CER project since its foundation, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok county entered in November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

Since 1999 the seat of the international Secretariat of the CER is in Nyíregyháza. Therefore main activities of the secretariat focused on organizational support of CER council meetings, working committees meetings, organizing events etc and cooperation with international partners like AEBR or Euroregio Maas-Rheine.

In 2001 the Carpathian Euroregion Association for Regional Development was established as self-governing, non-for-profit, non-partisan social organization to support inter-regional and cross-border cooperation in the CER territory with the President M. L. Karakó.

Projects launched by the Hungarian part have two main sources: National Cooperation Fund (Nemzeti Együttműködési Alap) and ENPI INTERREG programme. The most important projects launched are in the next table.

*Table: Chosen projects*

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
1	FLAPP (Flood Awareness and Prevention Policy)	After a cyanide pollution in the Tisza river basin the objective was to raise flood awareness, start sustainable flood management and CBC to stimulate river basin approach <sup>33</sup>	2004-2007	1 672 850 INTERREG IVC
2	Borders through the eyes of people	Sociological analysis and activities in border regions of Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine <sup>34</sup>	2012-2014	487 491 ENPI

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.interreg4c.eu/uploads/media/pdf/FLAPP\\_3W0088N.pdf](http://www.interreg4c.eu/uploads/media/pdf/FLAPP_3W0088N.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/project-database/151>

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
3	Promotion of folk-arts and handicrafts in the Carpathian Euroregion	To return local folk-arts and handicrafts their role as an important part of cultural and economic life in the border Hungary-Ukraine region <sup>35</sup>	2013-2014	91 447 ENPI
4	CBC Parliament	To create a new IT tool and databases for development of the border region <sup>36</sup>	2009-2011	424 971 ENPI
5	CER NEA Professional Program	To analyze and evaluate 20 years of CER, conference, book, operational support <sup>37</sup>	2013-2014	13 324 NEA
6	Sustainable Development of Border Regions provided by effective functioning the Carpathian Euroregion	Creation a new macro-strategy for the CER territory <sup>38</sup>	2013-2015	537 610 ENPI

### Carpathian Foundation - Hungary

The mission of the CF Hungary is to improve quality of live and preserve social, ethnic, cultural, environmental values and sustainable development in five Hungarian regions. It provides financial and technical assistance to NGOs and LSGs. The CF Hungary engages in grant-making and programme activities and. It has granted totally 1,5 million USD to hundreds of NGOs and LSGs since the beginning (1995). The most important grant programmes were: Capacity building Programme, 212 088 USD; Integrated rural community Programme with 263 600 USD; Carpathian Cultural Heritage Program with 171 000 USD; RomaNet Programme devoted Roma NGOs with the budget 80 000 USD; Carpathian CBC Programme with 157 180 USD; Carpathian BRIDGE (Best Rural Initiatives for Development and Gateway to Europe) with 80 000 USD; Local Initiatives Program in the CER with 79 144 USD; Community Centre Development Fund with 30 000 USD and Carpathian Scholarship Program with 20 000 USD.

Own projects have been covering areas like capacity building (RomaNet Cooperation Network, NGOs in Heves county), promoting networking among NGOs, enterprises and LSGs (Carpathian House), preparing joint strategies (Integration and migration in the Carpathian Basin) with the budgets more than 1 million €. CF Hungary is led by Ms. Boglárka Bata and it has nine people.

<sup>35</sup> <http://umti.org/en/activity/spryyannya-rozvytku-narodnyh-promysliv-ta-mistsevyh-umiltsiv-v-karpatskomu-jevrorehioni-huskroua1101163-2>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.carpathianeuroregion.org/cbc/en.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.carpathianeuroregion.org/projektek-nea.html>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/project-database/397>

## Romania

Romanian districts Satu-Mare and Maramureş became members in December, 29<sup>th</sup>, 1993, but later their membership was cancelled by the Romanian central government. Nevertheless, their membership was renewed again in 1997. Bihor, Sălaj and Botoşani regions entered into the project in April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and Suceava region in July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1999 and the last one was Harghita region which entered in November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2003. Starting since 1997 they were represented by the inter-regional association in the CER project. Subsequently, the local authorities took part in different projects representing their local authorities. The working committee on regional economic cooperation and development<sup>39</sup> was active between 2000 – 2008 using PHARE CBC program support. In the last years, the Romanian part has been represented by the “Romanian Carpathian Union”. Some activities arose after obtaining the grant from ENPI programme.

*Table: Chosen project*

	Project title	Project description	Period	Budget
1	Sustainable Development of Border Regions provided by effective functioning the Carpathian Euroregion	Creation a new macro-strategy for the CER territory <sup>40</sup>	2013-2015	537 610 ENPI

### Carpathian Foundation - Romania

The Romanian branch of the CF supported more than 250 projects with 1,237 526 \$ and 132 492 € in years between 1995 till 2005. The most important grant projects were Local Initiative Program (up to 5,000 \$/project), CBC Program (up to 25,000 \$), Integrated Rural Community Development Program (IRCD) (up to 150,000 \$/project), RomaNet (up to 5,000 \$/project) and Living Heritage Programme (up to 8,000 \$/project). Probably the last big project was in 2009, namely “Civil society development foundation”, where the CF Romania together with Romanian Environmental Partnership Foundation ([www.repf.ro](http://www.repf.ro)) gained grant from the EEA Norwegian funds in total 2,741 817 €. The project had five components, specifically, consolidation of democracy, children and youth, social inclusion and social services, environment and cultural heritage. The CF Romania has neither activities nor its own web page currently.

<sup>39</sup> [www.tradecarp.com](http://www.tradecarp.com)

<sup>40</sup> [www.uprec.ro](http://www.uprec.ro)

## 7. Role of the Carpathian Foundation

The Carpathian foundation (CF) was established as a financial tool to implement objectives of the CER project in 1994. According to Mr. Vazil Hudák, the model for the CF was a Foundation for the Mid South (FMS) in the USA<sup>41</sup>.

CF networking model consisted of headquarters in Košice, Slovakia and four offices in other respective countries. In 2005, the Carpathian Foundation International (CFI) was established with its seat in Budapest with the aim to concentrate all region-wide programmatic, grant making and fundraising functions into a new separate legal entity. Thus by 2006, the CF network comprised of six CF organizations with CFI as an umbrella organization<sup>42</sup>.

According to its Statute, the CF is a private, non-profit organization that works to promote good neighborliness, social stability and sustainable economic development in the territory of the CER. The CF addresses challenges facing the CER through the framework of programmes that support cross-border and inter-ethnic cooperation. Over 20 years, the CF organizations achieved important successes in promoting CBC by building bridges between communities, NGOs and local self-governments by encouraging and supporting development initiatives within the CER territory.

Since 1995 the CF has been supported by a number of American and European funders:

- The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Michigan, USA, 10,8 million \$ in 1995-2010
- The Ford Foundation, New York City, New York, USA, 400,000 \$ in 2002-3
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund, New York City, New York, USA
- The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
- The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Washington D.C., USA
- The EastWest Institute, New York City, New York, USA
- The Cooperating Netherland Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2,6 million \$ in 2002-8
- The European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- The Open Society Institute, Budapest, Hungary, 1,7 million \$ in 1999-2006
- King Baudouin Foundation, Brussels, Belgium, 180,000 \$ in 1999-2004
- The International Visegrad Fund, Bratislava, Slovakia
- Georghe Ofrim, Sighetu Marmatiei, Romania
- Fred Robbey, The Villages, Florida, USA, 900,000 \$ in 2002-3
- The Charities Aid Foundation, 460,000 \$.

Although after expansion and introduction of a new European regional policy for cross-border interaction, many donors withdrew from the Carpathian region.

<sup>41</sup> The mission of FMS is to invest in people and strategies that build philanthropy and promote racial, social and economic equity in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Their fields of action now are education, wealth building, health and wellness and community development.

<sup>42</sup> CFI was founded on March, 16 2005 by Dr. Lajos Tolnay with the paid capital 1 million HUF. On November 30, 2009 the founder transferred his rights to Péter Kalmár. Its mission and vision is to promote innovative initiatives and CB exchanges and to strengthen participative democracy and community organizing throughout the region.

All CF branches have the same mission – to develop CBC and inter-ethnic relation, to support building of local democracy and civil society by institutional strengthening of NGOs and LSGs. Later they added socio-economic development and sustainable development. All five branches together distributed about 15 million € thanks mainly to above mentioned donors.

In respective countries there is a network of national offices:

*Table: National offices of the Carpathian Foundation*

Country	Name	Seat	Key people
Poland	Fundacja Karpacka <sup>43</sup>	Sanok	Zofia Kordela-Borczyk Piotr Helinski
Ukraine	Karpatskij Fond <sup>44</sup>	Uzhgorod	Ruslan Zhylenko Igor Ilko
Slovakia	Karpatská nadácia <sup>45</sup>	Košice	Katarína Minárová Laura Dittel
Hungary	Kárpátok Alapítvány <sup>46</sup>	Eger	Bata Boglárka
	Carpathian Foundation International	Budapest	Péter Kalmár
Romania		Oradea	Lorena Stoica

## 8. Survey evaluation

In this small survey 15 persons mainly from Slovakia were addressed with the same questions. See Questionnaire.

In the first question about the present situation in the CER project in respective countries several people expressed their fears about the CER project. Some of the respondents were thinking about the CER project in the following terms, it is coming down, declining, falling apart, slowly dying, decreasing, nothing is happening, is not able to solve common problems like unemployment from such a large territory. One respondent expressed that it is a brilliant project, but it does not fill its mission and several respondents answered that it still has a sense. One respondent expressed an opinion, that the territory is too big and project has no good strategy and one connected the next existence of the CER project with the new situation in Ukraine in sense that CER project has to get a new wind until Ukraine becomes a member of EU. One respondent expressed an idea that CER project is a good structure for the CC project.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.fundackakarpacka.org/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.carpathianfoundation.org.ua/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://karpatskanadacia.sk/>

<sup>46</sup> [www.carpathianfoundation.eu](http://www.carpathianfoundation.eu)



In the second question about initial expectations of the project almost all respondents answered “yes - expectations were fulfilled”, one responded did not know the answer and one answered that “surely not”, because of an idea of Professor Süli-Zakar, specifically that the CER should be a partner for NATO and it was not implemented. One respondent answered that the expectations were huge and naive and without foreign financial resources nothing can succeed. Some respondents highlighted the value of creating platform for communication, people-to-people contacts, strengthening relations and better communication among local authorities and local people.

In the third question about the role of the Carpathian Foundation almost all respondents answered that the CF role has been useful and supportive, one mentioned that the CF was awarded with European Borders Dialogue Award for CBC support in 2010, one expressed an opinion that now there are five foundations without connections (what is not an appropriate approach because some branches have common projects), one evaluated the CF role up to 80%, one commented that strong financial tool for the CER project is missing. One respondent was thinking that CF is failing, not fulfilling foundation functions and that an Ambassador of the CER (like the Barents Secretariat has one – Ms. Marja-Leena Vuorenpää at present) is missing.

Answering the fourth question about perspectives of euroregional-type cooperation majority of respondents were thinking that perspectives are still good; one told, that perspective can be seen in connection with the CC project territory; one told that it depends on people and one answered that in relation with the situation in Ukraine perspectives are still good. Only one respondent was thinking that the CER didn't use facing opportunities (ENPI sources, EGTC) and that intellectual capacity in the Central Europe is missing. One respondent answered that it has no big sense to continue in the CER project. One respondent was thinking that perspectives are in economic development cooperation and one respondent answered that a lot of work has been done in parallel and subjects are not informed and that an initial threat of possible conflict in the territory might arise was diminished.

Answering the fifth question about the relation to the CC project majority of respondents didn't recognize the CC project at all and could not answer. Those who knew the CC project were thinking that: CER should have a stronger position in the frame of the CC project and a special fund for the Carpathians territory should be created; in building common infrastructure; CC could be a new engine for CER and that CC is a good idea but has top-down approach. One respondent was thinking that CER should support CC project and both should come together with common activities and one was thinking that both projects should be interconnected.

During discussions a question of new considered Carpathian region MRS arose and four respondents would be glad if such an idea would be approved, it could bring some new resources for the Carpathians and get a new wind to the CER project, one was thinking that joint (more parties) action is needed.

## 9. Project assessment

Process starting date	February 14, 1993
Time horizon	Not specified
Definition for geographic coverage	Poland: Województwo Podkarpackie Ukraine: Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpatiya, Tsernivtsi oblasts Slovakia: Prešov and Košice region Hungary: Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Heves, Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok counties Romania: Bihor, Satu Mare, Sălaj, Maramureș, Harghita, Suceava, Botoșani counties
No. of countries	Five countries, Ukraine as non-EU country
Supporting transnational structures	Carpathian Convention Visegrád fund Eastern partnership – ENP

The very existence of the CER project has been greatly useful for the whole territory. The project fulfilled its mission to encourage, facilitate and coordinate cross-border cooperation among people living in the Carpathian territory. One of the main motives for the project creation – to serve as an instrument for conflict prevention, which was highlighted also by the EWI, cannot be evaluated explicitly because we do not know whether any conflict in the Carpathian territory would have been arisen without CER project existence. But there is evidence that CER project has been serving as a unique platform for cross-border cooperation to enable, facilitate and coordinate among local authorities.

The main financial tool for reaching the objectives of the CER project was the Carpathian Foundation. This private, non-for-profit organization, whose mission is to promote good neighborliness, social stability and sustainable economic development in the Carpathian territory distributed about 15 million € which have been gathered from different, mainly American, donor sources during its existence since 1994. The awarded projects supported, strengthened and helped the development of inter-ethnic cooperation, local democracy and civic society. Cross-border cooperation has generated a space for face-to-face activities and interaction has successfully diminished the existing prejudices and isolation between regions and people.

After the EU introduced its regional policy and INTERREG financial tools, including ENPI/ENP, the situation profoundly changed. Many Carpathian Foundation donors withdrew themselves and the cross-border activities have become focused more on bilateral/trilateral projects. In other words, the European financial sources for territorial cooperation are much bigger and they are beyond any comparison with donors' sources. But one has to admit that at the

beginning the CER national structures were not prepared to launch excellently sophisticated project proposals, thus they were not very successful in using those sources.

Creating a Schengen border between EU and Ukraine helped to decrease illegal migration but a newly established visa regime caused that the number of travelers dramatically dropped. This new Schengen border and barriers do not help to reach the CER objectives between the EU member parties and Ukraine, but it is in contradiction with the euroregional objectives. Subsequently, the Schengen border can be considered as a new reason and argument for helping the CER project to get a new dynamism and spirit.

The situation also changed when the central authorities from seven countries, five CER countries and the Czech Republic and Serbia signed the Framework Convention on the protection and sustainable development of the Carpathians in 2003. The CC territory is bigger like the CER territory; it has 209.256 km<sup>2</sup> and 18 million people live there. The general objectives of the CC project are the following, improving quality of life, strengthening local economies and communities, conservation of natural values and cultural heritage. The CC project has been recently evaluated as an innovative tool with holistic development perspective, but it is based on top-down approach. There is not enough information among local and regional authorities in the area about the CC project and therefore the project proposals have not been in good quality.

Other factors needed to be included into pros-and-cons analysis, specifically, the new situation in Ukraine. After “the Dignity revolution” in Maidan square and signing the “Association Agreement” with the EU, Ukraine is facing hard period to consolidate situation in the Eastern part of the country, to go through painful reforms and to integrate into the EU. The latter would allow canceling visa-regime on the Schengen border, diminishing barriers on the border and improving conditions for cross-border cooperation. This factor should be taken into account whether the CER should play geostrategic role to help Ukraine with Euro-Atlantic integration, like it was suggested by Professor Süli-Zakar (2014, 332).

In 2005, mainly the Polish side started to push the idea to create a new MRS “the Carpathian region”. The concept of Carpathian Horizon 2020 was presented to the then Commissioner of regional development Mrs. Danita Hübner in Brussels. Other promotional and lobbying activities have been undertaken in order to support the idea. In the last study about MRS (EP, 2015), the Carpathian region was included into a group of “macro regions under consideration”. According to the study, the CER territory is characterized with big regional disparities and uneven development. The main challenge is *“to manage significant changes in economy, accessibility and energy networks that are necessary to achieve a sustainable economic prosperity without the loss of its natural and cultural characteristics”* (European Parliament, 2015, p. 37).

The idea to approve a new Carpathian region MRS has a weak point that its territory is overlapping with other MRS – the Danube strategy, which has been already approved and it

has allocated own financial resources to implement its priorities. On the other side, this overlap is not an exception, but there are other MRSs included in the study which overlap too (prepared strategy for the Adriatic Ionian Region with considered Western and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean Sea strategy).

Thinking about the chances of the Carpathian region, it is important to remind a recommendation from the last CC CoP meeting in Mikulov in 2014. One of the outputs was *“encouraged the Parties to actively participate in the implementation of existing EU macro-regional strategies relevant to the Carpathians, i.e. the strategies for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and for the Baltic Region (EUSBSR), and to use the CC as a strategic tool to link and complement relevant strategies<sup>47</sup>”*. It seems that the Carpathian region as MRS has no support from all relevant states, what is a first essential condition. At least two relevant states have to ask the EC to deal with the issue<sup>48</sup>.

The Polish side has another strategic line – “Carpathia brand”. The example was taken from the Savoie Mont Blanc region and is based on the Carpathian brand strategy Carpathia, which was described on the basis of the tool Brand Foundations DDB Worldwide. The Polish member has been promoting a new brand in all possible opportunities.

The situation in respective CER parties is different. The best situation seems to be in Hungary and Poland. Slovakia is weak in the CER after the Košice region cancelled its membership.

After introducing a new European law No.1082/2006 on EGTC Regulation the environment changed too. In the CER project the question: “should we change the structure and to shift to EGTC form?” has been discussed several times, but no decision has been made so far.

In 2013 self-government of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County was successful in obtaining grant from ENPI source with project called: Sustainable development of border regions provided by effective functioning the Carpathian Euroregion<sup>49</sup>. Partners are RDA for the CER Hungary, CER Slovakia, CER Romania, IARDI and “Business Initiatives” in Ukraine. The objective of the project is to prepare a new instrument for “establishing of systematic and lasting CBC”. Despite that Polish side couldn’t be a partner in this financial ENPI scheme, there is a new attempt to activate a weak CER structure.

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<sup>47</sup> Decision COP4/2, point 6.

<sup>48</sup> Discussion with MEP Miroslav Mikolášik

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/en/project-database/313>

Using a standard prediction of possible future development through scenarios, we can define three basic options:

**Optimistic** scenario: the CER will get the second wind and it will become a stronger CBC stakeholder with clear ability to influence CBC in the area. There are two main options. First is that the representatives of states, gathered in CC project, would decide to join into the structure with CER in order to obtain local and regional players in order to implement CC strategies. Second option is that MRS Carpathian region would be approved by the EC. In such a situation a new financial source would raise and the CER structure would be an essential partner in implementing a new MRS.

**Realistic** scenario: the CER will continue its decline. The cooperation among CER parties would be more and more fragmented and focused on bilateral or trilateral CBC. The regional self-government authorities in the CER territory will use mainly ETC financial instruments to develop inter-regional and trans-national cooperation and will not be using existing CER structure. CF will operate on the CER territory, but it will have to look for new sources in order to survive, consequently, it will not play its primary foundation function for which it was established.

**Pessimistic** scenario: the CER will lose its members and it will be closed within several years. Cooperation among the parties will be weaker and the cooperation will flow into dissolution. CF will operate, but without influence on the life of the CER structure.

## 10. Opportunities

### Opportunities for the CER project future:

1. to connect with “the Carpathian Convention” project territorially and/or financially and obtain support from the central level of respective parties
2. to push ahead MRS “the Carpathian region” and an accomplishment of the MRS will be approved
3. to create a new position of CER Ambassador to influence and be partner on the European level mainly in Brussels within the CBC issue (like it is in the Barents secretariat)
4. to ask for a creation of a new Višegrad+ fund strand for the CER territory to develop the CER in order to obtain additional financial sources to implement joint projects

### Opportunities for CESC:

1. to connect with a Polish party and to try together with them to push ahead a new considered macro-regional strategy, “the Carpathian region”, with the aim to be approved by the European Commission,
2. to address the Visegrad Fund Council of Ambassadors with a suggestion to create a new Visegrad+ strand for the Carpathian Euroregion / Carpathian Convention territory in order to reach the Carpathian Euroregion / Carpathian Convention objectives and to implement their strategies (preliminary approvals of relevant authorities are needed),
3. to address the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion with a suggestion to create a new position of “Carpathian Ambassador”, thus a nominated person would be a strong lobbying-type person operating on the European level (mainly in Brussels) with the aim to influence the development of cross-border cooperation and other related issues,
4. to address the Council of the Carpathian Euroregion with a suggestion to change its form of the Carpathian Euroregion
5. to try to be involved as a project partner together with the Carpathian Euroregion structure,
6. to play a role of intermediary body between “top” - governmental authorities and “down” - local and regional authorities in preparing and implementing strategies, programmes and projects in cross-border cooperation within the Carpathian Euroregion territory.

Opportunities		Probability
1	Push ahead “the Carpathian region” MRS to be approved by the EC	Low - middle
2	Creation a new strand V4+ to implement CER / CC strategies	Very low
3	Creation a new official position – Carpathian ambassador	Low
4	To change the CER form and create EGTC	Middle
5	To become a partner in the CER project projects	High
6	To become an intermediary body between central and sub national public authorities	Low - middle



## 11. Conclusion

The main reason which motivated the preparation of this short study was the attempt to analyze the present situation in the CER project and to search for appropriate possibilities how the project might get a second wind. The study is based on intensive Internet research; it collected descriptive and analytical resources about the CER project from the already existing documents describing the CER project, European institutions and different research institutions sources. Additionally, a survey was done among the key people, mainly from Slovakia, who were able to evaluate the project and think about the future role of euroregions. This survey was a valuable source of information.

At the beginning of the study, a short history of the project was described. Some chosen characteristics of the CER territory were gathered from statistical sources. The comparison of GDP in respective regions shows that the level of economic development considerably varies; the least developed regions are in Ukraine. Consequently, it suggests that one of the main problems within the CER territory is its uneven development.

Many American donors, who supported the objectives of the CER project at the beginning, withdrew themselves from the project after the EU launched its support and financial resources for cross-border cooperation. Moreover, the Schengen border factor and the existing strategies are included and reflected too. Situation in respective countries both in the CER structure and the CF network, together with the role CF has been playing in CER project are described in the next part. Last part is devoted to survey evaluation, possible opportunities CER project might face in the future and possibilities how CESCO could help

the CER project to get a second wind. Standard scenario-based forecasting is also included.

At first sight, it seems that the CER project fulfilled its mission and it is coming to its end. Establishment of the Schengen border inside of the CER territory created a new barrier for cooperation. Nevertheless, a new situation in Ukraine might paradoxically help to the CER project to get a second wind. That means the attempt to help Ukraine in order to become a member of the European Union and shift the Schengen border outside of the CER territory is a good motivation for next common euroregional activities. Bringing the concept of macroregional strategies in the EU on the table, where the possible Carpathian region strategy is on the list, can help the CER project too. In case when the considered "Carpathian region" macroregional strategy is approved on the European level, the CER structure, covering the same territory could become an essential subject and partner for implementing macro regional strategy's objectives.

Connection with the Carpathian Convention project could be another way for the CER project how "to survive". A combination of top-down approach of the CC project supported by the central governments and bottom-up approach of the CER project supported by subnational tiers of self-government authorities might be another opportunity how to energize the CER project. But new dynamism can be brought only when people in the CER structure will be able to connect their mission with new trends in the European regional policy, improve their ability to use European structural and investment funds and contribute to improving governance of the territory.

## Questionnaire

1. What is the present state in the CER project as a whole and in the Slovak / Polish / Ukrainian / Hungarian / Romania part of the project?
2. Have been the initial expectations of “founding fathers” fulfilled?
3. What has been the role of the Carpathian Foundation in the CER project?
4. What are perspectives of euroregional type of cooperation after INTERREG programmes are being regularly launched and a EGTC model came into existence in 2006?
5. What should be a relation of the CER project to the Carpathian Convention Project?

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