

Central European Service for Cross-Border Initiatives  
European Institute of Cross-Border Studies



# CROSSING THE BORDERS

## Studies on cross-border cooperation within the Danube Region

### Case Study

The Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza



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## 1. Introduction

Euroregions play an essential role in the current regional policies of the European Union, aimed at developing cross-border cooperation and reducing the frontiers' administrative barriers through addressing various challenges in terms of economic and social development, environment, public health, safety, security and mobility.

The key role of euroregional actions include economic policy, spatial planning, transport or even environmental issues, mainly depending on the general frame provided by the national authorities (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010).

The European Frame-Convention on the Cross-Border Cooperation of Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980) enhanced the possibilities for cross-border cooperation following the euroregional pattern, as well as the constitution of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR). Overall, this had an important role in fostering cross-border cooperation in Europe. The evolution of the European model concerning the value of the regions was marked by the Maastricht Treaty (1992), thus giving a hope that the regional dimension will play a very important role in the process of European integration. Currently, there are Euroregions created between member states of the EU, and between members and non-members of the EU (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010). The EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007 revealed the necessity of adopting additional organisational actions, as well as new instruments in order to achieve efficient cross-border cooperation between EU and non-EU countries.

Euroregions lying at the country's borders are implementing three macro-regional strategies promoted by the European Council: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region.

The Euroregions emerged through intense Western European cross-border collaboration had as triggering factor trans-frontier polarisation. On Romania's western frontier, the established three cross-border cooperation initiatives show distinct particularities (Săgeată, 2014):

- The bipartite Bihor–Hajdú-Bihar Euroregion between Romania and Hungary (inside the EU framework) is based on the Oradea–Debrecen cooperation axis. It is an outcome of the fragmentation of the Carpathian Euroregion, which is too large and shows little viability.
- The tripartite Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza Euroregion (DKMT) between Romania, Hungary, and Serbia relies on the Timișoara–Szeged–Novi Sad cooperation axis. It includes an approximately equal territory from all three states and despite the fact that the Euroregion is based on the EU's external border, it stands out as functional cooperation.
- The bipartite Middle Danube–Iron Gate Euroregion between Romania and Serbia also lies on the EU's external border. The homogeneous natural potential and the imperative necessity to preserve the rare and endemic ecosystems are the driving forces and factors that make the cooperation viable.



DKMT Euroregion reflects the relationships between the involved countries, namely, Romania and Hungary, as EU members, and Serbia as a candidate country for EU membership, through the economic dynamics of the three countries on one hand and the EU integration factor, on the other. This cooperative attitude guarantees the further development of economic cooperation in the cross-border region. The example of DKMT reveals the role of euroregions in developing own projects in cross-border cooperation also outside of European and international programmes.

This case study attempts to enlighten the importance of euroregions and their cooperative attitude and tendency in Europe. The study investigates the geographical confines of the region; the development of cross-border cooperation, its organisational/institutional structure, its activity and future plans. Moreover, the case study identifies the uniqueness of this cooperation and evaluates the selected Euroregion through a SWOT analysis, where the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are highlighted.



## 2. The development of the cross-border cooperation

Economic development in the border regions reflects the particularities of the involved countries. The Romanian-Hungarian area is mainly an important agricultural zone, to which other economic branches, especially secondary sector, are added; for example industrial machinery, processing of raw materials from local quarries (e.g. sand, gravel, and clay), and production of bricks, roof tiles, and concrete structures. On the Romanian side, the secondary sector is particularly developed in economic branches like construction, textile manufacturing (Timiș County), production of soft beverages (Oradea) and beer-making (Satu Mare). Recently, the packaging industry, which aims to prepare goods for shipment to the western markets, has greatly developed (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

In the *Romanian-Hungarian cross-border area*, there are three border crossing points by road and one by rail which create favourable conditions for a large number of businesses and enterprises to be opened on both sides. Moreover, the area has a high agricultural potential pending full exploitation, thus there is a significant availability of labour force, i.e. Romanians (mainly belonging to the Hungarian ethnic group) who find employment across the border in Hungary or there is a common cross-border commercial commuting as a result of the low prices of products in Hungary. However, there are several factors slowing down the economic development of the area, such as: centralisation of states and bureaucratic procedures, oversized trade sector, high percentage of roads in need of modernisation, differences in educational and health care systems. In some economic sectors, such as transport and telecommunications, in which Hungary has a clear advantage, the different policies and priorities of the governments end up fostering strategic competition (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

In the *Romanian-Serbian cross-border area* the economic structures point to rather interdependence than competition. The agricultural sector is predominant in the Romanian border area. In the industrial sector, the metallurgical and chemical industries stand out along with prefabricated constructions, textile products, detergents, and food. Recently, the electronics and technology sectors have been gaining ground. Small and medium-sized enterprises account for a little over than 40% of the total number of enterprises. Within the tertiary sector, branches like tourism, banks and trade stand first, especially in the Caraș-Severin County. On the Serbian side, the agricultural sector experienced a drastic loss of workforce after the Yugoslav Wars (1991-1995). The industrial sector employs about 30% of the workforce and the trade sector about 9%. The main employment fields are construction, education, transport, postal services, communication, social services, catering, and tourism. The greatest increase in employment was registered in the construction sector. Following the NATO bombings (1999), Serbia's transportation network was profoundly affected within the study area as well. However, it has maintained its waterway transportation potential and two main harbours in Novi Sad and Pančevo. On the Romanian side, the transportation network



includes over 1 000 kilometres of railway (together with Bucharest-Timişoara-Jimbolia and Bucharest-Timişoara-Stamora Moraviţa international lines), the European motorways E4 and E70 (Trieste-Belgrade-Portile de Fier), four border crossings, the Timişoara international airport, access to the system of channels along the Danube and Bega rivers and Moldova Veche, Drobeta-Turnu Severin, and Orşova harbours (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011; Săgeată, 2014).

Thus, the economic state of the Romanian-Serbian border region has a high level of training of human resources and urbanisation, relatively low unemployment rate and great investment potential in the agriculture, tourism and services. On the other hand, as a consequence of the Yugoslav Wars, several economic imbalances occur such as: the closing down of several cross-border micro-businesses due to the embargo, illegal trafficking, shrinking population (especially in Romania), and the reduction of industrial production due to the economic re-organisation.

The *Hungarian-Serbian cross-border area* reveals some discrepancies in terms of economic development and transport infrastructure on the side of Hungary, even though the municipalities located in the Serbian border area are among the most developed ones in all of Serbia. The main causes of these disparities are related to the socio-economic transformation experienced by Hungary over the past almost twenty-five years, such as privatisation in the 1990s and modernisation of the Hungarian industry relying on foreign investments and investors.

In the primary sector (threatened by the ageing of population in the countryside), Serbia employs 29,5% of the workforce in wine and dairy production, whilst in the secondary sector, the relative majority of the workforce (43,8%) is employed in the light as well as the mining industry. In the tertiary sector, retail (large shopping centres) are to be mentioned on the Hungarian side, and on the Serbian side there is transport (4,7%) and tourism (1,5%), which are both related to the exploitation of thermal resources (three spas, the most important in Kanjiza) and to hunting activities (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

An important aspect of the cross-border area is commuting for commerce (e.g. for shopping and gas supply in Hungary) and/or private services (e.g. for dental care, less expensive in Serbia). In terms of infrastructure, there are good connections in the transport sector linking Belgrade to Budapest through the motorway and along the navigable rivers of Danube and Tisza. One of the recent infrastructure projects within this cross-border area is the construction of the road connecting Ásotthalom and Backi-Vinogradi, which opens a new border crossing point between Hungary and Serbia (2007-2013 Hungary Serbia IPA CBC<sup>1</sup>). Some of the future projects are aimed to build new transport lines, to reopen of the Szeged-Timişoara railway crossing through Vojvodina, and to recognise the Tisza River as level IV European navigable line.

After the fall of the communist regime, the democratic leadership of Romania and Hungary gave new momentum to the endorsement of agreements and documents on cooperation and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.territorialcooperation.eu/frontpage/show/20211>



partnership, especially in the cross-border area. As a result, starting from 1991, a set of agreements were signed aimed at establishing an “open skies” regime and to open new border crossing points, extradition and the protection of investments as well as the abolition of double taxation. Following the new agreement on air traffic (1995), on September 16<sup>th</sup> 1996 a framework treaty on the mutual understanding, cooperation, good neighbourly relations, and the renewed exchange of information was endorsed. Subsequently, a series of other agreements were implemented between 1996 and 1999, e.g. cooperation on public records, fight against terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking, privatisation, development of military relations within the framework of the Vienna 1994 Document - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), notification in the event of nuclear incidents, environmental protection, establishment of a joint peace-keeping force and cooperation in the fields of education and research ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)).

On the Hungarian-Serbian border, there is a long-standing tradition of bilateral agreements ever since the beginning of the 1960s. The agreements involved the regulation of the movement of people and goods by road and rail, and of the control and demarcation of the borderline. In 1996, a protocol was signed that opened a new border crossing between Djala and Tizzasziget and also included the modernisation of the existing border crossing points, followed by an agreement on cooperation and reciprocal assistance in customs issues signed in 1998. Several agreements and documents on international partnership have been signed at all levels at the Romanian-Yugoslav/Serbian border. At the national level, the following stand out: the framework treaty of friendship, border relations, and cooperation between the two countries (Belgrade, September 19<sup>th</sup> 1996); the agreement on collaboration in the fields of research and technology (Belgrade, November 28<sup>th</sup> 1995); and the Programme of cooperation in education, science and culture for 1998-2000 (Bucharest, March 20<sup>th</sup> 1998). Moreover, a broader intergovernmental framework is to be taken into consideration, namely, the Sofia Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations, Stability, Security and Cooperation in the Balkans which was signed on 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1996, involving several countries: Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Italy, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as the representatives of the European Union, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Central European Initiative (CEI), United Nations (UN), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)).

At regional and local level, the bilateral cooperation agreement between Timiș and Csongrád Counties (signed in 1992) set the context of the cooperation protocol “Danube-Mureş-Tisa” (signed in 1997). Furthermore, the structure became “Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Regional Cooperation”, following the entry of the Romanian counties of Arad, Hunedoara, and Caraş-Severin. Vojvodina administrative district adjoined through the protocol signed on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2001. This cross-border cooperation initiative was followed by the bilateral cooperation

between Satu-Mare and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg Counties (2000), and other regional and local level partnerships.

Thus, the landmark of the establishment of Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT) Euroregion dates back to 1992, when a collaboration protocol was signed between two counties. This event took place on September 10<sup>th</sup>, when the President of Csongrád County (Hungary), István Lehmán, visited Timiş County (Fig. 1). This document established the further economic, scientific, and cultural relations between the two administrative units. Two years later, in 1994, following the model of the Euroregion "Carpathia", the authorities from Timiş and Csongrád Counties agreed on a protocol for the "Cooperation region Danube-Mureş-Tisza".

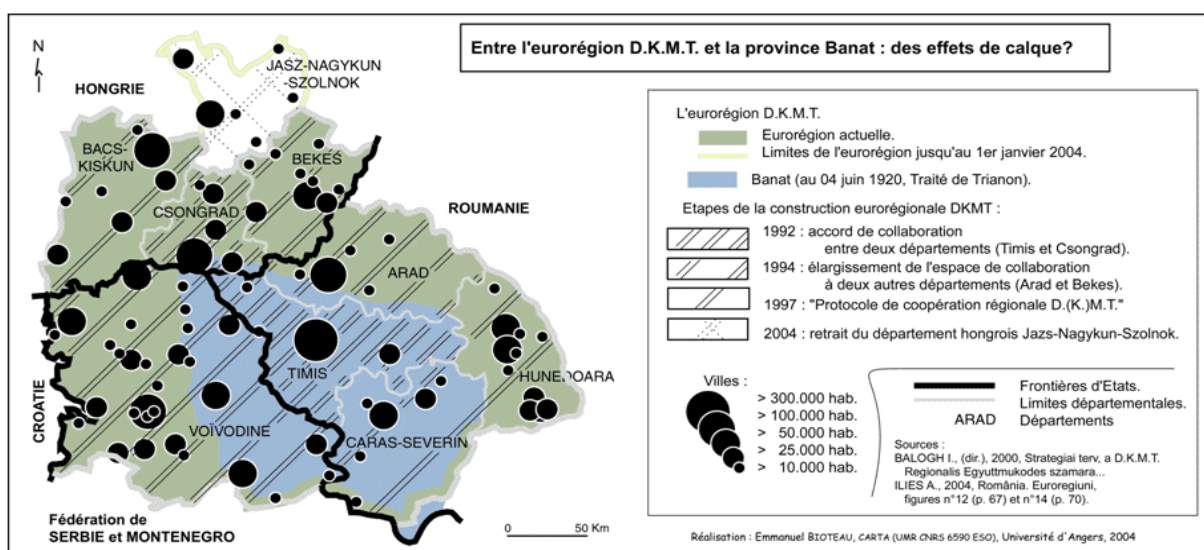


Figure 1: The spatial and temporal evolution of DKMT<sup>2</sup>

In March 1994, Timiş County council requested the agreement of the Local Public Administrative Department for the establishment of "DMT Euroregion". To this, other counties had joined: Bács-Kiskun, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Békés Counties (Hungary), Arad, and Caraş-Severin (Romania), and the Independent Province of Vojvodina from Serbia (the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at that time). The protocol set as main cooperation objectives the to create a climate of trust that would facilitate the social and economic development of the involved regions; to foster functional bilateral collaborations (between cities or institutions, especially between Romania and Hungary); and symbolic manifestations (economic or cultural days). Nevertheless, there were some difficulties hindering the development of this Euroregion, such as the different understandings of the individual, political and economic practices in the three border regions; the absence of an institutional framework for DKMT; and the disadvantageous status of Vojvodina at international level (due to the embargo on Yugoslavia). The public administration and the leaders of political parties agreed that cross-border

<sup>2</sup> <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/doc/typespace/frontier/images/BiotMichal6.gif>





cooperation was a beneficial factor in achieving the economic development of the region (Creţan, 2006).

Following the request of Békés County, the indication of the Criş river basin was introduced in the title of the Euroregion. Accordingly, the name of the Euroregion became: “Dunăre-Criş-Mureş-Tisa” (DCMT in Romanian), Dunav-Kireš-Maroš-Tisa (in Serbian) and Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza (in Hungarian). Furthermore, the member countries had established that the international name of the Euroregion must be Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, abbreviated as DKMT. The official Protocol of this cross-border structure, signed on 21<sup>st</sup> of November 1997, in Szeged, identified as the focal aim and objective of the Euroregion „*widening the relationships between local communities and regional authorities in the fields of economy, education, culture and sport, as well as cooperation for integration into the modern processes in Europe*”<sup>3</sup>.

The main target of DKMT is to enhance the economic and social development of the area by attracting international funds for regional projects and to access jointly resources that the national governments cannot provide for the area, especially under PHARE CBC (1996-2003), Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro (tri-lateral) Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2004–2006, Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, Romania-Republic of Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, but also through the Pact for Stability and other sources (Cernicova-Bucă, 2010).

Throughout its existence, the membership of DKMT Euroregion has changed from a maximum extent in 1997 (four Romanian counties, four Hungarian counties, and one Serbian province) (Fig. 2) to its current shape (two Hungarian counties, three Romanian counties, and one Serbian province), thus the Euroregion has passed through different administrative and structural changes. Three of the member counties, Hunedoara (Romania), Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and Békés (Hungary) withdrew from the Euroregion between 2003 and 2009. Subsequently, DKMT currently stretches over 60 000 km<sup>2</sup> and gathers a population of 4 5 million inhabitants.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://cjarad.ro/activitate/cooperare-parteneriate/3-euroregiunea-dkmt.html>



Figure 2: The limits of DKMT cooperation initiative at its largest extent in 1997 (Source: authors) and in 2008<sup>4</sup>

## 2.1 The institutionalisation of DKMT

The head institution of the DKMT Euroregion is the Forum of Presidents that is composed of the Presidents of the County Councils in Hungary and Romania, and the President of the Executive Council of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. The leadership of this institution is provided in turn, for one year. However, due to the mandate of the county council presidents (four years), formal relations are replaced by personal ones. A conclusive example in this sense is the Declaration of the Presidents of DKMT Euroregion, a supporting document of Vojvodina’s citizens, elaborated later, in the spring of 1999 (Creţan, 2006).

The progress of DKMT is shown in “Euroregio” magazine, which publishes the results and achievements of this Euroregion in three languages. The official language of the DKMT cooperation is English, and the languages used for meetings are Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian. Cooperation should proceed as a result of the work of the specialised committee,

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dkmt.net/en/index.php?page=nyito>



coordinated by a President (among the nine members of the Presidential Forum), in the following fields: economy, infrastructure, tourism, territorial development and environmental protection, socio-human issues, and European integration.

Due to the bombing launched by NATO forces on Pančevo, Novi Sad, and other economic centres of Vojvodina, DKMT suffered a significant slowdown in the years 1999-2000. During the crises in former Yugoslavia, Romanian and Hungarian support was limited to sheltering the refugees.

In the development of DKMT Euroregion an important role is played by the Strategic Plan for Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Cooperation, a document that is presently used to support further projects. The establishment of the euroregional Development Agency under the name „Society for Public Utility” (registered in 2003), based on the provisions of the Hungarian law, was an important step in the development of DKMT. Thus the decision-makers in the area considered that they stepped into a new cooperation phase, the *cooperation stage*, after having gone through the information exchange and the intensive information stages. Representatives of the Chambers of Commerce were constantly invited by the administrative bodies of DKMT to the meetings of the Forum of Presidents (since November 2003, the General Assembly) with the aim to ensure continuity in promoting economic development. In turn, the chambers of commerce signed a cooperation protocol in 1998 and organised economic missions, exhibitions and other events under the label of DKMT. The most recent achievements are the “Euro-regional Partnership for Competitiveness” (2007) and the inauguration of the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development of Historical Banat Region (2009) ([Cernicova-Bucă, 2010](#)).

The establishment of the DKMT Euroregion requires that strategic objectives are set on a dual geographical scale: at DKMT Euroregion level through cohesion and opening to Europe, and at EU level, into which the Euroregion is to be integrated. The Strategy identifies the objectives of three spheres (sectors) for the further development of DKMT (Fig. 3)<sup>5</sup>:

- a multi-cultural Euroregional model in the human sphere;
- the Southeastern gate of the European Union, through the recognition of shared interests and an economy based on cooperation;
- the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa eco-corridor of Europe, through concerted sustainable environment management in the natural environment sphere.

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<sup>5</sup> Strategic Plan Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, Szeged, 2000.

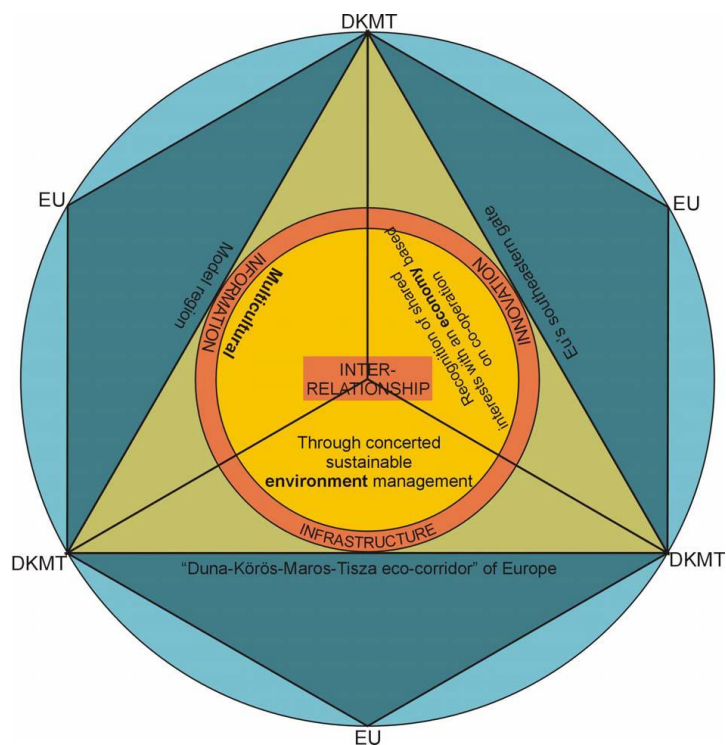


Figure 3: The 4 “i’s” (information, innovation, infrastructure and interrelationship) for the integration of DKMT (Source: *A Strategy for the Danube–Kris–Mureş–Tisza Euroregion*<sup>4</sup>)

Moreover, the Strategy identifies several priorities and measures to be undertaken<sup>4</sup>. The **first strategic direction**, i.e. increasing **social cohesion** in the DKMT Euroregion, has a general objective to identify the fundamental components of the Euroregional identity through the involvement of the local population in actions and processes aimed at the broadening of common information horizons (intended to bring about a better and deeper mutual understanding); the use of existing historical-cultural potential and cultural heritage, the better use of the tradition of co-existence of the various ethnic communities and a shared past; raising awareness of the Euroregional component of local decisions, promoting joint responsibility in the preparation and adoption of decisions that have a Euroregional impact; tourism as a way of enhancing social cohesion in the region. Thus, the proposed projects of the first strategic direction endorse<sup>4</sup>:

- the establishment of a Euroregional news agency: an information centre and news agency focusing on the relationships in the border region and on increasing the effectiveness of the Development Agency;
- cultural events: music and other related activities aimed at bridging cultural differences and overcoming linguistic obstacles;
- publications on the geography and local history of the Euroregion: fostering knowledge of each other’s cultural, geographical or natural heritage;
- Euroregional photo album: providing an overview of the region along with its natural and cultural heritage, mainly architectural heritage of the ethnic groups in the region;



- development of e-democracy: seen as one of the most powerful and most flexible media targets providing information on the DKMT region;
- Euroregional youth centre: aimed at providing younger generations the variety of communities in the neighbouring countries in the Euroregion;
- cooperation in health care: improving the provision of hospital care for residents in the border regions;
- promotion of the Euroregion with regard to opportunities provided by tourism: marketing particularly suitable for the introduction of those spectacular attractions in the Euroregion that constitute the region's image;
- preparation of a tourist map of the Euroregion (1: 300 000) having the following structure: natural resources for tourist industry purposes, protected natural areas, monuments and tourist centres, means of transport and accessibility of sites, technical and material resources in tourism (lodging capacity, leisure and treatment facilities, locations for recuperation);
- other components promoting tourism, recommended cross-border theme itineraries and regionalisation of the Euroregion for tourist industry purposes; tourist industry-related mobilising events (for the young, old-age pensioners and civil organisations).

Upgrading major **road networks**, promotion and harmonisation of cross-border development initiatives represent the **second strategic direction**. This initiative will be achieved through the following measures<sup>4</sup>:

- developing components of the cross-border road infrastructure (e.g. rehabilitation of run-down cross-border roads and railways);
- providing support for the construction of new frontier stations and re-classification of the existing ones;
- fostering support for the development of air and water traffic in the region;
- encouraging the development of inter-modal traffic (RO–LA, RO–RO), terminals and logistic systems;
- offering support for the integrated development of modern telecommunications in the regions; improving access to attractive tourist destinations.
- According to the Strategy, some of the proposed projects refer to the following:
  - rehabilitation of the Budapest–Kelebija–Belgrade rail line which is a branch of the current Orient/East-Med Corridor;
  - rehabilitation of the Smederevo–Belgrade–Pančevo–Kikinda–Triple Border Point–Deszk-M43 road as well as the Kikinda–Jimbolia–Timișoara road included in the expressway category;
  - construction and development of the (Vienna–Budapest)–Szeged–Nagylak–Arad–Timișoara rail corridor (Lugoj–Bucharest–Constanța); rehabilitation of the Timișoara–Moravica–Vršac–Belgrad rail line;



- completion of the (Oradea–)Szeged–Subotica–Bácsalmás/peage railway/–Baja(–Rijeka), railway line;
- rehabilitation of the railway Újszeged–Makó–Nagylak–Arad;
- rehabilitation of the road and the railway Szolnok–Hódmezővásárhely–Sînnicolau Mare–Timișoara;
- rehabilitation of the road and railway bridge Magyarcsanád–Cenad (H–RO);
- rehabilitation of the railway Sombor–Ridica–Baja (SCG–H);
- border crossing at the tree-border point–Kübekháza–Rabe–Beba Veche (H–SCG–RO); Nakovo–Comloșu Mare (SCG–RO);
- development of the Sarkad–Kötegyán–Salonta road and railway frontier stations (H–RO);
- construction of the Körösnagyharsány–Cheresig road and railway frontier station (H–RO), Lőkösháza–Curtici rail border station (H–RO), Geszt–Ateaș road frontier station (H–RO), Elek–Grăniceri road frontier station (H–RO);
- building up the logistic system of the DKMT region; development of logistics centres – Szeged, Baja, Békéscsaba–Gyula, Novi Sad, Arad, and Timișoara;
- rehabilitation of the Begej/Bega Canal, Szeged port (on the river and artificial watercourses);
- rendering the river Kris navigable – upgrading of the Bökény Dam;
- granting the River Tisza the status of an international waterway;
- construction of a dam at Csongrád in the interest of the safe navigability of the river;
- provision of the initial conditions of passenger traffic with destinations abroad;
- development of e-administration for enterprises;
- an internet-based system supporting continuous training for SMEs;
- introduction of a tourist card and an information system;
- developing elements of e-administration;
- setting up a system of tourist signs along the Danube, the Tisa, the rivers Kris, and Mureș;
- coordination of cross-border timetables (of bus and train services) via the internet;
- development of the trans-border cycling paths along the Danube, Kris, Tisza, and Mureș.

The **third strategic priority** refers to facilitating interregional **economic relations** and the region's gateway role by means of the following measures<sup>4</sup>:

- encouraging the utilisation of regional R&D products, especially in the SME sector, and the development of a cross-border innovation-transfer system;
- setting up a business information base instrumental in establishing the cross-border cooperation of enterprises, obtaining external resources and the efficient use of these resources;



- development of the supplier network, the co-ordination of the capacity of SMEs and larger enterprises/major investors;
- tourism industry-related cooperation between individual SMEs and between individual NGOs.
- Some of the proposed projects bring up the following:
  - establishment of cross-border industrial parks, incubation units and innovation centres for enterprises;
  - assistance with networking; support for the establishment of spin-off companies complementing universities;
  - establishment of a seed production innovation chain; manufacturing rape-methyl-acetate (biodiesel) in the Euroregion;
  - organisation of the international seminar “Initiatives for enterprises and local development in cross-border regions”;
  - cross-border career practice and guidance for university and college students;
  - raising awareness of history, culture, and especially business knowledge in higher education and at post-graduate courses;
  - support for cooperation between chambers of business and commerce;
  - establishment of a cross-border regional portal with capacity to provide economic information;
  - an establishment of a system of SME information points in the DKMT region;
  - financing the establishment of a Euroregional network of business and convention centres;
  - working out and implementing joint incentive programmes aimed to attract investments;
  - setting up a consultation forum of chambers;
  - thematic business databases in electronics and the automotive industry;
  - establishment of an e-market for enterprises in the DKMT Euroregion;
  - designation of thematic itineraries (e.g. industrial tourism, visits to listed buildings, wine and gastronomic tourism, folklore, monuments and memorabilia from the belle époque, thermal, wellness and health tourism).

Joint nature conservation and **environmental protection** is identified as the **fourth strategic dimension** of the Strategic Plan. This strategic level includes joint protection and stewardship by cooperating in the management of the natural resources of the Euroregion and of cross-border environmentally protected areas; cooperation between the representatives of authorities of environment protection, environmental sciences and civil organisations; joint



development of small-scale environmental infrastructure (waste utilisation and sewage treatment) and development of eco-tourism. Some of the proposed projects refer to<sup>4</sup>:

- the joint development of the protected areas of the Selevenj Forest (SCG) and the Körös Brook (SCG–H);
- a project for the joint development of the protected areas of the Mureş Valley;
- a research on the exchange of experiences in improving drinking water quality;
- the reconstruction of the Horgoš–Martonoš catchment canal;
- the organisation of periodical conferences promoting on-going cooperation between experts on environmental protection;
- rowing along the rivers in the Euroregion (the rivers Kris, Mureş, and Tisza).

The **aims** of the cooperation are focused on developing and broadening the relationships among local communities and local governments in the fields of economy, education, culture, science, and sport; and on helping the region to be part of the process of European integration. Accordingly, the objectives of the DKMT Euroregion are: (i) cooperation that benefits all parties and established along the principles of democracy and European development policies in an atmosphere of mutual trust, (ii) the best possible utilisation of regional potential through cooperation and (iii) transforming, through increased, diverse and institutionalised cooperation, the Euroregion into an economic, political, cultural, scientific and innovation hub in Central East Europe in a Europe that is closing ranks as a response to the challenge of globalisation.

In order to meet these objectives, major tasks to be performed by the DKMT must also be identified. Hence, the DKMT must improve its competitiveness and the absorption capacity of the region by encouraging cross-border cooperation; support the implementation of coordinated development programmes that can improve the quality of life and the standards of living in the region and put an end to a peripheral existence arising from the border location, thereby laying the foundations for permanent and dynamic economic growth in the region; in accordance with the provisions of the Balkan Stability Pact and in other EU core documents, facilitate and promote – while preserving the legacy of multi-cultural diversity – the democratisation of the region. Moreover, the DKMT must foster, besides the institutionalised relations, personal contact between people from different regions; deepen democratic mechanisms; break down the existing and destructive prejudices amongst the people; and finally cease latent hostilities ([A Strategy for the Danube–Kris–Mureş–Tisa Euroregion](#)<sup>6</sup>).

Following the reforms, DKMT Euroregion was constructed as a two-part structure, one as an open consultative political forum, and the other as an operative working association with a registered legal-economic status. The second structure is a tool for cooperation across the

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<sup>6</sup> Strategic Plan Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa, Szeged, 2000





borders and it was approved by the EU in 2006 - Banat–Triplex–Confinium Limited Liability EGTC (BTC-EGTC). The aim of the reform was to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation within and beyond the EU (Soós, 2012).

The Banat–Triplex–Confinium Limited Liability EGTC, initiated by the local governments of Mórahalom and Jimbolia, started on 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2006 because of the structural problems associated with the DKMT Euroregion. Subsequently, 37 Hungarian and 37 Romanian municipalities have joined; additionally a few self-governments from Vojvodina and municipalities from Bácska and Banat (would) take part. The cooperation was officially established on 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2011. The EGTC was established on the basis of the 1082/2006/EK EGTC legislative regulation of the European Union. The focal aim of the EGTC is to implement and develop cross-border cooperation programmes and projects co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, and/or the Cohesion Fund<sup>7</sup>, thus providing complementarity in terms of cross-border cooperation and financing with DKMT Euroregion.

The difficulties around the establishment of the EGTC shows the common problems along the peripheral borders of the EU: the EU's EGTC regulation cannot be applied directly to non-EU countries in spite of the fact that the willingness of cooperation is present and ready. There are some conditions to be fulfilled in order to turn the local governments of Vojvodina into members of the EGTC. Moreover, it is necessary to involve interested partners from third countries and to pass a law in their national legal system that can permit the establishment of the EGTC. The non-EU member third country (Serbia) should conclude a cooperation arrangement because they can empower their authorities with that document to shape cooperation beyond borders (Fejes, 2013).

However, the existing differences between the border regions in terms of structural, political (e.g. clear definition of Vojvodina's politico-institutional position within the Republic of Serbia; or membership and non-membership in EU/acquis communautaire), and economic divergences could turn into potential internal problems that can become obstacles in the efficient cooperation within DKMT. Beyond the political and economic differences, other factors may also represent potential negative issues with impact on the social and economic development of the Euroregion, namely the demographic imbalances (e.g. low population density, ageing of population, increased migration, etc.), the high number of employees in agriculture, differences in the educational and health care systems, the insufficient development of macro-regional and micro-regional transport infrastructure (mainly in Serbia and Romania). Moreover, the low level of coordination among the involved actors, the lack of communication and visibility (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated websites, reduced availability to communicate results and activities) could also negatively influence the

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.btc-egtc.eu/en/introduction>



effectiveness and management of the DKMT Euroregion. Consequently, the political, economic, social, administrative, structural and/or managerial obstacles have deeply touched the cooperation, thus in the change/reduction of the number of the members.

Currently, due to the withdrawal of three member counties (Hunedoara, Romania; Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Békés, Hungary), the socio-economic potential of DKMT Euroregion relies on three Romanian (Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Arad) and two Hungarian counties (Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun), as well as one Serbian province (Vojvodina).



### 3. Determination of geographical confines

Ever since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, both Romania and Serbia were under Ottoman rule. The province of Walachia, north of the Danube, became autonomous following the Treaty of Adrianopolis ratified between Russia and the Ottoman Empire (1829). In 1859, Walachia joined the autonomous province of Moldova, and in 1864 they formed Romania. Serbia had become an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire in 1817. The Russian-Turkish war (1877) led to Serbia's independence, ratified with the Treaty of San Stefano (March 1878), while Romania's independence was ratified a few months later at the Congress of Berlin. The border between the two countries was defined along the Danube, tracing the eastern section of the current boundary. Until the First World War, both Transylvania and Vojvodina were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. During this period, the border between Hungary and Serbia ran along the Sava and the Danube, north of Belgrade. In 1991, when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia broke up, the border with Romania was maintained, even without an official agreement. Although the border demarcation on the Serbian side is rather disarrayed, there are no disputes on either side ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)).

Currently, the Serbian municipalities directly bordering Hungary are Sombor, Subotica, Kanjiza, and Novi Knezevac, all belonging to the autonomous administrative district of Vojvodina. On the Hungarian side, the municipalities of Mohács, Bácsalmás, Szeged, and Baja belong to Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád counties. In the border area, 2,7 % of population is registered on the Serbian side (291 123 out of 10 640 000 inhabitants), and 2,2 % on the Hungarian side (221 450 out of 10 044 000 inhabitants). The ethnic structure of the population is 38,3 % Hungarian in the four Serbian municipalities, where there is also a small Croatian minority (3 %). The Romanian municipalities directly bordering Hungary belong to Satu-Mare, Bihor, Arad and Timiș Counties. The main cities are Satu-Mare, Oradea, Arad and Timișoara. The Hungarian provinces located in the border area are Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Hajdú-Bihar, Békés and Csongrád with Nyíregyháza, Debrecen, Békéscsaba, and Szeged as main cities. The Romanian municipalities bordering Serbia are Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți Counties. The foremost cities acting as border prefectures are Timișoara, Reșița and Drobeta-Turnu Severin. The municipalities on the Serbian side are located in the provinces of Vojvodina (northern, central and southern Banat) and central Serbia (Braničevo and Bor). The main cities are Kikinda, Zrenjanin, Pančevo, Požarevac and Bor. The ethnic composition of the population reveals a Romanian majority on the Romanian side (83 % in Timiș County), and a Serbian majority in the Serbian (80 % in central Serbia and 57 % in Vojvodina). There are also Hungarian (17 %) and Slovak (3 %) minorities in Vojvodina ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)).

Within DKMT, the border between Romania and Hungary spreads out south of Csanádpalota locality (Hungary) as far as south of Nădlac in Romania, whence it overlaps with the River Mureș along 22,3 km to Beba Veche (Romania). The Romanian-Serbian border is demarcated between



Vojvodina Province in Serbia, and Timiș and Caraș-Severin Counties in Romania along Rabe (Serbia) and Beba Veche (Romania) localities towards Bela Crvka (Serbia) and Naidăș (Romania).

The border between Serbia and Hungary spreads along an east-northeast direction over 166 km. The borderline starts on the Danube River, near the junction with Croatia between the cities of Mohács (Hungary) and Batina (Serbia) and extends until it reaches Romania, 5 km southwest of Kiszombor (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

Cooperation in the border areas was supported by a variety of rationales which included similarities in the culture, language and history of the region; a willingness to join to the European processes; and the chance for faster economic growth. On the other hand, the differences in the public administration structures, the different national and political interests and the shortage of the financial sources were barriers of the cooperation (Fejes, 2013).

The Romania-Hungary border area is one of the most active in the central and southeast European region. The two countries have developed strong cross-border ties, at local and regional level, as they are included in two of the most active and developed euroregions of Europe: the Carpathian Euroregion and Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisza (DKMT), which are currently the most successful Euroregions in the Balkan-Danube area (Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011).

The protocol for the establishment of the DKMT Euroregion was signed in Szeged, Hungary, on November 23, 1997. At that moment, it was considered by the Presidents' Forum as the most appropriate structure for the coordination of activities. In the meantime, other specific structures of cooperation, between chambers of commerce, universities, cultural institutions, etc. appeared. Given that the DKMT Euroregion has changed its structure several times over its existence, in its largest extent (in 1997), it included four Romanian counties (*judete*), four Hungarian counties (*megyék*) and the Vojvodina Autonomous Region in Serbia. In terms of the size of its territory and its three main ethnical components (Romanian, Hungarian and Serbian), the Euroregion is fairly well balanced. The macro-territorial axes have three urban cores: Timișoara, Novi Sad and Szeged.

However, some difficulties are to be encountered in the cooperation with Serbia due to some structural, administrative and political mismatches. Moreover, while the Romanian-Hungarian frontier represents an internal EU border, which is highly permeable, the Serbian frontier, perceived as a line between the EU and the former Yugoslav space of much political instability and organised crime, is relatively hardly penetrable.

The region stands for trilateral cooperation among administrative units of Romania, Hungary, and the Republic of Serbia, which despite being very different in terms of territorial size, population, and economy, are nevertheless engaged in promoting the socio-economic development of the entire region. It is one of the most viable and functional structures of cross-border cooperation at Romania's frontiers because, on the one hand, its three sectors are approximately equal in size, and on the other hand, have a minority presence on either side of



the borders. Not negligible either is Serbia's future integration into the European Union, which will make DKMT an EU internal Euroregion (Săgeată et al., 2010; Săgeată, 2011).

The three compartments of the Euroregion are clearly polarised by their major cities: *Timișoara*, *Novi Sad* and *Szeged*. Each area, at the largest extent of the Euroregion, had a balanced mono-centric urban profile, with well-represented large and middle-sized towns (*Arad*, *Reșița*, *Deva*, *Hunedoara*, *Petroșani* in the Romanian part; *Subotica*, *Zrenjanin*, *Pančevo*, *Sombor* in the Serbian area; *Kecskemét*, *Szolnok*, *Békéscsaba*, *Hódmezővásárhely*, *Baja*, *Gyula*, *Kiskunfélegyháza*, *Szentes*, *Makó*, *Kiskunhalas*, *Jászberény*, etc. in the Hungarian part) (Tab. 1), as well as a significant number of small towns (Nancu et al., 2014).

Table 1: The main features of the DKMT Euroregion at its largest extent (1997)

Country	Administrative unit	Population (2011)	Surface (sq.km)	Main cities	Population (2011)
Romania	Timiș County	683 540	8 697	Timișoara	319 279
				Lugoj	40 361
	Hunedoara County	418 565	7 063	Deva	61 123
				Hunedoara	60 525
				Petroșani	37 160
Arad County	430 629	7 754	Arad	159 074	
Caraș-Severin County	295 579	8 514	Caransebeș	73 282	
	Reșița	24 689			
ROMANIA (total)		1 828 313	32 028		
Serbia	Autonomous Province of Vojvodina	1 931 809	21 506	Novi Sad	341 625
				Subotica	141 554
				Pančevo	123 414
				Zrenjanin	123 362
				Sombor	85 903
SERBIA (total)		1 931 809	21 506		
Hungary	Bács-Kiskun County	534 000	8 445	Kecskemét	114 226
				Baja	37 000
				Kiskunfélegyháza	30 640
	Csongrád County	423 826	4 263	Szeged	170 052
				Hódmezővásárhely	47 019
				Szentes	29 117
				Makó	27 727
	Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County	399 000	5 582	Szolnok	74 544
				Jászberény	28 293
	Békés County	392 000	5 632	Békéscsaba	62 050
Gyula				31 679	
HUNGARY (total)		1 733 483	23 922		
TOTAL DKMT		5 493 605	77 456		

Source: Census 2011, Romania; Census 2011, Serbia; Nancu et al., 2014



## Romanian part of the Euroregion

*Timișoara* (population 319 279 in 2011) is one of the largest cities in Romania (3<sup>rd</sup> rank in the national urban hierarchy). Located in the Banat Plain on the banks of the Bega River and documented in 1177 and 1266, the city's early development relied on its favourable position vis-à-vis the main commercial axes. In the Middle Ages, it was one of the main centres of resistance against the Ottoman expansion. Beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its development was connected with sewerage works on the Bega River and the introduction into the navigable circuit, but the city's upsurge started in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became linked to the railway (1857), the telegraph (1854), and telephone (1881); had lighting gas (1857), horse-driven tramway in 1869 and electric tramway in 1899. At the same time, the city's cultural life got momentum, too: the first theatrical representations (1791), the first sections (1872 and 1874) of the future Banat Museum (1949) and starting with 1918, the Romanian language was being used in education and the press ([Ghinea, 1996](#)).

During the inter-war period, the economy continued to progress: new manufacturing units in the light industry, electro-technical, chemical and machine-building sectors, a trend pursued after 1945 and driven by the socialist industrialisation, associated with important fluxes of rural population coming to the city, which thus had to be enlarged and systematised.

*Timișoara* acquired a complex and diversified industrial profile, some of the main producers being *UMT* (technological, mining, metallurgical, equipments etc.); *Tehnomet* (agricultural tools, subsets for vehicles), *Electromotor*, *AEM* (electrical measuring apparatus), *Elba*, *Electrometal*, *Electrotimiș*, etc. (electrotechnics), *Solventul* (petrochemical items), *Azur* (lacquers and dyes), *Romtensid* (detergents), *Industria lânii*, *Uzinele textile, 1 Iunie* (knitwear), *Guban*, *Banatim* (leather and footwear manufacturing units, food units ([Vlăsceanu and Ianoș, 1998](#))). Many of these enterprises closed down after 1990. The city's population tripled from 91 580 inhabitants in 1930 and 111 987 in 1948 to 334 278 in 1992 ([Nancu et al., 2014](#)).

*Arad* (population 159 074 in 2011) is the seat of the homonymous Arad County. The city lies on the banks of the Mureș River, 50 km north of *Timișoara*. Attested by documents as early as the 11<sup>th</sup> century (1028), *Arad* is one of the oldest urban settlements in the territory of Romania. The town had an eventful history: the Tatar invasion (1241), the Turkish conquest (1552), and the Habsburg and Austro-Hungarian period (1687-1918). Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> November and the 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1918, it functioned as headquarters of the first Romanian government of Transylvania.

It also stands out as an important commercial and cultural-scientific centre (Romanian School – 1721; pedagogical school – 1813 – among the first set up in Europe; popular school of arts – 1853; philharmonic orchestra – 1890), as well as an industrial town beginning with the 20<sup>th</sup> century (in 1909 – *Marta*, the first Automobile Plant, and *UTA* Textile Mill). After the Romanian Administration was installed in *Arad* (1918), the town's industrial profile began diversifying:



1920 – *Astra* Waggon Plant; 1926 – *Sugar factory*; 1930 – *Polyrom* Oils and Lacquers; 1936 – *Uzina Tehnică Arad* electric light bulbs. In 1938, Arad was assessed as the most important economic centre of Transylvania and the fourth in Romania. After 1950, the first toy and watch factories in this country (*Arădeanca* and *Victoria*) were build and the population rose from 77 181 inhabitants in 1930 to 190 088 in 1992, which implied the building of new dwelling-places, mostly new apartment-bloc districts (Ghinea, 1996; Nancu et al., 2014).

After 1990, as industry was declining, Arad would diversify its functional profile, becoming the main hub of the road transport of goods in the western part of Romania, developing simultaneously its commercial, financial-banking and tourist sectors.

*Reşiţa* (population 73 282 in 2011), the residential seat of Caraş-Severin County, is the main polarising core of the Banat mountainous region. Situated in the centre of the Caraş-Ezeriş Corridor, alongside the Bârzava River, its development is closely-connected with the iron-and-steel metallurgy, based on local resources of raw materials. In 1721, the first foundry became operational, the first furnaces functioning in 1771. The metallurgical works were subsequently enlarged and updated, especially under the centralised economy of the communist period, when downstream industries were being developed, too: machine-building, metal fittings (*Plastomet*), and complementary industries, employing largely female labour force (garments factories – *Confecţii* and *Resiconf*) (Dumitrescu, 2008).

The demographic evolution went hand in hand with the industrial development, being also dependent on it: from 19 868 inhabitants in 1930 to 96 798 in 1992, which implied planning and expanding the housing stock. After 1990, as the ferrous industry in general, and that of *Reşiţa* in particular declined, coupled with a demographic setback, the population turned to other sectors of activity, mainly services and tourism (Nancu et al., 2014).

*Deva* (population 61 123 in 2011) is the residential seat of Hunedoara County. The town lies on the left-hand side terraces of the Mureş River, in the contact area between the Poina Ruscă Mountains and Haţeg Depression. This old-standing settlement (attested in 1269) had developed around the fortress, a major strategic point throughout the Middle Ages.

With the time, beside its defence function, trading, handicraft, and cultural-scientific activities would be discharged. After 1950, it was industry that proved attractive (copper metallurgy, building-materials, wood processing, silk weaving department, food units, geological prospecting and exploitation, etc.). Just like in other Romanian towns, demographic growth and housing projects were intimately connected with industry. The post-1990 industrial decline entailed a demographic downward-trend, with people turning to other jobs (services and particularly tourism, as the town and its surroundings has a good tourist potential) (Nancu et al., 2014).

*Hunedoara* (population. 60 525 in 2011), together with *Deva*, form a conurbation of mutual functional complementariness. This old traditional centre (documented in 1265) developed



simultaneously with industry after 1884, when the first furnace of the Iron Works, the handcore of the future Iron-and-Steel Combine Works, was being operated. The ferrous metallurgy, based on local resources (iron ore in the Poiana Ruscă Mountains and coking pit coal in the Petroşani Basin), engendered complementary manufactures (footwear, knitwear) that relied mostly on female labour force. The downslide of the metallurgical sector made the workforce seek other economic areas, especially tourism (Dumitrescu, 2008).

*Lugoj* (population 40 361 in 2011) is the second-in-size city of Timiș County. It lies in the homonymous plain on the bank of River Timiș. Documents attest it in 1242, when measures were being taken to rebuild the fortress destroyed by the Tatar invasion in the previous year. Raised to the rank of *civitas* in 1542, the town became the most important cultural centre of the Banat (Vlăsceanu and Ianoș, 1998), stimulated by some illustrious learned men (Moise Peștișel and Ștefan Fogarasi), the formation of the first choir in Banat (1810), a theatre (plays in Romanian since 1842) and the establishment of some learning institutions. The town had an early industrial activity (a natural silk mill in 1904). Similarly to other Romanian towns, the post-1950 large-scale industrialisation drive added new branches, e.g. machine-building as well as the production of textiles, building materials, electrometal items, food and artisanal manufactures.

*Petroşani* (population 37 160 in 2011) polarises the industrial-urban grouping of the Jiu Valley, including *Vulcan*, *Lupeni*, *Petrila*, *Uricani* and *Aninoasa* totalling 120 670 inhabitants. It has a typical one-industry profile, namely, coke pit mining. After 1990, as this sector declined and there were few professional reconversion opportunities for people, the area turned into a deeply disadvantaged zone.

*Caransebeș* (population 24 689 in 2011), lying at the crossroads of several old trading routes along the large corridors of the Timiș and the Bistra Valleys, the town became the second railway knot in the Banat. Having an old standing urban tradition (town status in 1556), Caransebeș represented an important centre of culture and learning (a 16<sup>th</sup> century Romanian school), only to decline after the Turkish invasion of 1658. It took as long as the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when – being connected to the railway network – it succeeded to recover. Industry developed mainly in the years of the socialist economy, and involved wood processing (*Mocars* Combine Works), metal constructions (*Caromet*), geological prospections and exploitations, as well as food units. Despite the post-1992 industrial and demographic decline (31 878 inhabitants at the time), the town continues to be an important transport hub (rail, road, and air), tourist centre (cultural-historical, and starting-point for walks and hikes in the adjacent mountain areas).

The Euroregion's Romanian part has also other local polarising cores with over 10 000 inhabitants: *Pecica*, *Sântana* and *Lipova* (Arad County); *Sânnicolau Mare* and *Jimbolia* (Timiș County); *Bocșa*, *Moldova Nouă*, *Oravița* and *Oțelu Roșu* (Caraș-Severin County), *Orăștie*, *Simeria* and *Călan* (Hunedoara County).





## Serbian part of the Euroregion

The DKMT's Serbian part is polarised by *Novi Sad*, lower in the hierarchy coming *Subotica*, *Zrenjanin*, *Pančevo*, and *Sombor*.

*Novi Sad* (population 341 625 in 2011), the residential seat of the Vojvodina Autonomous Region, is the second-in-size city in Serbia after Belgrade, the country's capital. The city lies on the banks of the Danube, south of the Hungarian Great Plain. It developed around the fortified Petrovaradin city, and was attested in 1649. An important defensive centre of the Hapsburg Empire against the Ottoman expansion, Novi Sad would become the biggest Serbian town (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries), the cultural and political core of the Serbs who, at that time, had no national state on their own. After being integrated into the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867), the town was subjected to a policy of Magyarisation, its ethnical structure becoming a mixed one. From 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1918, Novi Sad became part of the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, the forerunner of the future Yugoslavia, and of independent Serbia since 2006. The city's complex industrial profile, connected with the harbour, is based on the tertiary sector. The Serbs who returned home from the former Yugoslav republics after 1990 added significantly to Novi Sad's demographic increase (from 179 000 inhabitants in 1991 to 341 625 in 2011) and implicitly to expanding its housing stock (Săgeată et al., 2010; Săgeată, 2011).

*Subotica* (population 141 554 in 2011), the seat of North Bačka District, lies in the proximity of the Serbian-Hungarian frontier. Its mixed ethnical structure is formed of a relative Hungarian majority (32,66%), followed by Serbs (29,86%) and Croats (9,18%). With a history marked by the Ottoman and the Hapsburg Empires, the city was part of Hungary until 1918 and of Yugoslavia until 2006. It was an important commercial centre and a railway knot in the southern basin of Pannonia. After 1990, when ethnic conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo broke out, Novi Sad was faced with large inflows of Serbian refugees from those former Yugoslav republics.

*Pančevo* (population 123 414, 2011), seat of South Banat District, lies on the terraces of the Danube and the Timiș rivers close to Belgrade (19 km). It is one of Serbia's important industrial centres (e.g. oil refinery, air industry components, machine-building, chemical fertilisers). After the 1999 NATO bombardments in particular, industrial development brought about large flows of population to the city, mostly Serbian refugees from the other republics of former Yugoslavia.

*Zrenjanin* (population 123 362 in 2011). Situated in the east of Vojvodina, the city is the administrative centre of the Central Banat District. Likewise the other district towns, Zrenjanin is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural place, the outcome of its troubled history, a reality visible in urban physiognomy. The town has a complex industrial, services and cultural-artistic function, being also a long-standing well-known sporting centre.



*Sombor* (population 47 623 in 2011), the administrative seat of West Bačka District, was attested in 1340, known in the course of time for its commercial and cultural-religious functions. A multi-ethnic and multi-cultural place, the town's rich history is reflected in its cultural and architectural heritage (Nancu et al., 2014).

## Hungarian part of the Euroregion

The Hungarian part of the Euroregion covered a territory of 23 992 km<sup>2</sup> and gathered a population of 1 723 483 at its largest extent in 1997. It consisted of four counties: Csongrád, Bács-Kiskun, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, and Békés; with the major towns acting also as residential seats: Szeged, Kecskemét, Szolnok and Békéscsaba.

*Szeged* (population 170 052 in 2011), seat of Csongrád county, is the biggest city and the main polarising centre of the DKMT Euroregion's Hungarian part. Third-in-size in Hungary, the city lies on the banks of the Tisza, in a point of *triplex confinium* made up by the borders of Hungary, Romania and Serbia. An old city (documented in 1183) with a rich history, Szeged became a royal city in 1498; it was occupied by the Turks (1526-1686); then again a royal city in 1715, having later seen an urban progress connected with the railway network (1854) and the opening of the first industrial units (1869). Nowadays Szeged has a complex functional profile: industrial (important centre of the food industry, producing mainly some traditional items, e.g. *paprika*, or the piquant salami), a strong tertiary sector, and especially an academic centre. The city's rich history, seen in numerous buildings, true monuments of art and architecture, represents a touristic attraction.

*Kecskemét* (population 114 226 in 2011), the administrative centre of Bács-Kiskun County, lies in the central part of Hungary located at an approximately equal distance (86 km) from Budapest and Szeged. Situated in the midst of a sand plain, the city discharges agricultural and commercial activities, the latter benefitting from the trading in agricultural products (mostly cattle and wine), the primary units set up to process them, representing the embryos of the future industry, having favoured the accumulation of capital, concentration of population and expansion of the housing stock. The city's population increased from 8 255 inhabitants in 1700 to 43 240 in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and to 57 327 after the Second World War, with the numbers doubling that same century. Kecskemét is also an attractive tourist destination for its monumental buildings (from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries), museums, churches, etc. The main industrial unit is the *Daimler-Benz* factory for automobile components opened in 2012.

*Szolnok* (population 74 577 in 2011) is the administrative centre of Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County. It rises on the banks of the Tisza River, a lowland region, at the crossroads of old commercial routes. Attested by documents in 1075, the town has had an eventful history and lots of influences seen to this day in its architectural structures (Săgeată et al., 2010; Săgeată and Persu, 2013). This urban settlement began developing and diversifying its functional profile



after 1850, the population growing from 10 600 to 24 160 in 1900 and 34 000 in 1949, and twice as many in the years of socialist economy (up to 78 328 inhabitants in 1990/93), followed by a slight decrease as industrial restructuring set in. Owing to its thermal water resources the town became a tourist and spa centre (Nancu et al., 2014).

*Békéscsaba* (population 62 050, 2011) is the smallest of the County seats in the Hungarian part of the DKMT Euroregion. The city lies in the Hungarian Great Plain (Nagy Alföld), crossed by important transport axes such as country road 44 that connects Békéscsaba and Gyula, and high-speed railway line linking Budapest-Szolnok-Békéscsaba-Lőkösháza. Documented in 1330, it developed at a slow pace until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the first Slovakian colonists began settling in the Hungarian steppe. Being connected to the railway network, as well as the construction of the industrial units in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were of great importance for the development of the urban infrastructure, which would be partly destroyed by bombardments in the two world wars. The period governed by a centralised economy contributed to a new, industrially based urban development, the town becoming one of Hungary's main food industry centres with a record population of 68 000 inhabitants in the 1980s.

*Hódmezővásárhely* (population 47 019, 2011) in Csongrád County lies at the crossroads of some old commercial routes. It was founded in the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the merging of several villages. Destroyed by the Turkish invasions in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the town would recover under the Habsburg administration, when vast hydro-amelioration works were undertaken, and with over 55 000 inhabitants in 1890, it was the fourth largest town of the country. Severely affected during the two world wars, it passed through a new development phase under the centrally based economy, when big industrial units were built, though later dismantled from the latter half of the 1980s on. Nowadays tourism proves to be an efficient alternative thanks to the monuments of the town and the thermal water resources nearby.

*Baja* (population 37 300, 2011) is situated in the south of Hungary. The second town in Bács-Kiskun County, it began developing under the Ottoman domination, being given town status in 1696. Under the Habsburg administration it had commercial and transport functions; with industrialisation coming relatively late, at the time of the socialist economy, when it was an important textile centre. Currently, it is engaged in trading, services, academic education, and tourism.

*Gyula* (population 31 679, 2011) in Békés County lies on the banks of the Crişul Alb River close to the border with Romania. It is a multicultural place, hosting the largest Romanian community in Hungary (2,3% of the town's population) and an important Romanian school (Nicolae Bălcescu High-school). Documents attest this locality to 1313 as a military stronghold (fortified city), also engaged in trading, attracting a significant Jewish community, largely deported in the Second World War. At present, the town economy relies on tourism, having an interesting architecture and health spas for local thermal water therapy. *Kiskunfélegyháza* (population

30 640, 2011), in Bács-Kiskun County, is an important railway knot. It has a long history (attested in 1389). Its slow-going development was boosted by the Habsburg administration, which stimulated the building of monumental structures in the town centre, now a tourist attraction. Other converging localities, with 25-30 000 inhabitants are *Szentés* (Csongrád County); *Kiskunhalas* (Bács-Kiskun County) a major railway knot; *Jászberény* (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County) renowned for the Electrolux factory of refrigerators; *Makó* on the banks of the Mureş River (Csongrád County), an area rich in gas resources, lies at some 20 km from the Romanian border (Nancu et al., 2014).

In terms of population size, in the study area, *Timișoara* Municipium ranks first with 319 279 inhabitants. It is a strong economic and research centre. Second in line comes *Novi Sad* (341 625 inhabitants), capital city of Vojvodina Autonomous Region in Serbia, followed by *Szeged*, *Arad* and *Sobotica* (140 000 – 180 000 inhabitants each); *Szolnok*, *Reșița*, and *Békéscsaba*, *Deva*, and *Hunedoara* (50 000 – 100 000 inhabitants each). On the other hand, the small mountain villages of the Romanian part of the Euroregion are marked by demographic problems such as the ageing and migration of the population (Fig. 4).

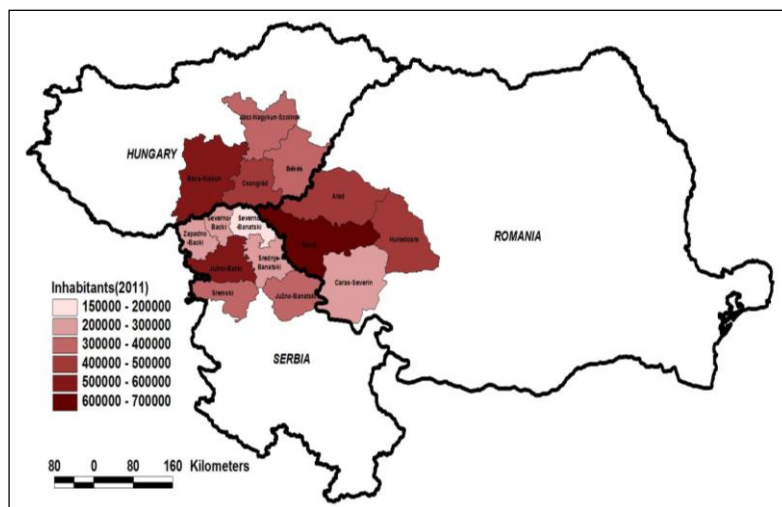


Figure 4: The number of inhabitants in DKMT Euroregion at its largest extent (Source: authors)

In terms of ethnical structures, beside the cross-border minorities several others nationalities are found: Germans, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, and Roma. Cooperation relations are established mainly in the field of economy, the building of transport and communication facilities, environment, tourism, culture, education, health-care, civil protection, and defence against disasters.



## 4. Organisational and institutional structure, operation<sup>8</sup>

The main decision-making body of the DKMT Regional Cooperation is the **General Assembly**. The General Assembly is the preparatory, coordinating and strategic decision-making body of the cooperation and is composed of the leaders of the regional public administration institutions. The full power members of the General Assembly (founding members and associated members) and other participants (permanent and case-by-case guests) take part in its activities. Yearly, on the last weekend of May, the Day of DKMT Euroregion is organised at the Triplex Confinium memorial at the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border. At such occasions, borders are temporarily opened and the General Assembly usually has a meeting on the spot.

The General Assembly elects the president-in-office for one year from among the presidents of the member organisations; the same person cannot be elected in two successive years, the rotation among the countries has to be taken into account. The president-in-office directs the organisation in the period between the General Assemblies, coordinates the activities of the Secretariat, and has to draw up the Annual Report about the activities of the cooperation and the implementation of the decisions made by the General Assembly.

The duties of the **Secretariat** are to carry out administrative tasks. It is constantly in relation with the member regions, contributes to the preparation of working papers, initiates and organises joint events, follows the programs of the European Union, prepares project proposals upon the decision of the General Assembly and implements projects. The seat of the Secretariat is the administrative seat of the president-in-office. The Secretariat has three delegated members: one Hungarian, one Romanian and one Serbian.

The **Coordination Committee** is a body consisting of one person per each involved country; actually, the vice-president of the founding organisation carries out the preparation of decisions as well as the preliminary coordination and keeps in touch with the DKMT Euroregional Development Agency Public Utility Company (PUC).

The workgroups prepare initiatives, projects, programs and recommendations in the different professional fields of the cooperation; they forward them to the General Assembly, and participate in the implementation of joint projects. At present, the DKMT Euroregion has ten workgroups addressing different issues:

- Economy, infrastructure and tourism workgroup;
- Urbanism, nature and environmental protection workgroup;
- Culture, sports, non-governmental organisations and social issues workgroup;
- International relations, information and mass communication workgroup;

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<sup>8</sup> <http://dkmt.net/ro/index.php?bov=315831200921418>



- Catastrophe prevention workgroup;
- National health workgroup;
- Healthcare workgroup;
- Industrial park workgroup;
- Tourism workgroup;
- Agricultural workgroup.

The PUC was established by the General Assembly on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The founding members of the General Assembly established the public utility company to ensure the implementation of the development aims defined in the deed of foundation of the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Regional Cooperation. With this measure, an economic entity having legal personality is created beside the political organisation of the regional cooperation, which is capable of preparing development tasks, drawing up project proposals, the management and implementation of projects. The PUC was jointly established by the eight organisations of the DKMT Euroregion. It plays an important role within international organisations as well: the DKMT Euroregion is a member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) since 2005. Currently, the Managing Director of the Development Agency PUC is Mrs. Eszter Anna Csókási, also member of the AEBR.

Some of the **main achievements** of DKMT include a common Strategic Plan of the Euroregion and several cross-border projects such as:

- Protean Europe: a cultural festival deploying a multitude of artists;
- Within and beyond the European Union: a series of economic development trade fairs and conferences for entrepreneurs and experts working in the field of agriculture, tourism, security policy, IT, and healthcare;
- Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC9): a four-language news portal that provides daily updates, helping the inhabitants of the region to find relevant information, though news and background information and in the framework of the radio service of ERIC own radio interviews can be heard on the website.
- cross-border thematic tourist routes: connecting to the culture of baths, art nouveau architecture, folklore and industrial memorials.
- joint flood prevention action group: for the possible prevention of floods occurring in the region, and for protection in case of danger. The rescue team has been equipped with the most modern sets of equipment, among others, a “mobile village” used for the fast removal of population.
- an international healthcare card: aiming to establish international division of labour among the hospitals and healthcare service providers of the region.

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<sup>9</sup> [www.ericinfo.eu](http://www.ericinfo.eu)



## 5. Composition of the working group

Besides the General Assembly and the Secretariat, the DKMT Euroregion has ten workgroups and all of them address different issues<sup>10</sup> like economy, infrastructure, and tourism; urbanism, nature and environmental protection; culture, sports, non-governmental organisations and social issues; international relations, information and mass communication; catastrophe prevention; national healthcare; industrial park; tourism, and agriculture. In 2003, the General Assembly established the Development Agency Public Utility Company aimed at implementing the objectives settled by DKMT Euroregion.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://dkmt.net/ro/index.php?bov=315831200921418>



## 6. Main activity areas/profile

The DKMT region was involved in many cross-border projects, using multiple EU funding sources (mainly through CBC PHARE programme before 2004, INTERREG programme and Cross-border cooperation programme Romania-Hungary 2007-2013). The projects were diverse and they covered the main objectives of the Euroregion: promoting tourism and environmental protection, infrastructure development, increasing the social cohesion of the region etc. In most of these projects DKMT was partner or coordinating partner, for others it acted as a territorial platform for initiating projects based on the needs identified in its strategic plan, thus using its limits for implementing their activities. Due to the fact that only some information regarding recent projects initiated by the Euroregion were available online, in this report only recent examples of projects are presented in detail. Information on implemented projects were gathered from the consulted literature and presented only as examples showing the diversity of initiatives in which the Euroregion was involved. However, the role of DKMT in these past initiatives was difficult to identify.

Romania and Hungary have developed strong cross-border ties, both at local and regional levels. They are involved in several euroregions such as the Carpathian Euroregion and Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT), the latter being the most successful euroregion in the Balkan-Danube area. Moreover, Romania and Hungary have benefited from constant EU financial assistance. Within the PHARE-CBC Programme (1996-2003), altogether 34 million euros were allocated for CBC projects to be implemented on the Hungarian side of the border and 28 million euro for the Romanian side. They played an important role in establishing some key facilities in the border area, including the modernisation of border-crossing stations and roads, as well as business infrastructure development projects. Environmental protection has also been an area of importance; projects in this field have mainly focused on water resource management, in response to the joint challenges identified.

Within the Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro (tri-lateral) Cross-border Cooperation Programme (2004–2006) nearly 32 million euros were allocated to Hungary (INTERREG), and nearly 20 million Euros to Romania (PHARE CBC), including national co-financing. Within the frameworks of the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, the European Union ensured further assistance in territorial cooperation to the border area between Hungary and Romania, continuing previous INTERREG IIIA and PHARE CBC 2004-2006 Community initiatives<sup>11</sup>.

The cross-border cooperation between Hungary and Serbia started in 2003 within the framework of the Hungary-Serbia Pilot Small Projects Fund (PSPF) under the Hungarian National PHARE Programme. The main purpose of PSPF was to support people-to-people

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.huro-cbc.eu/en/overview/>





actions and to facilitate institution-building projects of non-profit organisations along the Hungarian-Serbian border, as well as to prepare potential applicants for future INTERREG funding opportunities. Soon after, between 2004 and 2006, the Neighbourhood Programme Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro 2004-2006 within the framework of the trilateral Hungary-Romania and Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro Cross-border Cooperation Programme was implemented. Through the Neighbourhood Programme it was meant to foster the cooperation along the external borders of the European Union, integrating external (CARDS) and internal (ERDF) EU financial instruments. The Hungary–Serbia IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme was implemented within the 2007 – 2013 European Union financial framework under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The IPA instrument serves as a financial source both for candidate and potential candidate (among them Serbia) countries<sup>12</sup>.

Moreover, the CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) is aimed at supporting the participation of the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The Stabilisation and Association process is the cornerstone of the European Union's policy towards the region. It seeks to promote stability within the region whilst also facilitating closer association with the European Union. A key element of the SAP is a formal contractual relationship with EU in the form of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The SAP is designed to help each country to progress at its own pace towards greater European integration.

## 6.1 Examples of Recent Projects

Among the most important projects of the DKMT Euroregion are presented below: *Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion* and *EuroRegional News Aggregator*.

### **Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion**

(<http://borderless.dkmt.eu/project>)

The project was implemented under the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 ([www.huro-cbc.eu](http://www.huro-cbc.eu)), and is part-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund as well as by the states of Hungary and Romania (Tab. 2).

The primary aim of the “Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion” project is to develop two, cross-border thematic routes. The project objective is to establish touristic routes that link the border regions together not only through their joint topics but also in a

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.hu-srb-ipa.com/en/>

geographical sense, based on a common set of conditions, to enhance touristic potentialities. The implementation period of the project was 01.01.2011–30.09.2012.

Table 2: The sources of funds for the project “Borderless routes and adventures in the DKMT Euroregion”

Partner	Budget	Fund ((ERDF + national co-financing)	Own contribution
DKMT Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza Eurorégiós Fejlesztési Ügynökség Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft.	183 935 EUR	174 535,92 EUR	9 399,08 EUR
Consiliul Judeţean Timiş	11 700 EUR	11 434,41 EUR	265,59 EUR
<b>Total</b>	<b>195 635 EUR</b>	<b>185 970,33 EUR</b>	<b>9 664,67 EUR</b>

(Source: <http://borderless.dkmt.eu/project>)

The aim of the project was to gather the potential offer of the border region to taste and savour to gastronomy and historical themes of the regions. Each theme includes a shorter and a longer trip suggestion. Destinations, historical themes and overall gastronomy/wine tasting are presented in the brochures which can be found under the folder of documents to be downloaded from the project’s website (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6).



Figure 5: Wine and gastronomy map of the DKMT Region proposed in the project  
(Source: <http://borderless.dkmt.eu/lang/en/> - the map can be found under the folder 'Wine & Gastronomy map')

In order to promote routes, the partners of the project utilise several different tools along with the development of a dedicated webpage. In the framework of the project, 110 000 pieces of brochures were printed in four languages and 3000 DVDs were produced also in four languages. Furthermore, a study tour was organised for journalists in June 2012 with the aim to advertise

the project and to attract and invite potential tourists to the region. Hence, representatives of daily papers and televisions from several countries were informed on the tourist offer, tasting and historical themes of the border region.



Figure 6: Map of the historical memorial places in the DKMT Region

(Source: <http://borderless.dkmt.eu/lang/en/> - the map can be found under the folder 'Historical Memorial Places map')

In August and September 2012, the information brochures were introduced at the following exhibitions and events:

- AGROMALIM, Arad (Expo Arad);
- XXII. Makói Hagymafesztivál (22nd Onion Festival of Makó);
- Hungarikum Fesztivál, Szeged;
- Hegyaljai borünnep (Winefest), Şiria;
- Bortér (Wine square), Szeged;
- Hagymányos kézművesek vására (Fair of traditional craftsman), Timișoara;
- Kelengyésláda, Timișoara.

The partners participated with the brochures and DVDs on the following exhibitions with own installations procured in the framework of the project:

- TT Warsaw, Warsaw,
- 45<sup>th</sup> International Fair of Tourism, Novi Sad,
- Főszézon, Budapest.

The closing conference of the project was organised on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, where the project was evaluated as well as results and achievements were reflected.



## EuroRegional News Aggregator

(<http://ernainfo.eu/index.php>)



The project "EuroRegional News Aggregator" is implemented under the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 ([www.huro-cbc.eu](http://www.huro-cbc.eu)), and the project is part-financed by the European Union, through the European Regional Development Fund, by Hungary and by Romania (Table 3).

The main objective of the ERNA project is to offer and inform the population in the border region about cross-border issues and news, thus the targeted groups can directly receive news without border hindrances.

The website of the project ([www.ernainfo.eu](http://www.ernainfo.eu)) provides news in various languages, such as English, Hungarian, Romanian, and Serbian. Broadcasted topics, news and articles are processed and formulated by a team of specialists from Romania and Hungary (Table 4). Implementation period of the project was from 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2011 till 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2012.

*Table 3: The sources of funding for the ERNA project*

Partner	Budget	Fund (ERDF + national co-financing)	Own contribution
DKMT Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza Eurorégiós Fejlesztési Ügynökség Nonprofit Közhasznú Kft.	183 662,50 EUR	174 400 EUR	9 262,50 EUR
Institutul Intercultural Timișoara	107 787,85 EUR	105 600 EUR	2 187,85 EUR
<b>Total</b>	<b>291 450,35</b>	<b>280 000 EUR</b>	<b>11 450,35 EUR</b>

(Source: <http://ernainfo.eu/>)

*Table 4: Some examples of DKMT news updated on the project's website*

DKMT News
Three Romanians injured in the accident in Hungary have been brought to Timișoara Traffic - 06-09-2013 23:00:00
Three people injured in the accident that took place in Hungary at the end of last month have been brought in the country – two men and a little girl, all seriously injured but stable.
The motorway still keeps us waiting Traffic - 20-06-2012 08:14:07
The Hungarian authorities have suspended the construction works of the Makó-Nădlac motorway connecting Romania with the west.



### DKMT News

Water is distributed at MÁV stations

Traffic - 19-06-2012 08:10:03

Water is distributed from today at large railway stations because of the extreme heat

Summer railway timetable in Hungary

Traffic - 18-06-2012 08:25:40

Trains run in line with the summer timetable from 16 June, it will have the largest significance for railway services around the Balaton.

More people fly

Traffic - 17-06-2012 08:17:06

The number of travellers using air-lines slightly increased in Romania last year.

Traffic restarted on one lane on the Csongrád road

Traffic - 16-06-2012 08:15:38

On the Szeged exit section of the Csongrád road, connecting the town with the M43 motorway, reconstruction works still continue, therefore the traffic can only move in altering directions, on one lane.

*(Source: [http://ernainfo.eu/pages.php?list\\_cat=yes&idc=14&ids=1](http://ernainfo.eu/pages.php?list_cat=yes&idc=14&ids=1))*

The Euroregional news aggregator provides a balanced space for communication to the local/regional public institutions and NGOs with useful and non-sensational information that attract little attention in mainstream media. One of the problems that the Romanian-Hungarian team aims to solve is related to the small number of sites of public institutions and NGOs in which the RSS news aggregator may have an important role.

## 6.2 Examples of Past Projects

Amid the leading projects of the DKMT Euroregion implemented before 2005 the following ones are noteworthy:

- opening of new border crossing points: rail (to Berliste–Iam) – important for the restoration of the oldest railway lines in Romania: Oravița–Iam (RO)–Bela Crkva–Weisskirchen (Serbia)–Socol–Baziaș (RO), road and rail (at Socol) – out of isolation to the Danube enters the country and improves the natural riches offered by the Iron Gates Natural Park, road and rail to Grădinari (Caras-Severin/RO)–Markov (VS/Serbia) which will support a project and cultural tourism in Caraș-Severin and Vrsac. The project aims the promotion of cultural tourism, wine-growing area of Vrsac–Markov–Grădinari and natural heritage, tourism and industrial zone Anina–Oravița–Iam;
- the construction of the Rösztke (state border)–Novi Sad traffic corridor X/A motorway;
- modernization and development of road infrastructure in the area Naidăș–Socol–Baziaș, with funding from the Neighborhood PHARE Programme 2004–2006 Romania–Serbia;



- creating a border industrial park between Caraş-Severin and South Banat District (following the model of industrial park creating between the AP Vojvodina and Hungary);
- creating ethnocentre to facilitate the study and preservation of folk customs and traditions, crafts, and folklore;
- a circuit tour on both sides of the Danube border in two natural parks: the Iron Gates Park (South Caraş-Severin and Mehedinţi) and Park Gerdap (Borski and Braničevski districts);
- creating a joint alert system to prevent disasters (flooding, environmental accident / pollution, etc.) between the DKMT states. It wants a common system of information management and joint logistics (site, common equipment, communication system for mailing information) to stay in real time all relevant information on flows and water quality;
- “Center for monitoring and coordinating disaster - Caras-Severin”. Applicant is Public Service and Rescue Dispatch Disasters in the Directorate of Public Management and Private Domain of Caras-Severin County. Partners: Inspectorate for Emergency Situations “Semenic” Command to prevent the flooding of municipal Vârşeţ;
- “Vocational School of Tourism” for preparing the specialists of high level in the field of tourism.

Other more recent projects and programmes where the DKMT region has been involved are the following ([Oskó, accessed November 2014](#)):

- Environmental consciousness of everyday life of the young, for the young people (Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Hunida PUC, 2005) ;
- Study and exchange of experience regarding water quality improvement (PHARE Small Project Fund 2003 Hungary-Serbia and Montenegro program), 2005-2006;
- Within and beyond the European Union – series of cross-border trade fairs and conferences (Phare CBC 2003 Hungary and Romania – Cross-border economic development program), 2005-2006;
- Within and beyond the European Union – Economic development in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary), 2005-2006;
- Formation of thematic tourist route groups in the DKMT Euroregion (INTERREG IIIA), 2006-2007;
- A development project recommended in the strategy of the DKMT (strengthening economic relationships within the region – establishing tourism related cooperations between SMEs and non-profit organisations);
- ERIC – Euroregional Informational Centre (INTERREG IIIA), 2006-2008 - A development project recommended in the strategy of the DKMT (increasing the social cohesion of



the region – extending information supply. ERIC is operating as an international news agency, in four languages - Hungarian, Serbian, Romanian and English. It is continuously up-dated online helping to inform the inhabitants of the region directly and indirectly— by informing editors and journalists dealing with cross-border cooperation - with the latest news, interviews, selections, background analyses. Apart from the news and articles available on the portal at the address [www.ericinfo.eu](http://www.ericinfo.eu), we can also access a regional programme preview, a free, multi-lingual introduction and advertisement interface for enterprises, radio interviews, live programs (Ghiorghioni, n.a.);

- Security without borders (European Commission Directorate-General Environment – Community Civil Protection Action Programme, 2007-2008, Formation of thematic tourist route groups in the DKMT Euroregion (INTERREG IIIA). In this series of events the most important civil defence related sources of danger affecting the territory of the Euroregion were examined by experts arriving from the region, from Italy and Slovakia, also considering practical tasks in connection with flood prevention, epidemics, industrial accidents, the storage of dangerous substances and elaborating recommendations for international cooperation serving the security of the citizens of neighbouring states (Ghiorghioni, n.a.).

The region has been involved also in infrastructure projects such as ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)): construction of the infrastructure of the frontier crossing-point Cenad-Kiszombor (the Romanian-Hungarian frontier); renovation of the Bega Channel; renovation of the Szeged (Hungary)-Kikinda (Serbia and Montenegro)-Timișoara (Romania) railway; environmental protection in the Surduc Lake area; rural development and introduction of the area to the international tourist circuit; renovation of the Buzias centre for spa treatment and spa leisure activities; renovation of the Lugoj- Timișoara- Nădlac - Szeged road connecting western Romania to the Pan-European Corridor IV; opening of a new frontier crossing-point at Triplex Confinium – the location where the frontiers between Romania, Hungary and former Serbia and Montenegro meet.

## 6.3 Organisation of Events (meetings, conferences, seminars, cultural and media events)

### 6.3.1 Scientific events

Since 1999, the DKMT has organised 15 regional conferences on environment, food quality, the protection of biodiversity, nutrition and health-related issues (Tab. 5). The aim of these conferences was to promote further regional cooperation and a better and healthier environment within the region.



Table 5: Regional DKMT Conferences

Editions	Conference Topic	Place and date
1 <sup>st</sup>	Environment and Health	Arad (Romania), 19-20 November 1999
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Environment and Health	Szeged (Hungary), 12 May 2000
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Environment and Health	Petroşani (Romania), 6-7 April 2001
4 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Health	Szeged (Hungary), 9-10 May 2002
5 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Food Quality	Novi Sad (Serbia), 4-5 September 2003
6 <sup>th</sup>	Environmental Medicine and Health	Timișoara (Romania), 14-15 October 2004
7 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Health	Szeged (Hungary), 17 June 2005
8 <sup>th</sup>	Environmental Medicine, Nutrition and Health	Timișoara (Romania), 22-24 June 2006
9 <sup>th</sup>	Environmental Health and Protection Environmental Biodiversity and Health	Arad (Romania), 11-13 May 2007
10 <sup>th</sup>	Cross-border Bioecology and Public Health	Arad (Romania), 16-17 May 2008
11 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Health	Szeged (Hungary), 15-16 May 2009
12 <sup>th</sup>	Food, Environment and Health joined to 1 <sup>st</sup> CEFSER Workshop	Novi Sad (Serbia), 14-15 September 2010
13 <sup>th</sup>	Integrative Medicine, Nutrition and Health	Timișoara (Romania), 8-10 September 2011
14 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Health	Szeged (Hungary), 18-19 May 2012
15 <sup>th</sup>	Environment and Health	Novi Sad (Serbia), 16-17 May 2013

Compiled from <http://www.dkmt2013.uns.ac.rs/gallery.html> and [www.dkmt.net](http://www.dkmt.net) (accessed on September 12, 2014)

An overview of the most recent editions of the DKMT Euroregion conferences is presented below.

### The 12<sup>th</sup> DKMT Euroregion Conference on Food, Environment and Health

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT) on Food, Environment and Health was held in Novi Sad (Serbia), on 14-15 September 2010. The conference was organised by the Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, and it was a joint-action with the 1<sup>st</sup> CEFSER Workshop, as part of the planned activities within the FP7 project CEFSER (GA 229629). With this scientific event, the participating researchers had the opportunity to have an insight on how the strengthening of research potential is made possible through EC funded projects. The joint DKMT Conference and the CEFSER Workshop aimed to serve as a forum for the exchange of know-how and experience, as well as a chance for elaborating new ideas for future research projects.

The Conference's thematic areas were: food safety, nutrition, lifestyles and health; Environment and health; Food and health; Clinical and experimental research. The Programme of the event was organized in five sessions following the main thematic topics covered by the Conference (13 oral presentations), one plenary lecture session (two invited lectures) and two poster sessions (38 posters).





### The 13<sup>th</sup> DKMT Conference on Integrative Medicine, Nutrition and Health

The scientific event was organised by the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Victor Babeş, Timișoara (Romania), in the period between 8-10 September 2011. Integrative Medicine was the key issue of the Conference programme, due to its general perception as the medicine of the future, which combines Eastern and Western concepts in a holistic view of the human being. The conference was organized jointly with a Symposium of PhD students within the frame of the project POSDRU/88/1.5/S/63117 “Doctoral scholarships for competitive PhD students in the European Research Area”. The Symposium represented a part of planned activities within the POSDRU project, giving participating researchers an opportunity to have an insight on how the strengthening of research potential is made possible through POSDRU projects. The joint scientific event (the DKMT Conference-the Symposium of PhD students) encouraged the exchanges of know-how and experience between the participants, providing the basis for future research projects. The event addressed four thematic areas in the euroregion:

- the perspectives of integrative medicine in practice and education;
- nutrition, functional foods and food supplements;
- lifestyles and health; and
- environmental pollution and health.

### The 15<sup>th</sup> DKMT Euroregion Conference on Environment and Health

The Conference was held at the Faculty of Technology, University of Novi Sad, Serbia. The aim of the Conference was to gather scientists and researchers within the DKMT Euroregion for promoting the exchange of their ideas about the influence environment has on food and health, as well as to present the results of their researches to the interested audience. The main goal of the conference was to raise the awareness of the challenges and priorities of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region to which Hungary, Romania and Serbia also belong, broadening the Conference’s thematic issues by the incorporation of four vertical priorities of the Danube Strategy: environmental protection, irrigation and agricultural development, navigability, and energy production, explored during the Conference’s round table, in order to recognize the regional capacities for the scientific support to the Strategy 's priorities.

With the same goal of proving the scientific support to the Danube Strategy, the 15th DKMT Conference joined the LACREMED Conference "Sustainable agricultural production: restoration of agricultural soil quality by remediation", addressing the novel environmentally friendly approaches in the agricultural development within the region. The LACREMED Conference represented a part of activities within the LACREMED project implemented through the IPA programme of Cross-border Cooperation between Hungary and Serbia co-financed by the EU, representing another way of strengthening the research potential within the DKMT Euroregion.



The thematic areas of the Conference covered:

- environmental protection;
- air pollution and scenarios of future air quality emissions;
- climate impact on air quality and health;
- novel methods to combat soil and water pollution;
- assessment of the impacts of bio-energy development on soil quality, agriculture, biodiversity, and climate change;
- environmental impact on food safety;
- food quality and food safety;
- public health and the environmental (air, water, soil) quality;
- emerging issues in environmental health;
- nano-materials in the environment, food and health;
- irrigation and agricultural development;
- navigability;
- energy production.

The Programme of the Conference was organized in five sessions (nine invited lectures, ten presentations) and three poster sessions (66 posters) as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Environmental protection - novel methods to combat soil and water pollution (two invited lectures, four presentations, one poster session)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> *Water quality and emerging issues in environmental health* (three invited lectures and one presentation, one poster session).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Public health and the environmental (air, water and soil) quality (one invited lecture, two presentations)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Air pollution, scenarios of future air quality emissions, climate impact on air quality and health (one invited lecture, two presentations and one poster session)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Food quality and food safety - environmental impacts (two invited lecturers, one presentation).

The organisers aimed to promote young researchers by awarding the three best presentations according to the following judging criteria: organization/content/aim of the poster or the oral presentations, visual impact of the posters or PowerPoint-presentations and quality of the answers provided. The research results of the participants were published in the Conference Proceeding Book.



## The International Seminar on “Entrepreneurial initiative and Regional development – European comparisons”

*The International Seminar on “Entrepreneurial initiative and Regional development – European comparisons”* is another example of scientific event organised within the DKMT region that addressed the regional polarization and discrepancies between the various national segments across the region, in relation to the undergoing transformations induced by the EU integration. The seminar was organized by the West University of Timișoara in collaboration with the University of Angers and the University of Novi Sad, between 10 and 15 July 2006. The Seminar was an itinerant working seminar, following a route between Timișoara (Romania), Novi Sad (Serbia-Montenegro), and Szeged (Hungary).

The seminar welcomed the meeting of the “2H2S Program” researchers from a multidisciplinary and international perspective, grounded on the detailed analysis of the regional and local realities of Europe. The “2H2S” programme associates academic persons from humanities and social sciences (geography, sociology, economy, history etc.) and regional personalities of the political, economic, cultural and social life. The seminar oriented the scientific debates on the role of the “entrepreneurial initiative”, seen in a broad European comparative perspective, i.e. economic, social-cultural (especially in the associative domain) and political perspectives (concerning mainly territorial projects).

The thematic issues covered by the Seminar were:

- **Characteristics of the territorial economic development during the globalization era**  
Background: The transnational and multicultural space of the Banat, as a nucleus of the DKMT Euroregion, represents an excellent field of observation and analysis of these processes, in a period when the fast economic globalisation seems to compromise the models of economic development established on local synergies. The various European experiences will be able to come together in a productive dialogue with the economic reality of this pluralistic space.  
Key questions answered: Are the economic perspectives of these areas connected mainly to local or to national factors? Does any international factor play a much larger and determinant role due to globalisation and the extension of the European integration process? How do these factors play together on the economic stage, what are their consequences on local and regional structures and what are their chances in view of sustainable development?
- **Cultural identity and induced territorial outcomes**  
Key questions answered: In the new circumstances, can we still consider the existence of a regional identity of the people from the Banat? Could the mercantile tradition, inherited from the imperial policy and exercised by the local communities (especially German), still have an echo nowadays? Does the position of “frontier area” represent a strength or an obstacle for present and future economic development?



- **The role of the authorities in the social-economic renewal**

Background: The school education is represented by a vast network of secondary schools and college units which form the basis of professional selection, the area of influence of the local centres being much wider than the limits of the Banat or the development regions gathered in the DKMT Euroregion.

Key questions answered: Has the educational system of the DKMT Euroregion adapted itself to the specialized needs of the labour market? What are the synergies which emerge in the relationship with the enterpriser, the formative and the research environments? What are those strategies which can guarantee a survival in a highly competitive environment?

- **Associative, entrepreneurial and venture networks as cross border networks**

Background: Networks, in the variety of the forms, are at the centre of all territorial development projects. Social and cultural networks are frequently mentioned but seldom analysed. This kind of networks may be relying on common shared experiences generating the dispersion of individuals, who nevertheless continue to be cooperative and have exchange relations. There are networks, which are built ad-hoc by means of interpersonal, administrative, business-related or other kind of contacts. The identity element appears to be a remarkable support for network structuring, perceivable especially in pluralistic spaces, such as the cross border space of the Banat.

Key questions answered: What are the main features and meanings of the contemporary networks? Are the cross border cooperation sufficiently dense in order to generate stabile and active networks which can influence the level of recognition, acceptance and the number of joint projects? What is the role of the foreign investors in the stimulation of local synergies?

- **From one regional model of development to another – European comparisons**

Background: The model of economic success and social prosperity of the Banat seems to evolve in leaps, with periods of boom and crisis, according to the circumstances. The boom period given by the capitalization of agricultural products and natural resources ended together with the last decade of the communist era. The Romanian part of the Banat is searching today for new solutions, market niches, which would enable it to preserve and consolidate its privileged status among the other Romanian regions.

Key questions answered: Could the present individual competition of the three national areas of the DKMT Euroregion be subject to change towards a beneficial competition, with chances of success on the European level? How could be the cohesion between the four main polarizing cities (Timișoara, Novi Sad, Szeged, Arad) strengthened, without jeopardizing their strong connections with their national territories?

- **Insights on the features of the economic development of the DKMT Euroregion**

Background: The one-week experience in and beyond the cross-border space of Banat, implying meetings and debates applied to the local reality, allowed to derive the shape of illustrative insights and representations realized on scientific grounds. The constant



corpus of participants at the previous meetings of the work seminar already has the required proficiencies. The variable structure of the group depending on the location and social-economic content of the laboratory space chosen for each edition and new perspectives.

Key questions answered: Can individual reasoning and collective debating on the economic and social space of the Banat represent a source of ideas for the further evolution of the region? How could we make a better use of the established liaisons and meetings facilitated by the seminar? Can we imagine a frame of collaboration for the maintenance of the scientific reasoning, with positive effects on this laboratory space?

The presented works were reviewed by a scientific board and were published in a special issue of “Geographica Timisensis”, a scientific magazine of the Department of Geography of the West University of Timișoara.

### 6.3.2 Cultural events

#### Euroregional Theatre festival Timișoara (TESZT)

The company of “Csiky Gergely” Hungarian State Theatre is a young, enthusiastic, internationally recognized team, always searching for new forms of artistic expression. The permanent Hungarian theatre company at Timișoara was founded in 1953 as part of the Romanian State Theatre, but it has been an autonomous institution since 1957. The name “Csiky Gergely” was given to the institution in 1990. The theatre was involved in many projects and has a rich and varied repertory, including different types of performances such as: classic and contemporary theatre, non-verbal performances, music, puppets and marionette theatre plays.

One of the most important projects of the theatre is **TESZT** – the **Euroregional Festival of Theatre Timișoara**, and has been organized for the seventh time in 2014. The event was international and it contributed to the promotion of knowledge of multiculturalism. The Festival worked as a platform for cultural exchanges and also as an invitation to dialogue with the artists and other specialists in the field.

The TESZT goal was to support a closer and more frequent collaboration among the theatres in the region and to improve the communication between the institutions and the public of Timișoara, as a first step to future exchanges of performances and of experiences, as well as to a better understanding of the new theatrical forms. The TESZT festival was planned to be organized once a year, giving possibilities to the theatre to become a platform for celebrating the meetings between all those who are part of this region’s theatre life. Since 2007, the programme has become one of the most important cultural events of the DKMT Euroregion, where theatre performances, concerts, exhibitions and other auxiliary events are part of the



program. The past few years proved that this meeting works as a great forum of all those who are willing to think together about the regional theatrical efforts. The initiative of the TESZT festival was also to provide a meeting place for the three cultures and by fulfilling this role, it helps bringing closer the creators in the region. The TESZT aimed to become a cultural but also an artistic point for different art forms, a place for experiments and research, for dialogue between the public and the artists, where the young generation is treated as partner. As a perspective, the future goals of TESZT festival will be strongly connected to the TESZT Academy.

### 6.3.3 Regional media events

Analysing the PR challenges in promoting the cross-border cooperation Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisza (DKMT), [Cernicova-Bucă \(2010\)](#) showed that since 2004/2005, the Euroregion DKMT has lost its attractiveness for the media. The local authorities refrained from commenting on conflicts. The battle for competences between national and local authorities reduced its dimension as a result of the administrative reform – at least in Romania. PR efforts in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were less salient at the county level, rendering the impression that the DKMT is not on the public agenda any longer. The DKMT is no longer a topic included in the weekly press conferences organized by the president of the Timiș county assembly.

[Palea \(2011\)](#) analysed the regional media communication within the DKMT region. The study showed that except for the territorial studios of public radio and television (e.g. Radio Timișoara, TVR Timișoara), which have all the characteristics of regional press and which host cross-border shows directed at the public of the DKMT Euroregion, there are very few instances of regional press. In the form of written press, only local or county press were found, directed towards a cross-county audience. Usually, most of the information published covered the town where the headquarters of the editorial team are located. The main media products edited in Timișoara are: *Ziua de Vest*, *Focus Vest*, *Evenimentul Zilei – Vest*, the Transylvania-Banat supplement of the daily newspaper *România Liberă* (when it was launched), *Bănăţeanul*, *Cronica de Sud-Vest* etc. (some of these newspapers no longer exist), as well as in the products of other towns: *24 h* – in Reșița or *Noul Observator* – in Jimbolia, *Tăt Banatu’i Fruncea* – in Făget, *Nyugati Jelen* – la Arad etc. Some cross-border attempts are also worth mentioning: *Délvilág és Temesvári Új Szó* – between 1991-1993, *Régi(j)óvilág*- in Hungarian, founded in 2006, or *Licurici*, Romanian publication broadcasted around the border area between Romania, Serbia and Hungary, launched in 2003. The authorities from the Euroregion have also tried to produce a full-colour euroregional magazine, in the beginning under the name of *Euro Trio* (1998-1999), and later of *Euro Régió* (2000-2001). However, the magazine did not last on the media market. In the audio-visual department, it was only *Radio Banat Link* which has undertaken a regional editorial policy as a cable radio and television channel. Analogue was previously exploring the regional audiences ([Cernicova, 2009](#)). The author considered some large regional media products as examples of real success in the area of electronic media,



namely: the [www.zoro.ro](http://www.zoro.ro) portal, with information available in German; the news [www.ericinfo.eu](http://www.ericinfo.eu) portal, with information written in four languages (Hungarian, Romanian, Serbian and English).

Analysing the state of the regional mass-media, within Western Romania and the DKMT Euroregion, [Palea \(2011\)](#) found a decline of the written press, but an increase in the number of visitors for the online news sites. The author related these trends to the changes in mass-media worldwide, but also to the typology of target audiences. Several institutions like NGOs, promoters and implementers of regional projects, or other stakeholders, interested in being informed about regional affairs, were identified as the main users of the online media information. The author considered the *ericinfo.eu* portal as a good example of DKMT information dissemination, due to its user-friendly design and complex structure (e.g. advance search options, information in four languages). Comparatively the *zoro.ro* portal, delivering information only in German, was found as limiting the share of the target audience.

### Media events within the PROBITAS Programme

PROBITAS is a complex long-term Euroregional programme focused on human rights and democratic education, aimed at creating a favourable framework to support and stimulate the formal and/or non-formal contacts and experience exchange between young journalists and young artists from Western Romania and Eastern Serbia (Vojvodina Region), in the so called Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Euroregion DKMT). The PROBITAS programme aimed at building-up a solid non-governmental organizations network in the DKMT Euroregion.

On June 12<sup>th</sup> 1998, the first Euro-regional meeting of independent radio stations from Romania, Serbia and Hungary took place in Timișoara. The meeting gathered representatives from West Radio Timișoara, Radio 021 Novi Sad (Serbia) and Radio Media 6 Szeged (Hungary) who signed a *Partnership Agreement* with the intention to stimulate the tri-lateral collaboration in order to develop a media network in the DKMT.

Soon after, on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1998, the representatives of the three independent radio stations signed a new Agreement in Szeged (Hungary). The Agreement stipulated the foundation of “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” project with the following goals:

- a) to inform the public, media and international organizations about “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” project;
- b) to establish the most suitable ways to accomplish the technical needs in order to exchange information and to create the basis for further development of Euro-regional communication;
- c) to analyse and identify the structure and the deadlines of the radio materials which will be broadcasted as a part of the project;
- d) to establish the basic elements of a unique marketing strategy;



- e) to debate and elaborate a project with the aim to inform the European Community, the European Union and international organizations who support quick Euro-regional development about “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza”.

On September 12<sup>th</sup> 1998, the participants signed *The Novi Sad Agreement* in Novi Sad. The Agreement contained concrete activities for the first common Euroregional radio program. In December 1998, the first one hour Euroregional radio programme “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” was broadcasted simultaneously in Timișoara (by Radio West), Novi Sad (by Radio 021) and Szeged (by Radio Media 6).

On April 28<sup>th</sup> 1999, *West Foundation for Regional and Euroregional Journalism*, as a non-governmental organization, was founded in Timișoara. Main goal of this non-governmental organization was to sustain and to promote cooperation between young journalists in the DKMT Euroregion.

The cooperation between the three partners continued on these new foundations in 1999, when the representatives of the three radio stations participated at the First Edition of the Summer School for the Regional and Euro-regional Journalism, organized by the West Foundation and the Radio West Timișoara in Sebiș, Arad County.

The collaboration stopped in the 1999, under the constraints of the Serbian regime hindering the freedom of speech and it was re-launched on 5-7<sup>th</sup> April 2001, on the occasion of the *Euro-regional Mass Media Meeting*, organized by CED in Timișoara. The event aimed at bringing together journalists, press institutions and media related NGOs and thus increasing the media's contribution to the establishment and/or consolidation of democracy in the region. The debates focused on the results of “Euro-media Danube-Kris-Maros-Tisza” project. All the participants agreed the WFJ initiative of the “Probitas” long-term programme and appreciated its strategy as an important step for the promotion of cross-border cooperation in the journalistic domain. The *first edition of the new programme “Probitas”* was launched during 2001 summer under the title “Euroregional Journalism and Tourism”. The programme was redefined on May 2002, when a *Partnership Agreement* was signed by representatives of the West Foundation for Regional and Euroregional Journalism Timișoara, Novi Sad School of Journalism, Editing and Publishing House “Freedom” from Novi Sad and Tibiscus University of Timișoara.

The “*Probitas 2003 – Multiculturalism against conflicts*” event was the latest phase of a long term strategy, launched in 1999, by West Foundation for Regional and Euro-regional Journalism Timișoara. The final goal of all these activities was to ensure a future coherent inter-operational journalistic and creative activity dedicated to consolidate the Euro-regional young community, to prevent regional violence, terrorism and conflicts, to promote human rights, mutual acquaintance and peaceful co-existence between minorities and majority and to find out jointly common realistic answers to multi-ethnic society problems, very specific for the geographical





coverage of the project. “Probitas 2003 - Multiculturalism against conflicts” project aimed to fulfil these goals by:

- a) organising professional meetings between young and/or experienced journalists and professional artists which will carry out basic and applied debates on the causes and potential conflicts in the region, on violence and terrorism sources and its motivations;
- b) sustaining the Third Edition of PROBITAS programme inter-operational training and experience exchange programme (during the summer of 2003), dedicated to young journalists and young artists from Romania and Serbia, representing different ethnic communities from Danube-Kris-Maris-Tisa Euro-region, including a large area from Western Romania, Eastern Serbia and South-Eastern Hungary.

Subsequently, on these foundations, the second (2002), the third (2003) and the fourth edition (2004) of “Probitas” programme scored a great success, being sustained by important organizations and institutions from Europe and the United States. Over 150 young and/or experienced journalists and artists were involved in its lucrative activities from Romania and Serbia. At the end of every edition, participants published between 4 and 6 issues of “Probitas Magazine” and produced a similar number of one hour radio-shows.

Consequently, the programme “Probitas” was rewarded with “Best@Networking Award” on the occasion of the *Third Edition of the “Regional NGO Fair”* at the end of 2002.

From 2005, in the context of the European integration of Romania, the programme „Probitas” needed to change its strategic orientation: it aimed to sustain the complex processes of this integration and, on the other hand, at promoting a new generation of Romanian youngsters interested in communication and civic matters.

#### 6.3.4 Other events

An international civil protection preparedness exercise (**EU-HUROMEX**) was organised during 22-26 September 2008 in Szolnok, Gyula, and Arad in the framework of Civil Protection Mechanism of the European Union. The event had a budget of more than 500 000 Euros and it was among the biggest EU actions in the field of disaster defence (EC, 2011). The exercise was planned within the HUMOREX project, which included the preparation, implementation and evaluation of a full-scale simulation scenario of civil protection interventions, in a hypothetical situation of serious flooding. The recovery of infrastructure damages was also considered within the exercise.

The exercise was addressed to local population and gathered the participation of disaster saving units and rescue teams from: Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Moldova. The exercise was based on a flood emergency situation scenario and was attended by more than 500 people from eight countries. During the exercise, 160 people have been evacuated from Gyula (Hungary) to Chişineu de Criş (Romania)

(Fig. 7). The exercise took place on the territory of Hungary, at the catchment's area of the river Tisza and in Romania in Arad County (large scale affected areas over more than 250 km). The countries required assistance via the Monitoring and Information Centre, and applied the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) for handling disaster management.

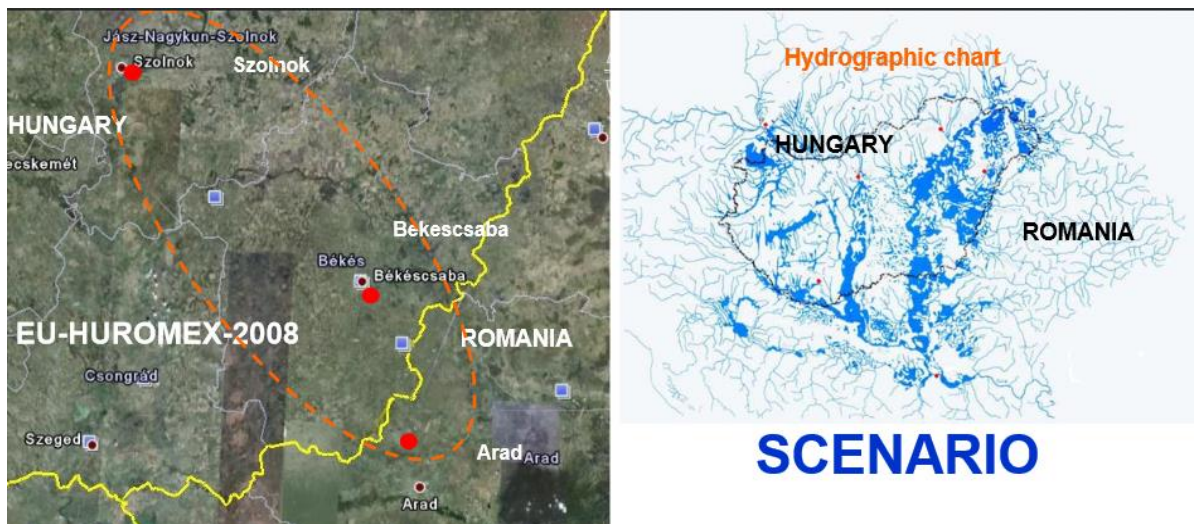


Figure 7: The target area for flood scenario in the HUMOREX exercise  
(Source: [www.igsu.ro/documente/SAEARI/Huromex.pdf](http://www.igsu.ro/documente/SAEARI/Huromex.pdf), accessed on July 13, 2015)

The lesson learned post-HUMOREX exercises were related to:

- difference between Offered capacities and Coming capacities;
- the need of a Proactive On-site Commander;
- the need for Cooperation between OSOCC-LEMA;
- language barriers;
- coordination of the Convoys in country and crossing the border (convoy length – 3,5 km);
- different Chains of Command;
- different Rescue Procedures;
- the need for Networking /Cooperation;
- practical experience;
- new standard of the bilateral cooperation;
- detailed scenario flexibility;
- efficiency of the Observers program;
- hygiene and Security on Camps;
- evaluations after the activities;
- media, web pages;
- cultural awareness.



Moreover, a joint flood prevention action group has been organised by the DKMT Euroregion for the possible prevention of floods happening often in the region, and for protection, in case of danger. The rescue team has been equipped with the most modern sets of equipment, among others, a “mobile village” used for the fast removal of population.

A regular phase of emergency preparedness software was design, defining the workflow, the database structure or the design of the user interfaces. The software was successfully tested in the conditions resembling real flood-related situations achieved during the deployment of the international exercise EU-HUROMEX. Based on the lessons learned and the results, starting from April 2009, a new software (TEVAC - Trans Border Evacuation) was designed in order to be used by all Emergency Situations Inspectorates all over Romania ([Baş et al., 2010](#)).

### The closing conference of the Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC)

The Conference was held in Novi Sad and it gathered the present and future ERIC partners. The closing discussions addressed the main achievements over a 2-year period of activity and the future plans of the Centre in relation to existing rights of using Internet and further possibilities of using it for the operation of the new ERIC portal, to maintain and update the news and information flow within the DKMT region. The event was held in the Euroregional Information Centre (ERIC), established by the Danube-Kris-Mureş-Tisa Euroregion Developing Agency Ltd, Voivodina Self-governing Territory and Regional Media and Art Foundation, in the scope of INTERREG III/A. Assessing lecture was given on Eastern-European possibilities of media privatisation, as well as its present conditions.

### The Day of the DKMT Euroregion

*The Day of the DKMT Euroregion* is organised on the last weekend of May every year at the Triplex Confinium memorial at the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border. During the event, borders are temporarily opened and the General Assembly of the DKMT performs a meeting.



## 7. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence/possibility of EU membership;</li> <li>• Multicultural traditions, cultural cooperation and coexistence of diverse cultures and communities;</li> <li>• Its geostrategic role as a gateway between Central Europe and the Balkans;</li> <li>• Valuable natural resources and availability of raw materials necessary for industry (felling and wood processing, textile, shoe manufacturing, food industry, machinery and electronics);</li> <li>• Operational infrastructure supporting small- and medium-size enterprises (e.g. industrial parks, chambers of trade and commerce, centres of business development, consultancies and duty-free areas);</li> <li>• Availability of international airports, e.g. Timișoara;</li> <li>• Important European road corridors which cross the Euroregion as well as natural corridors open towards Central and Western Europe (through the Danube), to the western Mediterranean (across the Sava corridor), to the Balkans (by the Morava–Vardar and Niš–Sofia corridors), to the Carpathians basin and the Black Sea (on the Lower Danube and passes across the Carpathians);</li> <li>• The Danube River stretching from the west to the south, providing links and favourable conditions for marine traffic between the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea (with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU harmonization of economy still needs improvement;</li> <li>• Low population density, marked demographic ageing, migration of certain population groups, mainly young;</li> <li>• High numbers employed in agriculture;</li> <li>• Differences in the educational and health care systems.</li> <li>• Shortage of capital, lack of interest on behalf of investors, low level of own sources, relative poverty in all three areas;</li> <li>• Weak transport connections within the region, outdated infrastructure between Romania and Serbia;</li> <li>• Border crossing points with insufficient capacity between Romania and Serbia;</li> <li>• Underdeveloped and inadequate management and marketing strategies, including tourism infrastructure;</li> <li>• Lack of Euroregional tourism marketing;</li> <li>• Insufficiency of the institutional system of cross-border regional and local level cooperation;</li> <li>• Lack of Euroregional motorway and state-of-the-art expressway links;</li> <li>• Outdated rail infrastructure, long border-crossing time between Romania and Serbia;</li> <li>• Missing components of communal infrastructure (e.g. sewage treatment, and waste collection and recycling), heavy</li> </ul>



Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>connections to the Middle East and the Caspian Sea);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presence of minorities in the region fosters cooperation in the fields of education and culture;</li> <li>• The existence of three internationally acknowledged higher educational centres in the region that have been cooperating in several fields, i.e. Timișoara, Szeged, and Novi Sad;</li> <li>• Joint strategic planning and joint management that allow a homogenous development of the region;</li> <li>• The homogeneous management system of EU funds opens up new areas of cooperation and strengthen the existing ones;</li> <li>• Good border crossings by road and one by rail between Romania and Hungary, Hungary and Serbia, but insufficient between Romania and Serbia;</li> <li>• Road and rail networks are in good condition on the Hungarian side, but they both need to be modernised on the Romanian and Serbian sides;</li> <li>• At economic level, there is a cross-border common market thanks to the low prices of products, the availability of a work force, the large number of new enterprises along the border area;</li> <li>• Long-standing tradition of agreements (since the 1960s) between the three countries, aimed at regulating the movement of people, goods and capital across the border.</li> </ul>	<p>pollution in large cities (dust and exhaust gases), polluted surface and ground waters;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of joint programmes in environmental protection with a long-term monitoring.</li> <li>• The low level of coordination of actors in the management of the Euroregion and the lack of communication (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated website);</li> </ul>



Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement/stabilizing relationships in the Balkans;</li> <li>• The region can act as a Southeast European gate towards the enlargement of the EU;</li> <li>• Availability of EU support for cross-border cooperation through different funding instruments;</li> <li>• Common management system of EU funds which opens up new relationship opportunities and can improve the efficiency of cooperation;</li> <li>• The university centres of the region are capable of catalysing European education trough R&amp;D and innovation;</li> <li>• Trans-European network intersecting the region Vienna–Szeged–Istanbul–Thessaloniki and Budapest–Arad–Bucharest, Trans-European Motorways E68, E70 and E75 and the important Trans-European corridors No. 4, 5, 9, 10A and 7 (the Danube) as well as their branches - provides excellent opportunity to connect the area to the rest of Europe;</li> <li>• Increased effectiveness of joint environmental and nature protection initiatives as a result of coordinated actions;</li> <li>• Joint management of natural and human-induced disasters (e.g. floods)</li> <li>• Improving economic performance of the countries which can contribute to the strengthening of cross-border cooperation and development of the region;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes of the political situation that might negatively affect cooperation;</li> <li>• The proximity to the Western Balkans periodically affected by tensions and conflicts, thus triggering economic disrupting within the Euroregion and foreign investments;</li> <li>• Relatively high environmental risk of natural disasters and pollution;</li> <li>• The slowness of infrastructural developments restricts cooperation possibilities;</li> <li>• Shortfall caused by the insufficient financing of R&amp;D and the higher education sector;</li> <li>• The Schengen border control may hinder cooperation;</li> <li>• The tourism related marketing activity is not achieved because of the lack of financial resources as well as that of joint management and promotion;</li> <li>• Lack of consistent programmes to retrain labour force and insufficient employment opportunities;</li> <li>• Planning and insufficient publication of statistics on cooperation and joint results of activities;</li> <li>• European institutions should better disseminate their cross-border cooperation models, while national authorities should harmonise legal procedures in this field and create a database covering also local and not only national initiatives;</li> <li>• The absence of cooperation structures, excessive state bureaucratisation</li> </ul>



Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing interest of potential investors and tourists as a result of the improvement of infrastructure (roads, border crossings);</li><li>• The use of alternative sources of energy may help save energy in the region, especially in rural and tourist industry areas.</li></ul>	<p>(translating into inefficiency, slowness and loss of opportunities);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• increased administrative centralisation may hamper cross-border cooperation in the Euroregion;</li></ul>



## 8. Future plans and goals

### 8.1 Future challenges and trends of the cross-border cooperation

Economic relations between Romania and Hungary can be explained by the economic dynamics of the two countries as well as by the EU integration factor, which provides momentum for further increase of the economic cooperation along the border. There are many good examples of positive cooperation between the two sides.

Nevertheless, the two main obstacles that have been detected with respect to Hungary-Serbia, are related to state centralisation and the lack of adequate resources, especially in Serbia. Other factors include EU regulations on foreign employment, import quotas, and quality standards to control the cooperation in the economy and labour sectors.

After Hungary became a member of the EU, levels of economy and technology changed in favour of Hungary, with Serbia lagging behind. The economies of the two countries are not complementary; they compete in the same fields, i.e. food industry, agriculture, transport and tourism, with the great advantage on the Hungarian side because of its membership in the EU, providing a better access to the Union market. Hungary also benefited greatly from EU funds, while Serbia suffered the ten-year period of sanctions. The two countries cooperate on environmental issues as members of the Danube Commission, as well as in matters concerning Tisza and Timiș rivers. The environmental restoration of the Bega and Caraș rivers were drawn up, but EU funding is needed for their implementation. The same also applies to other initiatives (e.g. Szeged-Timișoara railway, the new Szeged-Novi Sad-Timișoara navigable channel and new border crossing points).

In terms of education and culture in northern Vojvodina, at the border with Hungary, education from primary to university level is carried out in Hungarian language which enables many citizens of Serbia to attend schools in Hungary ([Gasparini and Del Bianco, 2011](#)). As for sports activities, Hungarian teams often go to the spas in the Vojvodina area for training camps. Moreover, a wide range of cross-border activities involving everyday services for citizens of the border area are taking place.

In the Romanian-Serbian cross-border area there are very good relations in the field of trade (after the limitations imposed by the embargo were abolished), and in the socio-cultural field, given the good ethnic relations and the linguistic minorities in the area. In the economic and industrial sectors, trade fairs and exhibitions were organised, mostly on the Romanian side.

The main obstacles to cross-border cooperation can be identified in the centralised bureaucracy, but also into a lack of crucial instruments, like an up-to-date database for all joint initiatives. Opportunities at the economic level, however, do exist: low cost of labour, a good level of consumption, tourist potential, etc. The cross-border cooperation between Romania





and Serbia increased after the resolution of the Kosovo crisis and the establishment of the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, launched in 1999. An important role was played once again by the Council of Europe, which coordinated a number of projects promoting regional cooperation, consequently, it profoundly contributed to the stabilisation and democratisation of the region.

The economic dynamics across borders is a positive factor for developing cross-border cooperation between the two countries. The level of coordination between the Romanian and Serbian administrations improved in the last few years, although the administrative capacity of both countries should be improved concerning cross-border cooperation. During the last few years (after the Yugoslav Wars), a significant improvement was witnessed in areas like movement of people and goods. With Romania as part of the EU, this trend will gradually continue as it is supported by strong cross-border ties, and economic and socio-cultural development. The border infrastructure is still not adequate by European standards, even though considerable improvements have been made.

*The future plans of the DKMT Euroregion* are very well related to the fact that two of the participating countries are already members of the European Union, which assures significant support for cross-border cooperation programs. Moreover, Serbia's chances to become a European Union member will lead to the diversification and expansion of cooperation potential in the region. The implementation of concepts defined in the strategic plan of the DKMT Euroregion will continue during the forthcoming years – in line with the national development plans of the certain member countries: the projection of a “Euroregional TGV” fast railway connecting Budapest-Békéscsaba-Arad-Bucharest; a motorway between Röszke and Belgrade, completely constructed on the E75 section; the Triplex international industrial park founded on the Hungarian-Romanian-Serbian triplex border; the “Banat road” built between the Belgrade-Pančevo-Kikinda-Triplex border point and the Deszk node of the M43 clearway; turning Danube into a complex European tourism and environmental protection route on the territory of the DKMT Euroregion; the reconstruction of the Timisoara-Szeged-Subotica-Bácsalmás-Baja railway line in the framework of a TEN corridor – Trans-European network; the Magyarcsanak-Cenad Bridge reconstructed on the Mureş River; maintaining environmental protection green belts along borders; a new border crossing station is established between Caras-Severin County and the southern part of the Vojvodina etc. ([DKMT Euroregion Fact Sheet - Association of European Border Regions](#)<sup>13</sup>).

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.aebr.eu/pdf/fmanager//Regionen/D/DKTM/Fact\\_Sheet\\_DKMT.pdf](http://www.aebr.eu/pdf/fmanager//Regionen/D/DKTM/Fact_Sheet_DKMT.pdf)



## 8.2 Expected funds to finance projects within DKMT

The success of the programs and projects that the DKMT Euroregion benefited from (e.g. PHARE CBC, Hungarian–Romanian CBC Programme) has provided the favourable environment for the attraction of further financial instruments.

The CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation) is aimed at supporting the participation of the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP). The Stabilisation and Association process is the cornerstone of the European Union's policy towards the region. It seeks to promote stability within the region whilst also facilitating closer association with the European Union. A key element of the SAP, for countries that have made sufficient progress in terms of political and economic reform and administrative capacity, is a formal contractual relationship with the EU in the form of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. The SAP is designed to help each country to progress at its own pace towards greater European integration.

The INTERREG programme provides funding for interregional programmes across Europe implemented under the European Community's territorial cooperation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It is expected that INTERREG EUROPE will continue the achievements of INTERREG IVC over the 2014-2020 financing period to provide financial support for projects within the cross-border area.

Moreover, the Romania-Hungary Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 and the Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014–2020, which are currently under development, could support initiatives aiming to develop and broaden relationships among local communities and local governments in the field of economy, education, culture, science and sports – and help the region to maintain the process of European integration. To this, one might add Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian national sources.



## 9. Unique, regionally specific features of the cooperation

In Central and Southern Europe the process of European integration involves regional cooperation, such as border regions, thus substantially contributing to the implementation of cross-border strategies and preparation for accession of some countries, i.e. Serbia. They also contribute to the diminishing of tensions and maintaining the stability in the Balkans area. Euroregions enable the involvement of human and material resources that would otherwise remain unused. On the other hand, border regions are often secluded from the centres of decision-making and economic activity, thus facing problems related to an insufficient transport infrastructure; underdeveloped service sector; inadequate technological infrastructure. However, all of these can be solved through regional economic cooperation.

The DKMT Euroregion includes territorial-statistical units (corresponding to LAU2 level) pertaining to three neighbouring countries: Hungary, Romania and Serbia generally overlapping an important historical province - Banat. Thus, by its geographical position and tripartite structure the Euroregion is at a most favourable position in the context of European Union enlargement.

Moreover, important natural transport corridors across the region also connect it with other important European regions: the Danube to the Central and Western Europe on its upper sector, and the Carpathian basin and the Black Sea on its lower sector; the Sava corridor to the western Mediterranean region; the Morava–Vardar and the Niš–Sofia corridors to the Balkans. In particular, the Danube corridor plays an important role through its northwest to southeast passageway, thus linking the Atlantic Ocean with the Black Sea.

In addition, its favourable location has led to the development of important communication axes such as the Trans-European railroads linking Vienna–Szeged–Istanbul–Thessaloniki and Budapest–Arad–Bucharest, as well as Trans-European Motorways E68, E70 and E75 and important TEN-T corridors (Rhine-Danube Core Network Corridor and the Orient/East-Med Corridor) and their branches. All of these stand as important objectives of the European infrastructural investments, thus providing excellent opportunities to connect DKMT to the rest of Europe<sup>14</sup>.

The DKMT Euroregion is one of the most important and active areas of Europe by its position in the eastern border of the European Union at the crossroads of Trans-European and Pan-European corridors. However, intensity of the cooperation is lower than in Western Europe because homogenisation processes are significant barriers to the development of the border regions. Thus it stands as an important area in the development and stability of the West Balkan region. Two of the regions belonging to DKMT are parts of countries that are part of the EU (Hungary and Romania) and one to an EU candidate (Serbia). Moreover, Hungary is part of the Schengen Area. All these factors provide favourable context for cooperation within and beyond the borders of the EU in Central Europe and Southeast Europe.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dkmt.net/en/index.php?bov=80981200392763>



## 10. Summary

The Euroregion Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa (DKMT) consists of four counties in Hungary: **Bács-Kiskun** (centre Kecskemét), **Békés** (centre Békéscsaba), **Csongrád** (centre Szeged), **Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok** (centre Szolnok), four counties in Romania; **Arad** (centre Arad), **Hunedoara** (center Deva), **Timiș** (centre Timișoara), **Caraș-Severin** (centre Reșița), and the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (centre Novi Sad). The area of DKMT is 77 243 km<sup>2</sup>, gathering a population of over 5 900 000 inhabitants. The Euroregion has its origins in the bilateral cooperation between Timiș (Romania) and Csongrád (Hungary) counties through the Regional Cooperation Protocol Danube–Mures–Tisa. In its current form, the organisation was established on 21<sup>st</sup> of November 1997 in Szeged. Two of the LAU2 units of the DKMT Euroregion belong to countries which are EU members, Hungary joined in 2004 and Romania in 2007. Hungary is part of the Schengen Area, too.

DKMT's objective is the development of relations between local communities and local representatives in areas like environment, economy, education, culture, health, science and sport, and cooperation in perspective of European integration. This cross-border region is one of the most important areas of the European Union, with a specific role in the Trans-European and Pan-European corridors, as well as an important area in the modernisation of the West Balkans.

The main decision-making body of DKMT is the General Assembly that is also electing the President in office, formed by heads of regional authorities for a period of one year, according to the principle of rotation between countries. DKMT's Secretariat is composed of three delegated persons, each from the Romanian, Hungarian, and Serbian parts, based on internal agreements between the regional leaders of the three countries. Working groups study and draw up programs and projects, make proposals and draw up reports on activities from the General Assembly. The Steering Committee is composed of three presidents of the regional authorities, one from each country. The Agency for Cooperation Development DKMT realises activities conducted by both public and economic utility, for ensuring funds needed for the development of regional DKMT cooperation.

The DKMT Euroregion Development Agency Public Utility Company was established by the General Assembly on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The founding members of the General Assembly established the public utility company to ensure the implementation of development aims defined at the act of foundation of the Danube-Kris-Mures-Tisa Regional Cooperation.

The region was involved in the last years in many cross-border projects using multiple available EU funding sources (mainly CBC Phare programme before 2004, INTERREG programme and Cross-border cooperation programme Romania-Hungary 2007-2013). The projects were diverse and covered the main objectives of the Euroregion: promoting tourism and environmental protection, infrastructural development, increasing the social cohesion of the



region, etc. The cooperation was also involved in organizing and managing scientific activities, emergency situation training and other media activities. The Euroregion is also active in terms of scientific activities; specifically, it organised 15 regional conferences that analysed and investigated the issue of regional cooperation and the possibilities of its enhancement in order to create a better and healthier environment within the region. Besides the scientific activity, a full-scale simulation scenario was organised in the framework of the HUMOREX project. This hypothetical situation imitated a disaster caused by a serious flood and it dealt with the issues of preparation, intervention, implementation and civil protection.

However, the DKMT Euroregion has undergone several structural changes from its establishment, and these changes have affected the level of communication and the visibility of actors involved in its management (e.g. no functional country secretariats, outdated website, reduced availability to communicate results and activities). All of these could negatively impact the effectiveness of this cooperation initiative.



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