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Cross-Border Cooperation within the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument “Ukraine-Romania-Moldova”

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Abstract: Under the current conditions of expanding globalization, the role of cross-border cooperation in the life of regions and communities is growing and new opportunities are opening up to intensify economic activity in peripheral areas and increase their competitiveness. Cross-border cooperation is aimed at overcoming the negative aspects of the existence of borders and the consequences that have arisen in the border areas due to their location on the national outskirts of states and aims to improve living conditions. Among the main goals of such cooperation are: overcoming existing stereotypes and prejudices on both sides of the border; removing political and administrative barriers between neighboring nations; creation of economic, social and cultural infrastructure, subject to the formation of joint bodies, economic entities, centers, etc. The article describes

the main aspects of cross-border cooperation between Romania, Moldova and Ukraine. Romania is an important partner for the countries of Eastern Europe and, as one of the youngest EU countries, has considerable experience that could help partner countries to carry out effective socio-economic reforms and fight corruption. Ukraine-Romania-Moldova cross-border cooperation is part of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument and plays an important role in developing mutually beneficial relations between states, addressing socio-economic, environmental and security issues, and is an effective means of Ukraine's European integration. The Joint Action Plan “Ukraine-Romania-Moldova” 2007–2013 of the European Instrument has significantly affected the revival of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, especially the cooperation of local and regional authorities, communities and civil society institutions. During the program, more than 140 projects were implemented, which contributed to the development of transport infrastructure in border areas,

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energy networks, water and waste management, funded projects for cooperation between universities, research institutes and local authorities. There are positive dynamics of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Romania, in particular, important infrastructure projects are being implemented under the “Joint Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Program 2014–2020” and EU Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine 2014–2020”.

Keywords: cross-border cooperation, European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, Ukraine-Romania-Moldova program, Upper Prut Euroregion, Lower Danube Euroregion Ukraine, Romania, Moldova.

Трансграничное сотрудничество в рамках европейского инструмента соседства и партнерства «Украина-Румыния-Молдова»

Аннотация: В современных условиях расширения процессов глобализации растет роль трансграничного сотрудничества в жизни регионов и общин и открываются новые возможности для активизации хозяйственной деятельности на периферийных территориях и повышения их конкурентоспособности. Трансграничное сотрудничество направлено на преодоление негативных аспектов существования границ и последствий, возникших на приграничных территориях из-за их расположения на национальных окраинах государств и направленных на улучшение условий жизни населения. Среди главных целей такого сотрудничества есть: преодоление существующих стереотипов и предрассудков по обе стороны границы; устранение политических и административных барьеров между соседними народами; создание хозяйственной, социальной и культурной инфраструктуры, при условии формирования общих органов, хозяйствующих субъектов, и т.д. В статье описаны основные аспекты трансграничного сотрудничества между Румынией, Молдовой

и Украиной. Румыния выступает важным партнером для государств Восточной Европы, и как одно из самых молодых государств ЕС имеет немалый опыт, который мог бы помочь государствам-партнерам в проведении эффективных реформ в социально-экономической сфере и борьбе с коррупцией. Трансграничное сотрудничество Украина-Румыния-Молдова является составной частью Европейского инструмента соседства и партнерства и играет важную роль для развития взаимовыгодных отношений между государствами, способствует решению социально-экономических, экологических и вопросов безопасности, а также является эффективным средством европейской интеграции Украины. Совместный план действий «Украина-Румыния-Молдова» 2007–2013 гг. Европейского инструмента оказал существенное влияние на оживление трансграничного сотрудничества между Украиной, Румынией, Молдовой, особенно на сотрудничество местных и региональных органов власти, общины и институтов общественного общества. За период реализации программы было реализовано более 140 проектов, способствовавших развитию транспортной инфраструктуры приграничных районов, энергетических сетей, управлению водными ресурсами и отходами, профинансированы проекты сотрудничества между университетами, научно-исследовательскими институтами и местными органами власти. Между Украиной и Румынией наблюдается позитивная динамика трансграничного сотрудничества, в частности, реализуются важные инфраструктурные проекты в рамках «Совместной операционной программы ЕИС «Бассейн Черного моря» 2014–2020 гг.» и «Совместной операционной программы ЕС «Румыния-Украина» 2014 ».

Ключевые слова: трансграничное сотрудничество, Европейский инструмент соседства и партнерства, программа Украина-Румыния-Молдова, еврорегион Верхний Прут, еврорегион Нижний Дунай, Украина, Румыния, Молдова.

Introduction

Cross-border cooperation is an important tool for European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Eastern European countries, as well as a means to address socio-economic, environmental, political and security issues of modern states. Among the various programs for the development of EU cross-border cooperation, the Ukraine-Romania-Moldova program occupies an important place. Cross-border cooperation between

Ukraine, Moldova and Romania has a long period, in particular, the first Euroregion, which in 1998 included administrative-territorial units of Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Romania, was the Lower Danube Euroregion. Since 2007, when Romania became a member of the EU, a new stage of cross-border cooperation has begun, in particular, strengthening Ukraine's European integration. At this time, the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument is also being implemented, which includes the

Ukraine-Romania-Moldova cross-border cooperation program (2007–2013).

The EU's neighborhood policy is an integral part of the instrument of cross-border cooperation, including Euroregions. Each Euroregion has its own history and significance for the participating state

Research on cross-border cooperation is interdisciplinary and related to such sciences as regional economics, law, etc. Historical, cultural and interethnic aspects also play a significant role in the formation of cross-border cooperation. The history of the establishment of borders has significantly influenced the development of the territories and communities with which they are connected. Within the framework of cross-border cooperation, considerable attention is paid to the implementation of projects to develop ties with the diaspora, aimed at preserving the ethnic, cultural, historical and linguistic identity of its representatives.

The term «cross-border cooperation» is considered in the system of international cooperation of the regions and was officially introduced with the signing of «Protocol 2 to the European Framework Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities concerning interterritorial cooperation» (Protocol 2 to the European territorial authorities or communities concerning inter-territorial cooperation, of 5 May 1998 in Strasbourg). The Madrid Convention defines cross-border cooperation as «... any joint action aimed at strengthening and deepening good neighborly relations between territorial communities or authorities under the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties, as well as concluding for this purpose any necessary agreements or agreements.» (European Framework Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, 1980). The Statute of the Assembly of European Regions defines the term «interregional cooperation», which means any links established between regions belonging to different states. Although the phenomenon arose in 1958 with the creation of the first cross-border region between Germany and the Netherlands.

The well-known Swiss researcher Hans-Martin Chudi defined cross-border cooperation as meaning bilateral, trilateral or multilateral cooperation between local and regional authorities (semi-public and private actors may also be involved in this context). in

geographically adjacent territories. This also applies to territories separated by the sea (Tschudi H-M. Promoting transfrontier-operation: an important factor of democratic stability in Europe.- Strasbourg. 4–6 June 2002).

According to Filippo Celato and Rafael Colette, cross-border cooperation is an instrument of the European Neighborhood Policy, which should erase borders and enable Europe to become truly «broad». This is particularly evident in the ENP cross-border cooperation component and, more generally, in the territorial and non-territorial perceptions of the ENP. A striking example in this regard is the proliferation of micro-, meso- and macro-regional strategies across diverse national and supranational borders (Scott, 2015).

According to Polish scientist Eva Kokhanska, cross-border cooperation can overcome historical prejudices often associated with local communities, it allows for strengthening of business and people-to-people contacts as well as stimulates economic development of frontier regions. Cross-border cooperation in Europe aims at improving the quality of life, competitiveness of the regions, and supporting the idea of a single market and social cohesion (CBI Pro-Akademia, 2014).

It is important that cross-border cooperation is carried out only between adjacent territories, it is aimed at establishing ties and contractual relations in border areas in order to find solutions to common and identical problems, it is aimed at overcoming the negative aspects of borders and consequences in border areas. due to their location and aims to improve the living conditions of the population.

Researchers identify the main factors in the development of cross-border cooperation: the existence of common problems to solve which should be combined; implementation of a unified spatial planning policy of the European continent, opportunities for accelerated economic and environmental development of border regions and improving the quality of life of residents; opportunities to receive significant financial support from the European Union and other international structures; formation of a single integrated space within the cross-border region.

The basic principles of European regional policy allowed to form the principles of cross-border cooperation, in particular, this partnership, assistance,

solidarity, the principle and concept of cross-border development strategy.

Ukraine has adopted the Law «On Cross-Border Cooperation», which defines cross-border cooperation as joint actions aimed at establishing and deepening economic, social, scientific and technical, environmental, cultural and other relations between territorial communities, their representative bodies, local executive bodies of Ukraine and territorial communities, relevant authorities of other states within the competence defined by their national legislation (Law of Ukraine on Cross-border cooperation, 2004).

The study of the peculiarities of the formation and development of cross-border cooperation dates back to the mid-90s of the XX century, when regional policy of the European Union moved to the level of mobilization and application of the principle of subsidiarity. local governments, public organizations to solve common problems. The states began to conclude cross-border cooperation agreements, and also moved to cooperation within Euroregions, in particular, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and other countries created Euroregions around their borders, due to the development of European integration processes and strengthening regional funding for regional development in Europe.

The research is aimed at characterizing modern Ukraine-Moldova-Romania cross-border cooperation, identifying problematic issues of such cooperation, identifying key international development projects of the Ukrainian-Moldovan-Romanian cross-border region, in particular, building border infrastructure, deepening cultural cooperation. It is important to analyze the agreements between local authorities and regional cross-border regulations.

The methodological basis of the study of cross-border cooperation is an interdisciplinary approach, which allows to combine a set of general and special methods, and the institutional approach as an opportunity to consider the impact on cross-border cooperation of different institutions; socio-cultural method- explains the impact of social and cultural ties on the development of cross-border relations; comparative analysis- to compare the processes of cross-border cooperation in Europe and Ukraine. Background analysis helps us to determine the main preconditions for the emergence and main trends in cross-border cooperation between the parties. The

comparative method is used in the article to compare the population to the number of national minorities living in Romania, Moldova and Ukraine.

The study of the peculiarities of the development of cross-border cooperation is of interest to many modern Ukrainian and foreign scholars. In particular, such forgers as S. Hekman, N. Mikula, S. Garasymchuk are actively researching the issues of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania. Modern foreign scholars analyze cross-border cooperation not only through the prism of solving economic and environmental problems, but also raise issues of ethnocultural cross-border cooperation, the activities of national minorities in the border area.

The study of cross-border cooperation is an object of interest to modern scientists. Polish scientists Eberhardt P., Kasperska E., Gwizdala J. paid special attention to the study of this problem; Romanian- Basboga K., Horga I, Moldavian- Mazepus H., Ramasheuskaya I. and Ukrainian scientists- Artyomov I., Vazhynsky F., Gakman S., Lendiel M., Mikula M and others.

The works of the Ukrainian scientist S. Hackman were especially useful for our research. In his work «Interregional Cooperation as a Factor of Ukraine's European Integration» the author considers the problems and prospects of EU programs, among which much attention is paid to the neighborhood programs of the Euroregions «Lower Danube» and «Upper Prut». The most obvious example is the functioning of the Euroregion «Upper Prut», which actively promotes the development and improvement of trade and economic relations with several countries. This strengthens cooperation between governments, encourages the development of new projects and the introduction of new technologies (Hackman, 2020).

S. Hackman pays special attention to the humanitarian aspect of cooperation. According to the scientist, the development of ties between educational institutions creates a favorable environment for exchanges of educational programs, the creation of cultural and sports centers and the signing of bilateral agreements. For example, since Romania is part of the Upper Prut Euroregion, Ukraine's participation in it provides an opportunity to strengthen ties with the EU. Also, this form of cooperation contributes to the development of new agreements, obtaining additional funding. Among them are programs to overcome economic and social inequality, and so on (Hackman, 2020).

No less important to the topic of our study is the work of F. Vazhynsky «Ukrainian-Moldovan cross-border region: institutional and legal framework and the current state of subregional cooperation.» This article considered all legal documents in the field of Ukrainian-Moldovan cross-border relations, as well as a number of projects, including «Creating a favorable investment climate in the border regions of Ukraine and Moldova», «Border Business Cooperation Ukraine-Romania-Republic of Moldova», and «Internationalization and Cohesion of SMEs and Business Support Structures in Border Areas-InterNet». The author also reviewed current projects, including «Inventory, assessment and reduction of anthropogenic pollution in the Lower Danube region of Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova», «Eco-cities: a common vision in the border region» and «Development of the agricultural sector by creating agricultural networks »; «Consolidation of the network of protected areas for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of the Danube Delta region and the Lower Prut PANNature»; «Cross-border interdisciplinary cooperation to prevent natural disasters and mitigate environmental pollution». Euroregion «Lower Danube» (Vazhynskyi, 2015).

Expenditures for each project are incurred during the implementation period of each relevant contract. Eligible costs and ineligible costs at project level must be described in the application package in accordance with the Practical Guide to Contract Procedures for EU External Action. Thresholds for the size of the project are usually between 30,000 and 2 million euros (Andrusevych, 2008).

The specific amount will be set at the priority / measure level before the proposals are considered in accordance with the decision of the European Commission. Beneficiaries and their partners must contribute to the project budget an amount equivalent to 10% of the EU contribution to the project (Artomov, 2013, pp. 44–51).

Cross-border cooperation is part of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, which provides for cooperation at the regional level (NUTS 3) between EU countries and the member states of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. A feature of these programs is the development of a Common Operating System for the entire period of program implementation (Artomov, 2013).

In the context of our study, we should consider the operational program «Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova», which was based on the financial element of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (Balabanov, 2007, pp. 52–63).

Features of the adoption of the joint operational program “Ukraine-Moldova-Romania”

For the period 2007–2013, the goal was to develop cooperation between the three countries in order to overcome common problems and find new ways of development. The program also encouraged active interaction between people and communities living in border areas (Artiomov, 2013).

The purpose of the Upper Prut Euroregion is to expand existing subregional ties and promote the further development of cross-border cooperation of administrative-territorial units of the founding states, individual cities, other settlements, local governments, public administration, individual institutions, enterprises, non-governmental and public organizations, national minorities and individuals in the fields of economy, education, science, culture and sports, as well as the development of new mechanisms of interstate cooperation and secure sustainable (self-reproducing) development of the region in the framework of integration into the modern European process (Mikula, 2004).

The Upper Prut Euroregion project is an integral part of the system of modern European priorities of regional cooperation, development of the European security system and improvement of cross-border financial and economic, communication and environmental relations.

According to statistics, for the entire period of the program in 2007–2013, the EU government allocated 126.72 million euros. The minimum contribution of the participating countries amounted to 11.4 million euros. The list of administrative units covered by the program included. Botosani County, Vaslu County, Galati, Suceava, Tulcea and Iasi in Romania, Chernivtsi and Odessa regions in Ukraine and the whole Republic of Moldova (Mikula, 2004).

In addition, some regions were included, in Romania it is Braila County, and in Ukraine Vinnytsia

and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, as well as Vinkovetsky, Gorodetsky, Dzerzhinsky, Dunayevetsky, Kamyanets-Podilsky, Letychivsky, Novoushitsky, Khmelnytsky, Chemerevetsky and Yarmolaetsky and Yermo and Berezhany, Borshchiv, Buchach, Husiatyn, Zalishchyk, Monastery, Pidhaitsy, Terebovlya, Ternopil and Chortkiv districts of Ternopil region) (State Fiscal Service of Ukraine, 2013).

If we consider the geographical framework, the total area of the program is 112,554 square meters. km, additional 64,053 sq. km. km are occupied by adjacent regions. About 15 million people live in this area. The average population density is 91.3 inhabitants per square kilometer. The highest population density is 149 people per square kilometer (Iasi County), the lowest – 30.2 people per square kilometer (Tulcea County) (Yevchak, 2020).

Looking at demographics, we can see that about half of the population lives in rural areas. This means that the main focus of the program should be on agricultural development. As for urban regions, they can contribute to the economic and social aspects of the program. Among the cities with a population of about 1 million are Odessa and Chisinau, and 18 cities with a population of over 100,000. The peculiarity of the Euroregion is that large cities are located 30 km from the border, leaving the border areas sparsely populated (Embassy of Ukraine in Romania, 2021).

In the period 2014–2020, the European Union will finance the Joint Operational Program Romania-Ukraine, through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENPI, 2019).

The program addresses the region on the border between Romania and Ukraine and will contribute to the common goal of the European Neighborhood Instrument: the evolution towards prosperity and good neighborliness, achieved through cooperation in the border area for the benefit of neighboring and EU member states. border (Regulation EC No 1082/2006).

The territories of the Program consist of: Romania: counties: Satu Mare, Maramures, Botosani, Suceava, Tulcea

Ukraine: Regions: Ivano-Frankivsk, Zakarpattia, Chernivtsi, Odessa. EU funding for this program is 60 million euros. The two countries must ensure a minimum co-financing of 10% of the EU contribution (European Commission, 2021).

The program was prepared by the Joint Program Committee to consult with stakeholders. The program was approved by the European Commission in December 2015 (Herasymchuk, 2018).

At the same time, there is no tendency among the urban population to increase the number of inhabitants. This can be explained by the high level of migration of people of working age, as well as reduced fertility (The European Neighbourhood Policy, 2016).

Among the main problems of the region is the high level of migration from the border regions of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. According to official figures, about 40,000 Moldovans live and work abroad. This led to the process of «aging of the nation» and a significant shortage of able-bodied people (Embassy of Ukraine in Moldova, 2021).

Directions of implementation of the program “Ukraine-Moldova-Romania”

Development strategies need to be encouraged to prevent these processes. To this end, the Ukraine-Romania-Moldova program was created, which aimed to increase the economic potential of the region so that the able-bodied population had fewer reasons to leave their homes. However, the statistics are disappointing. The low level of GDP in the program region may indicate that an increase in the number of labor does not add value to the products produced. The agricultural sector also remains uncompetitive (Herasymchuk, 2018).

The tourism sector has the greatest potential for development. Cultural and historical heritage are opportunities for tourism development. Important sites include natural landscapes, architectural monuments, nature reserves, festivals, fairs, etc. Usually in large cities the tourist infrastructure is developed at a high level, while in suburban regions there is a low interest in tourism. A promising area is agritourism, which consists of traveling in the countryside (Tereshchenko, 2006).

The main factors of its development are rich traditions, ecological products and cleanliness of the environment. However, poor accessibility to the regions and the lack of a marketing campaign to encourage travel to rural areas are hampering. It is worth noting that the development of tourism could significantly

contribute to business development, and as a result, create new jobs and fill the region's budget (Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union, 2010).

Education in the border regions has a developed structure, but the total percentage of university graduates is only 15%. The aim of the program is to improve the quality of secondary and higher education. In rural areas, the problem of finding teachers and other educators is particularly acute. There is a lack of computers and other equipment in educational institutions, and this problem needs to be solved. Universities often use the opportunities of cross-border cooperation programs to obtain additional funding (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, 2021).

The program area includes four Euroregions, including the Upper Prut, the Siret-Prut-Nistru, the Lower Danube and the Carpathians. The presence of these formations may indicate a willingness to cooperate and use the latest tools to achieve goals. A major advantage of the Euroregion as a unit is its support at the state level and the involvement of local, regional or governmental authorities. This allows for the development of broad cross-border plans or strategies (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, 2008).

Considering cross-border cooperation in the field of nature conservation, it is regulated by the Declaration on the Establishment of the Green Corridor of the Lower Danube (2000). According to the document, Ukraine, Romania and Moldova are committed to establishing a network of functional water areas along the Lower Danube. Cooperation is also carried out at the level of exchange of experience in the management of protected areas (Maksymenko, 2019, pp. 140–145).

In 2007–2009, 10 projects of various directions were financed. In particular in the field of tourism, culture, education, health care. It also happened during this period. Within the framework of the operational European Neighborhood and Ukraine-Romania-Moldova Partnership Instrument, programs to increase active life in the Prut River Valley were implemented, a cross-border tourism project was funded, and the fight against garbage was launched (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, 2021).

Also noteworthy is the joint action plan «Ukraine-Romania-Moldova» 2007–2013, which improved the level of economic competitiveness, strengthened po-

litical cooperation, achieved development in the field of education and culture, tourism, health. This instrument has actively promoted cross-border cooperation between Ukraine, Romania and Moldova at the local and regional levels, as well as the development of civil society (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, 2021).

Ukraine is currently cooperating with Romania and Moldova in the Lower Danube Euroregion. Its zone includes the Odessa region of Ukraine, the Romanian counties of Braila, Galati and Tulcea, as well as the Cantemir and Cahulvid districts of Moldova. The aim is to achieve balanced economic development, solve problems in the field of employment, education, environment, the formation of a single cultural space.

Ukraine and Romania carry out cross-border cooperation in three main areas:

1. Cross-border cooperation in the framework of the European Neighborhood Instrument programs;
2. Cooperation at the level of non-governmental organizations and local state bodies of Ukraine and Romania;
3. Regional trade and economic cooperation.

Key projects include Clean Danube River, Transboundary Health Infrastructure, and Improving Public Safety through Emergency Management (BRIDGE) (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, 2021).

Cooperation between Ukraine, Romania and Moldova is multidimensional and is implemented within the framework of the European Instrument, Euroregions, individual programs, projects and bilateral agreements. The vast majority of them aim to improve the level of cross-border cooperation by strengthening cultural ties and economic development. Integration of cross-border regions into the single economic space, overcoming common problems, developing new plans and strategies are a priority (European Neighbourhood Policy, 2021).

Analysis of various aspects of the preparation and implementation of the Eastern Partnership Moldova-Ukraine-Romania Territorial Cooperation Programs shows that they focused primarily on large projects, the number of which was limited by the Program budget. This approach, according to researchers, was not in the interests of territorial communities in border regions (Mikula, 2011).

Given the specifics of the implementation of the Programs, the strategy of involving a wide range of

participants in cross-border cooperation is more effective than under current conditions by simplifying application procedures and differentiating competitive conditions abroad, budget amounts, in particular. This will facilitate cooperation at borders, form stable thematic partnerships, increase NGOs' experience in project management and create the right preconditions for the effective implementation of European approaches to the development of cross-border cooperation (Regulation EC No 1082/2006).

Despite the general positive perception of the Romania-Moldova-Ukraine Eastern Partnership Territorial Cooperation Programs, there are a number of problematic issues that experts say reduce its effectiveness, including discriminatory bidding, non-compliance with program programming and selection, unification of joint operational programs.

Thus, despite some negative aspects, the Romania-Moldova-Ukraine cross-border cooperation program is an important tool for accelerating Euro-integration and Euro-Atlantic processes (Kuibida, 2009).

However, in order to increase the effectiveness of this program, it is necessary to increase the responsibility of local authorities, as well as to expand the dialogue between local communities and government officials, to create clear deadlines for the implementation of a project control of various EU institutions.

Euroregions are one of the most successful examples of institutionalized cross-border cooperation on the European continent. Euroregions serve as an effective tool for transferring know-how in the field of governance, in particular in the context of EU enlargement and the existence of different speeds of integration between Central Europe and Ukraine.

Issues of national minorities in the development of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine-Moldova and Romania

An important area of cooperation is the establishment of intercultural dialogue, social integration of ethnic minorities, the development of interpersonal contacts in the field of education and culture. One of the issues in the development of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania is the issue of Romanian, Moldovan and Ukrainian national minori-

ties. Half a million ethnic Ukrainians live in Moldova, almost 53,000 in Romania, and 410,000 ethnic Moldovans and Romanians in Ukraine. All three national minorities are consolidated, preserving their language and culture. (Romania-Ukraine-Moldova, 2021).

The development of national minorities in cross-border cooperation is extremely important, in particular, to promote coordination of government actions to ensure the rights of the Ukrainian national minority in Romania and Moldova, as well as the Romanian and Moldovan national minorities in Ukraine. A number of projects on cooperation between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania have been implemented to ensure the rights of national minorities; creating the necessary socio-economic and other conditions for the preservation and development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities. The parties are also actively working to improve the legal framework for ensuring the rights of the Ukrainian national minority in Romania and the Romanian national minority in Ukraine. The activities of local executive bodies, local self-government bodies, enterprises, institutions and organizations on the development of the Ukrainian national minority in Romania and Moldova, and the Romanian and Moldovan minorities in Ukraine are also monitored. Interstate Commissions on National Minority Issues in Ukraine and Moldova have been established. Moldova and Romania are ready to solve problems. (Regulation EC No 1082/2006).

Romanian and Moldovan national minorities traditionally live in Ukraine in the regions bordering their countries of origin, and their rights are protected by international norms, bilateral intergovernmental agreements between Ukraine and Moldova, Ukraine and Romania, which provide symmetrical measures to protect the rights of national minorities. (Embassy of Ukraine in Moldova, 2021).

For example, in the Treaty on Good Neighborliness and Cooperation between Ukraine and Romania, Article 3. Article 13 deals with the protection of the rights of national minorities, stating in particular that the Contracting Parties undertake, if necessary, to take appropriate measures to promote full and genuine equality between persons belonging to a national minority in all spheres of economic, social, political and cultural life., and persons belonging to the majority of the population; it concerns the right, individually or

together with other members of their group, to freedom of expression, preservation and development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity, the right to preserve and develop their culture and the right to protection against any attempt at assimilation against their will. They have the right to fully and effectively exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination and in full equality before the law. It is stated that the Parties will create equal conditions for persons belonging to the Ukrainian minority in Romania and the Romanian minority in Ukraine to learn their native language. The establishment of a broad intergovernmental commission, which will meet at least once a year, is declared. At the same time, Ukrainian-Romanian relations have been quite difficult for a long time since the signing of the Agreement, in fact until 2014. (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, 2008).

Table 1. Number of national minorities living in the border area of Romania, Moldova and Ukraine (in thousands)

National minorities	Ukrainians	Romanians	Moldovans
Romania	51,7		161
Ukraine		151	258
Moldova	160	75	

Note. This table shows the data collected by the state authorities of Ukraine (State Statistics Service of Ukraine, 2021), Romania (Romanian National Institute of Statistic, 2011) and Moldova (National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova, 2014).

Ukrainian-Romanian-Moldovan cross-border cooperation is determined by the strategic interests of the three countries, including Euro-Atlantic integration (Romania is a member of the EU and NATO, while Ukraine and Moldova declare their desire to integrate into these political and security structures of the Western world). Joint exercises and security projects in cooperation with NATO, both Ukraine and Moldova are participating in multinational exercises that have focused on countering the Russian threat in recent years. Ukraine and Romania are also conducting bilateral military exercises at their border. Economic cooperation is important, as Ukraine, Moldova and Romania meet each other's transit needs, while mutual trade is growing.

In general, today, despite the positive dynamics of Ukrainian-Romanian, Ukrainian-Moldovan re-

lations, there are challenges that are the subject of political dialogue between the parties. The Romanian side periodically declares restrictions on the rights of the Romanian minority in Ukraine. Issuance of Romanian passports to Ukrainian citizens remains a problematic issue. At the same time, Moldova expresses dissatisfaction with the possibility of obtaining Ukrainian citizenship by residents of self-proclaimed Transnistria. Today, ensuring symmetrical rights of persons belonging to national minorities is of strategic importance for the development of interstate relations, partnership and security in the region.

Analysis of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine-Moldova-Romania shows that in recent years it has taken place within Euroregions, in the structures of which the administrative-territorial units of the three countries participate and through which concrete steps have been taken to establish the principles of good neighborliness and fruitful regional cooperation. for the formation of tolerant interethnic and interethnic relations.

Conclusions

Specific cross-border measures, and the success of specific bilateral and tripartite projects that have been implemented in Euroregions, including the Upper Prut Euroregion, there are significant obstacles to successful cooperation. Common for the Euroregion «Upper Prut», as well as for other Euroregions with the participation of administrative-territorial units of Ukraine, Romania and Moldova, are not only the peculiarities of education, but also problems, difficulties that hinder the implementation of cross-border projects and cross-border cooperation with the involvement of technical and financial assistance from regional partners from EU countries and influential international structures. In our opinion, the most important are the following:

1. The legal framework for the general financing of cross-border projects (lending, concentration of local, regional and state budget allocations and funds of private and international structures) and the provision of appropriate guarantees is not clear enough.
2. The large geographical area of Euroregions and the large number of members of Euroregions do

not contribute to finding optimal management decisions to be taken by regional and local authorities to solve problems, which is the main mission of such structures in Europe.

3. Business circles are insufficiently represented and involved in the structures of the Upper Prut Euroregion. The working bodies of the Euroregion are mostly represented by civil servants, which contributes little to solving the problems of business representatives and other stakeholders.
4. Regional and local authorities do not sufficiently involve and, at the same time, provide sufficient support for cross-border cooperation at the level of civil society institutions, especially in cases where the latter implement projects that fit into the territorial development strategy.
5. There is almost no effective cooperation on spatial development of borders and infrastructure development, which is traditionally the main task of such structures in the European Union.
6. At the same time, the legal and organizational potential of Euroregions is not fully exploited, mainly due to the fact that neither Euroregions nor their institutions have the status of a legal entity, which makes it impossible for them to directly attract projects, investments, etc.

The traditional development of the dialogue on the rights of national minorities is characterized by the difficulty of understanding the parties, especially in Ukrainian-Romanian relations. The relevant Ukrainian-Romanian intergovernmental commission has not worked for more than 10 years. Formally, her work has resumed, but I would like her to become more productive.

The law of Ukraine "On Education", in particular Art. 7, which concerned the language of instruction in schools for national minorities.

Bucharest, being the second sharpest after Budapest, actively expressed remarks, claims and dissatisfaction with this educational innovation; Local protests of the Romanian national community were organized in the territories of its compact residence, in particular in Chernivtsi region. Currently, this issue is not in the focus of priority public interest, but remains open for further discussion and dialogue, needs to be resolved by the parties and is one of the priority areas for constructive dialogue between the two countries.

In general, partnerships in the educational and cultural spheres are developing quite dynamically. There is an intensive exchange of delegations, cultural and artistic events and joint projects, member states are actively using the resources of the European Union (provided by programs such as Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, TEMPUS). It can be argued that the educational and intellectual elites of the countries are cooperating much more intensively today than in previous times.

Cross-border cooperation within the Upper Prut and Lower Danube Euroregions are important elements of multilateral diplomacy involving Ukraine-Moldova-Romania. To date, many projects have been implemented on the problems of the Ukrainian-Moldovan state border and the development of border infrastructure, increased trade and economic potential between the parties, as well as solving border socio-economic problems. For Ukraine, in particular, cooperation contributed to the resumption of construction of the Izmail-Reni railway, construction of the Berezine-Bessarabka railway, construction of bridges across the Dniester estuary and Yampil-Koseutsy (across the Dniester), modernization and electrification of the Belgorod-Dniester-Izmail track.. Thus, cross-border cooperation can become even more fruitful, with greater involvement of local authorities and the involvement of local communities.

The development of cross-border cooperation between Ukraine and Moldova-Romania is significantly influenced by interethnic relations in the border regions, it is important to establish intercultural dialogue, integration of ethnic minorities. The development of national minorities in cross-border cooperation is extremely important, in particular, to promote coordination of government actions to ensure the rights of the Ukrainian national minority in Romania and Moldova, as well as the Romanian and Moldovan national minorities in Ukraine. Implemented projects on cooperation between Ukraine, Moldova and Romania in order to ensure the rights of national minorities; creation of necessary socio-economic and other conditions for preservation and development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities had a positive impact on the nature of interregional and interstate relations. Minorities in Romania and Moldova, and the Romanian and Moldovan minorities in Ukraine provide an

opportunity to resolve existing disputes and prevent conflicts and conflicts. Ensuring symmetrical rights of persons belonging to national minorities is of strategic importance for the development of interstate relations, partnership and security in the region.

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