

Transboundary state reterritorialization in the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands



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Abstract

In this research the process of reterritorialization and the development of the Black Sea EUregion and the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands are analysed. Under the banner of globalisation Europe is increasingly being *detrterritorialized* and its borders are disrupted. While the external border is becoming a spectacle of militarized border enforcement, the internal border appears to be silently eroding. The borderlands of today could be tomorrow's internal spaces. The European integration project and especially its EUregions are changing the relationship between territory, sovereignty and borders. This is also the case in the Romanian-Bulgarian situation where several cross border programs have been set-up, new regional cooperation networks launched and a few million Euro a year is allocated to the border. In the wake of the spatial turn within geography, the rise of EUregions as new transboundary spaces which might gain their own territoriality should gain much more academic attention. Territory is a combination of concepts like land and terrain but also encompasses ideas from the field of history, law and political science. Therefore it is the ideal concept to use when explaining a complex process like the changing of our territorial state system. It also puts the border into perspective. No longer is the border a primary (f)actor, but it becomes a second order issue, where territoriality is the *condicio sine qua non* of its borders. The focus on territory also defies two-dimensional thinking and prevents overstating the effects of globalization. It shows that besides detrterritorialization new structures see the light and existing ones are changing. The territorial restructuring of the traditional Westphalian state is most visible in EUregions. On the political level they show a focus on non-exploitatational interdependencies, collectivization of national security and creation of an environmental agenda. The overall process points out to a process of (political) *reterritorialization*, because when two national governments agree to create a region that extends beyond the territory of their state they implicitly support a new territorial configuration. This also creates a dilemma, a conflict of territorial logics, where the territorial logic of the nations-state competes with the border bridging territorial logic of cross border cooperation. For the national government, the border is of great importance, since it delimits their sovereignty and more importantly, the sovereignty of its neighbouring countries. But for an EUregion, the border is a barrier to be overcome. Against this background, EUregions appear to be developing into cross border territories.

The Black Sea EUregion located in Romania and Bulgaria however, is far from attaining a status on its own. The border region as a whole lacks a proper transportation infrastructure and is poorly connected with the larger European economy. The amount of cross-border interaction is very low. Six major obstacles to cross-border cooperation have been pointed out, ranging from cultural and economic barriers to infrastructural and administrative/legal barriers. First of all there is a lack of awareness and regional identity. Except for some symbolic twinning there are no signs to be found of a regional identity. Secondly,

there is a similar economic structure on both sides of the border, creating almost no incentives for people to cross the Danube. This situation has become worse since the economic crisis. Then there is the problem of funding, there is enough money available, but it doesn't reach the organizations and projects that need it most. A fourth major obstacle is corruption. Furthermore, there is a lack of proper infrastructure to overcome the geographical barriers. Last of all, Romania and Bulgaria still don't have access to the Schengen Area.

Several changes are needed to overcome these obstacles in order to become a fully functional transboundary space. There are some excellent examples available in Romania and Bulgaria of how CBC could work. But to increase their effectiveness and to intensify and multiply the amount of interaction a lot needs to be done. Politicians should strive to support local initiatives as much as possible. A proper infrastructure needs to be put into place. From the EU side, allowing Romania and Bulgaria into Schengen would improve the situation a lot in the borderlands.

While the Black Sea EU region might not have the ability to change the territorial logic of the nation-state and its borders, it does show that there is a process of reterritorialization happening in European space. New territories are being created, which are for a part beyond the traditional sovereign reach of the nation-state. But transborder cooperation still has an enormous task of bridging this border region to create a common space in order to fulfil the burden of expectations. Until that time, we have to accept that transborder state reterritorialization in Europe is geographically uneven.

"The first man who, having fenced off a plot of land, thought of saying, 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him was the real founder of civil society. How many crimes, wars, murders, how many miseries and horrors might the human race had been spared by the one who, upon pulling up the stakes or filling in the ditch, had shouted to his fellow men: 'Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget the fruits of the earth belong to all and that the earth belongs to no one.'"

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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I hope to deliver with this thesis a Western perspective on an Eastern border. Central in the whole project is the Romanian-Bulgarian border itself, the line of reasoning within this thesis starts from the border. As is the case with all human endeavours, the writing of this thesis was confined to the dimension of space and time. Although it has been a project of almost two years, it was like there was never enough time to do all the things I wanted to do and to write the it down perfectly. Of course, there have been interruptions. During these two years I had to work occasionally for several months to finance all the travel expenses. In fact, I've travelled more than 9.000 kilometres for this thesis. I've been to Turkey to do my internship. To Greece for an international Black Sea symposium. And of course to the borderlands of Romania and Bulgaria, to do my field work. During these trips I've got to know a lot of people and made lots of new friends. Without the support of these people I couldn't have finished this project. I sincerely would like to express my thanks to the following people:

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Abbreviations

APV	All Purpose Vehicle
BRIE	Bulgarian Romanian Interuniversity Europe Center
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CBC	Cross Border Cooperation
CBR	Cross Border Region
CFDP	Common Foreign and Defense Policy
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe. The CEE states are Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia Lithuania and Slovenia
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COE	Council of Europe
CoR	Committee of Regions
DG	Directorate General
EEC	European and Economic Community
EGTC	European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation
ENPI	European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Spatial Planning Observatory
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICBSS	International Centre for Black Sea Studies
INTERREG	Interregional co-operation programme
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UBBSLA	Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities

1) Introduction

Europe is being born at its borders. While students of multi-level governance believe that the EU has reached a stable time where its institutions and policies only change marginally, the experiences from the borderlands teach us that we can expect some significant changes in territorial policies. Under the banner of globalisation Europe is increasingly being 'deterritorialized' and its borders are disrupted. The nation-state is under pressure. The vision of a 'Europe sans frontiers' however is far from reality. Borderwork is increasingly becoming a powerful geopolitical tool in the European Union, contributing to new geometries of association. While the external border is becoming a spectacle of militarized border enforcement, the internal border appears to be silently eroding. The borderlands of today could be tomorrow's internal spaces. New surveillance technologies like unmanned drones and the introduction of biometric passports are both fortifying and shifting the borders of the EU, leaving behind what Vaughan-Williams called 'an archipelago of zones of juridico-political indistinction' (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Or as Moïsi said about the EU's geographical space: 'it's like a rapidly growing child. It does not know where its body ends' (Burgess, 2006). Borders are becoming more and more invisible, electronic and mobile, as well as 'remote-controlled', in other words; borders are vacillating. The expanding Union now includes Romania and Bulgaria leading to an Europeanization, or better said, EUnization of the South-East of Europe. It also is magnifying the EU's macroregional geopolitical role in the Wider Black Sea Region. Of course there are different opinions regarding these developments. There are the EUro-sceptics, who think the EU is a Leviathan that is unleashing its massive bureaucratic force on unsuspecting nations. On the other sides there are the EUro-enthusiasts, who wonder why the Europeanization project is moving so slowly (Peters, 1997). While it is unclear what the EU is heading for, it's after all not a teleological project, the developments at the EU's internal border appear to be more or less synchronized. More and more cross-border regions are emerging and a complex multitude of overlapping spaces is created. The changing boundary between state and civil society is broadly captured by governance theories. But governance theory alone does not suffice, there is a double movement of reterritorialization, whereby on the hand states are fragmenting and on the other hand are teaming up in movements of regionalism.

The European integration project and especially its EUregions are changing the relationship between territory, sovereignty and borders. Officially, the European Union has no physical borders, for EU territoriality is mediated through the member states. But decisions are made by the EU about the role and functioning of borders, ranging from the removing of border controls (Schengen Treaty 1985) to the promoting of cross border interaction. This is also the case in the Romanian-Bulgarian situation where several cross border programs have been set-up, new regional cooperation networks launched and a few million Euro a year is allocated to the border. Still there is only one bridge over the 600+ km border. A view

on the website of the Committee of Regions (CoR) might pave way for optimistic thinking on cross border cooperation, but views from the ground appear far from that. There is a gap between the space of representation and the representation of space. But, as Lefebvre once noted, there is always a dialectic between them. It is this dialectic, what happens between and in the spaces of integration and their official representation that is central to this thesis. The spatial praxis of the cross-border cooperation area is interesting and are often constructed by both very real and imagined spaces, heterotopias as Foucault would call them. It is the space of the transboundary region, often overlapping with so called EUregions, that is at the forefront of this thesis. This research aims at sketching the contours of the cartographic chartings of these new transboundary spaces, as well as explaining the state of cross-border cooperation, both in theory as practice.

Chapter 2) Research Design

The central goal of the research is supporting the regional policy of the European Union with regard to the Cross Border Cooperation area in Romania and Bulgaria in the context of the Wider Black Sea strategy, by presenting insights in the different kinds of (new) regionalism, both in theory and practice, and providing views of relevant actors on the implementation of the regional cross border policy of the European Union. Because of the theoretical orientation of this research project, it also hopes to contribute to theory development in regard to the linking of the concepts of reterritorialization, new regionalism and cross-border cooperation. Since transborder regions are a new concept, there hasn't been much research on it, most contributions to the theoretical understanding of transborder regions are very new, dating from the late 1990s. This particular cross border area has not been researched before. And the relationship between a CBC region and the wider geopolitical picture also has not been explored before. So theoretically, this research will expand the scope of understanding of processes of new regionalism and cross border cooperation.

For the theoretical framework some eclecticism has been applied, this research contains elements of realist, liberal and constructivist theories. Therefore it can be best categorized in the 'pragmatic holism' approach. This approach, coming from the field of International Relations studies, both includes and surpasses various paradigms. It believes in the hermeneutic circle principle, where the world system is the result of interactions between strategies of different actors. These actors are driven by interests and values, which guide them to changing their surroundings. This pragmatic holism is complemented with the critical geopolitical point of view that every (political) action has a territorial underpinning. There is no single state territoriality, but there are multiple territorialities, which overlap and are sometimes in conflict with each other. Some elements from the critical geopolitical field are used, especially from the practical, structural and formal subfields. Since this research is conducted in an European area which is considered as a laboratory of integration, this project is in itself a major case study to gain insight in the dialectics between regionalism and reterritorialization. The concept of CBR incorporates theories from both regionalism and limology.

The research questions are designed in such a way that each sub-question deals with a specific topic that is touched upon in the main research question. First there are some questions that will create a theoretical framework, by looking at theories of new regionalism, border and cross border governance and reterritorialization. Then there is the question whether these theories can be linked to each other. Subsequently the specific border region between Bulgaria and Romania will be discussed and the different theories will be applied to this region, where possible. In this way, the theories will be applied and a dialogue emerges between them. By answering all sub questions, the main question will be answered.

The main research question consists of two parts:

- 1) *How is cross border cooperation working out in the Romanian-Bulgarian Danube region? &*
- 2) *Do the recent developments in transboundary regions create new cross-border spaces with their own territoriality?*

Out of this main research question, the following sub questions emerge:

- *Why and how has the concept of CBC emerged?*
- *What is this new regionalism and in what way is it present in the Wider Black Sea Area?*
- *How can border theories (reterritorialization) be applied to the Romanian-Bulgarian border?*
- *What are the developments of the Wider Black Sea Area and how is the European Union involved?*
- *In what way can the theories of new regionalism, cross border governance and reterritorialization be linked to each other?*
- *In what way is this cross border cooperation programme implemented at the border region between Romania and Bulgaria?*
- *What kind of cross border activities are there between Romania and Bulgaria?*
- *How can cross border cooperation be improved?*

Societal relevance

The Black Sea Synergy, the Black Sea vision 2020, University networks, European Territorial Grouping Cooperation, business-platforms and more. There are plenty of tools, policies and frameworks present in the Black Sea region to tackle regional issues and to promote cross border cooperation (see appendix 1 for an overview of active regional groupings). However, real integration and cooperation still appears to be failing and the why question remains unanswered. The Wider Black Sea Region has been described as a black hole where external funding disappears. The region is also portrayed as the only area in the world where protracted conflicts display classical geopolitical power struggles. With the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 to the European Union, the Union gained this volatile region as its new frontier. Conflicting neighbourhood policies and a lack of cross border cooperation appear to be the major common denominators. Due to the embedded bilateral distrust, countries within the Black Sea area have adopted an institutional approach to region building. However, most of the attempts at institutionalized cross border cooperation failed after several years but without the dissolution of all the newly created platforms and frameworks. This process laid the foundation for the confusing structure of regionalism in the Wider Black Sea Area. In 2007 the European created a cross border programme for Romania and Bulgaria. Both Romania and Bulgaria have to deal with serious issues, especially concerning their unstable economies. Besides that,

they have to deal with drugs traffic and smuggling, leaving a border landscape that on the hand is being stimulated to integrate, and on the other a borderland that needs to be strengthened. They constantly feel the pressure of the EU on their shoulders to perform well and to provide the Union with stable borders. Instead of working together to fight these issues, Bulgaria and Romania do not show any interest in each other. This can be observed at the border, which for the most part consists of the Danube River. Unfortunately, this river is only bridged once and Romania and Bulgaria are arguing on where to build a new bridge (instead of building more). The recent attempt of building the second bridge failed, partly because of lack of investments. The European Union tries hard to establish functioning frameworks for cross border cooperation. In the beginning of 2011 the recently created 'European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation' (EGTC) will be adjusted to the experiences and opinions so far. There is an EGTC setup under preparation for Romania and Bulgaria on the joint management of navigation projects on the Danube. Other relevant legal declarations are prepared with both Romania and Bulgaria and countries that either belong to the European Union or a part of the neighbourhood. All these issues show important it is for the cross border cooperation programmes to succeed in the Black Sea Region. This research can contribute to that by presenting theoretical insights combined with field observations and opinions of experts. While today there is almost no border region in Europe that does not have a CBC program on its books, this border region is special because it lies at the outer edge of European Union.

Scientific relevance of the project

Before the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU, the involvement of the EU was based upon bilateral agreements and the Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Russia. In 2007 this attitude changed drastically, and a Black Sea policy was created, the so called 'Black Sea Synergy'. A new regional strategy was being set up and the number of publications on this region expanded rapidly. The amount of institutions and frameworks involved is expanding. It seems that the enclosed seas (the Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea) in the EU's periphery are approached by a kind of commonality. The cross border programmes around the black sea that are being set up aim at "supporting civil society and local level cooperation" (EC Regional Policy, 2011). This is linked to the 'civilian power' of the EU. The joint statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the Wider Black Sea states very clearly that the Danube region is a key area to strengthen connection between the EU and the Black Sea countries. It is exactly this Danube area that is appointed as a Cross Border Cooperation area. It appears that the regional policy is part of the strategy of the EU to strengthen its influence within the Wider Black Sea area. At the same time the European Union considers the Romanian-Bulgarian CBC area as a laboratory of integration. The EU creates with its Neighbourhood Programme new forms of regionalism, making the Black Sea Region a multi-layered region in which the EU's interests collides and overlap at the same time with the Black Sea countries. The fog of this multi-layered regionalism is dense and uncertain,

both in academic publications as in practice. Since transborder regions are a new concept, there hasn't been much research on it, most contributions to the theoretical understanding of transborder regions are very new, dating from the late 1990s. This particular cross border area has not been researched before and certainly not from a post-structuralist geographical perspective. The relationship between a CBC region and the wider geopolitical picture also has not been explored before. The ontological assumption of Paasi, the border as a product of social construction, and his theory on the processes of new regionalism will form the foundation of this research. This train of thought will be connected with the theory of reterritorialization, first coined by Deleuze and Guattari, as worked out by Popescu. In this way the research will both add and combine new insights in the functioning of the hybrid border as an institutionalized social process. More importantly, in the wake of the spatial turn the focus on territory is of the uttermost importance. Borders and border regions are being re-examined because of this turn and despite the view of hyperglobalists, we shouldn't forget that territory is still one of the foundations of the state. The territory perspective can offer an alternative view on the world. It defies two dimensional thinking and prevents us from thinking that everything is deterritorializing and space and place are no longer important anymore. The war on terror has shown us how power remains specific to specific places. Terror, so to say, has shed light on the continuing political importance of territory.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research consists of a literature study and qualitative research. Relevant theories put forward in recent and classic articles and books will be examined. Put together, these will form the backbone of the research, providing a groundwork and framework. The two most important theories are CBC theory and the reterritorialization theory. The qualitative research consists of in-depth interviews and field observations. The interviews are drafted on the base of the theoretical framework, but will be semi-structured, e.g. that they can change by input of the interviewee or new insights from the field. The objects of the research are various, they are primarily relevant organisations and businesses, but also include people who cross the border itself. In total, more than 20 people have been interviewed. 20% of these interviews were recorded and transcribed, see appendix 2 – 5. The other ones weren't recorded for various reasons.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework

Barriers, bridges, symbols of identity, dividers, resources; borders can be described in different ways, depending on their function in a specific context. 'The rise and fall, the construction and deconstruction of various types of boundaries is the very story of human civilization', thus said Oommen, an Indian Professor of social science (Oommen, 1995). But this story is about to end according to post-modern theorists. The end of both history and geography is near, borders will disappear and humanity will live in a global village, a postmodern and deterritorialized hyperspace created by the processes of globalization where the tyranny of distance is overthrown. In this new world order we will no longer make sacrifices to Terminus, the God of boundaries, and the spaces of place will be replaced by the spaces of flows. Castells (1996) speaks in his books on the information age about the rise of the network society, with spaces of flows as the substitute for spaces of place. For a long time this was the opinion shared and propagated by neoliberal (hyper)globalists, mostly coming from the field of economics and information sciences and a lot of academics have published on this topic (see Fukuyama 1989, O'Brien 1992, Guéhenno 1995, Ohmae 1995, Badie, 1995, Latour 1996 Friedman 2005)¹. Despite all of the much (ab)used 'post' messages, like post-modern, post-sovereign, post-Westphalian, post-state and post-hegemonic, the nation states and its borders are not relics of the past. They have not been eliminated and the ethical question of 'why borders?' still remains (Houtum, 2005). Today there are more than 300 land boundaries and 194 states, and more than fifty unresolved border disputes. Although scale in some cases has become more relative, more and more borders are created in fact and the world is far from being a cultural and geographical homogeneity (Mansfield, 2005). Fencing is fashionable. Traditional military and economic functions of the border might appear to be declining, at the same time the use of border control is increasing. The deterritorialized nature of post-modernity is after all but one of many interpretative claims and far from being self-evident. Post-ism labels are useful as heuristic devices to plot complex transformations, but fail to describe the fragmentation in the heart of the present. Besides that, one of the risks of overemphasising the deterritorialization and de-bordering processes is that new forms of territorial authorities might be overlooked. And it is exactly this the territorial system that produces borders and states that does appear to be changing in an unprecedented way. The rise of EUregions for example as new transboundary spaces which might gain their own territoriality, including sovereignty, is a process that should gain much more academic attention. Is this rise only theoretic, or does it really occur in the borderspaces? While this changing territorial system already is discussed in contemporary research in the form of deterritorialization, the term itself is often misunderstood and put out of context. To understand the spatial reorganizations that take place, a proper understanding of territory, borders and border-regions is necessary.

1 One thing that has to be mentioned in this respect, is that the thesis of a borderless world is one which is posited mainly by scholars from the developed Western World

This chapter discusses from a geographical perspective the theory of territory, borders and regions. It begins by presenting the theory of territory and borders (limnology). Subsequently the process what might be called 'traditional state territoriality' is investigated. The third paragraph will put the discussion into broader geographical perspective. This is important because transboundary state reterritorialization takes place within special regions and within wider regionalism trends. In this case the Black Sea EUregion is the focus, which shall be properly introduced in chapter four. The final paragraph of this chapter concludes by bringing the concepts together and relate them to the process of reterritorialization. It will be argued that reterritorialization offers an useful perspective on territorial reconfiguration. And not only that, reterritorialization is leading to new spaces that have the ability to radically alter the face of our borderlands.

3.1 Territory and Borders

Territory is gaining more and more attention from border scholars. Why is this the case? Why, in the wake of the spatial turn, should territory be at the centre of academic debate? And how is territory connected to borders? Developments in spatial thought and theories on territory and borders have rarely been unified and a lot of concurrent approaches exist at the same time (Davoudi, 2009), as this paragraph will show. But maybe one of the best strength of the concept of territory is that it has the ability to bring together different theories from different fields. Territory is a combination of concepts like land and terrain but also encompasses ideas from the field of history, law and political science. Therefore it is the ideal concept to use when explaining a complex process like the changing of our territorial state system. The question of what territory exactly is however, is not easily answered. One has to delve into history to fully understand the concept and its consequences. This is also the case for borders, frontiers and boundaries. These concepts evolved together with territory, starting from the antiquity where the Roman *limes* were the edges of authority. For this reason, the study of borders is also known as *limology*. This paragraph will try to explain the construction of the ideas of territory and borders.

3.1.1 Theorizing territory

From the 1960s onward, space has gradually become more asserted within social and cultural theory. The post-Fordist economic era with its flexible specialization upgraded space to something that could add value to economic development (Davoudi, 2009). A spatial language developed hand in hand with the shift from post-Fordism to post-modernism. Today, space and spatiality are widely used concepts by many feminist, post-colonial and beyond-modernity enquiries. In some cases space is privileged above time. John Urry for example argues that space, rather than time, is the significant dimension of contemporary capitalism (Urry, 2007). Henri Lefebvre ('The production of space'), David Harvey and Frederic Jameson are important names when delving into the development of space within social science. Along with space, the concept of territory is also being rediscovered and redeveloped. One of the first modern works on territory comes from Robert Sack, who adopted a behavioural approach to territory. According to him territoriality is the "key geographical component in understanding how society and space are interconnected" (Sack, 1986). He described territoriality not just as a simple spatial relationship, but as a spatial strategy to gain control over people and their behaviour, it thus becomes "a geographical expression of social power". He sees territory as a social construction, a human strategy to affect, influence and control. Besides Sack, two other important writers that might have influenced the theoretical development of territory are Jameson and Soja. Jameson considers space as a template, from which the secrets of reality can be read, through which the individual hidden geographies of power could be discovered. Soja took this argument even further, arguing that space is filled with politics and ideology and that both the illusion of opaqueness and the

illusion of transparency led to a misinterpretation of space (Keith, 1993). Both of these authors drew upon the work of Lefebvre. When applied to borders, Balibar said in this respect that borders are no longer the shores of politics, but the space of the political itself. Few authors are to be found who don't agree with this, except maybe for the post-Marxist Ernesto Laclou who draws on the work of Heidegger and calls politics and space 'antinomic terms' (Laclou as quoted in Keith, 1993). His view on space is a static Cartesian one, space is the opposite of time, and therefore cannot be political. His argument is rooted in Leibnizian philosophy, but rather than observing space as neutral, he considers space as an absence. His way of thinking is not widely spread nor shared but does offer an opposite view on Jameson's theory and therefore the means to create a milder position that is situated in between the two conceptual opponents. The critical (geo)political views on space reasserted territory as an important research theme, for it is through territory that the quantification of space can be made visible and the underlying mechanisms of control uncovered. While spatial thinking has many philosophical progenitors, it might come as a surprise that traditionally there are relatively few scholars within geography that have tried to theorize the concept of territory. A taken-for-grantedness might be the rational motive for this neglect of territory. Although the word territory has been used many times in early geographical works, a conceptual elaboration is hard to find. Friedrich Ratzel, one of the founding fathers of political geography, argued that the cultural growth of a nation had to go hand in hand with territorial expansion. Halford Mackinder divided the world into different areas, or territories, with the heartland being the key to domination, the geopolitical pivot of history. But in these classical works territory is treated as a given, an area that can be conquered and possessed by political rulers. The concept of territory itself is not elaborated.

Nowadays territory is becoming more popular, both as research focus and as the word to describe a particular space that is more than just a passive abstract arena on which things happen. Foucault already mentioned that there appears to be a parallel shift from people to population and from land/terrain to territory. Moreover, the focus on territory appears to be replaced by a focus on population, which for Foucault is reason to believe that the European nation state system is becoming increasingly stabilized. Initiatives like the European Spatial Development Programme (ESDP) appear to confirm this point of view, they significantly elevate European spatial policies. But other recent developments in European Integration, like the development of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, point towards a restructuring of territory, rather than a replacement of it by some form of population-oriented government. European Integration together with globalisation alter the form of the territorial nation-state and give way to sub-state regionalism. So how can we grasp the concept of territory?

Often territory is considered as some kind of property, most of the time owned by a state. Nevertheless, it also has frequently been used to describe non-state areas (e.g. overseas territories, occupied territories). While territory does not create nations, it is certainly one of its foundations and a provider for identity. A shared place is often a shared identity and human empathy tends to decrease with

distance, as David Hume once observed (Agnew, 2003). The affection of people towards territory, the sense of place, is as old as human society itself. Much modern societies are defined territorial, as belonging to a certain portion of space and not based on kinship relations. The human attachment to territory is logical, since people need territory to survive. Besides that, people are also bounded to space by their memories where different places are associated with important personal experiences. This basic necessity of territory and the geographies of the mind have evolved in a socially mediated economic organization of space, manifested in its most complex form of the nation-state. The territorial state as we know it today, revived by the treaties of Westphalia, is invented in the West and established by the Romans (Zartman, 2010).

Academics tend to treat territory in many cases as either an outcome of territoriality or as bounded space. Territory as bounded space is mostly found within the discipline of political geography. Territory as an outcome of territoriality intrinsically requires a behavioural approach (e.g. Sacks). In both instances a sort of scale amnesia is required, for to decouple territory from sovereignty and the political in general, territory could become everything and nothing at the same time. This is also the major reason why territory has so many meanings, depending on the people who wield the term. Politicians incline to use more the population and resource aspects of territory, while a jurist is more interested in the jurisdiction of a territory. Within these diverse definitions, the philosophical approach is also of great significance. The (spatial) deterministic and naturalistic perspectives holds that humans have in their genes to defend and control territory, just like it happens in the animal world². This opinion was largely shared, and often wrapped in nationalistic narratives among the first generation modern political geographers, including Ratzel and Mackinder (Agnew, 2002). On the other side of the spectrum there are the constructivist theories that emphasise the social construction of territory; humans create territory and give meaning to a former meaningless space. This view has been criticized because it lays too much emphasis on the constructed side of territory, while there are in fact objective parts in human territoriality that are not imagined. This is one of the major perils of spatial relativism, that it ignores the brute reality that exists beyond discourse (Desmond, 1999). Furthermore, constructivism originated from the realist perspective and therefore has a negative approach to territoriality. Apart from Forsberg there are few known scholars that stress the positive aspects of territoriality. Most of the modern authors within spatial sciences also write from a neo-Kantian or neo-Cartesian view, thereby condemning theoretical spaces to the specialized field of Western intellectuals. The best alternatives to the constructivist are probably to be found from within the field of critical geography. Despite the fact that lots of critical geographers apply a constructivist view, their works often offer and use partial, locatable and critical knowledge that defy the relativist and constructivist point of view (Keith, 1993). This might lead to a recourse to spatiality, while at the same time the technocratic impetus is tempered. Disregarding all the critique, the constructivist view appears to be

2 The word territory is widely used in biological publications, often from a deterministic, Darwinist, perspective

the most propagated in contemporary geographic research and territoriality is increasingly perceived as a psycho-social construct (Burgess, 2006). In order to have a functional vocabulary for this thesis, the difference between territory and territoriality must not be forgotten. Territoriality is not a fixed point on a map. As has been noted before, territory is often conceived as the outcome of territoriality. This definition is not completely accurate, for it assumes an uncomplicated one-way causal relation between the two. Nevertheless, territory and territoriality are closely connected. (Political) Territoriality can be understood as a process, or spatial strategy, whereby actors make a (legal) claim to a specific territory. These claims are materialized through power relations which are primarily exercised through the concept of sovereignty. It is the human ability to modify and control their environment (Burgess, 2006). In a less positive way, territoriality also can be seen as the process where a political boundary is imposed on a population, regardless of its social structures (Zartman, 2010). In this view, a delimited area is not a territory in itself, but becomes so when its borders are used to affect behaviour by controlling the area.

The use of territory as concept is also influenced by the social and geographical context people are living. Language also plays its part and often translation between languages fails to grasp exact meanings and nuances. In the Dutch language for example 'territorium' is only used to describe the habitat of animals and not that of humans. Territory is often translated in Dutch to 'grondgebied', which lacks the historical Latin connotation. The leaving behind of wider systems of meaning occurs also in other languages. To make sense of the wide range of definitions, meanings and attached philosophies it is useful to make a distinction between land, terrain and territory. Stuart Elden is one of the contemporary geographers who brought this suggestion forward and provides a useful distinction between land, terrain and territory in order to make better sense of territory. Land is the political-economic question, a resource that can be owned and defined as property. Terrain is the militarized version of land, connected to exercises of power. It is the political-strategical question. Territory in this respect is the combination of land and terrain, but with the addition of jurisdiction. The jurisdictional aspect is visible in how land is materialized through law. The majority of laws are ordained in the name of a territorial entity and not resulting from specific persons or titles. Etymologically this is also more accurate since territory is derived from the Latin *territorium*. The prefix *terri* is assumed to come from *terre*, meaning land, terrain or sustenance. The link with *terrere*, meaning to frighten or terrorize, is easily made. The suffix *-orium* means surrounding something. When put together, territory actually means the land or terrain that surrounds something. So when territory is mentioned, it implies the combination of property, power, authority and rights as defined by law (Elden, 2010). Not only the political-economic and the political-strategic question is important, but also who exercises jurisdiction matters.

This interpretation of territory and the rising attention towards the concept of territory might be called a 'territory turn' in social and in particular, geographical, science. It is important for border scholars because of its defiance of two-dimensional linear thinking. Treating territory as both political, economic and

jurisdictional leads to the increasing recognition that territory also includes verticality, virtuality and temporality. Territory is not only a certain area or region, but rather a volume. A volume that becomes a political technology and therefore intrinsically is no longer a neutral or moral vacuum, but a moral question in itself. As field experts, this is where geographers can contribute in answering territory-related questions like: who is winning the war on terror? And how is the EU altering the traditional territorial relations? Following this train of thought also paves way for more innovative spatial studies, for example; why isn't the relation between states and virtual spaces, the internet, never been properly researched before? For it appears that cyberspace is becoming the virtual version of Lebensraum (Burgess, 2006). A lot of research is conducted on the Global War on Terror, but what about World Wide Web Terrorism? Another consequences of treating territory as described above is that a specific territory must be considered as temporary. Because they are socially constructed and depend on people who exercise power over them, territories require to be confirmed and maintained in order to continue to exist. Territories are communicated through various signs, primarily through borders, but also in land ownership rights, job descriptions and cultural norms (Popescu, 2006). Territory can be used to identify social relations.

To understand territory as this bundling of political technologies is relevant for border research because it puts the border into perspective. No longer is the border a primary (f)actor, but it becomes a second order issue, where territoriality is the *condicio sine qua non* of its borders. The border comes forth from territory, as it is a de facto result of (inter)state jurisdiction, delineating different compounds of space. The very act of defining territory implies the existence of boundaries. These boundaries, in the form of state borders, community borders, fences and other ways of claiming territory are visible everywhere. However, it is the organization of territory that creates and alters the border, not the other way around. The border as a building block of territory. One of their important roles is shaping territory in the process of institutionalization. Paasi describes this process as having four historical stages. First of all, as already mentioned, boundaries are constructed and a territory attains shape. This shape is extended in the second stage with symbolic shapes, created by discourses and social practice. The third stage is when different organizations and institutions are founded that both produce and reinforce the boundaries and territorial symbolism (Popescu, 2006). Finally, a territorial identity is constructed that separates 'them' from 'us'. The next paragraph will explain how the study of borders has evolved and in what way it is connected to theories on territory.

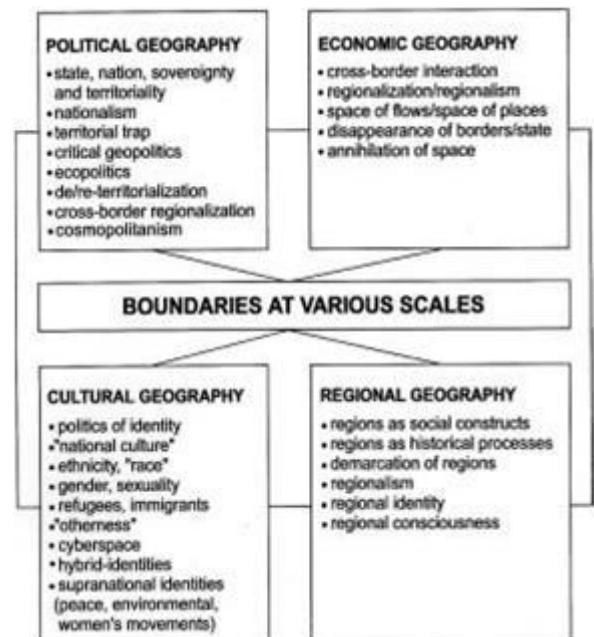
3.1.2 Borders

Border, boundaries, frontiers and margins are important tropes in contemporary research. The study of borders is not something new, it has a fertile past and considering that during the past few decades the genre has evolved into an interdisciplinary field, the future is also appealing. Originally the study of boundaries was conducted by physical geographers, whose focus was on the borderline itself, doing research on the moats and walls. Their work was supplemented by human geographers, who broadened the idea of borders and took into account its surroundings and social dimension as well as topographical criteria. But soon others joined the field and today borders are studied by psychologists, lawyers, anthropologists, economists, ethnologists and more. Geography played, and continues to play, a pioneering role in the study of borders. As Julian Minghi said: 'boundaries are perhaps the most palpable political geographic phenomena' (Minghi, 1962). It started with the task of drawing new borders as a result from war, as the famous title of the book by Lacoste says: 'La géographie, ça sert d'abord à faire la guerre' (Lacoste, 1976). States made war and war made states. Especially the link with fascism and nazi ideology marked border studies and the field of political geography still is tainted by war-driven geopolitics. Geographers remain until today the experts in questions of boundary delimitation. Ironically, partly because of the 'borderless' world propaganda that went hand in hand with the concept of deterritorialization, border studies have undergone a renaissance during the past decade. More and more conferences on border issues are organized and also the amount of institutions dealing with (cross)border issues and border research centres are proliferating. Border studies are mushrooming all around the world (Newman, 2006). Other reasons for this border 'revival' are the dissolution of the Soviet States, the on-going border conflicts and the increasing importance of the European Union. Also the advancement of capitalism has stimulated border thinking, because for those who see the world as a market, borders are unnecessary obstacles. The European experiment on governance and its transboundary reach has created a laboratory for European scholars to test and develop theories on the governance, meaning and functioning of borders. Also technological advancements like the biometric passport and the patrol drones are contributing to a situation that the French (Marxist) philosopher Etienne Balibar described as world where borders are no longer at the border. In a way we become the border itself. The scope of study has expanded and new approaches are invented, no longer is the border considered as a line alone, a physical manifestation of separation that has to be studied empirically, but increasingly the border has become known as a process (Paasi, 1998). A process that does not stand alone, but is part of the process of institutionalization of territory. The important question is not where a boundary is, but how a boundary is and what the practices of the boundary are. In other words, boundaries and borders are now understood as a verb, it is not so much about the border, but about b(/)ordering (Houtum, 2005). Or as Georg Simmel puts it: 'a border is not a geographic fact that has sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that takes geographic form' (Simmel as quoted in Hemmel, 2002). The latest addition to the widening of the ontology and epistemology

of borders comes from the field of 'critical geopolitics', part of the political geography sub-discipline, worked out by Gerard Toal and others. Various approaches are adopted in border studies, but most of them considers borders and boundaries as products of social practice and they integrate analyses at different levels of scale. Figure 1 depicts a more detailed overview of boundary studies at various scales within the sub-disciplines of geography. Of course one has to keep in mind that there are no clear distinct categories, a lot of work is often more fluid and cross disciplinary.

In traditional geography there was for a long time the distinction between good and bad boundaries, elaborated by the British imperial administrator Lord Curzon of Kedleston. His view became important in the diplomatic realm and suggested that good boundaries were the natural ones, formed by mountain ranges or rivers, while bad boundaries were artificially constructed (Houtum, 2005). Holdich, a contemporary of Curzon, used the same terms as Curzon but in his view boundaries should be judged on their military utility, good boundaries were those that could prevent conflict. Today the overall tendency is to accept that there are no natural borders, even the word natural itself has many different and confusing connotations. Borders are always constructed, whether they are physiographic or not they remain products of social practice and are often the result of

Figure 1: Boundary studies at various scales within sub-disciplines of human geography



Source: Walters, 2006

conflict (borders as the 'scars of history' or the 'geopolitical wounds'). The modern-day interpretation is not completely new, as sometimes is argued in publications. Lapradelle already wrote in 1928 that natural boundaries should be relabelled with 'derived artificial boundaries'. And Ancel, a French political geographer claimed in 1936 that a boundary was an indicator of state power and that emphasises should be placed on the *circonstances* (Rankin, 2004). Being artificial, the border can in some cases be reinforced by natural distinctions, like the border between Romania and Bulgaria shows. The border as we know it today was invented by the modern nation-state and combined the ancient forms of 'marches' and 'limes'. The border in this way became a line that had administrative, military, fiscal, juridical and linguistic functions. Because of these different functions until today distinctions are made like military borders, economic borders and police borders, depending on their role and characteristics (Andreas, 2003). One could argue that the invention of the border transformed the previously more indefinite and heterogeneous space into territories. Raffestin, a Swiss geographer, called space the 'original prison' while territory is the prison that men designed for themselves (Mancebo, 2006). One of the more modern interpretations of the borders

comes from Walters. He describes the border as a firewall, just like in the digital world. It controls and registers the information flow, prevents infiltration and provides safe interiors. This idea captures the moment when bordering and the governance of territory enter into a new relationship. (Walters, 2006).

Although the terms boundary and border are often used interchangeably in the literature, there is a small distinction between them. The term boundary (*grenze, frontiere*) comes from bounds, both a verb and noun. Though more inward oriented, boundary is a more broad term than border (*grenze, lisiere*), which is the territorialized line on the ground that separates political (id)entities, that creates an 'inside' and an 'outside', an 'interior' and an 'exterior'. A border is a formal delimitation between two or more collective subjective entities and often has the effect of widening the geographical and mental distance between locations. A boundary can be less formal and does not have to be material, it can also be cognitive, e.g. a separating wall, semantic divider between categories or mental map in the minds of people that distinguishes 'them' from 'us', the point at which *we* end and *they* begin. Identities are produced through boundaries. Materialized boundaries can become nested in the minds of people, like the *Mauer in kopf* that persisted after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Or as the entrepreneurs in the Dutch-German and Dutch-Belgian EU regions that still behaved as if there were national borders, despite the fact that they had been removed for a while, as Van Houtum showed in his dissertation (Houtum, 1998). The term boundary does not have to relate to politics, it can also be applied to other things. For example, it is common to speak of 'disciplinary boundaries' in academics. So, boundaries are not limited to the border itself, but find their way into society and reproduce themselves. It is at the boundary that previously invisible flows become visible, and often decelerate. Boundaries also exist at the microlevel, for example separating one neighbourhood from another. They also define borderlands and borderlands form transborder regions. Borderlands and transborder regions lie in close proximity to the border, it are the spaces around the line where society meets state. It is in these, often peripheral, regions that the effects of the borders are experienced, expressed in stereotypes, perceptions and behaviour. Therefore, although boundaries are at the outer edge of countries, they are at the very centre of the being of the nation state and can be seen as the bellwether of the state of the nation.

Besides boundaries and border there is also the term frontier. This term is, as it already suggests etymologically, derived from front and has a slightly more outward orientation than the previous two. The expression is most used within research from a post-colonial perspective. The term frontier was already in use at the beginning of the 1900s, employed by Jackson Turner as the meeting point between savagery and civilization, a unilateral spearhead (Rankin, 2004). Lord Curzon capitalized the word and spoke of a Science of Frontiers and of scientific frontiers, being a area that combined natural and strategic elements. In the past a frontier was often called the foreland, borderland or march (Kristof, 1959). In this sense, borderlands can be seen as the frontiers of the nation state. They create their own regions. Frontiers are also the Terra Incognita, which can take the form of an actual region, but also a market, a battlefield or a crowded town

square (Paasi, 2007). One of the more important contemporary works on frontiers comes from Henri Lefebvre, with his book 'the production of space' (1991). Frontiers can be described as neither open space nor physical territories, but rather social and cultural productions. The major difference between a frontier and a border region is that frontiers are more temporally defined zones, while borderlands tend to last longer (Wilson, 1998). Traditionally, borderlands and frontiers were considered as buffer zones or places of mutual antagonism. In the colonial age, frontiers were the more or less formalized boundaries of empires that challenged the naturalization of the nation-state. Boundaries were at best when they were not bothered by border people. Within the European Union, borders are increasingly becoming spaces of transition and integration, shared spaces that functions as bridges, or at least aim at doing so. While frontiers, as the flexible outward oriented area at the outer edges of empires, are physically more or less disappeared, it can be argued that within the European Union the term has been gradually replaced by borderland, or so called 'zones of contact'. The focus is less on the open space or physical territory, but more on the social and cultural production (Zartman, 2010).

In the end, all borders, boundaries and borderlands have to be studied from the local perspective, because all are situated in particular contexts and location and are part of a discursive landscape. They cannot and should not fit in tight typology boxes just for the sake of simplification. Borders come to life at the level of the narrative, anecdote and communication, through everyday experiences of individuals. The meanings of borders are constantly changing, the more borders are crossed, the more they are reproduced along other dimensions, ranging from the cultural to the symbolic. And as Latour (1993) has argued, a key can transform a door in a border for some or a pass-through for others (Houtum, 2005). It is the challenge of the border scholar to collect these narratives and to interpret them and to show in what way these narratives represent the different functions of a border. These narratives can be individual, but also exist at group-level. The border is a historical, geographical and psychological process still in the making, an assemblage of heterogeneous discursive and non-discursive practices, and regimes of truth and conduct, which possesses an overall coherence without answering to any determinative principle or underlying (Walters, 2002). Borders are constant on the move, just like the sea at the edge of the land. Sometimes they move slow, sometimes fast and sometimes it appears to be stable. But every movement in time leaves an imprint of its influences behind in the borderlands.

3.2 Transboundary state reterritorialization

The European Union can be described as an assemblage of national states that are sharing their sovereignties. While the territorial scale of Europe as a political actor is altered by the integration project, the territorial foundations of political power have remained the same, leaving the underlying international structure of the system intact (Burgess, 2006). Questions of statehood, power relations and boundaries are central in the history of political thought. Key thinkers like Aristotle, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel, Herder, Marx and Gramsci have tried to make sense of the relation between a state and its citizens (Agnew, 2002). The spatial attributes of statehood are at the heart of the debate on government/governance. As Machiavelli stated in *the Prince*, politics is only possible within state boundaries. And since, as Aristotle argued, man is by nature a political animal, one must be a member of the state to be fully human. Without the state, there is no *bios*, no life. But is this still the case today? Is politics only possible within certain borders or can it go beyond them? Is there life outside or in the margins of the state? The border can help us understand the imprecise fit between nations, states, sovereignty and politics.

3.2.1 *Bordering the state; territory and sovereignty in the European Union*

The modern nation-state is built upon three pillars; population, territory and sovereignty. These elements might appear objective, or innocent, but appearance can be deceiving. As Hardt and Negri argued in their book *Empire* the idea of territorial boundaries and the technologies of sovereignty created a Leviathan that was at the heart of European colonialism. While not all scholars agree with this radical geographical point of view, it does point out that there is debate on these concepts that form the nation-state. Nowadays the state's arena, its territoriality, is what provides states autonomy and power (Agnew, 2002). Sovereignty was not always attached to territory. Before the 1600s sovereignty was most of the time personal, embodied in a sovereign ruler. Territorial sovereignty was formalized in the Treaty of Westphalia³, whereby the state gained exclusive authority over a certain area. Borders became promoted to integral parts, or political membranes, of this organizing system. State borders as examples of human territoriality writ large. The state sovereignty had to be recognized by other political entities and territoriality became inseparable from state sovereignty. This recognition by other political entities already points out to the fact that the state is not fully autonomous. The classic concept of the state as a sovereign, constraint-free autonomous entity has been reflecting realist political thinking better than the reality of the international scene (Telo, 2007). In the eighteenth century the nation state, reinforced by capitalism and the industrialization process, made its

3 The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) is often treated as the decisive turning point from which the world was neatly carved up into territorial units, but a long incremental process of political restructuring already starting in 1555 with the Treaty of Augsburg happened beforehand, culminating in the conjoining of citizenship and territory. 1948 did entail the end of feudal geopolitics.

entry on the world's stage. It introduced political identity and ideology in relationship with territoriality and sovereignty. Citizenship became restricted to territory. Around the mid-1900s the nation-state went international and it soon became the worldwide *modus operandi*, aggressively visualized by flags, banknotes and maps (Wintle, 2009). The state became the boxed power container of modernity with a panoptic monopoly on the use of force. The state was a kind of spatial fix to cope with the challenges of capitalism. With an increasingly intensified globalization process, state territoriality became challenged at the end of the 20th century. The changes in the economic and financial system showed that borders were not impermeable, more shockingly displayed by terrorist attacks and environmental threats, leading to the development of the idea of the 'risk-society'. Furthermore there is an increase in migration. Overall, social relations are extended beyond traditional territorial spaces. The power container of the nation-state appeared to be leaking. The state-centric view became disputed leading to both a supranational, even global dimension and a subnational, local perspective on territoriality. The more or less recently created EU regions are the most tangible examples of how traditional state sovereignty is altered, or in some cases replaced, by transboundary spaces. Will these regions emerge as new political-geographical units?

National boundaries started to divide maps of Europe from the eighteenth century onwards (Wintle, 1999). The development of capitalism under modernity provided the necessary space for the nation-state (Wilson, 1998). As soon as the European Integration project came into being, the role of borders had to be redefined. No longer should they only function as barriers between two states, but the borderlands now had to integrate and cooperate. To achieve the integration of borderlands, the EU created different programs, legislation and means. The territoriality of the EU is implicitly mentioned in the European charter. The Union is for example called 'an *area* of freedom, security and justice' and the EU is trying to 'promote *territorial* cohesion'. It also talks about the '*territorial integrity* of the State' and it ensures the 'right to move and reside freely within the *territory* of the Member States (Burgess, 2006). Transborder regions came to be known as EU regions, or Euroregions. The territorial restructuring of the traditional Westphalian state is most visible in these regions. On the political level they show a focus on non-exploitative interdependencies, collectivization of national security and creation of an environmental agenda. These partnerships are not always without self-interests (Scott, 2006). Because of their geographical positioning between two, or more, sovereign territories, the very existence of EU regions can challenge state sovereignty. For the link between sovereignty and territory no longer seems to be an exclusive one. Until recently, there has not really been the case of a challenge, for the influence of cross border regions is weak. The overall process however, does point out to a process of political reterritorialization, because when two national governments agree to create a region that extends beyond the territory of their state they implicitly support a new territorial configuration (Popescu, 2008). Paragraph 3.2.3 will explain this process of reterritorialization in more detail. Overall, the conditions that shaped our modern territorial sovereign state are changed, and this might lead to a denationalized form of state

sovereignty. This is not to say that territoriality as such no longer matters, but the territorial state is undergoing major changes. For research projects like these, it implies that 'the national' needs not to be seen as an unitary container with clear insides and outsides, but as a dimension of scalar processes (Mansfield, 2005). This view also escapes the territorial trap as introduced by John Agnew, who became famous for it among social scientist. According to him the problem of many scientists that dealt with spatial issues was the focus on the state, on this single spatial entity. The result of this fixity on the state is that spill over effects are ignored, analysis tend to remain within the state, while effects of societal developments goes beyond state-borders (Agnew, 1994). Besides that, there is the fallacy of unit comparability, where every country is portrayed as a holistic unit that can be compared to other countries without problems. The difference with EU territory compared to state territory is that EU territory is not fixed, but expanding and it is variable for different policies.

3.2.2 Dissolving boundaries through cross-national cooperation

Despite being sometimes describe as a 'little promontory on the Asian continent' (Rumford, 2005), Europe has had, and continues to have, a profound influence on territorial developments. EU policies are visible on the ground. There are those that pertain directly to territory, such as the control of borders, Schengen and visa policies and student exchange programmes. Others are less visible, but not less important. The transboundary territorial logic of the European Union has manifested itself in various ways throughout time. While cross-border cooperation started as an internal affair, nowadays also non-member states are included in cross border initiatives. Several key terms are being used to describe the different manifestations of cross border cooperation, like transboundary cooperation, transfrontier cooperation and cross-national integration. All these terms however mean more or less the same; the process of smoothing historical scars is expanding. The border between Poland and Germany for example has the highest density of cross border projects, including social, cultural, economic and environmental projects. There is a certain paradox regarding European integration for the decreasing importance of borders is based upon the recognition of those very borders (Rumford, 2009). In its early stages, the EU tried to create a more common 'Europeanized' space between its member states with regional policies aimed at creating more cohesion and cooperation to prevent the peripheralization of European areas. This cohesion was put on the agenda through the effort to create a European wide spatial planning⁴ The Madrid Convention offered for the first time a legal framework for substate actors to actively participate in cross border cooperation (Popescu, 2008). At the end of the 1990s every single border of the European Union was covered by a cross border cooperation set-up. With more than 70 cross border regions (CBRs) in Europe today, and hundreds more cross-border projects, cooperation beyond the state limes is a major characteristic of the EU. The amount of

4 This finally resulted in the adoption of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and the establishment of the European Spatial Planning Observatory (ESPON)

CBRs appears to be the qualitative evidence for moves that are either labelled neoregionalism, new regionalism or the 'Europe with the Regions'. Sometimes the process is referred to as the 'cross-borderization' of Europe (Perkmann, 2003). But what exactly happens in these regions and how significant are they really?

Cross border cooperation can be defined as an institutionalized form of cooperation between adjacent subnational authorities across national borders. It often involves so called 'low politics' and initially is intended to tackle practical on-the-ground problems. CBC in the long run can contribute to a stabilization of border contacts by (institutionalized) improved relations between two or more nations. CBC has the ability to form a region, a cross border region, composed of the territories of authorities that participate in transfrontier cooperation. There is no general theory on cross border cooperation, which makes sense, because it often is a local affair. Any generalized explanation becomes a-historical and mechanistic. More specific theories do exist however. From the 1950's onward, research has been carried out into the different ways cooperation takes place across borders. The internal borders of the European Union are subjected to enormous change, at first they were established by boundary commissions to create a state-exclusive area but nowadays the European Commission desires the erosion of the these borders and tries to promote cross border activities. The study of cross border regions can roughly be divided into two major theoretical strands; the first being the sceptical perspective, which questions the potential of cross border regions as space of reterritorialization in their own right. The second is more optimistic and argues that these transboundary regions can function as spaces of reterritorialization in innovative ways. CBC creates Cross-border Regions, that can be defined as territorial units that comprises adjacent sub-national areas from two or more nation-states.

Cross-border cooperation has a long history in the Europe. The Dutch-German and the Franco-German frontiers were the first to engage in official CBC. Out of these co-operations formal cross border collaboration arrangements like EUregions and the Association of European Border Regions emerged. Legal frameworks came into being and the creation of the single market, with help from the Single European Act, paved way for more intensive cooperation. From the 1988s onwards, there is a large increase in Cross Border Regions all over Europe (Perkmann, 2003). A major impetus for this strong surge is that in 1990 the first major interregional funding programme was launched, called INTERREG, followed by INTERREG 2 (1994), INTERREG 3 (2000) and INTERREG 4 (2007). While the amount of money allocated to these programmes is relative low, its political significance is great. The later initiatives allocated more money towards the external borders of the EU, but the original aims remained unchanged. In the 1960s and 70s cross-border cooperation schemes in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) were seen as an oddity, because of two reasons. First of all the Iron Curtain divided Europe, making cooperation nearly impossible. Secondly, there was not much attention to 'low politics'. Practical cross border cooperation projects were not thought likely to have long run impacts and did attract much funding from the EU (Ingham, 2002). At the beginning

of the 1990s cross border initiatives appeared in the East of Europe and they quickly expanded to the newly achieved member-states. In 1994 Phare CBC was introduced by the Commission, this programme explicitly focused on promoting integration within Central and Eastern European border regions. One of the larger cooperation programmes within the PHARE initiative was CREDO, which aimed at supporting non-profit organisations in EEC border regions by contributing up to 80% of 'hard' projects (small-scale infrastructure) and 90% of 'soft projects' (education, advice, economic and trade development, information exchange). The major difference between the Phare CBC programmes and Interreg was that the first is funded by the Directorates General (DG) External Relations and the latter by the DG Regional Policy. Besides that, Phare-CBC was more project oriented and financially organized in a year to year basis, while Interreg is programme oriented and has an multi-annual financial decision making process. Finally, it was the European Commission who was responsible for the allocation of funds in the Phare programme, while with Interreg the member-states themselves were responsible. These differences hindered closer cooperation between the two programmes. Nevertheless, in the funding period 2000-2006 these organizational inadequacies were not addressed. In 2003 extra money was made available through the External Border Initiative. This initiative supported CBC investments at the future external border of the EU. In 2000 the TACIS (Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States) programme was launched to complement Phare CBC and encourage the democratization and market transition processes in post-soviet spaces. These extra initiatives all incorporated the principle of subsidiarity, despite the lack of strong local governments and authorities in the CECs. The year 2007 proved to be one of change. First of all, the TACIS programme was incorporated in the ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument). But maybe more important and certainly less well-researched, was the creation of the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). This grouping reflects a breaking away of the previous path of European Cross-border Cooperation.

The EGTC is a legal entity, unlike the different programmes and initiatives that governed cross border cooperation before 2007. Groupings can exist of member states, regional or local authorities, associations and other public bodies and they attain under this entity a legal personality (Regulation EC No 1082, 2006). The fact that they can create a single legal body makes it a lot easier to cooperate and attract contractors. National actors can cooperate as stakeholders. Furthermore, there is no need to sign an international agreement, which needs parliamentary ratification. The first EGTC that was formally launched was the *Eurométropole*, an initiative of France and Belgium. Many more appeared on the agenda, also in the Eastern European countries.

Central in all CBC initiatives is the joint character of the whole process, it is about joint development, joint implementation, joint staffing and financing. In most programmes, partners from different sectors can apply, both governmental and non-governmental. Table 1 shows the potential applicants for Cross-border funding programmes, it is retrieved from the Black Sea Basin CBC programme.

Besides all these potential actors in CB programmes, others like associates and subcontractors might also be involved, though often not in a direct way. Despite these conditions, real time applicants remain scarce in the Black Sea Area, especially when it involves CBC that is not energy or climate focused.

Table 1: Potential applicants and partners for Cross-border funding programmes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public administrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decentralised and/or local governmental public services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public undertakings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chambers of commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural, forestry and fishery authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism public authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban and rural development institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ports, rails and roads management authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operators and service providers on electronic communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental protection agencies and similar institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste, water and wastewater management bodies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural protected areas and reservations administrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency situations institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection against flood bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural institutions and operators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and training institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EUroregions

Source: Presentation 'Application package' as held on the Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme-Partner forum, 23 July 2009, Varna

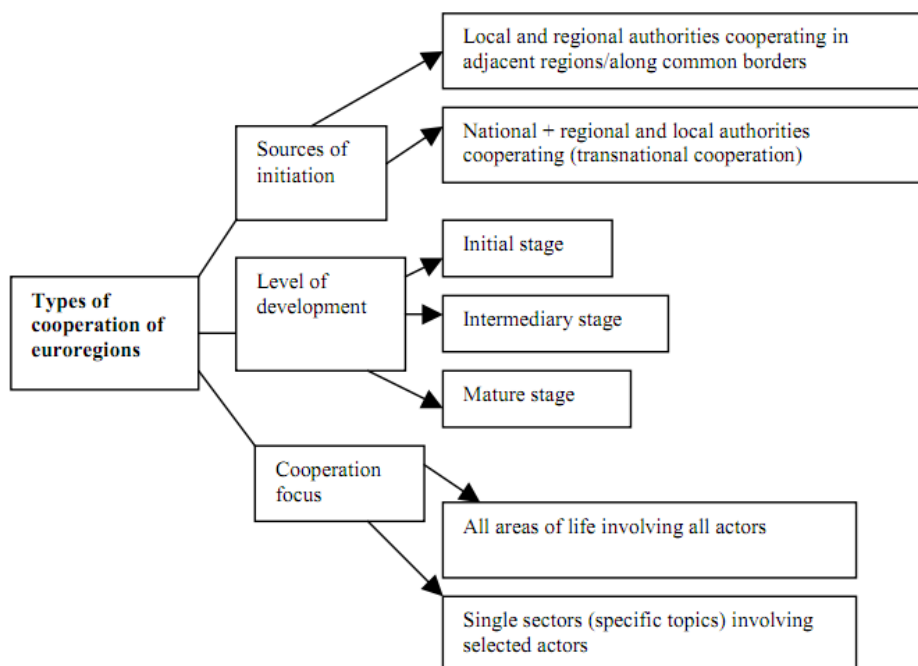
3.2.3 Reterritorialization and EUregions; conflicting territorial logics?

“How could movements of deterritorialization and processes of reterritorialization not be relative, always connected, caught up in one another?”

(Deleuze, 1980)

EUregions are territorial structures that are brought to life to intensify cross-border cooperation and they are at the crux of the reterritorialization project. Officially, EUregions are administrative structures aimed at promoting CBC. While previously the nation state had a monopoly on policies aimed at the 'other', now subnational regions have gained the power to create their own foreign policy. This challenges the territorial logic of the nation-state and the meaning of the border. The first EUregions were established along the Swiss border and they were perfected in the Dutch-German border regions. There are different types of CBC of EUregions. Figure 2 depicts a general scheme for this. If this scheme is applied to Bulgarian-Romanian CBC it safely can be said that the overall level of development is in its initial stage, with a focus on single sectors with specific topics. The sources of initiation are various, but consist mainly of local authorities.

Figure 2: Types of cooperation of EUregions



Source: Lepik, 2009

Ideally, EUregions create a form of so called ‘triple helix cooperation’, meaning cooperation among the public sector, the educational establishment and the business community (Lepik, 2009). EUregions have been quite successful overall, but their story has not been well publicized. Also, nowadays there are few, if none, research projects that tackle the territorial features of these cross border regions. There are studies

that argue that EU forms of cooperation are weakening the state and its territoriality, but what exactly is the function of territoriality in shaping these new institutional spaces? While the previous paragraph together with the globalization paradigm might provide room for the thought that cross-border interactions are relatively new, this is not the case. Transnational flows already existed in, and before, the seventeenth century while at the same time the sovereign state and capitalist system were evolving. The social-scientific discourse of the transition from a Westphalian to a post-Westphalian era is an important one, but not necessarily entirely true. One of the premises of the Post-Westphalian discourse is that cross border flows and territorial sovereign states are dichotomies of each other. But, as the quote from Deleuze already suggests, processes of deterritorialization, caused by globalization, are always linked to movements of reterritorialization. A connectivity conundrum exists. While some things are deterritorializing or despatializing, like the flows of information, other things are reterritorializing, of which the various transborder projects are an example. And power is never deterritorialized, but always specific to particular places. Ó Tuathail also emphasises that shifting relations are moving towards deterritorialization and reterritorialization at the same time and in the same spaces (Tuathail, 1994). The concept of reterritorialization provides a good way to express the way in which territoriality plays its part in the process of cross-border cooperation.

It is difficult to say who first came up with the term reterritorialization, but the four names that introduced and elaborated on the term as used within the geography discipline are Sacks, Deleuze and Guattari and Popescu. Only the latter, Gabriël Popescu, is a geographer. Sacks is a political scientist and Deleuze and Guattari are philosophers. Reterritorialization is therefore a concept that never has been very well elaborated within the field of geography. This is why, after the publications of these writers, the term has been embraced by different authors who used it for various causes and to describe various processes. Cocco for example uses the term from a Marxist perspective, in the context of the labour of territories (Cocco, 2007). The term deterritorialization was initially inspired by Deleuze and Guattari who described the process in their book 'A Thousand Plateaux'. After their publication, the term has become detached from its original meaning and is now widely used to describe the decreasing role of territory in a globalizing world. The concept is also applied to the war on terror, Al-Qaeda is for example often portrayed as being deterritorialized, not operating within existing territorial frames. But there is still a terrible geographicalness within terrorism. And in similar cases the term is used to describe situations where territory doesn't seem to matter anymore. But this is not what the term originally implies, in fact it means the reverse; territory is both the outcome and condition of process of spatial reconfiguration. Deleuze and Guattari argued that deterritorialization never happens without reterritorialization and these two terms should not be separated. Deterritorialization creates the conditions for reterritorialization, though these changes might be territorial, they are primarily functional reconfigurations. Reterritorialization cannot be seen apart from deterritorialization. Deterritorializing is the process whereby culture, politics and economies are no longer

tioned to the national territory. This untying results from an increasingly globalized world. Reterritorialization is the concept which captures the reconfiguration of territorial systems as a process that is multi-scalar and flexible, where the state is not disappearing but organized differently. This is not New Medievalism, where territoriality is organized in different centres, but rather a mixture of both old and new forms. It also stresses that the geopolitical roots of globalization should not be overlooked. Globalization is not a pure technologically, market-driven process, but is also sponsored and controlled by states, primarily through financial arrangements. Globalization is not global at all, but restricted to certain areas in the world, stretching from North America, Western Europe and East Asia. In short, reterritorialization is the process where new territories are formed that overlap with nation-state territories.

The EU itself is in some publications presented as a model of reterritorialization, Burgess and Vollaard call it the most developed model of reterritorialization (Burgess, 2006). What is interesting in this respect is that the European Union, a supranational organization that works at the sub-national scale, is devolving power to certain regions. Although national governments are often not directly involved in the governance of EU regions, they provide services that are required for local authorities to undertake effective cross border cooperation action and therefore this EU-induced reterritorialization is still managed by the state. So while the border defined state territory is put under pressure by cross border regions, it is at the same time managed by those states. This might be one of the primary reasons for the small effectiveness of many CBC projects. EU-induced reterritorialization is most visible in the EU regions. Formally EU regions do not have a single legal status. The Council of Europe states that the term 'suggest simply a feeling of belonging to Europe and a willingness to participate in the process of European Integration' (COE, 2010). They are bridges between countries, which have the ability to enable grassroots participation in cross-border cooperation. The newest generation EU regions are emerging outside the European Union. Examples are the Finnish-Russian region Karelia and the Ukrainian-Russian region Slobozhanshchyna. EU regions are territorial in nature, not only because they are delineated territorially but also because they bundle different political techniques together. Technically EU regions are national creations, but often they are assisted by non-governmental organizations and by trans- and supranational bodies like the Council of Europe, with direct financial assistance. This makes these regions interesting from a geopolitical perspective. The main dilemma for EU regions lies in the fact that governments do want to cooperate together and have their borderlands strengthened, but at the same time they don't want these cross border regions to become autonomous governments on their own. This is inherent in the working of the political system, since the whole system is designed to find an acceptable balance between autonomy on the one hand and co-determinations or access and influence to relevant collective decision making arenas on the other (Burgess, 2006). Broadly speaking it can be stated that the improvement of weak economic situations at borderlands are the prime reason for cooperating, while political considerations can function as barriers to integration. Besides that, EU regions are in some cases perceived as vehicles to extend political control

beyond national boundaries (Scott, 2006).

Gabriël Popescu refers to this main dilemma of EUregions as a conflict of territorial logics that is going on at the EU borders. This conflict is driving the process of cross border reterritorialization and plays out on multiple scales. On one side there is the territorial logic of the nations-state which competes with the border bridging territorial logic of cross border cooperation. It is at the border where this conflict is being negotiated. For the national government, the border is of great importance, since its delimits their sovereignty and more importantly, the sovereignty of its neighbouring countries. But for an EUregion, the border is a barrier to be overcome. From the supranational perspective, the EUregion is considered from a geopolitical imagination, as a territorial policy tool (Popescu, 2008). The territorial logics that are in conflict with each other have their roots in conventional understandings of political territoriality. This understanding is mainly focused on state territoriality. But times are changing and it appears that EUregions are becoming more than just geopolitical tools used by (supra)national actors to fix the territorial shortcomings of the Westphalian system. In fact, the recent developments even appear to crystallize in the creation of cross border territories, and the question is whether these areas are gaining a sovereignty of their own. However, at the moment they are far from attaining a status of their own.

3.2.4 European region making and New Regionalism

When doing research in European territory on processes like reterritorialization, cross-border cooperation and b/ordering, it is important to realise that Europe is being scripted in various ways with region-making being one of its most important features. EU power is created and narrated through new regional spaces and the role of regions in the use and production of Europe is increasingly influential. European integration paved the way for different region making processes, with regions like the Baltic Sea and Central Europe as its most clear examples. It appears that creating a region is increasingly considered as a prerequisite for regional policies. This is leading to a situation where the region itself is becoming the condition of its own existence and success (Bialasiewicz, 2009). As is the case in the construction of the Black Sea Region as paragraph 4.2 will show.

Table 2: Major differences between old and new regionalism

	Old Regionalism	New Regionalism
Actors	Deominated by states and intergovernmental organizations	Involves states, market, civil society and external actors
Areas of cooperation	Cooperation in clearly delimited sectors, especially trade and security	Cooperation on a variety of fronts simultaneously, with strong sectoral linkages
Policy orientation	Introverted and often protectionistic	Extroverted, often directly linked with globalization
Theoretical view	Realism	Constructivism

Adapted from Telo, 2007

During the Cold War era, lots of regional groupings came into being. ASEAN, ECOWAS, SADC, SAARC, GCCC, CSCE, CARICOM and the OIC are just a few of the examples. Most of these organizations survived the Cold War and still exist today, although in a somewhat altered form. Regionalism has gained renewed attention since the late 1980s. Important scholars in the field are Söderbaum, Wilson, Anderson, Keating and Hettne. Just like the reassertion of concepts like space, territory and sovereignty, the proposed reason for this theoretical revival is globalization. Processes of globalisation caused new divisions of labour, challenges the state as the prime territorial unit and makes regions maybe even the preferred medium through which globalization is mediated in this world. In this more complex world, where state power is inadequate and where multiple multinational institutions exist, regionalism is necessary and desirable (Fawcett, 2004). The mid 1990s is seen as the second wave of regionalism, where regional groupings were proliferating again. Table 2 depicts the major differences between 'Old Regionalism' and 'New Regionalism'. Above all, new regionalism seeks to understand how regions are made and unmade, and by whom and for what purpose (Teló, 2007). New regionalism acknowledges that the process is multifaceted, a phenomenon that includes state as well as non-state actors and emerges primarily from local actors. It goes beyond the target of this thesis to explain the origins of regionalism, the only thing that must be stressed is that regionalism is not just a by-product of globalization, but rather an interplay between different scalar processes. As is the case with borders, all regions are artificially constructed and there are no natural regions. A region is always a (social) process in making, never definitive (Paasi, 1991). The word region derives from the Latin *regere*, which means 'to rule'. Often regions are defined in relation with the nation-state. Major categories that result from this are supranational and subnational regions. A region is conventionally described as a number of states grouped together, although they also appear within states. However, ongoing mobilities and rise of various networks challenge this fixed and taken-for-granted approaches to these regional categories. A degree of definitional flexibility is required to understand regionalism. Within the European Union several regions are well-known, such as the 'blue banana', the 'circles', 'learning regions' and more recent, the 'cross border regions and EUregions (Rumford, 2009).

Although regionalism and regionalization are often used interchangeably, it is useful to make a distinction between the two terms. There doesn't seem to be a real consensus on the meaning of the term and authors from different academic fields use the term differently. James W. Scott, for instance describes regionalisation as: "national processes of decentralization and subnational processes of region-building with, among other things, the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness and responsiveness of governance". Thus, regionalisation is a directed process of region-building. Michael Keating stated it a bit sharper, by saying that "regionalization can be understood in terms of a tangible political project: the construction of a regional development model". Others defy this purpose driven political character, Anna van der Vleuten for example defines regionalisation more economically, as the everyday practices of local actors/entrepreneurs.

Hettne and Soderbaum consider regionalism as the formal part, the ideology and program while they think regionalisation is the process. Then there is the division between hard and soft regionalism. Soft regionalism is a promotion of a sense of awareness or community. Hard regionalism is the more official version, whereby regional groups and networks are consolidated and formalized by arrangements and organizations (Fawcett, 2002). Besides the financial impact, the territorial cohesion pursued by the EC is a major contributor to regionalism and redrawing of internal borders. In the case of Ireland for example, borders were redrawn in order to create a larger space that was 'eligible' for receiving structural funds (Davoudi, 2010). Ultimately, regions and regionalism are being build up all the time by states and non-state actors.

4) The Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands

“Romania's relationship with Bulgaria could, too, deteriorate even to the point of potential Bulgarian territorial claims against Romania. Sofia's claims would be rejected but the presence of such views that Dobrudja 'belongs' only to Bulgaria is known to us and pursuing these would be unwelcome”

(Pascu, 1992 as quoted in Ingham, 2002).

The quote above from the former Romanian presidential policy advisor Pascu is about the historical region Dobruja, which is now covered for the largest part by the Black Sea EU region. It shows that at the beginning of the 1990s Romanian-Bulgarian relations were not optimal, at least according to this presidential policy advisor. Initially this facilitated the fear that EU regions might be used as political tools to realign state borders. The geopolitical status of both Romania and Bulgaria has been recast in the course of the twentieth century, with changing frontiers and foreign policies through revolutions and the aftermath of the Soviet regime. From a spatial perspective this changing geopolitical status can be described through various ways. Aspects that influence the position include developments in neighbouring countries and their mutual relations, perceptions of spatial communities, internal political events and more global processes. All these processes affect the prevailing geopolitical situation and the border. There is not much research going on in the Black Sea Area from a European perspective. Most of the research that has been conducted is either on economic issues, like the BSEC, or on security issues, often related to Russia and the Caucasus. Questions on cross border cooperation and their influence on both the internal and external borders are not tackled. This chapter tries to provide a thorough description and analysis of the Romanian-Bulgarian border, placing emphasis on cross-border interactions and EU-induced processes of reterritorialization. It starts by presenting a general introduction to the border, then moves on to describe different cross border cooperation initiatives across different levels.

4.1 Locating the Romanian-Bulgarian border

Places that look far away become closer by looking at a map, but there are few good maps that depict the Romanian-Bulgarian border today. This is interesting, for as Wintle shows in his book, pictures are useful in discovering a *mentalité* (Wintle, 2009). The lack of pictures can also point to a lack of common identity. Nevertheless this paragraph will try to sketch the situation at the Romanian-Bulgarian border.

Map 1: The border and its doublet settlements



Source: Sageata, 2010

Since Antiquity, the Danube river has segregated Romania from Bulgaria. The Romanian-Bulgarian border is easy to point out on a map. But to describe its position not just topographically, but in other dimensions like the relative geographical location and embedding in EEurope is much harder. Are both countries located west of the Black Sea or situated in the Eastern part of Europe? Both of the countries are mapped within different regions, often context-dependent and occasionally on purpose. The different maps on the Dobruja region, a region that covers a part of both countries, can also be used to achieve ideological supremacy over space. Historically, Romania and Bulgaria were made up of regions like Wallachia, Dacia, Moesia and Dobruja. Before 1989 Romania and Bulgaria were as members of the Warsaw pact part of the 'Eastern Bloc'. In this era, the Eastern Bloc was intensively identified in Western Europe as a region 'untouched by Western Enlightenment', characterized by industrial backwardness, lack of advanced institutional and superstitious cultures (Bialasiewicz, 2009). This framing of Eastern Europe, a temporal divide, did not fully disappear after the fall of the cold war iron curtain. Today they still belong to Eastern Europe according to the United Nations. The CIA World Factbook is more precise and refers to Romania and Bulgaria as part of South-East Europe. Sometimes Romania, or a part of the country (often Transylvania) is included in Central Europe. Bulgaria is also considered part of the Balkans, a view that is not accurate according to many Bulgarians.

This description is also not used very often, because of its negative connotation with the Balkan wars⁵. The Romanian area Northern Dobruja is also considered part of the Balkan peninsula. Both Romania and Bulgaria are considered part of the Black Sea Region and the (EU scripted) Danube region, of which only Romania is part of the Lower Danube EU Region. Categorized according to language, Romania belongs to the Romanic family (or Latin Europe) and Bulgaria to the Slavic language family. Besides EU membership, one of the most important events for the geopolitical status of Romania and Bulgaria was the joining of NATO. Romania was the first country that was part of the Partnership for Peace program of the NATO and gained membership in 2004, together with Bulgaria. In doing so, they became part of the system of Euro-Atlantic integration. When talking about the Romanian-Bulgarian border it is important to realize that it is cross-cutting through and within these different regions. Each geographical characterization is based on internal and external political considerations. The different categorizations also show how intensely fluid all regional constructs are.

Map 2: The Romanian-Bulgarian border and the different districts



Source: European Commission, 2011

The Romanian-Bulgarian border is with 610 km one of the longest borders within the EU, thereby having great potential for cross-border cooperation. The border is constantly changing and the different cooperation programmes are softening historical divides and fostering joint approaches in overcoming political, economic and social development problems. The border area consists of seven Romanian counties and eight Bulgarian districts that make up for approximately 7500 km². The districts adjacent to the border all had their particular regional history, resulting from different ethnic compositions and (socio)economic achievements. 470 kilometres of the border is formed by a 'natural' frontier, the Danube river. This river divides the two countries for three quarters of the length of the border. On both sides of the river are hills and mountains, on the Bulgarian side slightly higher than the Romanian side. These physical characteristics create a border that is not only a construction, but very real and tangible. In 2004 the total population of the area was around 5,1 million, of which 64% located in Romania. The entire border area is characterised by a declining and ageing population, due to its peripheral location. While normally a river favours the emergence of an urban zone, the surrounding areas in Bulgaria and Romania have remained rural (Sageata, 2010). These rural areas, mostly in the west, deal with out-migration. The Gross Domestic Product is very low compared to the average of the EU. In 2003 GDP per capita was 1840 euro, only 6,5% of the EU average of 28,100

5 Although it is called the 'Balkan Wars', the conflicts only took place in Yugoslavia

euro. Also when compared to the countries themselves, the regions perform poorly. Romania had a GDP per capita of 2400 euro and Bulgaria of 2300. The economic core of the border region on the Romanian side is Constanta. On the Bulgarian side, the Vrastra district is the core economic area. The economic structure is dominated by agriculture. This structure has been changing in the past few years, similar to other South-East European countries and the tertiary sector is growing rapidly. Despite being at the forefront of the economy, the agricultural sector is in great need of modernization. This is hard not to notice when travelling around in the rural areas. Both the equipment and facilities are out-dated. It is hard to say what the exact situation at the moment is, since a large amount of the data necessary for an economic analysis is missing from official statistics. Most of the available data comes from 2004 and even this date is not complete. In overall however, the region is among one of Europe's most disadvantaged areas in socio-economic and structural terms, with limited investments and low dynamism.

The region as a whole lacks a proper transportation infrastructure and is poorly connected with the larger European economy. Although the Danube has functioned in the past as an important axis of transversal fluxes from the Central Europe to the Black Sea, the amount of cross border interactions between Romania and Bulgaria themselves is low. One major factor contributing to this is the lack of border crossing points. The Danube river in this area is only bridged once and has seven ferries. Bulgaria and Romania have demonstrated that building a bridge requires more than just knowledge of Newtonian physics. For a long time Romania and Bulgaria have argued where to build a second bridge. While the location was selected (between Vidin and Calafat) and the building project started in 2009, the bridge still isn't finished, officially due to lack of investors. There are three functional civil airports, the others are either military or non-functional. The port of Constanta is the largest of the Black Sea and the main Romanian port. One important priority for both Romania and Bulgaria after the accession to the EU is entry to the border-free Schengen zone. Romania already gained in 2002 some Schengen provisions that allowed visa-free travel to the EU for its citizens. This arrangement was part of the pre-accession strategy and not without a trade-off, Romania had to strengthen its grip on the Eastern border. Previously Romania had a liberal border regime with Ukraine and Moldova, but this began to tighten from the 2000s onwards at the EU's request. Despite the efforts, both countries are presently not incorporated in the Schengen zone. Primary reason for this is corruption (especially of the border guards) and a fear within the EU that organized crime will gain access to EU territory via Moldova. Bulgaria and Romania are trying to decouple the corruption and crime efforts from the Schengen discussion, but so far they are not succeeding in it. The recently discussion about the Roma and organized migration reasserted the dominant EU opinion. Also the failure of Bulgaria to secure its borders with Turkey is a problem. At the end of 2010 France and Germany decided to postpone Romanian accession to Schengen. Bachonschi, the Romanian foreign minister spoke about an attempt to establish a 'two-speed Europe' and threatened to leave the monitoring system that was set up to assist Bulgaria and Romania with accession, reforms and fighting corruption. This threat was

however nearly impossible to realise, for Romania agreed to participate in it as one of the accession conditions prior 2007. To come back on this is almost the same as saying that Romania didn't agree on the conditions of their accession (Euractiv, 2010). The Schengen discussion is reason for some scholars to believe that European integration is re-dividing Europe into two, creating distrust and even hatred in Eastern Europe (Diener, 2010).

4.2 The Black Sea EUregion and Europe's Black Sea Dimension

Historically, the Black Sea was a Turkish lake for centuries long. After the Ottoman rule, it became a Russian/Soviet sea. But this might change. The membership of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 was symbolically important, for the EU now bridges the European continent from east to west and a new external border for the EU was created, the Black Sea. The countries located around the Black Sea don't have much in common, except for the sea itself. There is no natural 'Black Sea Region'. It can be said that the region has been written into existence, through the production of lots of documents, visions and programmes. The EU is one of the major drivers, followed by NATO. This is importance to realize, for it shows that the region will only exist through the EU/NATO agenda (Bialasiewicz, forthcoming). At heart lies the idea that there is one

Map 3: The Black Sea EUregion



Source: Council of Europe, 2011

European space ('monotopic Europe') which is being pursued through the construction of a reterritorialized governmentality (Richardson, 2006). What makes the forming of a Black Sea Region more difficult, is that the many countries have overlapping membership in different regional groups. Furthermore, the Black Sea region contains a lot of 'frozen conflicts' and these are now brought to the 'very doorstep' of the EU. In fact, from the EU point of view, the Black Sea has become European as much as the Mediterranean and the Baltic. Previous to the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, the EU was rather pre-cautious on getting involved in this region. The involvement of the EU was based upon bilateral agreements and the Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Russia. In 2007 this attitude changed drastically, and a Black Sea policy was created, the so called 'Black Sea Synergy'. A new regional strategy was being set up and the number of publications on this region expanded rapidly. Also the amount of institutions and frameworks involved is getting larger and larger. It seems that the enclosed seas (the Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea) in the EU's periphery are approached by a kind of commonality. It is however difficult to see what the EU really is doing in this region, for as Pierre Bourdieu put it: 'Europe does not say what it does; it does not do what it says. It says what it does not do; it does what it does not say' (as cited in Bialasiewicz, forthcoming). But some things are discernible. The joint statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the European Union and of the Wider Black Sea states very clearly that the Danube region is a key area to strengthen connection between the EU and the Black Sea countries. This large Danube area is appointed as a Cross Border Cooperation area. It appears that the regional policy is part of the strategy of the EU to strengthen its influence within the Wider Black Sea area. The EU creates with its Neighbourhood Programme new forms of regionalism, making the Black Sea Region a multi-layered region in which the EU's interests collides and overlap at the same time with the Black Sea countries. This transnational hardwiring is

inherently part of the EU's governmental rationality (Richardson, 2006). Of course, the EU is not the only actor in the region. Russia and the United States are also claiming the region as a strategic frontier in terms of (energy) security and conflict (Aydin, 2009). These interests are sometimes an obstacle for regional cooperation.

One of the first major mesoregional strategies of the EU after the Cold War was the Northern Dimension. This dimension was created to manage the transformations that the North-Eastern European countries had to deal with. Officially it was launched in 1995, but the processes leading to it started a few years earlier. A major lesson of the Northern Dimension was that mesoregional policies can stimulate regional and local cross border cooperation, and also positively contribute to external relations (as the PCA with Russia demonstrated in 1992). The Northern Dimension has become part of the EU's CFDP and helped to establish the New Neighbourhood Initiative and to develop the vision of Wider Europe. Out of the Wider Europe vision, a Black Sea Dimension was created. The Black Sea Region gained prominent interest of the EU after the accession of Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. The EU already was observing in many regional organizations, but is nowadays more involved by funding of and participating in regional projects. More and more official documents are released that stress the importance of the (Wider) Black Sea Region, especially for security and environmental issues. Nevertheless, although the Black Sea Synergy is promoting the regional approach, the Eastern Partnership is still focused on bilateral ties and therefore the approach of the EU is not very clear or cohesive. One of the major EU programmes in which 10 Black Sea countries participate is the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme. In Romania and Bulgaria the regions Sud-Est and Severozichien are eligible. The Black Sea Basin programme aims at 'a stronger and more sustainable economic and social development of the Black Sea Basin regions' (blacksea-cbc, 2011). It does so by (financially) encouraging communities and municipalities to develop their local economy, to confront environmental challenges and to promote people to people interaction. The programme is financed by the ENPI. A closer look on the Black Sea Region shows that there is a lot of international activity going on. More than thirty organisations are active and try to promote cooperation and to organize joint projects. At first glance, it appears that the region is doing well with so many activities. However, many of these organizations are practically dead or only exist in name. Besides that, there are many overlapping agendas and competition for funding, which results in a lack of institutional capacity and slow decision-making. In the end, there are only a handful projects of regional importance. Bulgaria and Romania are involved in many of these organisations. One of the reasons for this is that they want to keep an eye on the Russian and Turkish endeavours in the region. This motivation is also present at other countries, making projects for the good of the whole region scarce. National motivations still prevail over regional cooperation, although the situation has improved a little over the years, especially in the climate and energy sector.

It is important to make a distinction between the Black Sea Region and the Black Sea EU region. In 2008 the Black Sea EU region was created, covering the eastern parts of Bulgaria and Romania. This

EUregion was created to offer an institutional framework for transboundary cooperation. In most EUregions cooperation appears to be most successful in the cultural realm. Sports activities, city partnerships and student exchange programs are flowering in numerous border regions. But this is not the case in the Black Sea EUregion. It appears that the degree of support for cooperation in the Black Sea EUregion depends on the synergy of local entrepreneurs and borderland inhabitants. In the created policies the borderland inhabitants are not really considered or involved in the design and process. The role of borderland people is now restricted to reacting on scalar policies and maybe modifying the plans by their actions. One possible explanation for this is process of creation. Like other transborder regions in Eastern Europe, the Black Sea EUregion was first regarded by both countries as a way to extend their influence and political control beyond their border. Quickly after that, the region was used for internal purposes, in which Romania gained the most out of it, for the largest part because of the port in Constanta. Because of these motives, the region has been largely top-down created. (Popescu, 2008).

One of the more financial threats to cross-border regions like these is that funding and attention is unequally distributed, whereby the region gravitates towards one of the states. This is also the case in the Black Sea EUregion. There are three major cities in this region, Constanta on the Romanian side and Balchik and Dobrich on the Bulgarian side. Constanta however is relatively much larger and has a significant port. The city is much more able to draw both attention and funding to itself. This has caused that, especially in the beginning of the cross-border region, Romania has been profiting more from the EUregion than Bulgaria has. The field in which the most successful cooperation projects among Black Sea States are launched is energy. There are a lot of initiatives in the energy sector, and especially the BSEC is very active in this. In 2007 they released a Xenophon paper on energy cooperation among the BSEC member states. They sketched an energy strategy for the coming years (ICBSS, 2007).

Despite the lack of strong regionalism one things has become clear. Whether the region is called an 'intellectually constructed region', a 'black hole', a 'side effect of European Integration' or a 'passive geographical area', the number of publications on the Black Sea region as a whole has grown rapidly, making it a unit of analysis (Aydin, 2009). However, entrenched nationalism and security issues prevent the region to behave as a region. The Black Sea Area seeks to become European, visible in the European integration logic found in official documents. At the same time, it tries to prove that it always has been European. The aim of this Black Sea regionalism appears to become integrated with Europe, so Europe in this respect is both the beginning and the end-point of region-making (Bialasiewicz, forthcoming).

4.3 Cross-border Cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria

'Geographic proximity does not ensure easy relations between neighbouring countries. On the contrary, it may precisely be a hindrance to good and friendly relations' – Soedjati Djwandono (Jetschke, 2009)

Although Romania and Bulgaria have good relations with each other, apart from the competition, it looks like they don't have much interest in working together. One of the interview respondents said that Romania looks to Bulgaria as the country they have to cross to go on holiday to Greece. Of course this is stereotyping, but there is truth in it. Cross-border cooperation is not working very well between Romania and Bulgaria. This is not only the general opinion by international observers, but is also admitted by national and local politicians, business people, teachers and inhabitants of the different border towns. Anyone with experience in travelling through the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands knows how hard it is to cross the border, let alone to do business beyond the border. So why is this the case? Why is there almost no cooperation, or at least appears there to be no cross-border interaction? This chapter will explain the obstacles for cross-border cooperation currently present in Romania and Bulgaria.

4.3.1. Obstacles to Cross Border Cooperation

Cross-border cooperation in the same territory can highly fluctuate throughout time. Take for example the towns of Ruse and Giurgiu. Both towns once belonged to the medieval Bulgarian state. In fact, it might be very possible that they once were one town, only divided by the Danube. However, power shifted and Giurgiu became part of Romania. Interactions became much lower, although during the communist era lots of people crossed the Danube to go do some cross-border shopping in the opposite town. After the fall of the Wall, the amount interactions almost dropped to zero, only to increase a little again the past few years. And there are many examples like these all around the world that prove that borders are always on the move, as is cooperation between borders. As has been said, cross-border cooperation is at a low level now between Bulgaria-Romania. There are several obstacles, ranging from cultural and economic barriers to infrastructural and administrative/legal barriers. Out of the different interviews held and observations made during my research six major obstacles can be identified:

1. Lack of awareness and regional identity
2. Similar economic structure on both sides of the border
3. EU-funding doesn't get there where it is most needed
4. Corruption
5. Lack of proper infrastructure to overcome geographical barriers
6. No access to Schengen

Of course there are more factors involved, but the six mentioned above appear to be the most important. Almost every person interviewed referred to them. Before presenting ideas on how to overcome these barriers, every obstacle will be discussed separately.

Lack of awareness and regional identity

Common identity is one of the common bases for CBC. At the same time, the cultural barrier is the most difficult to grasp, for it is not as tangible as for example the lack of roads or bridges. It is a problem that exists in the minds of people and therefore it is the most difficult one to analyse and, if necessary, change. Regional identity is very important for CBC to succeed, when there is a common identity governments can create common policies with a common vision. Working together is also more easily if identities are shared. The Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands however are lacking any form of regional identity, except for some symbolic twinning there are no signs to be found of a regional identity. Some might also think this has something to do with the many ethnic minorities present, with each of them having their own identity. But remarkable enough, the border cities are not that diverse. Linked to the question of identity is the question of citizenship. Because of the communist past of the countries, in particular in Bulgaria, the state is highly centralized, making active participation of citizens more difficult. The awareness, or attention, of politicians is also very low. During the early days, members of the government even opposed the very idea of the EU region. As explained before, this is related to the socialist legacy. The Romanians for example saw the EU regions as a direct threat. They thought they were established in order to bring down Romania, to draw out the foreign investments and cash flows. So the Bulgarian initiative was accepted, but not wholeheartedly. Both of the countries also were a bit scared of the fact that the region gained autonomy of its own, they couldn't exercise full power over them anymore. The experiences of other EU regions in Romania, like the Lower Danube and Eurocarpathian however, have made the general opinion gradually more positive towards the concept of the EU region.

Similar economic structure on both sides of the border

The cities on both sides of the river are too similar to have good cross-border exchanges. Besides being underdeveloped, their economic structure is pretty much the same. Product prices on both sides of the border are more or less the same, so cross-border shopping doesn't really have a *raison d'être*. Or as an 84-year old Bulgarian put it after a question on if he visited the other side of the river: 'What is there for me over there? It's exactly the same as here' (RNW, 2006). One of the reasons for the underdevelopment and lack of dynamism is that politicians never favoured transborder cooperation during communist times, a mentality that is not easily changed. Historically socialist countries had an economic structure oriented toward the interior, and not the exterior of countries. This doesn't stimulate cross-border interaction,

especially because there is also lack of infrastructure to cross the border. The economic crisis made things even more complex. At the beginning of the EU accession process, a lot of companies saw opportunities in the markets across their own border. In particular the Bulgarian companies in the food and construction sector grabbed their chances, for the Romanian market is about three or four times the size of Bulgaria. And more important, there is a significant demand for Bulgarian products in these sectors in Romania. So the major companies started to invest in cross-border activities. But then the economic crisis came, the Romanian currency devalued and their activities couldn't be profitable any more. Most of the Bulgarian companies froze or stopped their endeavours and this is the situation that still exists today. Although the economic situation is improving a little, companies aren't very eager to invest beyond the border, because they are aware of the great risks. In other sectors there is almost no interaction going on, because the economic structure is pretty much the same and it is hard for a 'foreign' company to compete with native ones, especially because in order to cross the border lots of taxes have to be paid.

EU funding doesn't get there where most needed

Anyone knows that without money there is not much trade and cooperation. Because of their economic underdevelopment, the Romanian Bulgarian cross-border regions have one serious disadvantage; they don't have enough financial power to invest in their own regions and are therefore dependent on foreign investors. In 2007, shortly after the ascension of both Romania and Bulgaria, a territorial cross border cooperation programme was set up. This programme is part of the Cohesion policy of the EU. The Cohesion Policy of the European Union tries to achieve a balanced and sustainable development of the Community and is quite an egalitarian notion. The idea of balanced development is basically a spatial manifestation of a social issue (Davoudi, 2010). One of its key objectives are the different cross border projects. Even before 2007, in the period 1998-2006 the EU granted 8 million Euro per year to Romania and Bulgaria for financing projects with cross border impact. It is unclear for what exact projects this money has been used for. The overall strategic goal of the cooperation area as formulated in the official programme is: *“To bring together the people, communities and economies of the Romania-Bulgaria border area to participate in the joint development of a cooperative area, using its human, natural and environmental resources and advantages in a sustainable way”* (ERDF, 2007). This strategic goal is split up in five specific objectives, each of them being part of a priority axis. The total funding of the programme is 262 million euros, of which 217,8 million comes from the ERDF, 42,6 million from the national public funding and 1,5 from private funding. Different monitoring agencies are set up at a programme and project level to control the efficiency and allocation of the funds. Despite these agencies, the allocation of the funds experiences some major difficulties. The Institute for Public Policies published a report in July 2011 where it stated that in Romania, only 3.4% of the money out of the EU funding is actually spent (IPP, 2011). This is absurd. While it is unclear what amount of money intended for CBC reaches its objective, it safely can be said to at least 50% does not get there where

needed. This is linked to the lack of transparency and gives rise to suspicions of corruption. Nevertheless, enthusiasm and expectations for cooperation were very high at the start of the negotiations about membership of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU and a lot of Bulgarian companies tried to enter the Romanian market, also trying to make use of EU funding. This enthusiasm and expectations soon changed when people realized how hard it was to meet all the different EU standards. Especially for the smaller companies it is very hard to meet the criteria, for they have to invest a lot. The European Union does provide some funds for these companies, but this money often doesn't reach them.

Corruption

Corruption might be the best-known impediment for cross border cooperation. Bulgaria is almost famous for it and often accusations of corruption are used to deny certain things, including access to Schengen. Of course this reputation and these accusations are not made up out of nothing. During my research several contact persons did admit that there still was corruption, not only within the government, but also among police officers and businessman. I will not include names of persons, but I will mention three examples of corruption practices. The first one happens often, and people who cross the border frequently are most aware of it. The police officers who are in charge of the bridge taxes sometimes charge persons more than the standard fee. However, the other way around is also possible. If someone suggests the police officer to lower the tax, and that to pay him in cash, there's a good chance he will accept it. A good strategy for people who cross the border often. The second example also has to do with crossing the border, but this time involves business people. When trucks cross the Friendship Bridge, they not only pay an extra fee, but they also have to register at a second checkpoint after the bridge. It occurs that they are being told that if they do not pay an extra amount of money (ranging from one hundred to a few thousand euros) they are being put on the 'black list'. This black list has very negative consequences for companies, for it implies that their numbers are being registered wrongly. This causes problems of all kind. The third example might be the worst. One contact person told me of one politician who used EU funding for his own purpose to further his career. Although it might be a relief he didn't use it for personal expenses, it still is a major fraud.

In June 2011 the European Commission released a report with a set up measures to tackle corruption in both countries. This is the first time the EC ever showed such an initiative to fight corruption on EU-level. This proposal also included that Bulgaria and Romania first have to deal with corruption and mafia crime before they will be allowed into Schengen area. In 2013 the EC will issue an EU Anti-Corruption Report that will show threats and trends that need attention.

Lack of proper infrastructure to overcome geographical barriers

Maybe the most amazing thing about the Romanian-Bulgarian border is that it is bridged only once. A cynical Czech I've met responded on this fact; 'ah, they forgot to demolish that one?'. That there is only one bridge is not because there is no money available, but it is for geopolitical reasons. The existing bridge is between Ruse and Giurgiu and is located close to Bucharest. In order to cross this bridge, taxes have to be paid. A person travelling by car has to pay 6 Euros per time. A truck has to pay almost 37 Euros. This is a heavy burden and a major obstacle for people to cross the border. There have been some improvements, because in 2001 people had to pay around 30 Euros to make use of the bridge by car. Remarkable is that during communism, people could travel for free and didn't have to pay any taxes to cross the border. These taxes were introduced after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Officially these taxes are for road improvements and to maintain the bridge, but any person that has used the bridges knows that this is not the case. The road is in a very bad condition. The taxes are used as an addition to the local budget.

Both countries do want to build more bridges, also to increase their connection to Europe, but they disagree on where to build the bridges. A classic case of isomorphism. The Romanians want the second bridge to be build more inland, preferably near Constanza. The reason for this is that people who need to make use of the bridge (e.g. to travel to Greece or Turkey), have to spend more time in Romania and thus spend money there. The Bulgarians however want the bridge more to the west, because that is closer to Sofia. Because of this reasoning, there hasn't been build a bridge in decades. But for many borderland people a bridge would be useful, for the Bulgarians for example it would be worthwhile to make the trip to Bucharest for international flights because Bucharest is a lot closer than Sofia for many. But because the lack of bridges and the existing taxes to cross the border, most of them don't travel there and go via Sofia instead. In 2010 they finally started to build a second bridge, between the Romanian city of Calafat and the Bulgarian city Vidin. This project however stopped in the middle and it is still unclear as when or if the bridge will be finished. And of course there shouldn't be only build two bridges, for there is need for at least ten. It would be best if all the twin cities along the Danube-lined border would be connected by a bridge. But bridges only are of use when there is traffic using it, and it is questionable whether there is really a demand for it. Nevertheless, this example shows us that it is necessary to make a distinction between intentional policies, self-promotional rhetoric and actual co-operation. More network thinking is necessary to close the gaps in the net.

Figure 3: The Romanian-Bulgarian Friendship Bridge



Source: Publics Bulgaria, 2011

No access to Schengen

There have been numeral dates set on which Romania and Bulgaria should have gained entry to Schengen, but every time these dates have been postponed. It looks like the combination of 'open borders' and 'Romania and Bulgaria' is not very popular within the European Union. Especially Romania is disappointed with it, considering the fact that they have invested a lot to improve border control. The outer borders of Romania, in particular the one with Serbia, are regulated with help of the most advanced technological tools. Cameras are scanning the license plates of incoming cars, trucks have to pass through mobile scanning devices and biometrical scanning devices are used to check passports. In the unlikely case a car or person passes the border illegally, a squadron of quads and APVs equipped with infrared and night vision are ready to intercept. Continuous camera control and GPS-tracking also make it a lot harder for border guards to be bribed. Compared to a few years earlier, where the border was a grey zone with occasional checks by guards and a place to 'smuggle' cigarettes, the situation could be put forward as a best practice example in the European Union. Both countries are technically ready to join Schengen. But a lot of member states oppose this idea, led by France. France is afraid after the debacle over the Roma people that open border with Romania would lead to big problems. The Bulgarians and Romanians are surprised over the fact that they are not judged by experts, but by politicians.

4.3.2. Overcoming the obstacles

“We cannot make the same mistakes all the time” – Emiliyan Enev (Enev, 2011)

If Romania and Bulgaria do want to work more closely beyond their own borders, several things have to change. First of all there is an urgent need for commitment on the national level. Stakeholders in the local level are putting much effort in CBC, but are hindered by lack of support from their national government. This is also related to the problems of corruption. In order to deal with this effectively, politicians should strive to support local initiatives as much as possible. More public-private initiatives would be more than welcome. Secondly, the infrastructural problems have to be solved. Infrastructure is one of the basics for cross border cooperation, for if people want to cooperate they have to be able to cross the border. The second bridge should be finished as quickly as possible and after that there should come at least five more bridges and/or crossing points between the major cities along the border. After the establishment of a proper infrastructure the more specific problems could be addressed. Of course a lot of its success depends on developments within the European Union. Gaining access to Schengen would lead to a major step forward in CBC. With Schengen the problems of corrupt border guards and the unjust taxes could be tackled. Access would provide both the countries with the legal framework to pursue free border crossing. Furthermore it might be a good idea to establish an independent monitoring agency that keeps track of the funding. Too much is disappearing into a black hole right now, if there would be more monitoring the chances funding gets there where most needed will rise significantly. After all of this, regional identities can be promoted. Although there are some efforts to promote it at the moment, these are not very effective because of the missing foundations as discussed before. It goes without saying that regional identities are already present in the region, but in order to successfully ‘exploit’ or market them other activities should have priority right now.

Figure 4: the BRIE logo

If there is one example of good cross-border cooperation, it is the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre (in short: BRIE). This centre is located in Ruse, close to the bridge crossing the Danube. The program was introduced in 1993, before the pre-accession strategies. It is a collaboration between the



Source: BRIE, 2011

universities in Ruse, on the Bulgarian side, and Giurgiu on the Romanian side. It offers several bachelor and master programmes for students living in the borderlands. The master course are offered in both English as German and are organized jointly. Besides the study programmes, the centre also jointly prepares project proposals to improve the cross-border cooperation. Several of them have been accepted, including one called BRIDGE, an abbreviation for Bulgarian-Romanian Initiative for Democracy as a Guard post of Europe. This programme, funded by the EU PHARE programme, focused on instructing the border police not only on

how to work efficiently together, but also how to work in a Schengen environment. Besides that there is a project running right now which investigates the existing border identities in the region in order to help local authorities improve the common identity.

These kind of collaborations show us the potential for CBC in the region. It is a shame that this pool of potential remains untapped for the largest part. One way to increase CBC and to create more successful partnerships like BRIE might be to do more with the different Black Sea Region programs. In table 3 I listed some of the possible activities that might be eligible for funding as part of the Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme. Of course, this is not the only program. A more pro-active attitude could draw a lot more money into the border regions of Romania and Bulgaria, making more applications for activities of these kind would be of great advantage to Romania and Bulgaria.

Table 3: Possible activities eligible for funding between Romania and Bulgaria as part of BS program

Support to the promotion of traditional products from Black Sea agriculture in the international market	Pre-feasibility studies for small-scale transport infrastructure for a better integration of less developed areas and tourist destinations	Common initiatives for promoting transit transportation infrastructures in the region aimed at increasing freight and passenger transportation efficiency
Development of cooperation networks aimed at promoting the use of information and communication technologies in local/regional economic activities	Creation of cross-border tourism products and common service standards	Training for staff of local bodies and institutions supporting SMEs, especially for the improvement of capacity to operate in interregional activities
Networks for the promotion of innovative urban and rural planning and management methodologies for urban development and rehabilitation	Programmes for the improvement of the coastal area	Development of concepts for coordination and cooperation in case of natural or man-made disasters
Partnerships for among universities, high schools and research centres	Partnerships for promotion of cultural heritage / creation of cultural networks or centres	Promotion of common cultural events / awareness raising events

Source: Presentation 'Application package' as held on the Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC Programme-Partner forum, 23 July 2009, Varna

CBC stakeholders also shouldn't focus too much on the European Union. The EU is important, that for sure, but it isn't the only initiator or fund-provider for cross-border programs. In 1992 the United States provided funding through the United States Agency of International Development in order to establish an association of municipalities in Bulgaria. This association, called the Union of Bulgarian Black Sea Local Authorities (UBBSLA), promotes local self-government and tries to achieve active citizen participation in the Black Sea Region. Besides networking in the region the association provides services for capacity building, training

courses for municipal servants, especially for the municipal administration. The organization knows five different committees that each deal with issues in the municipalities. There is a committee for law and regulation, one for financial regulations, one for spatial planning, a committee that deals with tourism and sustainable development and a last one that focuses on energy development. While each committee is important, most achievements have been made in the field of energy development. Energy, so to say, is a hot issue in the Black Sea region, with all the countries committed to work together. Overall, UBBSLA has a lot of projects, of which nowadays a lot receive funding from the European Union. Maybe one of the most politically relevant projects was the creation of the Black Sea EU region, an initiative in 2006.

BRIE and UBBSLA are excellent examples of how Cross Border Cooperation can function in Romania and Bulgaria. BRIE proves that the barriers for working together across the Danube can be overcome. There is still some frustration in the management, in particular on how long it sometimes takes to lift off a new project, but at least there is visible progress. UBBSLA is more inward oriented, but proves how municipalities in the Black Sea Region jointly can take up projects, whether this is training or setting up new businesses. If only more organizations would follow their lead, stimulated by the national leaders (instead of top-down decisions) and supported by (EU) funding, the Romanian-Bulgarian borderland could develop into a fully operational transboundary space. A space where terms as meeting, connection and contact would replace the associations of frustration and corruptions too many people have nowadays of this particular border.

Conclusion

Once countries had borders, but increasingly countries at the edge of the EU become borders, as is the case of Bulgaria and Romania. Under the burden of high expectations, the results from the Black Sea EUREGION are less than hoped for, the current EUREGION in Bulgaria and Romania is not working very well. Despite all the claims of official documents, there is no strong regionalism present in the Black Sea Area, it is rather a sort of loose peripheral regionalism. There is a lack of cross-border interaction and the Romanian city of Constanta is attracting most of the funds. This does not mean that the concept of an EUREGION is not right. However, more investigation is needed as to how to make it work at the local level. It could be argued that the creation of a second EUREGION around the towns of Ruse and Giurgiu is desirable. Since there are many cross-border interactions already between Ruse and Giurgiu, the establishment of an EUREGION could both reinforce these interactions as well as expand the zone of activities.

Seven important impediments to cross border cooperation have been pointed out. Three of them could be solved rather easily. The lack of proper infrastructure could be solved by building more bridges and crossing points. There is enough money available for this, the only thing that has to be overcome is the (small-scale) geopolitical thought that is present in the mind of politicians. The second thing that could be improved without too much effort is the distribution of EU funds. This is mainly an issue of organization. It would be a good idea to distribute the money equally between Bulgaria and Romania and to create a monitoring agency that keeps track of the money. The third barrier to CBC that could be solved easily, but is now experiencing heavy resistance, is the accession of both countries to Schengen. Technically, they are more than ready.

Besides that, it is still unclear as to what extent the EGTC is helpful. Also, the construction of a new bridge might contribute to a feeling of togetherness between Romania and Bulgaria. Furthermore a potent cocktail of cartography, of good maps, and iconography could alter the attitudes of the people living in the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands. Making cooperation visual can help people to identify themselves with the region. While there are not many CB projects and the overall process is slow, there is some hope for the future. Lots of persons group together around the border to jointly work on CB projects. Two major things that have to be overcome are the assumptions of corruption and the general lack of trust. Corruption is present, but much less than people actually think. The lack of trust can only disappear by working together and by getting to know each other better. Universities like BRIE and initiatives from local entrepreneurs regarding information exchange help to overcome the lack of knowledge, and therefore trust. The role of the EU in the Black Sea Region is key. The EU has become the main economic partner and therefore is very important in creating cross-border projects of regional importance. While the Black Sea EUREGION might not have the ability to change the territorial logic of the nation-state and its borders, it does show that there is

a process of reterritorialization happening in European space. New territories are being created, which are for a part beyond the traditional sovereign reach of the nation-state.

The possible enlargement of the Union with Turkey might trigger a new form of territorial cooperation in the Black Sea region and will influence the position of the EU in the Black Sea Area. Romania and especially Bulgaria are not really opposed against enlargement, which might be related to the fact that they are at the outer edges of the European Union. And being at the outer edge is basically something no one wants. The best prediction of what will happen in the future of European cross-border cooperation is offered by the situation that exists today. This thesis has shown that the EU has many territorial features, but the question of whether Europe needs to be a territory is not asked. Maybe to foster cooperation the idea of territory and our associations with places and frontiers have to be replaced by some other principle of community. A border is not only reacting to changes that have occurred in a particular situation, but also preparing for the next move, both dealing with and producing pressures for future situations. While the EU promotes itself as the world champion of European Integration, a lot of work still needs to be done. This research has shown that the state is not located in a static self-contained territorial arena. Rather it is historical specific configuration that is constantly being produced, reinforced and reconstructed. Above all, the EUregion allows us to escape the logic of the traditional nation-state and to think beyond borders. On the other hand, the EU's impact shouldn't be overestimated.

Transborder state reterritorialization in Europe is geographically uneven and cross border governance is still shaped by capitalist practices. Sadly enough the lack of economic activities isn't stimulating CBC in the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands. The fact that both countries on several occasion publicly announced that they want to cooperate more closely is a good thing. This creates a kind of rhetorical trap. Besides that, there are some good opportunities for new businesses, in particular in the tourism sector. Also there are opportunities for innovative networks between universities, research institutes, small- and medium sized companies and local administration. The BRIE University has already proved how useful these types of cooperation could be. Though there is no single regional identity present, there are plenty of cultural heritages to exploit. But transborder cooperation still has an enormous task of bridging this border region and to create a common space in order to fulfil the burden of expectations. The Bulgarian-Romanian EUregion contains the (territorial) potential for new geometries of association, but so far the actual achievements have been somewhat disappointing.

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Appendix 1: Selected overview from Black Sea Regional Organisations

Name	Date	Type	Member states/parties	Goals/activities
The Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)	1992	Regional economic organisation	Initiating party: Turkey Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine	Foster regional cooperation through its sectoral working groups: Agriculture; Banking & Finance; Combating Crime; Culture; Customs Matters; Emergency Assistance; Education; Energy; Environmental Protection; Exchange of Statistical Data & Information; Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals; Information & Communication Technologies; Institutional Renewal & Good Governance; Science & Technology; SMEs; Tourism; Trade & Economic Development; Transport
BSEC Business Council	1992	International non-governmental, non-profit organisation	National organisations representing the business communities of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine	Lobby and act for the continuous improvement of the business and investment environment; provide a forum for a dialogue between the private and public sectors; help attract Foreign Direct Investment to the region; help enhance the competitiveness of SMEs through management training; develop joint cooperation projects; collect and disseminate statistical data and information on business conditions and business opportunities in the region
Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB)	1997	International financial institution	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine	Accelerate development and promote cooperation between its shareholder countries; support regional trade and investment, providing financing for commercial transactions and projects in order to help member states to establish stronger economic linkages
International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)	1998	Independent research and training institution	Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine	Foster multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners; strives to pursue applied, policy-oriented research, build capacity and promote knowledge on the Black Sea region; tries to fulfil in the best possible way its institutional role and the assignments received by carrying out studies, offering policy advice and coordinating activities
Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the BSEC (PABSEC)	1993	Parliamentary assembly	76 parliamentarians from Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine	Provide a legal basis for economic, commercial, social, cultural and political cooperation among the member countries; to enact legislation needed for the implementation of decisions taken by the heads of state or government or by the

				ministers of foreign affairs; to provide assistance to national parliaments so as to strengthen parliamentary democracy; to promote cooperation with other international and regional organisation
Black Sea Association of National News Agencies (BSANNA)	2006	International association	AzerTAj (Azerbaijan), ANA (Greece), Armenpress (Armenia), Anadolu Agency (Turkey), ATA (Albania), BTA (Bulgaria), ITAR-TASS (Russia), Caucasus-Press (Georgia), Moldrpres (Moldova), AGERPRES (Romania), Tanjug (Serbia), MIA (FYROM), HINA (Croatia), GHN (Georgia) and Ukrinform (Ukraine).	Promote friendship and good neighbourly relations; strengthen mutual respect and trust among the agencies; freely and equally exchange information to facilitate its dissemination.
Black Sea Euroregion	2008	Regional initiative	Initiating parties: Romania, Bulgaria City of Idjevan; Municipalities of Bourgas, Nessebar, Shabla, Varna, Braila, Constanta, and Mangalia; Autonomous Republic of Adjara; Region of Cahul; Counties of Braila, Constanta, Galati and Tulcea.	Develop cooperation among its members, to represent and support their common interests and to cooperate with the existing Black Sea international organisations
Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership	2006	Regional platform	Initiating party: Romania Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine	Foster greater synergy among international and regional organisations to create political preconditions for the success of regional cooperation projects; shaping a common vision and setting a common agenda. Promote good governance, strengthening of tolerance and nondiscrimination, civil society capacity-building, empowerment of youth through provision of better education and research opportunities, with a view to creating a regional environment conducive to the promotion of democracy and fundamental rights and freedoms. Identify regional means and capabilities that can be mobilised to ensure sustainable development through more effective regional cooperation and highlighting the role and active involvement of the business community to this end. Encourage regional cooperation by pooling relevant national experiences and best practices in crisis management, civil emergency planning, post-conflict reconstruction and environmental protection, putting regional priorities in harmony with European and EuroAtlantic developments in these areas.
Black Sea NGO Forum	2008	Nongovernmental Organisation forum	100 NGOs from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and other EU member states.	Increase the level of dialogue and cooperation among NGOs in the wider Black Sea region, as a means of strengthening NGOs and their capacity to influence regional and

				national policies.
Black Sea Synergy	2007	EU regional cooperation policy	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.	Stimulate democratic and economic reforms; support stability and promote development; focus on practical projects in areas of common concern; respond to opportunities and challenges through coordinated action in a regional framework; develop a climate more conducive to the solution of conflicts in the region
Community of Democratic Choice (CDC)	2005	Intergovernmental organisation	Initiating parties: Georgia, Ukraine Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Latvia, FYROM, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia and Ukraine.	Promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law.
Harvard Black Sea Security Studies Programme	2001	Academic programme	Senior military representatives and civilian security specialists from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States.	Deepen participants' understanding of global and regional strategy, defence organisation, military reform and restructuring; identify the very broad common areas of agreement that exist among the Black Sea nations and expose their officials and US participants to the strong common history and shared values of the region; highlight the specific areas of current cooperation on issues of vital interest to these countries and, at the same time, identify those issues which divide them and present challenges to regional cooperation; expose Black Sea officials to the free flow of ideas inherent in the pluralistic American system and within the US national security community itself by engaging them with policy makers who represent a wide range of viewpoints.
International Federation for Sustainable Development and Fight Against Poverty in the Mediterranean-Black Sea	2004	International association	Various institutions from: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Lebanon, Luxembourg, FYROM, Malta, Mauritania, Moldova, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States	Better management of water and its demand; an increased rational use of energy drawing on renewable sources; supporting sustainable mobility through appropriate transport management; assuring sustainable tourism that may also become a leading economic sector; guaranteeing sustainable agricultural and rural development; furnishing incentives for sustainable urban development; favouring sustainable development of the sea and its coastal zones.
Operation Black Sea Harmony	2004	Naval operation	Initiating party: Turkey Turkey, Russia, Ukraine and Romania.	Increase shipping security along the Black Sea coast and track suspicious ships.
South East European Co-operation Process	1996	Non-institutionalised	Initiating party: Bulgaria Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina,	Promote good-neighbourly relations; stability; security; cooperation in

(SEECF)		regional cooperation structure	Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, FYROM, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey	South East Europe.
The Baku Initiative	2004	Policy dialogue on Energy and Transport	Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.	Integrate energy markets of the participating countries, in order to guarantee transparency and to also give an impulse to Trans-European transport cooperation on the basis of the mutual interest for the progressive integration of their respective transport networks and markets in accordance with EU and international legal and regulatory frameworks.
The Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN)	1998	Regional association	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine	Protect the environment, democratic values and good practices.
The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (the Black Sea Commission or BSC)	1992	Intergovernmental organisation	Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine.	Combat pollution from land-based sources and maritime transport; achieve sustainable management of marine living resources; pursue sustainable human development.
The Danube Black Sea Task Force (DABLAS)	2001	Cooperation programme	Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, the International Commission for the Protection of the River Danube (ICPDR), the Black Sea Commission, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the EC, other bilateral donors, other regional/international organisations with relevant functions.	Provide a platform for cooperation for the protection of water and water related ecosystems of the wider Black Sea region, (the entire Black Sea basin including all tributaries).
The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) – a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States	2007	Public-private partnership	Main recipients can be located in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia (the oblasts of Krasnodar and Rostov)	Rebuild trust in public institutions; to affirm the value of citizen participation in the democratic process; to strengthen a critical set of institutions that lie at the nexus of state and society; to foster regional, cross-border ties in the public, private and non-profit sectors.
Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA)	1993	Intergovernmental programme	Initiating party: EU Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.	Stimulate cooperation among the participating states in all matters related to the development and improvement of trade in the region; promoting optimal integration of the international transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia 'TRACECA' into Trans-European Networks (TENs); identifying problems and deficiencies in the region's trade

				and transport systems; promoting TRACECA projects as a means to attract funding from IFIs, development partners and private investors; defining, in terms of contents and timing, a Technical Assistance Programme to be financed by the European Commission.
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme (BSTIP)	2007	Intergovernmental initiative	Greece, Turkey, BSEC and UNDP.	Develop networking arrangements; supporting the introduction of the Global Compact in the sub-region; building capacity in EU and WTO legislation.

Adapted from: Commission on the Black Sea, 2010

Appendix 2 Interview with Professor Gabriel Popescu held in March 2010 by email

I will answer your questions in stages. Now, I will attach here my dissertation since you mentioned you can't access it on-line. It is a lot of stuff there you don't need, but you can focus on the regions and regionalism parts you asked about. Needless to say, the information there is a bit outdated, but I stand by its main points. What I am saying is that today I will write differently

Now, I just want to answer you two points. First, I do consider CBC and Euroregions in Europe as a good idea. The basic thinking of behind the entire CBC idea is not wrong in my opinion - Europeans needed some sort of institutional push, and help, to at least start thinking about the possibility of looking for solutions to their local problems on the other side of the border, if there is to be an Europe at all. Where problems start to appear is when you call them "laboratories of integration". It is too much to think like this, from a variety of perspectives: One, you set the bar too high, you expect too much from this entire idea when, culturally, until 20 years ago most Europeans learned in school that their neighbouring countries were their enemies; economically, the entire system was inward oriented; and politically, decision-making power was monopolized in central governments and was unheard of for local authorities to have a say in issues that crossed their borders. Two, it all becomes top-down by design, because if you- the EU as a supranational body- take upon yourself to make it happening then it is your views, your idea of what CBC has to accomplish, that comes to define both what CBC is and its objectives. In part, I think this is what the national governments feared in Euroregions, that they create "territorial rivals", because the idea of heavily institutionalized (even in a multi-network way) territories that extended in both sides of national borders resembles too much the idea of nation-state itself (although this is not actually the case, this is how many government leaders see it). Then, there is the issue of consistency. The EU cannot claim it wants integrated borderlands and then not do enough to make it happen, but even work against it. I am referring here at these CBC schemes that are straddling the EU external borders, where the visas are effectively pushing ordinary people away from CBC. It appears to me who looks at this issue from afar, that what CBC at the external borders is becoming is more of an intergovernmental affair, as well as business driven - basically, organized flows of goods and people will continue to cross borders while the individuals, the ordinary citizens are left out from CBC. Well, if it is to create integrated territories across the border, or to help people think of their local space irrespective of the border, then don't we need, in the first place, exactly "the people" to be able to cross these borders as they don't exist. What is happening now at the external borders starts to resemble Southeast Asian cross border integration, where business is the main goal, and citizens were really never in the picture. I hope I am wrong on this, though.

To answer your last question in the first paragraph - I do not think we can answer in clear black and white terms if the experiment of Euroregions is working. Yes they work if we think where we started from, both inside & outside EU: there is at least awareness of the other side now, there are some common development strategies (even some good achievements in some places), and there is almost no border region in Europe that does not have a CBC program on its books! To sum up, the idea is there, it has become mainstream, it has been implanted in both minds and institutions. Personally, I consider this great, again if you don't lose the perspective of what European borders were before.

Then, No, it has not worked as initially envisioned. I can write you a lot regarding of what went wrong - from the expectations to the way they went about them, etc. To sum the NO part up, the Euroregion idea risks to become moot, to lose its cross-border meaning as it is developing right now. Thus, here is how I would look at this issue today (I might even write an article about this soon): Instead of trashing the idea of Euroregion and CBC in general, why not sit down and try to learn from the last 20 years experience. Really, sit down and try to analyze what has worked and what not; what can be actually accomplished and what not, in what way, how can we make this idea work at the local level, where it should actually work in the first place, and so on. I think there are already articles written about this - I can think quickly now at Henk's point that we need more "cooperation" and less "Europe" (which in my reading

means creating framework to make it normal for people to cross local borders if they want, and not pushing for cooperation where there may not be the case). The point about re-thinking the idea of CBC now is that abandoning it won't help either - that is for sure - so how can we adjust it then? By the way, I heard about a new legal framework - EGTG. I know this is for EU alone, but this idea of creating the legal apparatus for local CBC irrespective of the existence of an official Euroregion seems excellent to me. Now, I have not been to Europe since this EGTG has been put into place, so I do not know if it is actually "smart" or good. I also did not see any articles on this issue - I guess it is too new? I am actually surprised I do not see more written about it because it seems to me that it fixes one of the main complaints about CBC in Euroregions - the lack of the legal framework for the local authorities to engage in CBC (as the Madrid convention was a bit outdated). Again, from here, just reading the EGTG document it seems a good idea. I wonder if you know more about it and if this can be used in the Romania-Bulgaria case (I don't see why not).

I want to address your geopolitical question as well. I do not know much myself about Romanian-Bulgarian CBC. Sorry. The two countries have had and continue to have good relations. That is less of a problem for CBC. I think what matters most there is the lack of interest in each other. From Romania, Romanians look at Bulgaria as the territory they have to cross to go to Greece for holiday (of course I am stereotyping here now). I don't know too well how the Bulgarians look to Romania, but judging by the general level of interaction, it might be the same. So, there is not a lot of mutual interest at the national scale, and there is, apparently too little complementarity at the local scale - that is, Romanian and Bulgarian cities facing each other across the Danube are not economically differentiated enough for the most part; they are also on the smaller side, and pretty underdeveloped, again, for the most part. There are clusters where CBC can find sound complementarity, but the lack of bridges is a problem. Speaking of problems, here is one- here is how the national interest trumps CBC in the region.

The Danube between these two countries is bridged only once. This is unacceptable from many points of view. Romania and Bulgaria can build excellent bridges themselves, without any help. They may be poorer countries but the technical know-how and the money for even big bridges have never been a problem. What is a problem, is the political will and geopolitics. So, now that both countries need good links with the EU, they want bridges but can't agree where to build them. The Romanians want to build a bridge where they think it will be useful to them. Basically, they want to build it further more inland, to make European truckers to drive (thus spend) more in Romania. The Bulgarians want to build it closer to their city of Vidin, closer to the shortest distance to Sofia. Yet, this will mean that the trucks will cross Romanian territory in one day. And like this, for over 10 years, there is no additional bridge built across Danube. In this occasion the Romanians are the bad guys in my opinion. It's all about the national geo-political and economic interest. This is insane. What we need there is 10 bridges not 1, so that all these twin cities across the Danube are properly connected. Then you can actually speak of a chance for cross-border synergies to emerge, and so on!

So, if you want to focus on this area, you do not have much concrete, or large scale, or intense, CBC to write about, but the region can be interesting in its own right exactly because the lack of intense CBC. I know other people start looking to the region, somebody from Hungary was asking me about the region as well. By the way, there is some older Euroregion with some better CBC contacts at the extreme part of the Danube border, at the place where the Danube enters Romanian territory. EU geopolitics now: if you want to focus on the black sea region, there is another Euroregion that covers the entire Black Sea. Now, that is another animal, which is called Euroregion but it is really not at all local cbc there, it is more intergovernmental and it is actually more of a geopolitical project. If you want to focus on geopolitics and less of local cbc, that region is your goal as the EU does see that "Euroregion" as a way to assure its presence in the Black Sea region. To make it clear for you - the Danube and the Black sea have always been seen as related from a Geopolitical perspective. You cannot really separate them, as who controls the Danube, and especially its mouths (delta) also has a lot of influence in the Black Sea. This is how Romanians, Russians and even the Turks see the issue - that is "classical" geopolitics! However, as far as Romanian-Bulgarian Euroregions and the EU influence in the Black Sea space is concerned, I do see a connection there myself, but more on a roundabout/secondary way. In other words, making sure R&B integrate across the

Danube does help EU to gain influence down the road/river in the Black Sea region for sure (but this is a long term strategy), but for the EU to gain more direct and quick influence, it has to aim squarely to the littoral portions of Romania and Bulgaria, and even to the Danube Delta between Romania & Ukraine. I wish we'll get away from this classical mode of understanding power over space, but it appears that in national and international politics this rationing still predominates.

Ok, Alex, I hope you can take something out of this long blurb... I'll get back to you later with the rest of the answer. I promise I'll be shorter :)

Thanks for reminding me to continue. I was getting carried away.

First, I want to clarify something. I am not aware of a new Euroregion being created that covers the entire area of the Danube you show in the map you sent me. I know there are several Euroregions but I do not know of a single one. Is this a new one?

Second, I heard that the bridge over the Danube between R & B will actually be built this year between Calafat (R) and Vidin (B) (who knows when it will be finished though, although they promise it will be very fast). If this true then maybe there is some hope for rationality there, as was the location that is better from a European point of view, shortening travel time between Greece & Bulgaria and the rest of Europe. Now, there are the other 9 bridges that remain to be built.... :).

Third, I hear of some new interaction between R & B cities across Danube, i.e. opening up new ferry connections and so on. Thus, what I take from here is that things are moving as far as cbc is concerned. At the same time, it is not clear where are they moving. Good intentions not always materialize on the ground. This is where your research can come in, not only to see how are they moving but possibly how it is different there and if something about the broader cbc process in the EU can be learned from there.

To your questions now:

When I speak of cb reterritorialization I mean this process of regional integration across borders. However, why I do not simply call it "cb regional integration" is because it has some particularities, as far as how space is used and made sense of from a political point of view, that is better captured by the concept of reterritorialization. In short, here is how I see this. Reterritorialization means change in how social relations (include here daily lives, economics, politics, etc) relate to space. For the most part of the 20th century this relationship was about fitting everything inside national borders. Well, this was never totally accomplished, but it is obvious that with globalization this logic is even more untenable. So, we have seen that people's relationship with space has already changed and it continues to change...yet we can't say exactly how this change will eventually look like in its spatial/geographical aspects. In this context, cbc is one aspect of this change, one aspect that takes place at sub-national, regional scale. Ok, if this is the case then cbc and its territorial materialization in Euroregions means that we can see them in this light to help us ask the questions about what is its ultimate purpose and if and how it can be attained.

The bottom line is 1. that if we analyse what cbc & Euroregions have achieved so far, of course we can call this reterritorialization in the proper sense of the word - I mean in most cases people in border areas do not live borderless. This would mean for me "proper" or "actual" cb reterritorialization - when the border really does not matter to how people go about their lives even if the national border still exists in theory. As you go and speak of Eastern Europe in particular, this is even more the case. Yet in all fairness, most of these border did not have time yet to disappear. For example, B & R citizens still need passport to cross their common border because they are not in the Schengen space (am I correct on this?).

2. Still, the very creation of Euroregions, and the very fact that cb contacts between local authorities take place in an institutional setting, I mean they are sanctioned by the political institutions of the nation states, this implies that cb regions/Euroregions are

exactly one example of reterritorialization! Basically, what do we have on our hands here is a case where new territories where social life can be organized socially, politically, etc, are emerging that are not nation states. To make the point even more interesting, the nation state actually takes part in their creation! I mean this is unprecedented.

Thus, the power of the cbc idea/logic resides more in its potential of allowing "escape" from the logic of nation state. Of course there are problems with the very logic of these euroregions - as I pointed to you last time and in my papers - but they can be addressed, expanded upon, modified, etc.

I think the above discussion also partially answers your questions about new regionalism and eastern Euro. You will find in my 2008 article insights about how is that the new regionalism came to be used in Euroregions - basically this is the idea that de-emphasizing the border can allow the reconstitution of people's daily spatial relations that existed before the borders were drawn, and in other cases that people will develop these spatial relations once the border is made easier to cross, thus forming regions from where before there were only divided regions.

Well, we see now how this worked. It is not something it can be generalized. For example, at the Romanian-Hungarian border this can work better not because of the Hungarian population present there (although this definitely helps cbc) but because there are relatively large cities in both sides of the border that can gain by working together, and also, most importantly, both sets of border cities are far away from their respective national capitals. For example, many Romanian citizens living in the border region prefer to travel to Budapest to fly for long trips from there, as Bucharest is farther away from them. This creates synergies in the region, and this is situation with a lot of future cbc potential provided the political and ethnic issues stay as they are and are not blowing out of proportion. Take Bulgaria-Romania border now, the situation is different for the reasons I showed in my previous email. CBC potential is there as well, although it is not that evident and clear. I guess what I am saying is that there is a lot of variation here and you can't assume that regional integration is good or bad but that it depends of the context. The best one can do from a policy point of view is to create the conditions for cbc to take off. You will see then if it takes off or not.

I do not know where well the relationship btw ENP programmes and cbc. Yet, it is my sense that ENP did not have enough cbc programmes, or they are not taking front place at all. From what I know ENP is catered more toward the national level. So even where cbc is mentioned in ENP it often refers to national institutions working with their EU counterparts instead of local/regional actors working with their EU regional counterparts. Yes, I do see the need for ENP programs working very closely with CBC programs. It makes much sense to do so given ENP goals. Yet, this is hard to do as ordinary citizens need visas to enter the EU this pretty much kills spontaneous regional integration, or this idea of regional integration done through people's daily lives. CBC still exists in the "visa-required" circumstances of the EU's external border, but it is directed toward economic actors and higher social categories and it's pretty much like pre-programmed cbc. It is my firm belief that to speak of meaningful cbc or regional integration is to speak of making the border irrelevant to the daily lives of the ordinary people. Without this, there can be no meaningful cb integration. Increased trade and economic production links without people's ability to move back and forth across border whenever they please is no cb integration. Just look at the US Mexico border and how strong the cross-border ties are for decades in the MAchilla industry, and yet if Mexican people can't move freely back and forth, then the region remains unintegrated as a whole.

Here is what I would say about cbc in Eastern Europe. The cbc policy has to continue to become routine for any local level community. Right now, the argument is that it is all talk and it does not get down to the people. This is often absolutely true but this talk has to continue and to be even more in order for the actions to follow. So, let's continue to promote cbc and then use all this 20-year cbc experience accumulated in may European institutions to help develop actions on the ground.

For example, these EU money for CBC projects can be directed more toward concrete projects that are truly cross-border - I mean that can be used by inhabitants in both sides of the border - anything from schools to local airports to bridges, to water purification to...everything. Too often, money were given for projects that benefited only one side. Of course this is good too, but if you want reasons for people to use space in common then help them do that. There are so many instances where building these facilities with a clear scope to be used across borders makes perfect sense not only to offer reasons for cbc but because this would be the best thing to do for local needs.

Also, these EU funding programs can invite more citizen participation by requiring that projects have inputs from citizens for example... . There are many ways really that this can be done and others know how and what to do already.

Also, I would clearly differentiate between inside/outside EU borders when I think of cbc. Really, the visa requirement makes all the difference.

Also, what the EU can do more for the E Europe that is inside EU is to provide this legal framework that empowers the local authorities to engage in cooperation across borders to give them more independence from central governments. I do not mean to say not to include national institutions in CBC because I think this would be impossible given the existence of the nation states. What I mean that by having European level legal status, or instruments, the local institutions so strenghten their position vis a vis central governments - even better said, the local institutions are not left to the mercy of the national ones! As it has worked throught the 1990s it was that although the EU institutions supported cbc in reality, the local institutions had to go too oftern and for too many things through the national institutions. Well, what I think we need are instruments that allow local authorities to coordinate their ideas/projects with the national ones but to beg them to help! More like a consulting negociation rather than a subservient negociation. This is why I was asking you about the EGTC, from what I read (not too much as I said) this is supposed to do just that by expanding on the Madrid Convention. Again I would be curious to find out how is this EGTC received in Europe or if I have the wrong idea of what it really does.

Gush, I wrote a paper length email again! I have to let you now.

Let me know if I answered all your questions.

Appendix 3 Transcription interview held with Prof. Mimi Kornazkera at the University of Ruse. She is director of BRIE-Ruse, the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Centre.

Date+time: 22/03/2011 12.00h-13.00h (local time)

Location: University of Ruse, 8 studentska Street, sector G.

Introduction

M: I would firstly like to say that in 1993 we introduced at this university the program of European Studies, which was the first Bulgarian program of the kind. And on this ground we have had an experience of say about ten years when we had the chance to start a very good cooperation initiated by a German rectors conference, which is a NGO in Germany. So we had this initiative, this offer, this opportunity to develop CBC here between the uni of Ruse on the ground of the program European studies here the academy of Economy studies on the ground of the new structure that they started to develop in the city which is just opposite to Ruse. So if you cross the river here on the Danube, the friendship bridge, this the single bridge on the Danube, which is a shame. And so we use this facility, the bridge, and also the opportunity of economic studies which is located actually in Bucharest, the capital, this capital is 60km away from us, very near, to develop a structure in this small town known as Giurgiu, to start programmes at different academic levels, they started with small bachelor programmes in the beginning. Within this small structure and the proximity the small town, The distance is 15km, if the bridge offers better logistics opportunities, you can go by bike. So it is very convenient and very near. So the new structure of economic studies set in Giurgiu end our university , the university of Ruse is 65 years old, is quite a history and what is more, after the changes, after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, this university expanded the profile of the academic offer and included also law, business management, European studies, educational programmes, wide range of courses and offers because the region actually is quite huge, if you refer to the Bulgarian situation this university is a monopolist in the region here. The only university that provides education in this quite big region. So it was the right policy of the university to widen the fields, also to include European studies as well

So, how many students are there in European Studies?

At the moment we have about 40 students per year, this is the mission level. So when they graduate they have opportunities to continue with their masters. They continue either at BRIE, also other Bulgarian master programmes such as international cooperation and European projects.

And these students are all Romanian and Bulgarian?

No, let me explain. So this has been the existing situation here. We have been admitting Bulgarian studies for the programme Of European studies, which is a bachelor programme. But when the offer came from our partners, the idea was to develop master programmes and actually develop our academic cooperation on the ground of the master programmes. So we decided to develop a joint master programme, to include the academy of Economic studies in Bucharest, to include German partner universities and our university and we form a team and we develop jointly the curriculum. So the curriculum, which is jointly developed in Ruse, is a curriculum in also European studies at the master level being provided in the English language and it also offers studies in German language. Students do study German in addition, they have a semester in Germany, so this is the third semester and finally they come back and defend their thesis here. So that to say was the vision. So we have one Bulgarian semester, that is to say here, provided by Bulgarian teacher staff. We have a Romanian semester provided by the Romanian teacher staff. And we have one

German semester and the final semester here we have very practice oriented modules here. They include cross-border project management, the students work at teams and have to develop their joint proposals for cross-border projects. And they have a module in team working leadership, to prepare them how to work in teams and finally they have to develop their defence, their master thesis. They defend their thesis in front of an international commission, colleagues from the academy of Economic studies of Romania come here, we also join this team and students defend their thesis in front of this international commission.

So, has it also happened that a project that is being proposed by students is really accepted?

So far not yet, but we, the academic staff, have developed two projects and they both have been approved and we have started. The first one is called BRIDGE, it is an abbreviation and we use the symbol of the bridge, it means Bulgarian-Romanian Initiative for Democracy as Guard-post of Europe. So this program was addressing the needs of border police, for knowledge, for skills, considering the accession to the Schengen area. And we brought together sixteen Romanian and sixteen Bulgarian police servants and we offered them courses and modules, including also language courses, the Bulgarians learned Romanian and the Romanians learned Bulgarian. Also they learned all of them the English language, in their last semester studies. And they also learned about European integration, about the Schengen area, about Schengen law and they learned about free movement of people, so this idea of the EU. In general that was very, very useful and they were one of the first so to say people prepared for working at the border in the new situation that they will be confronted with, that is that they have to work shoulder by shoulder. So Romanian border police servant and Bulgarian border police servant and they are jointly within one and the same point of the border, checkpoint. So that is the first step of course of the Schengen situation. Then there will be no borders at all. But that is the preliminary situation. That was the project and it was very successful and we were very satisfied with the results. That was a project under the PHARE programmes, you know PHARE is Pre-Accession Financial Instrument for states which were supposed to prepare for membership of the European Union.

So, at what time started this project?

It started in 2007 and finished in 2008

So that was the first project, the second one needs to be contracted right now, but it has been approved, we have all the official documents for this. This is called BRAINS, it means Bulgarian-Romanian Area Identities Neighbourhood Study. So this is a research project and we want to survey big numbers of population living in this border area along the Danube, along the whole territory of the Bulgarian-Romanian border, not only Ruse and Giurgiu here. And we would like to know what people know about their neighbours and what they would like to know, and which are the strengths of the regions, as a territory, as historical legacies, strengths which people like to identify with. So the point is that we would like to develop, to propose recommendations to politicians, local authorities so that they can jointly strengthen this common identity.

So do you think that there really is a border identity?

First of all we believe that there is need for such a identity. Because if you have a common identity you can think in terms of common policies etcetera. And you know that this cross-border cooperation there is financing, EU financing for cross-border cooperation. And you have to develop these projects jointly. So you have to think about the goals. Which are the areas, regions, parts that need to be developed. Which are the dis-balances in the territory. And you cannot do this without having a common identity, a common vision. This is a territory you can also belong to, even though it is in a foreign country, a foreign state. You can also so to say, I can profit from the proximity of this new area and may find a job there if I don't find it at home. I may go there for tourism, or for visiting a

good hospital. So all these things that actually exist is an opportunity for people to benefit from.

Yes, so one of the pillars for cross-border cooperation is identity. Because yesterday I spoke with professor Strahil and he told me that although, for example, Bucharest is closer to Ruse than Sofia, people still rarely cross the border.

This is very important to know, because actually there is a constraint, there is a very serious problem at the border. Probably you have come to be aware of this, there are taxes that people who want to cross the border have to pay. This is one of the most complicated issues that we were confronted with when we started our cooperation that you read about here. We started our preparatory activities at the end of 2000. In 2001 we developed a curriculum, lots of joint meetings, a lot of activities to ensure the logistics, to organize all those things. Because it is not easy to organize something joint, located in two different states. And what we found out was that to cross the border, to get out of Ruse, go to Gurugu, and then come back to Ruse, costed us 72 Euros on taxes. That was absolutely absurd. So that was the situation after the fall of the Berlin Wall. By the way, in previous time, during communism, there have been no taxes, no barriers of this kind. It was easier. And we had the habit of visiting Romania for example to buy coffee or to buy sport-shoes, because the Romanians in the communist times maintained good relations with China and they imported from China some goods and we visited Bucharest to do some shopping there. That was easy in those times. When the Berlin Wall fell, there was a very quick change in the management of the border and a lot of taxes were introduced and they were of different kinds. Some of those taxes were called ecological taxes, some were called veterinary taxes, or sanitary taxes, actually local authorities in Romania, that was not very much in Bulgaria, but in Romania, local authorities used these taxes for their local budgets. So these taxes were incomes for the local authorities, but in the case of Bulgaria was different for all the taxes were centralized. They were used as incomes for the central national budget. So that was very complicated, very difficult and we had to organize a lot of meetings with a lot of authorities to let us travel free of taxes. Because we explained to them that this was not just a visit to go to Bucharest or on an excursion or just for fun, it is work and we are introducing an common academic structure and we would like to have the opportunity to travel regular free of taxes. So we got some understanding but step by step as a result of our pressure and of pressure on behalf of other structures with similar cross-border activities, the authorities finally decided/agreed to reduce those taxes and at the moment the cost of such a trip, just considering the taxes, is 12 Euros. But anyway, it is still a burden, it is still there and it is something we are fighting against and we are using all opportunities; we are giving interviews to the media, we organise protests sometimes...

Is there also pressure from the European Union to abolish these taxes?

There has been pressure, but we are not satisfied with the position on behalf of the EU institutions, we had a local office of member of the European Parliament, his name is Nikolai Mladenov, he is now currently foreign minister of Bulgaria. So he himself initiated so to say a very active lobby and he tried to inform and persuade some of the members of the commission to address this case and try to impact the national governments. So the results so far was not there, so we don't have any concrete measures undertaken in practice. But it is in our interest to fight, nobody gives you just rights or opportunities for free, you have to fight.

So what about the perspective of the Schengen accession?

The problem is that Schengen relates to the minister of interior and those taxes are collected by the ministry of transportation because they claim that these taxes are needed to maintain the bridge. But you know that the bridge is in a poor condition and it has not been reconstructed for years.

But I believe they started building a second bridge, but suddenly this halted, what do you know about it?

Actually it is a very slow process and it is due to many reasons, but I believe, at least what I've heard from also our Romanian partners and colleagues, is that this second bridge is not very much in the interest of Romania, economic interest, because of the following. Now this single bridge requires that all travellers from the western part of Europe cross Romania and then use the bridge to go for example to Turkey, to Greece and if they cross through the Romanian territory then there are some gains for the Romanians, they spend money there. So this is obviously one of the reasons and for many years when this process started, negotiations, there have been complicated attitudes on behalf of the Romanian part.

Some interesting geopolitics going on, but still it is sad that there is only one bridge...

Yeah and by the way this problem is confronted by our politicians and now we have a very good minister for regional development, he is very active and his political rating is among the highest. His performance has been impressive. His vision is that we need to have much more bridges here and that is a message that he also has delivered to his Romanian partners, so this will be the trend. This is something that has to happen. There is need for much more bridges.

Yeah, it is the basics for Cross-border Cooperation, and then of course you have identity and such. So what do you think of Cross-border Cooperation as a whole, for example; how do you see the CBC in ten years from now?

I think there will be much more cooperation. My argument is the following. I know a lot of teams of people on both sides that are interested and have started to develop projects. Because there are regular meetings when a programme is started. We are now in the Romanian-Bulgarian CBC programme 2007-2013, it will expire in 2013 and the next round will begin. So when this programme started there is a special communication policy on behalf of the central authorities of the programme. So they offer a lot of information and they bring together potential interested groups that could and would like to develop their partnerships with the Romanian side. So on those meetings I see a lot of people from different parts of the Bulgarian side and the Romanian side. People that are supposed to implement the projects are there, I would say there is even a critical mass of people. The problem basically is, is this assumption when it comes to the approval of the projects, this process is slow. The authorities of the programme do not very much trust the initiators of the projects, there are maybe assumptions of corruption but this is not that much the case. I've been working for many years and I know very well the situation. There are assumptions, there are fears, that maybe there might be corruption etc., so that not many projects are given a chance at the beginning, but a lot of project proposals have been developed. [...]

So how important is Ruse in this Cross-border Cooperation, I understand that it is like an example for other cities on how to cooperate?

It is important, because it is actually here that the first initiatives for CBC have been launched and the first non-governmental structures have been set-up. So we have for example here in Ruse a cross-border association called Danubius, euro-region Danubius. It supports the efforts of local public authorities at regional level to cooperate and we have the municipality level, the local level. So, as you know, there are two sub-national levels in the administrative structure of the two states. We have in Bulgaria so called Oblasts, that is districts and in Romania they have ..., which is also similar to district. [...] They have also done a lot of work, they have established a lot of relations and they have for example made connections between schools in Ruse and schools in Giurgiu, between art galleries, libraries, so different structures, even the hospitals and the churches. [...] There is a myth that in history Ruse and Giurgiu have been one town. This may be possible, because in the 11th/ 12th century the territories beyond the Danube belonged to the medieval Bulgarian state

That is also an interesting metaphor for the cooperation

It is very interesting, because borders have been always mobile, varied, if we go back in history we can even find things that we cannot believe about

I also talked with professor Strahil about the expectations of the Bulgarians about the European Union, he told me that the Bulgarians at first believed that the EU would solve all the difficulties, that they would give a lot of money, start projects. But then the Bulgarians found out that they self had to start the projects. So what about that, is that true? Are the expectations wrong? Or what are the expectations?

I would like to say the the enthusiasm in the beginning, when we were negotiating about the membership of Bulgaria, the enthusiasm was really higher and people had very positive expectations. But then to really meet all the EU standards for many people turned out to be a really difficult story. People realized that they really had to work hard and invest a lot in order to meet the standards. For example a small company to meet certain standards, which are standards for competitiveness, they have to invest a lot and to innovate their companies, buy new machines, to change the inside everything and meeting the standards is very very hard for a lot of businesses. And there is an EU program for providing money to these companies, but not all companies have the chances. So this is really disappointing. For me this is the main factor that impacted some negative assumptions.

So there is the cooperation in the field of education, also in economics, what about the politics? Do Romania and Bulgaria have a good political relationship?

I have to tell you that at the beginning when we started the negotiations for membership, first of all the message from the European Union institutions was quite clear; both countries should be in jointly. So both states should sign one and the same contract for membership. That was the last wave of enlargement for the European Union so far. And the two states had to prepare together, to work in the preparation for membership jointly. But for example at that time prime minister of Bulgaria was Ivan Kostov, who was right wing politician, he was very tough, he addressed the EU institutions and said if we have the preparations finished earlier, we have to join the EU earlier. So we don't want to be considered in package with Romania. So there has been this competition in the beginning and it complicated more or less the relations with Romania. After that when both countries joined the EU this tension calmed down. And now, as what I believe from the media, is that there are positive relations, that they are balanced and that people from both governments discuss joint problems and they try to find joint ways to resolve them.

So less competition

I think so, for example there is now the prospect for Schengen and within this prospect there was that time a message from the Romanian side; they said okey if we prepare earlier, why not, why shouldn't we become members of Schengen area, but the Bulgarians if they are not prepared, they have to wait. This seemed to be the case within the last months. But then, if this is the case, Romanians have to consider their border with Bulgaria as an external EU-border. And if you have to manage an external EU-border you have to invest a lot of money. And the Romanians found out that it is not cost-effective for them to claim that they are more prepared than us. So they decided to change their rhetoric's and they said okey we will be patient enough and wait for the Bulgarians to prepare and we will be together in Schengen.

So what are the prospects for Schengen?

I think the prospects are good. There is a problem, which is a problem for Bulgaria in general and this is the assumptions for corruption and I believe on behalf of the EU-institutions this is the main reason. Actually, Bulgaria has this serious task to safeguard the border to Turkey. We may be vulnerable in terms of this, because of the complicated situation in the Arab states. You probably may have heard that there was a Turkish initiative to organize a sort of Schengen area between Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. So free movement of people within this area and we may be confronted with lots of illegal immigrants...

Like what is happening at the Greek border right now

Yeah, it is happening at the Greek-Turkish border. You have heard the Greeks said; we want to build a wall so that we can prevent the expansions of illegal immigrants. This is very complicated. As a teacher of European Integration I think it is absurd to raise walls in the 21st century. But we have to assure our partners that we have the capacity and are able to protect the southern border of the European Union, this is the border with Turkey. This is something very very serious and should be done on a high level.

[...]

Appendix 4 Notes of the interview with Emiliyan Enev

(no complete transcription because I wasn't able to record it)

Emiliyan Enev works for a large company that imports and exports food. He also has his own internet portal (infobulgaria.ro) that provides Romanians with information on Bulgaria. The aim of this website is to promote tourism and to provide good information on Bulgaria. He also worked for 2,5 years for the Chamber of Commerce. So he has quite a lot of business expertise in the Romanian-Bulgarian borderlands.

After the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the EU in 2007 there was a lot of activity. Enthusiasm was high and there were lots of dynamic processes going on. A lot of Romanians were coming to Bulgaria. They came for shopping, because the prices were relatively low in Bulgaria. But also for business and tourist purposes. A lot of Bulgarian companies, especially in the construction- and the food sector, tried to penetrate the Romanian market in the first two years. The Romanian market is large, Romania is about three or four times the size of Bulgaria and the market is easy, for there is a large demand for Bulgarian products. But then the crisis came, the Romanian currency deprived/depreciated and many companies stopped or froze their activities. This situation is still the same today, although the situation seems to be improving a little. Also there are almost none Romanians visiting Bulgaria for shopping, like they previously did, because the prices of Bulgaria and Romania more or less became similar.

The situation should get better, but hasn't really started yet. The Romanian economy relies heavily on the industrial sector. This sector was hit strongly and Romania had to take a credit of around 20 billion dollars from the Worldbank. Also the Bulgarian companies were not prepared well to enter Romania, there was a lack of information on the Romanian market and on the business culture. From the business perspective larger companies are able to succeed in the longer run in Romania (and vice versa). Examples of successful large companies are Prista Oil, Bella (food production, mostly pastery) and Euroins (insuring company). Examples of Romanian companies are Ropetrol and a chemical producer.

The field of tourism is very interesting, it is still relatively cheap for Romanians to visit Bulgaria, especially the price/quality is very good. There are many good hotels and services in Bulgaria, unlike Romania. The tourism sector in Romania, it can be said, is lagging behind five or six years compared to Bulgaria. So more than one million Romanians visited Bulgaria last year. These include people that just pass through to travel to Greece for example.

The taxes that must be paid in order to cross the border are a heavy burden for companies. When you are by car you have to pay 6 euros each time you want to cross the bridge. For a large truck it is almost 37 euros. And two years ago the prices were even much higher (large truck 55 euro). So there is some progress, but very slow. Also there are some unofficial arrangements (/corrupted police officers), for example that you can pay 1/3 of the taxes without receipt. The former minister for Foreign Affairs, Nikolai Mladenov(?), did pay a lot of attention to these taxes two years ago. He was a deputy in the European Parliament. But his focus on demolishing the taxes was largely part of his PR campaign to get in the Bulgarian government, and when he did enter the efforts stopped and nothing changed.

Of course when doing business a lot has to do with trust and knowing each other. During the communist era there was some kind of Iron Curtain between the two countries. Romania and Bulgaria were like neighbours that turned their back on each other. These bad impressions remained and now they are in the process of rediscovering each other, which is a very long process.

Then there is the process of entering Schengen. It would be a good thing to enter as soon as possible, for now you have practices like

a second, economic, checkpoint for Bulgarian goods to enter Romania. The goods are registered and then the companies are sometimes blackmailed. Accession to Schengen would stop this. All the criteria for accession are met, but now France and some other countries are putting in other criteria, which is unfair. Of course there are problems, like corruption, but there are problems everywhere. France has problems with lots of illegal immigrants from Libya or other Northern African countries, but this would not be more or less when Bulgaria and Romania joined the Schengen area. From the business point of view, both countries should enter Schengen as soon as possible.

There is a significant growth of commodity exchanges between Bu and Ro.

Energy projects have huge delays, this shows that cooperation on the government level is very productive. They don't communicate with each other adequately. It is slowly improving.

EU policies do help, not only with the money they provide, but also with know-how. It is however not used in the best possible way. It happens often that projects which aren't very important receive/win money and projects that need it don't get any. Part of this is related to the fact that the Bulgarian minister who was responsible for this regional funding, was not very active in the Cross Border Programme, so the Romanian took the most out of it. For smaller companies financing is a problem, because in order to be part of a programme, they have to invest first money to receive it back later. But these companies often don't have a large amount of money and it is not possible for them to take a loan or credit, for the interest rates are not covered by the programme. There are few NGO's who could afford being part of it. The money cannot reach the NGO's that really need it, which is by the way more of a local problem than a EU problem, for the money is allocated by local/regional authorities. At the EU level they are aware of these problems.

He is afraid that throughout our conversation the negative image prevailed, but he wants to be realistic.

There are positive things happening. For Ruse it is very positive to be this close to Bucharest, only 60 km. Bucharest is a huge economic centre and market, and this is to advantage of Ruse. Also many Bulgarians tried to find a job in Bucharest, especially during the first two years of EU membership.

The negative thing is many Bulgarian companies are taking high risks, they don't have a long term vision but want to make money quick. They also make stupid moves, are frauding and sometimes don't pay their bills. There is a lack of trustworthy companies with a long-term vision who pay their bills within 30 days.

Of course it will not stay like this forever, we cannot make the same mistakes all the time.

It is also interesting that there is a huge difference, in culture, between the North of Romania and the South.

The business culture in Romania is changing rapidly because of the many international big companies that are entering the market.

Appendix 5 Transcription interview with Elena Simeonova, held on 7th of April, 2011 at the UBSSLA office, Varna

Can you tell me something about the background of UBSSLA?

The organisation started in 1992. The launch was initiated by seven municipalities on the Black Sea coast. It was a special program of the United States agency of international development, or USID and UBSSLA was one of the first municipalities that was established in Bulgaria. This association of municipalities are based on geographic location and currently there are ten regional associations of municipalities, we are situated on the Black Sea coast, there is one the Danube coast, then we have Southern part, south-western part.

And are there also other countries involved, besides the US?

No, it was a special program provided for Bulgaria by the US for improvement of local self government and to promote local initiatives and the regional associations were created to support the municipalities in their development and capacity building. The associations were the ones that had together the municipalities and then and now provide services for capacity building, training courses for municipal servants, especially for the municipal administration. We have currently 5 standing expert committee, which are comprised of municipal experts who work in different municipalities. The five committee's are; committee for laws and regulations, so the juridical persons who work in the municipalities are involved, the second one is for financial regulations and the directors of the financial departments are involved in this committee. Third one is committee for special territorial planning, for tourism and sustainable development and the fifth one is for energy development.

Okey, so as far as I understand there is a lot of cooperation in energy development going on, like most of the things I read is about energy cooperation.

Yes, energy is a hot issue now. The supreme government body of the organisation is the general assembly, where all members of the municipalities are represented. Currently there are 21 members, including all municipalities which have an outlet to the Black Sea, Bulgarian municipalities, and some of the inland, neighbouring municipalities. So all of the municipalities through their mayors represent the general assembly. They make decisions on important topics. Then, on the second level, there is the managing board, which currently is consisting of seven mayors, which represent the three administrative districts within the association, Dobrich, Varna and Burgas. [...]

Is there also some kind of cooperation with other organisations?

Yes, many, many, many. So first of all all the regional associations we have a very good network established and very good communication. At the level of associations we have monthly meetings or telephone conferences between these regional associations. And there is the national association of municipalities which is in Sofia and represents all 264 municipalities in Bulgaria. And we cooperate very actively, this is for the regional associations. Most of the organisations are represented in the region here, on the Black Sea region.

And also for example with international centre for Black Sea Studies and those kind of organisations?

Yes, yes. The cooperation is in spheres where both organisations have the same ideas or aims to find solutions to some issues. So for example, the International Black Sea Club, it is an international Black Sea organisation of all Black Sea countries which deals with issues related to the problems of the Black Sea Region. There is a Black Sea network of non-governmental organisations in Bulgaria which is located here in Varna and it also represents all the Black Sea countries. At national level the municipal network of energy efficiency. [...]

So you've had more than 15 years of experience, what are the greatest achievements so to say of the organisation?

The best I would say is that we are, the association, is able to provide the municipalities services which are directly linked to the local self-government, for example some tools that we are implementing very efficiently is to organize specific workshops or seminars around specific topics that are to find solutions to local problems. It is a practice that we make a survey among all our members about their current needs about needs, problems or investments, areas of investment and based on that survey we are trying to make the connection between the local and the national government. So through these workshops and seminars we try to involve the decision makers at national levels to propose solutions to the local level. The other approach is that when some municipalities or some specific person, some staff in the municipality, wants to discuss a problem within the union together with the other municipalities, so he put the question for the relevant committee and the committee discusses it and then propose statement which is then send to the national government. This is the best practice that we are able to make this connection between the local and the national government. The topics that are discussed are various, they are not limited to one or two, all the spheres of the local life is discussed, the social care, territorial planning, climate protection, tourism development because the region is very active and attractive, energy efficiency during the recent years.

So this local self-government is the core philosophy or approach of UBBSLA?

Yes. So is the vision of the UBBSLA is member-network, representing all municipalities and trying to support and promote them. Not only nationally but internationally.

[...]

What about the funding, do you also receive funding from the European Union or...?

The support that we receive is mainly through projects that we implement. So if we have some problem to be solved, then we are trying to search the appropriate funding, programme, to solve this problem. So the main financing is to this projects.

So you've also made use of for example the Black Sea Basin Programme?

Yes, but Black Sea Basin is, we can use it, but it is not working very efficiently at this stage

Because it is too new?

Yes, it is new and it is at the very beginning and now it is moving slowly, step by step

I've also read about the involvement of UBBSLA in the creation of the Black Sea EUregion, could you tell me more about that?

Yes, it was an initiative in 2006, mainly supported by the Romanian, it was initiated by the Romanian government and then all the

Black Sea countries were involved. The idea of this Black Sea Euregion was to establish an association where first the big cities along the coast would become members and then try to involve as many cities located in the region and try to find some common topics to work on the area, for example some of the topics were establishment or creation of road network of all black sea countries, to define the common culture, heritage, culture identity between the countries and the first conference, the launching was in Varna in 2008 and it was supported by the European council as a very good imitative trying to develop a strategy for the Black Sea development. There were Baltic region established, Adriatic region, so it was very reasonable to create a Black Sea region.

Yes, so all the inner seas are covered

Yes, the European Council was very supportive, the EUregion was given green light, but it started very well, but at some stage the cities weren't so active and then the economic crisis has come and now it is not very active, I mean, there are several project developed for the Black Sea countries, but now they are pending to find the different programmes and to be financed.

Yes, I was going to ask you about that, because I didn't read a lot about real projects of the Black Sea EUregion

There are, I can give you some information. [...] I could not say that they are successful, but they are currently involving, in progress. I will send you some papers to you and to Nataliya as well because it will be easier rather by mail than by paper.

[...]

About Cross border Cooperation in general, what do you think about it between Romania and Bulgaria, is there political will to cooperate? Because both countries have a long history and some told me already about an 'Iron wall' between them. What do you think about it?

The Romanian-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation is in force since the transition process, before it entered the European Union. This programme has been running since 1995 as far as I remember and I think it is very efficient especially for the municipalities which are located on the border, on the two sides of the Danube river. I know that some municipalities are very active especially for this climate issue, because of this many factories that are located on the Romanian side, they had some negotiations between both governments on these hot issues. As for our side, our members in the municipalities, they have established very good partnerships with Romanian municipalities. The municipalities are cooperation very well, the mayors know each other and the regular meetings are organised between the municipalities. So for example we have very good partnership with Constanta.

But I was being told that there is a lot of competition going on between Varna and Constanta...?

Yes, but Varna is not involved in the Black Sea Cross-border cooperation and it was one of the gaps, because Constanta is a big city on the Romanian side and Dobrich and Shabla aren't. It was one of the issues that UBBSLA has proposed to the national government to include Varna in this cross-border cooperation because Varna and Constanta could be paired and laid on the same ground, especially for the port and for tourism, but it was not decided. Because Varna was somehow to distant from the border and it was explained that Varna falls within other programmes and would cooperate for example with Constanta within some other programmes, but not within cross-border. The cross-border programme is created for municipalities located on the border itself. So a far as I know Dobrich has many initiatives and actions that were implemented and they have exchanges made between municipal servants and also between some students, Shabla also has three or four projects for exchange and sharing experience at the municipal and local level, as well as on the district level.

It is interesting that you mention these good relations, and contacts between mayors, because when I was in Ruse I spoke to a

professor who said; 'it is good that you are here, because Ruse is the only city with actual cross-border cooperation with Romania'. Because of the bridge and because they have BRIE, the interregional university.

Yes, I told you that the cities that are located on the border who are directly impacted by the cross-border activities are the most active ones. But they have to face with some bigger problems

Like the economic crisis

Yes, and of course the environmental protection, production of factories and so on.

What do you think of the accession to Schengen? I've heard different opinions, some said better sooner than later, some said lets just wait and improve the situation before accession. Do you have an opinion on that?

I have my personal opinion, I think it is better to be sooner, because of the free movement of goods, no people. No taxes. It will have positive impact on the Bulgarian economy, and our economy. Probably you know that in March there was a national calculation of the population in Bulgaria and two days before the results have been announced in the media and it was announced that over 500.000 people have left the country for the last 5 years, and even for the last 2 years even 700 medical people, which is very bad. That is why I said the free movement of goods, not people.

[...]

But the process should be done step by step, considered carefully and step by step to put the things.

What do you think about the different EU strategies for this region? There is the Danube strategy and the Black Sea vision...are they helping, are they efficient, or...?

I do really hope that these strategies will help, especially for Danube and for the Black Sea region because the BSR for some reasons was left apart by the EU side and it was somehow left, so this Black Sea strategy is really important for all fields of life.

Is it true that the Danube strategy is working better, more efficient, than the Black Sea strategy?

Yes, yes, because it was adopted earlier before the Black Sea Strategy, I think one year before, and now it is working and the BSS was adopted in February or in March and now it is the beginning of its...It is needed because of its countries, Bulgaria and Romania are EU members, but the others are not so the strategy should try to include those countries.

And probably also work together with other countries, like Turkey

Yes, we are working very efficiently together with Turkey. We have some projects that we are currently implementing mainly for integrated coastal zone management along the Black Sea coast. For sharing experiences, especially transferring of experience from Bulgaria to Turkey. And some initiatives that we already have implemented such as regional planning, planning of energy and climate.

Could you elaborate a little on the regional planning?

The process of local and regional planning, I mean gathering all the resources, development of plans and programs for sustainable developments, elaboration of concrete measures that would be achieved, finding appropriate financial sources, implementing these measures. So for example the structural fund provide financing to the municipalities and this is because we are part of the EY. This is not the case in Turkey, but Turkey is now supported through pre-accession programmes/instruments. [...]

Is the process of distributing (EU) funds working well in Bulgaria?

Ehm...I think so, we have a minister of European topics or issues. He is very active, very ambitious to use the opportunities that the structural funds provide. He is really doing that. There are many project that are currently financed through the structural funds running in the municipalities. But of course the procedures and steps are difficult and slow.

Yes, because I've heard that especially for the smaller and medium sized companies/NGOs it is very hard to enrol or get any funding at all

Yes, for small and medium companies and for NGOs it is very difficult to take funding from the structural funds. The structural funds are mainly to municipalities, to public institutions, and somehow the small and medium enterprises and NGOs are left out. A very small amounts of funds are allocated to the business and to the NGOs

Could this be improved?

I think so, yes. I hope so. Because there are compositions for allocating more money for business activities, for soft-measures, supportive measures of the NGOs that they provide for public administration.

Then another interesting thing. Last month I read an article where a professor was quoted who said about the region of Dobruja that they still have are quarrelling about it, is that true?

Yes, it is not a topic for discussion, but it is true that a part of this Dobruja region was Romanian and sometimes it became to Bulgarian. [...] Those who are on the border still speak Romanian. As far as I know there are many immigrants from the Romanian side who stay on the Bulgarian side. Many elder people still speak Bulgarian.

[...]

We've already discussed a lot, are there any topics you wish to address, topics that you think are really important for my research?

I could speak about some achievements of the organisation. And another interesting issue is that the network establishment at the level of the Union, as a Union, UBBSLA, has concluded arrangements with some Spanish associations of municipalities, also with some Austria and Greek, at the municipal level we have supported the established of the twin-towns between our municipalities and some international [...]. And now we are working to find the best twin-city for Nessebar. [...]

Recently we started working very efficiently on energy and climate protection. So far we have more than five projects related with data collection of energy and climate in the region, development of energy overview of the region including observation of the energy potential in order to create the possibility for the municipalities to promote themselves and attracts investors. [...]