

Chapter 4

Cross–Border Cooperation (CBC) in a Multi–Level Governance System in Southeastern Europe Territories: How to Manage Territorial Governance Processes in Serbia– Romania Border Space

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ABSTRACT

Considering the actual panorama of a multi-level governance on EU, the macro-regional strategies - specifying the EU strategy for Danube region (EUSDR)

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fosters coordination across three dimensions: sector policies; different levels of governance from EU to regional or local, and across administrative boundaries. This chapter analyzes and assesses the ability, challenges, and obstacles of Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) strategies, projects, and programs to improve integration and cohesion peripheral territories as is the case of the border region of Romania – Serbia, enabling articulating border areas and creating synergies among them. In this regard, it will be considered the latest findings on new insights towards spatial integration in border and transnational contexts. The chapter presents some hypothesis for a good-planned, long-term sustainability for this territory and lesson learned regarding the coordination and management of policies in the EU's system of multi-level governance that could have a wider application and scope.

INTRODUCTION

In last decades, European integration policy has helped to reduce the fragmentation of the European territory (Dominguez, & Pires, 2014). In this context, the spatial policy is an instrument serving the Union's internal and external policies and contributes directly to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Borders are the sovereign 'interface' between countries (Henrikson, 2010), and their degree of openness, which can change over time, depending on the situation with regard to the process of Europeanisation (Decoville, & Durand, 2017). "In strategic planning, planners need to think increasingly in terms of open, porous borders despite the fact that in concrete planning activities, politics, and governance, the region continues to exist largely in the form of bounded and territorial political units" (Paasi, & Zimmerbauer, 2015).

Although the INTERREG programs were intended to support cooperation across national boundaries, they were often criticized for creating additional boundaries through the definition of the program's areas of cooperation. In recent years, EU macro-regional strategies promote a specific approach to addressing the functional interlinkages between territories (Dühr, 2011). EU macro-regional strategies introduce a new layer of governance to the existing 'many vehicles for multilateral cross-border cooperation already at work in the EU and broader European space' (Dangerfield, 2009). There are four EU macro-regional strategies covering the Baltic Sea Region, Danube Region, Adriatic and Ionian Region and the Alpine Region. EUSDR (EU strategy for Danube region) was adopted in 2011 and nine EU member states are involved in the Strategy: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as five non-EU member states, Bosnia Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and Ukraine. However, the challenge now lies in the implementation of the EU macro-regional strategies and

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their performance over a longer period of time and in the new instruments need to realize their added-value. Danube - the macro-region has been composed of 14 states of very different sizes and administrative structures, and different principles of the administrative systems, different level of governance performance which reflecting the different development paths. “Good governance” is the basis and ultimate objective for the institutional capacity building.

The countries display various institutional capacities most of them lacking the strategic and operational capacity to respond to new challenges, the involvement of civil society and other stakeholders in the decision-making processes is still limited (INTERREG, 2014, INTERACT, 2012; 2017). The approach of addressing problems in an integrated manner on a transnational level was already recognized as an efficient tool by the countries situated within the Danube river basin. Based on the experience accumulated, there are some elements of the implementation which need to be further strengthened or developed in order to enhance the operation and effectiveness of EUSDR’s governance system.

The present research aims to analyze the ability, challenges, and obstacles of strategies in coordination and governance dimension to concretely improve border integration, create synergies among them and to examine how the Europe 2020 objectives of promoting sustainable, inclusive and smart economic development can be promoted by macro-regional authorities in Serbia-Romania border space. In this regard, the present research adopts a twofold perspective, addressing both the European level and the macro-regional level coordination and governance. In this context, it will be highlighted the Romania Serbia border space because it is in the scope of the EUSDR strategy, it is the financial-economic depressed region with declining population and has complex governance arrangements. This study try to answer on some of the policy questions: How to promote sustainable and inclusive regional development strategies, taking into account the changing role of coordination and governance regional authorities and the proliferation of stakeholders in functional territories? Which are key differences between EU macro-regional strategies and transnational cooperation programs? Which are challenge and obstacles in coordination and governance dimension in Serbia-Romania border space contributing to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth?

Recent research and experiences show that Danube macro-regional cooperation is time-consuming and complex, and it will likely succeed if a strong political commitment regarding the macro-regional level is carried out (Dühr, 2011). There are some elements of the implementation which need to be further developed in order to enhance the effectiveness of EUSDR’s governance system.

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BACKGROUND

Territorial Governance is an objective, vision, dimension, or priority of several European strategic and flagship documents, such as Europe 2020, Territorial Agenda 2020, and Europe Territorial Vision 2050. However, these documents do not address the Western Balkan region (TG-WeB, 2018, p.11).

The Europe 2020 strategy, according to the European Commission (EC) (2017) «puts forward three main priorities to make the EU a smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive economy and growth»:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: more competitive economy, resource efficient, greener and
- Inclusive growth: developing a high-employment economy in order for social and territorial cohesion.

Regarding with role of the Cross-Border Cooperation in the European strategy, The European Territorial Agenda 2020 defining the importance of CBC claiming and territorial integration as a “key factor in global competition facilitating better utilization of development potentials and the protection of natural environment” (INTERACT, 2012; 2017) fostering at integrating the territorial dimension within different policies at all levels of governance. Key challenges and potentials for territorial development have been defined with European Territorial Agenda 2020. Today, although there are many attempts to explain CBC programs of strategies and projects and indicate their significance, many of them are very broad and do not solve challenges beyond national boundaries and do not have common planning, common strategies, and management (INTERACT, 2012; 2017). Regarding multilevel governance, Europe 2020 Strategy „has improved coherence in the European multi-level governance system(s). However, boosting Europe’s global competitiveness and the transition to a sustainable knowledge-based economy requires more efforts than those set-in motion by the Europe 2020 Strategy” (Böhme, et. al, 2014).

Common Regional Development Strategies/ Macro Regional Strategies

In spatial planning literature, there is a lack of theoretical references on how the projects and strategies affect the real spaces of the border. This lack of conceptual tools makes it difficult to produce cross-border territorial strategies that can effectively articulate border territories and create synergies between them in a way

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that involves institutional aspects, functional reality, ideational representations, and elements related to differences in territorial contexts (Faludi, A. 2010; Kuzmin, & Kravchenko, 2014; Kurowska-Pysz, 2015; Reitel, B., 2015; RESSI, 2017, Castanho, et. al, 2017). Cross-border integration has been covering different aspects. One of them is institutionalization between local and regional actors across borders (Scott, 1999, Sohn, et.al., 2009, Dörry, & Walther, 2015).

Macro-regional strategies for functional macro-regions are new strategies for new territorial forms of integration. These strategies and their programs have encouraged full Integration into a Macro regions area framework and achieved coverage of a big territory with a high diversity of regions and sometimes with conflicting interests. The EU macro-regional strategy level is lifted by transnational cooperation into the sphere of EU multi-level governance with a stronger role for supranational institutions. Especially, the European Commission as coordinator of the macro-regional strategies can provide some stability that intergovernmental cooperation often misses.

Macro-Regional Strategies in INTERREG Programs

Macro regional strategies and a transnational cooperation program operating in the same cooperation area. Both working on common issues for the territory, supporting cooperation and have some key differences: the core idea, themes addressed, funding aspect and how it's implemented and managed (INTERACT, 2012; 2017). They are based on different policy and/or legal frameworks, internal governance structures and administrative procedures, different sets of rules or thematic priorities (ICPDR, 2014).

The main role of transnational programs is to use their resources for funding transnational projects with the strategic dimension, providing the ground for projects to test their experimental ideas and pilot new or alternative approaches and solutions in the thematic field of respective programs. However, Macro-Regional strategies (MRS) go far beyond projects and programs thematic focus and define a political-strategic framework for cooperation on the macro-regional level. From the perspective of a program, which supports MRS, to the financing of the governance structure of MRS reduce program capacity in achieving its targets and brings administrative burdens (Dühr, 2011; INTERACT, 2012; 2017).

BORDER INTEGRATION AND THE NEW CBC GOVERNANCE SYSTEM/COMPLEX GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Regarding of the working definition of multilevel governance (MLG) in the 'White Paper on MLG' overall principles of MLG deriving from the White Paper are

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participation, representation, partnership, subsidiarity, proportionality, proximity, solidarity and mutual loyalty. This principle is dependent on different corresponding qualities of governance, because of multi-level governance lead to coordinated action by the European Union, the Members and local and regional authorities, based on partnership and aimed at drawing up and implementing EU policies.

Territorial Governance is place-based and addresses territorial diversities, be those natural, social, cultural, historical, or ethnic. The region is rich in its diversity, which is a unique asset to its development, but often also creates a basis for disputes. Any reform should address these diversities and should not be implemented uniformly (TG-WeB, 2018, p.11).

Macro-regional strategies introduce a new layer of governance to the existing ‘many vehicles for multilateral cross-border cooperation already at work in the EU and broader European space’ (Dangerfield, M. 2009). Complex governance arrangements and the need to ensure long-term political commitment present further challenges for EU macro-regional strategies. EU macro-regional strategies seek to achieve coordination across three dimensions: horizontally (across sector policies), vertically (across different levels of governance from EU to regional or local), and geographically (across administrative boundaries) (Dühr, 2011).

Territorial Governance is based on decentralised approaches, which strengthen democracy, bring about efficiency, and enhance the principle of partnership. The governments of the Western Balkans, on the other hand, have recently shown a strong tendency towards governance centralization (instead of developing decentralisation mechanisms) (TG-WeB, 2018, p. 11).

CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES IN THE CREATING OF MACRO REGIONAL BORDER TERRITORIAL STRATEGIES

The experience with the transnational INTERREG programs has shown that broad frameworks with largely generic funding priorities rarely result in projects of real significance for the macro-region (Géphyres & Radboud, 2010). It is therefore important that policy priorities and actions are specific to the macro-region, and not merely replicate EU policy objectives. It can be issues that are currently not dealt with appropriately within a country and by nation-states acting alone, and issues that may in future not be dealt with satisfactorily by nation-states acting alone as a consequence of changing framework conditions (political, economic, environmental, social, or else) (Dühr, 2011).

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Healey (2007) argues that only if the strategy is sufficiently focused and convincing will it be able to generate ‘mobilizing force’ that ensures the long-lasting support of actors. The strategy must have the potential for ‘transformative force’, for the institutionalization of approaches and of cooperation structures, and the new ‘communities of practice’ at macro-regional scale (Dühr, 2011).

National, regional and local capacity has to be strengthened to ensure that all the bodies are able to work with their cross-border counterparties, as well as to coordinate the different policies. Countries are likely to proceed at a different speed in the alignment with EU legislation and in the access to financial instruments, by hindering the implementation of the macro-regional approach. A weak political perception which is not able to understand the outcomes and challenge that the area integration is essential both for the economic strengthening of countries and the whole European integration process. Existing experience related macro-regional strategies shows that the quality and stability of governance mechanisms are essential for an effective implementation (EC, 2014).

CASE SERBIA - ROMANIA BORDER SPACE

Study Area

The study area includes a relevant part of the territory of this two countries (9 NUTS 3 units are included in the area, 6 districts in Serbia and 3 counties in Romania) (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/experts_documents_en.cfm#2). The study area is in the core of the Danube basin and of the European Danube macro region and the geography of the area is heterogeneous and complex. Regarding the population number it is balanced on the two sides of the border. The plains are located in the north (the Banat), and in the south east, and mountains are the Southern Carpathians range, Western end of the Southern Carpathians, the Veliki Krš, Mali Krš and Stol mountains, dominated by karst formations. In Romania the Mehedinți Mountains.

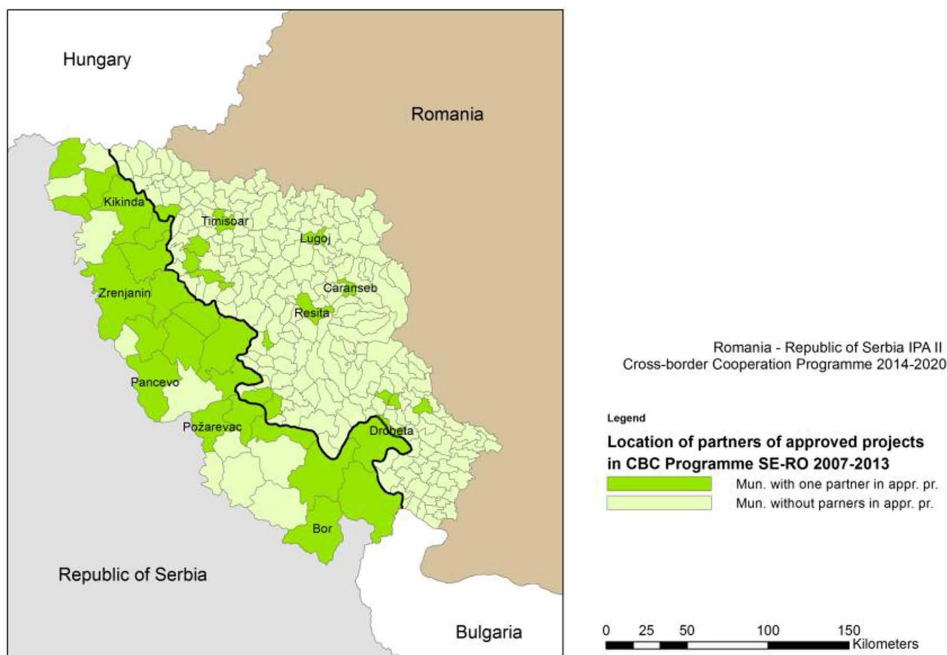
The Danube produces many opportunities/needs for cooperation and cross-border interaction. Other smaller rivers crossing area have relevant impact: Tisa, Timiș, Cerna, Caraș Nera. The eligible area for the programming period 2014-2020 under the IPA CBC programme Serbia Romania will include three counties of Romania, and the six districts of the Republic of Serbia. The eligible area includes a relevant part of the territory of the two countries.

The study area is at the centre of the European Danube Macro Region. The two partner countries include a large share of the river basin, their total surface

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Figure 1. Study area

Source: Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014–2020, Territorial Analysis SECOND DRAFT 2014



representing 10% of the basin in Serbia and 29% in Romania (<http://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/countries-danube-river-basin>).

The total area is 40.596 sq.km (53,1% in Romania/ 46,9% in Serbia), including the Romanian counties Timiș, Caraș-Severin and Mehedinți, and the Serbian districts (Severno Banatski, Srednje Banatski, Južno Banatski, Braničevski, Borski, Podunavski).

As we can see at Figure 1 the two NUTS2 regions belong in Romania, and two NUTS2 regions in Serbia. The three Banat districts (NUTS3) belong to the Vojvodina, an administrative entity classified as NUTS2 statistical region according to the law 46/2010. The Braničevski, Borski and Podunavski districts belong to the NUTS2 statistical region of Southern and Eastern Serbia. In Romania, Mehedinți County belongs to the Development Region South West. The two counties of Caraș-Severin and Timiș belong to the development Region West (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020).

The eligible territory in Republic of Serbia represents 20,8% of the total, a larger share than in Romania, where the three eligible counties represent just 9% of the national territory. The length of the border in the eligible territories between

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Table 1. General policy framework

General policy frameworks in Serbia- Romania border space
INTERREG program/IPA CBC PROGRAM The Europe 2020 strategy The EU Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) The South-East Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020) Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 National plan of the Republic of Serbia Regional Development Strategy Republic of Serbia CBC and Interregional Programs accessible in the program area (e.g. CBC HU-RS)

Romania and Republic of Serbia is 546 km, out of which 290 km (53,1%) on the Danube river. The length of the border in the programme area represents 26% of the external borders of Republic of Serbia, and 17% of the external borders of Romania. Along this common border there are 5 constantly operating road border crossings and 2 constantly operating railroad crossings. Also, there are 6 fluvial ports in Serbia, and 3 on the Romanian shore (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020, p. 8)

The population in the eligible area is almost evenly split in the two countries, according to the demographic data in 2011, 1.244.509 live in Romania and 1.137.179 live in Republic of Serbia. Thus, within the border area, 52,2% of the population is living in Romania, and 47,7% is living in Republic of Serbia. The population has been decreasing from 2,584 million in 2002, with a steep decline in the last years due to both negative migratory and demographic balance.

General Policy Framework

The Romanian Partnership Agreement highlights the central role of the CBC programs in case Romania, for the contribution to the Europe 2020 Strategy with highlight the importance of promoting the EUSDR, as macroeconomic strategies offer a new, more substantial and consistent cooperation platform. The planned interventions related to the EUSDR include five different areas, namely transport (e.g.: development of bridges and port infrastructure), network of settlements (e.g.: connecting Bucharest and the Danube river), environment (e.g.: protection of the Danube Delta), society (e.g.: improvement of social infrastructure) and economy (e.g.: exploiting the agricultural, energy and tourism potential of the Danube area) (INTERREG, 2014).

The Republic of Serbia according to the National plan, have affirming one of the priorities of its foreign policy – an improvement of regional cooperation to develop relations with immediate neighbors and countries in the region of South-East Europe.

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Table 2. Main outcomes based on the territorial analysis (TA) in Romania-Serbia border space

Main outcomes	Based on the Territorial analysis (TA) in Romania-Serbia border space
Socio – cultural	• EU support for social inclusive growth • Growing social and cultural ties between RO and RS • Integration in the macro regional framework of EUSDR. • Declining population, especially of young active people • Unemployment rates are still high in the territory • Indicators shows potential the region has as a tourist-magnet • Marketing and advertisement strategies are not coordinated among these countries
Financial – Economic	• The region is financial-economic depressed • GDP/per capita values are considerable low • Strategies for investor’s magnet should be considered
Resources Sustainability	• Several infrastructures are duplicated in nearby areas/territories • Poor quality of local and intraregional transport infrastructures for moving within the eligible area • Severe limitations to accessibility in rural and mountainous areas • European strategies for environmental protection in macro regions, offering additional support to local strategies (Danube region)
Political - Strategic	• Lack of political commitment towards EU 2020 goals and EU standard’s • Transparency and political commitment should be increased • Common Master-Plans and long-term objectives should be considered • Lack of political commitment towards EU 2020 goals and EU standard’s • Transparency and political commitment should be increased • Common Master-Plans and long-term objectives should be considered

In the strategy of Serbia, regional cooperation represents a central contribution to the strengthening of bilateral relations with the neighbors and the states from the South - East Europe region. The Republic of Serbia is actively contributing especially to the EUSDR, thus assigning a special role to the CBC Program with Romania, for the contribution to the wider strategy, and the creation of an integrated framework for the achievement of the Strategy objectives (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC PROGRAM, 2014).

Below are summarized the main policy frameworks in Serbia- Romania border space.

Based on the territorial analysis (TA) in Romania-Serbia border space Table 2 present main outcomes in socio – cultural, financial – economic, resources sustainability and political – strategic fields.

When we analyze regional governance regimes in Europe which take into account both the specific governance characteristics of the various countries as well as the way they each chose to manage and implement EU cohesion policy, in Romania case which entered the EU in 2007, there is continuity with a centrally managed cohesion policy. Through ESPON 2020 they have not yet successes develop

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Table 3. Challenge and obstacles in coordination and governance dimension in fourfold manner in Serbia-Romania border space contributing to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

MAIN OUTCOMES	BASED ON THE TERRITORIAL ANALYSIS (TA) IN ROMANIA SERBIA BORDER SPACE
Socio – cultural	• EU support for social inclusive growth • Growing social and cultural ties between RO and RS • Integration in the macro regional framework of EUSDR • Declining population, especially of young active people • Unemployment rates are still high in the territory • Indicators shows potential the region has as a tourist-magnet • Marketing and advertisement strategies are not coordinated among this countries
Financial – Economic	• The region is financial-economic depressed • GDP/per capita values are considerable low • Strategies for investor’s magnet should be considered
Resources Sustainability	• Several infrastructures are duplicated in nearby areas/territories • Poor quality of local and intraregional transport infrastructures for moving within the eligible area • Severe limitations to accessibility in rural and mountainous areas • European strategies for environmental protection in macro regions, offering additional support to local strategies (Danube region)
Political - Strategic	Lack of political commitment towards EU 2020 goals and EU standard’s Transparency and political commitment should be increased Common Master-Plans and long-term objectives should be considered Lack of political commitment towards EU 2020 goals and EU standard’s Transparency and political commitment should be increased Common Master-Plans and long-term objectives should be considered

autonomous meso-level institutions, have a strong mono-centric character, with a capital that dominates in terms of population and economic development, in all issues that contribute to influencing the development trajectories of other regions (RESSI, 2017, INTERREG, 2014).

Policymaking in Serbia requires reform of the public administration, professional monitoring and evaluation, proper planning at strategic and policy level, effective execution management with a focus on performance, and coordination of activities within the government itself as well as in cooperation with other state authorities and civil society.

The governance dimension, as well as coordination (transnational, political and cross-sectoral) of macro-regional strategies, are the key to their success according to recent studies carried out by Chilla, & Sielker; 2016, Sielker, 2016; Gänzle & Kern, 2008; Durh, 2011. and INTERACT, 2017. Regarding with review the relevant policy documents in Serbia and Romania, the reports from the European Commission (EC), 2013; 2014; INTERACT Program, 2012; 2017, that different coordination aspects

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in fourfold manner are identified and adapt in Table 3. as outcomes, challenge and obstacles in Serbia-Romania border space contributing to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

CONCLUSION

The present Paper allows understanding the EU macro-regional strategies introducing a new, complex layer of governance dimension and to examine how the Europe 2020 objectives of promoting sustainable, inclusive and smart economic development can be promoted by macro-regional authorities in Serbia-Romania border space. Focusing on the Romania Serbia CBA it is possible to understand the distance that exists between the EU 2020 strategy goals. Nevertheless, and analyzing Table 2, it is possible to identify the several opportunities for sustainable, inclusive and smart growth that these regions have. At the same time, it is necessary for the Serbia as one of Western Balkan country recognize that integration is not equal to accession. In this sense, intra-regional integration should become a priority for the Serbia next to current processes of EU integration and accession.

Moreover, by analyzing the cross-border area it is noticed that the multi-level challenge of cross-border cooperation needs soft, flexible forms of territorial governance. Contextually, recent experiences show that macro-regional cooperation is complex and time-consuming, and it will likely succeed if a strong political commitment regarding the macro-regional level is carried out. Multilevel governance system has to be improved in Romania and Serbia border spaces.

In line with the argument presented above, the improvement of territorial governance constitutes an important aspect within a wide range of different policy fields. Regarding that the relations between the study area and the Danube Region through Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020 was analyze in the following main fields: regional development, mobility, energy, environment, risks, and socioeconomic development. In the same time that are the most urgent topic areas in which territorial governance needs to be improved to ensure progress towards more efficient policy making and European integration are all listed below.

Regarding regional development and cohesion Serbia as Western Balkan country should become part of EU programs that support evidence-based policy making, such as ESPON.

In some areas a strong interdependency between the eligible area and the larger Danube region can be identified. These areas are dominated by international and interregional factors, with impacts that largely overcome the regional dimension.

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Some examples: reduction and prevention of pollution of land, water and air by industrial and urban sources, control and mitigation of environmental risks, development of the integration of the European Transport Networks. In these areas the action of the CBC programme partners should be focused on the integration of the local with the global strategies at the level of Danube region. (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020, p. 8).

Unemployment and low rate of activities are another common and serious challenge in the study area which suffer of a demographic decline, with aging of the population particularly severe in the marginal areas. The long history of cross border interaction, and the recent experience of cooperation under the current program, created a relevant potential for common actions in this field as well as in the field of social services in marginal areas, or social and cultural inclusion.

A sustainable use of natural resources, in particular water, by developing and managing environmental infrastructures, by protecting natural resources can be addressed as “protecting the environment, promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation, risk prevention and management” The actions in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development are also those where the strongest synergies with the Danube regions strategy can be pursued. (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020).

The study area has good accessibility to national and European transport networks, but suffers of a poor quality and inefficiency of local networks, for both transport infrastructure and public services. The severity of this challenge is worsened by the risks of marginalization of the remote rural areas, in particular those close to the borders, and those in the mountains.

Promoting sustainable transport and improving public infrastructures - in particular common action for soft innovations in the provision and management of public services, for the establishment of innovative systems for public transport, for the provision of basic utilities to remote areas, could benefit of joint actions and sharing of experiences across the border (Romania-Serbia IPA CBC Programme 2014 – 2020, p. 112).

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