

Session 33. Multi-scalar perspectives of mobile borders governance / *Perspectives multi-scalaires de la gouvernance des frontières mobiles (2 - The case of macroregions)*

Emmanuelle BOULINEAU, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, UMR 5600 BioGéophile: Borders on the Danube River in an Enlarged Europe. When EU Innovates New Border Forms on the Riversides of a Long-lasting Frontier.

The aim of the paper is to explore how the Danube River, one of the most ancient frontier in Europe, is becoming a new mobile border due to the European Union project. Furthermore, more than a mobile border in time and space, the Danube River is nowadays a multi-scalar boundary in the EU enlargement context. Is this a mean to shift problematic cross-border relations between Central and Eastern countries?

The communication will focus on the danubian border between Bulgaria and Romania and its place in European policies developed since the last enlargement.

Two main issues will be addressed in the paper:

1. The Danube River between Bulgaria and Romania: an old mobile border.

From the Roman Empire till 1945, the Danube River has been a border characterised by its mobility: frontier of empires, uncertainty of the thalweg, conflicts which have laid to renegotiation during international conferences. The borders changes during the 20th century have stressed the fragility of the young nations-states such as Bulgaria and Romania. As inhabitants of the riversides could not appropriate the borderlands through territorialisation, socialist states have tried to reinforce their sovereignty by promoting strong and controlled borderlines. Due to the lack of achievement of state-nation building, borders in such countries have been mostly designed through top-down process and/or by external forces. We will show that in a way, too much mobile borders kills borders by rebordering instead of debordering as EU policies intend nowadays to do.

2. The danubian border between Bulgaria and Romania since EU enlargement: a multi-scalar border included in the regional issue in Europe.

The Danubian border is nowadays an area of collective project supported by EU policies such as cohesion policy (objective 3: transnational, cross-border cooperation), euroregions, and more recently the Strategy for Danube region (2010). All these policies give a wider territorial dimension to boundaries by introducing a regional scope. Instead of reducing/erasing borders, we can assess that EU policies emphasis on the regional dimension in the enlarged Europe is a mean to escape the long-lasting problems of borders in Central and Eastern Europe. By putting on the agenda regions instead of borders in its territorial policies, it is also a way for European institutions to fit with its own competencies, on the contrary to the border issue which still is a member states competency.

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Nicolas ESCACH, UMR 5600-Géophile: La « macro-région » baltique: le « laboratoire » d'une nouvelle coopération transfrontalière européenne ?

Since the 1990s and the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Baltic region has been undergoing a full geopolitical reorganisation. The major factor in the new deal is a process of intense and fast regionalisation. This trend consists in recreating a long-lost unity with new economic, political and institutional networks. The Baltic Sea Region which has dreamt up lots of methods of cooperation may be seen as a laboratory of transborder regional integration process. But the unified and unifying Baltic area which has emerged as "the European model of regional integration" is at the moment questioned. The Region displays lots of challenges the Stakeholders have to try for.

We must remember that the Baltic area has never been unified, contrary to what may be thought. We can wonder to what extent this concept of unity accounts for what the Baltic Sea Region is today or if it does not come close to being part of a "Baltic myth". The Baltic area is actually divided by lots of "Ghost boundaries". These boundaries underline the diversity of Baltic identities (the Germans and the Slavs, the Hanseatic League and the Kalmar Union, the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, the "Baltic Occident" and the "Baltic Orient"). The institutional framework combines many areas of cooperation (Scandic-cooperation or "Scandinavism", Balto-scandic-cooperation, Nordic-cooperation or "Norden", Baltic-cooperation, Hanseatic-cooperation or "New Hanseatic League", Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, Euro-baltic-cooperation, Bilateralism or Multilateralism...). These "Olympic circles" (in contrary to "Concentric circles") don't intersect each other. Historically speaking, the Hanseatic period was able to create an « identity of networking » or even a « reticular identity » around the Baltic sea. This "reticular form" is contrary to the concept of "area(s)". Offering a definition of the Baltic region is tricky. The « Baltic laboratory » is a very complex phenomenon.

However, decision-makers themselves concentrated recently their efforts on the definition of a new scale: the "macro- regional" approach. The "European strategy for the Baltic Sea Region" was adopted in June 2009 by the European Commission. This macro- region is the first in European Union to be implemented. The concept of "macro-region" is connected to the mythical unity of the Baltic Sea Region. In 2009-2010, the Commission has already started the preparation for the Danube Strategy, in order to begin with its implementation phase in 2011. Several Macro-regions are being identified throughout the European territory, covering large areas across national borders (the North Sea Region, the Mediterranean Sea Region, the Atlantic Sea Region ...).

To establish the blueprint describing the European strategy, the stakeholders took the problem of spatial cohesion into account (the gap between Sweden, Finland, Germany and former Eastern countries like Poland or Latvia, between the Baltic Sea Region of "Urban Shrinkage" and the Baltic Sea Region of "Urban Growth", between the dynamic metropolitan areas and the growth corridors like Öresund Region or the Gulf of Finland and the poor and isolated rural areas) but they neglect the "external dimension" or "external challenge". The limits of the macro-region are not clear. The European Commission did not mark clearly the external boundaries of the region (Fuzzy Boundaries?). Officially, the external boundaries are different for each thematic cooperation. But the European commission explains in the same time that it concerns the eight "Member States" bordering the Baltic Sea. Russia belongs to the functional Baltic Region based on economic exchanges (formal or informal) and investments but is an external partner regarding the macro-regional strategy. The stakeholders have neglected the complexity of the institutional and cultural framework in the Baltic Sea Region. The "fuzzy boundaries" enable the different stakeholders to come to an agreement whereas each decision-maker has his own definition of the area which

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becomes, taking up Vincent Clément's phrase "a multi-layered area" or a "nomadic area" (Space can be dilated as one wishes). The "Coopetition" (Cooperation+Competition) between the institutional frameworks (Nordic, Baltic...), between the decision-makers, between the States (for a leading role) is prominent. In this context, Crossborder-networks are stronger on the regional and local scale because on this scale, the boundaries, threats or opportunities, have to be crossed for economic, social and cultural reasons.

Anais MARIN, Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki: Bridges over troubled waters. Transboundary tourism as a tool for reconciliation and region-building across shifted borders: insights from Eastern European Euroregions.

Many Central and Eastern European borders were shifted westwards as a consequence of World War II, thus producing "stump syndromes" and minority-related problems between states adjacent to what is now the external border of the EU. Upon shifting state borders, natural landmarks (mountain ranges, rivers and lakes) oftentimes served as demarcating lines. Whereas in the Middle East or Africa sharing water resources has usually been conducive of conflicts between riparian states, in Eastern European peripheries on the contrary water basins became cornerstones for cooperation projects that contribute to overcome past enmities and foster mutual understanding – at least locally.

In Eastern European borderlands, concern for the protection of transboundary waterways is oftentimes the most consensual common denominator for region-building initiatives: over the past 20 years, dozens of Euroregions were established across the EU's Eastern borders that bear the name of a shared waterway. This is the case in areas where a river or lake is congruent with a state border (Lake Peipsi-Chudskoe between Estonia and Russia, the Bug river along Poland's borders with Belarus and Ukraine, or the Prut that demarcates the Romanian-Moldovan border for example) as well as among countries irrigated by a transboundary river (such as the Danube, the Neman or the Dniestr).

Hereafter referred to as "geopolitics of bridging", transboundary region-building processes across these waterways display some distinctive features that this paper will seek to highlight. Among other specificities, in Eastern European peripheries the sustainable management of transboundary waterways – that is to say coordinated development strategies and territorial planning in the field of wastewater management, navigation, fishing, transport infrastructures etc. – has recently opened the way to new cooperation projects meant to develop a transboundary ecotourism offer of services. This trend has led to the museification and marketing of borderlands as ideal destinations for "nostalgic" and "alternative" forms of tourism, such as soft mobility ("green") tourism, which emphasises the attractiveness of the untamed natural landscape of these remote rural areas for adventure and outdoor sport activities (hiking, biking, horse-riding, canoeing, etc.).

The "debordering" dimension of most ecotourism projects in Eastern European peripheries stems from the fact that local stakeholders, border communities and territorial authorities have successfully lobbied for the introduction of exceptional border-crossing regimes, such as visa-free regimes for small scale cross-border traffic or cruise visas for tourist excursions on transboundary canals (Saimaa, Augustów, etc.).

Drawing on findings from a comparative field research conducted in Euroregions with non-EU participation established across Eastern European border waterways (Euroregions Bug, Neman, Country of Lakes, Upper Prut, Siret-Prut-Nistru, Lower Danube) the paper argues that ecological

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concerns were conducive of cross-border cooperation projects that reach far beyond mere water management. Innovative plans for the sustainable development of these borderlands as ecotourism destinations have been the driving belts for exchanging best practices in other low policy fields such as education, culture and support for SMEs. In most cases, this fostered a de-/re-territorialisation of boundaries according to dividing lines, interests and feelings of belonging that challenge traditional state borders, thus reconnecting ethnic communities divided by shifted borders and opening “breaches” for new mobility flows across the so-called “Schengen curtain”

Keywords: Sustainable transboundary water management; ecotourism; border shifts and stump syndromes in Eastern European borderlands (Finland, Poland, Romania); Euroregions with non-EU participation (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova).