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Transnational Border Cooperation  
Between Germany and the Czech Republic:  
Implications for Decentralization  
and European Integration

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**EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE, FLORENCE**

**ROBERT SCHUMAN CENTRE**

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Implications for Decentralization  
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## **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, it seeks to place cross-border co-operation between Germany and the Czech Republic in the context of democratization in the Czech Republic. Second, it intends to relate cross-border co-operation to German-Czech relations and to European integration. Third, it attempts to highlight the external influences, especially of the EU, on democratization in the Visegrad countries generally and in the process of decentralization particularly. First, it will compare the contexts in which cross-border co-operation takes place in Western and Central Europe, and then consider the forms for interregional co-operation between Germany and the Czech Republic. Next, it will assess the impact of border co-operation on local and regional government authorities, German-Czech relations and European integration. The final part of the paper will explore the role of European Regional Organisations both in the development of local and regional government in the Visegrad countries, and in cross-border activities between Germany and the Czech Republic.

### **I. Interregional Co-operation**

Cross-border interregional co-operation is a well-established feature of post-war Western Europe. However, when applied to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) it meets greater challenges. It is not the intention here to compare the experiences between these entities, but merely to highlight some important contextual differences, as well as similarities in aims and perceived impacts. Ethnic disputes are more intense than those experienced in Western Europe. CEE states had little or no previous history of regional or local government prior to 1989. Economic disparities between CEE states and those of the EU are greater. They are also much larger than those which prevailed among either the six original EU states or those of successive EU enlargements. On the other hand, international organisations, transport and communications networks, and international financial flows facilitate more cross-border regional co-operation now than during much of the post-war period in Western Europe.

Clearly, economic and political conditions vary between Eastern and Western Europe, but the objectives of cross-border regional co-operation remain the same. Inter-regional co-operation is seen as helping to resolve ethnic disputes, promote mutual understanding, stimulate social and economic development, and enhance the process of European integration. However, some states, both in Western Europe and CEE, worry that too much regional or inter-regional autonomy could erode their own central authority or induce alliances

between regions and the European Commission, eventually by-passing them. This also holds for the activities of so-called 'Euroregions', assigned with developing programmes in the economic, cultural, environmental or transport fields.

The origins of the Euroregion<sup>1</sup> date back to 1958 and coincide with the beginning of the EU. The origins of such regions coincide with the establishment of a region around Enschede (Netherlands) and Gronau (Germany) (Wijman 1992). An Euroregion is a region in the sense of a closed geographic unit with inclusive and sometimes exclusive characteristics, such as cultural, economic or social ties among the constituent parts in different countries (Wolters 1994:407-409). The aim of public bodies in these regions is to promote the common interests of the participating municipalities, districts or cities. (Kraemer, 1995; 65)

Euroregions are composed of a common board and administration of a small or large number of subnational public authorities on both sides of one or more common national borders. Euroregions must fit into the public and private legal systems of at least two countries. External funding organisations, like INTERREG in the EU, insist on organisational forms which can act as a legal entity for cross border activities as a condition for providing grants. However, the establishment of such governing bodies is easier when federal states are involved than in the case of unitary ones, which are reluctant to bestow regional competencies. Unitary states see cross border co-operation, at least formally, as part of international relations. But even here there are some exceptions: Belgium grants cultural communities international treaty competencies within those areas for which they were set up (Hrbek and Weyand; 1994; 46-50).

## **II. Cross-border Regional Co-operation between Germany and the Czech Republic**

### *a) Forms of interregional co-operation*

Since 1991, five Euroregions have been established along the borders of the Czech Republic and Germany, mostly at the instigation of Germany. A principal element of the initial activity were the treaties on 'good neighbourly relations' which Germany undertook with Poland and then Czechoslovakia in 1990/91. These called for co-operation between regions, districts, cities and other territorial units, especially in border areas. They were supported by intergovernmental commissions for regional border development, with sub-committees for cross-border co-operation, and interregional co-operation.

In 1991 the Euroregion "Egrena" was established, in the Western part of the Czech Republic extending into the German Lander of Bavaria and Saxony. This was the first Euroregion in which the Czech Republic became involved and experience from it was widely used in establishing trans-border co-operation in other areas. (Illner, 1998) The most active is the Neisse Euroregion, known as the "Black Triangle", located between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic which is facing particular environmental problems. The other three Euroregions are: "Ore Mountains", in the North-West of the Czech Republic, bordering on the German Land of Saxony; "Labe", comprising Saxon and Czech districts along the Labe river; and "Cumava-Bavorsky les", which includes parts of the Southern Czech Republic, Bavaria and Austria.<sup>2</sup>

All five Euroregions under consideration have a comprehensive approach, cutting across cultural, social and economic issues in efforts to overcome local detriments. The main objective of the five Euroregions involving Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and Austria is to improve mutual understanding, and develop good neighbourly relations, develop tourism, strengthen the region's economic resources, protect and restore the environment and historical monuments, develop transportation and border crossings, and the provision of mutual assistance in cases of natural disaster. (Illner, 1998)

#### *b) Impact of interregional co-operation*

How might one determine the impact of these five Euroregions? Given the existing language barriers and legacies of ethnic conflict, the starting point for assessing these early initiatives would be to ask if the five Euroregions, have stimulated cross-border contacts, improved neighbourly relations, activated authorities in the communities involved, and brought new activities to public life in the regions under discussion. According to studies undertaken by Karl Deutsch in the 1950s and 1960s on nation building and European integration, increased contacts and exchanges transmit greater mutual responsiveness, a notion of a "we-feeling" and a sense of "identity" and "community" (Deutsch, 1954 and 1967). These spontaneous effects will occur irrespective of whether they are guided by institutions. In fact, Deutsch argues that the introduction of strong central institutions may well hinder this process. This argument is contested by the school of new institutionalism which argues that institutional mechanisms or legally binding arrangements are needed to sustain interregional co-operation or to make it effective. (March and Olson, 1989; Keohane, 1989) They point in particular to institutional guidance or "memory" as a help to

promote "learning" and hence equip the actors to become more effective in their mutual co-operation.

An important question in this context is who needs to learn first? There is little doubt that proper co-ordination between the public or semi-public actors in the Euroregions in question is the key to obtaining clear effective outputs, at least in the early stages of new interregional co-operation arrangements. Improving the skills of public servants runs parallel with increased expertise and direct information about how others do. (Alomar, 1995;140) However, for learning to spread to a wider spectrum of socio-economic forces within a given territory, regional government in conjunction with central government has additional tasks. It needs to foster co-ordination and concert among the different public agencies, semi-public institutions, and private organisations, like business associations, chambers of commerce, banks, universities or research institutes, as well as customs and tax harmonisation agencies. The objective is to provide information and encourage the development of formal and informal links with counterparts in the other participating regions (Alomar 1995; 139).

The Euroregions bordering Germany and Austria with Poland and the Czech Republic involve local authorities, civic organisations, and individual citizens in the fields of culture, education and science, physical planning, environmental protection, border crossing and road infrastructure. (Illner, 1998) However, there were criticisms that these Euroregions' activities were confined to a relatively narrow set of leaders or mainly took the form of improved personal relations. In one sense this is surprising given that there are instruments and opportunities for a wider public involvement. For example, one important feature to facilitate cross border co-operation and understanding on a broader mass basis has been the introduction in all German-Czech Euroregions of a cultural passport, enabling its owner to attend a wide range of cultural events and activities (museums, exhibitions, concerts, castles, etc.). However, the take up has been disappointing; with only 17% (of 400 asked) of Czechs expressing any interest in buying the passport.

### *c) Obstacles to interregional co-operation*

Various reasons account for this. Firstly, enormous population changes in North and West Bohemia took place after the Second World War. Those new arrivals were culturally and socially heterogeneous without any strong relations to the settled area of the borderland. It took two generations to create even a partially new social community.

Secondly, derived from the wartime period of 1938 to 1945 are two (interrelated) issues which have had and are likely to be major obstacles to cross-border co-operation and improved German-Czech relations. The first relates to the claim by the Sudetan Germans of the 'right to a homeland'. This dates back to the so-called Benes Decrees of 1945 which had called for the immediate confiscation of all property belonging to anyone who had identified him or herself as 'German' (or 'Magyar') in any census since 1929. Under this Decrees approximately 3 million Sudetan Germans were expelled; a large proportion of which settled across the border in Bavaria.)<sup>3</sup> The second bone of contention centres on the barring of non-Czech citizens from property rights.

So far the Czech government has been unwilling, despite German pressure, to revoke the Benes Decrees. This has not only soured cross-border co-operation, but also German-Czech relations generally. However, on a more encouraging note the two governments agreed in December 1997 to establish a joint fund for compensating Czech victims of Nazism, and for compensating Sudetan Germans who were expelled from the Czech lands between 1945 and 1948. The fund, known as "the fund for the future", is being registered as a non-profit organization in the Czech Republic. Between 1998 and 2002 the fund will receive 72 million ECU from Bonn and 13 million ECU from Prague. Nonetheless, this fund could not avoid getting stuck in old controversies, as the dilemma over the composition of representatives to the Advisory Board illustrated in the Summer of 1998, with the Czech side expressing opposition to the participation of the leader, Franz Neubauer, of the Sudetan Landsmannschaft.

This is one more example that psychological worries will take a long time to resolve and that regional stereotypes or negative impressions will continue to persist. (Hrbek and Weyand, 1994; 51) After all the German-Polish and the German-Czech borders have witnessed many horrors and atrocities during this century. Subsequently, the legacy of the past makes its presence felt even when practical problems or tasks of cross border cooperation are being considered. (Kraemer, 1995;64) In addition, cultural differences, and especially language barriers, impede the process of mutual understanding and responsiveness.

Thirdly, the enormous economic disparity along the frontiers of Austria and Germany with their Czech neighbour is a source of friction. This is exacerbated by the fact that the Eastern regions of Germany receive substantial EU regional aid, having Objective 1 regional aid status, whereas the Czech border regions do not receive such benefits. Obviously EU membership for

Visegrad countries, with the potential for finance from the European Structural Fund, will help to redress this economic imbalance with Germany

A final obstacle to cross-border co-operation, as well as to decentralisation, is the Czech government's, especially that of the former Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, policy to portray Euroregions as a threat to the Czech state and its sense of identity.

*d) Assessment of interregional co-operation.*

Euroregions or interregional cooperation arrangements are not magic instruments which open automatic doors to finance, investment, development and stability. (Kraemer, 1995;62) It is also not a goal per se, but rather a mechanism which enhances the exchange of information, organizational and economic resources of the regions, to help economic and social development of less advantaged areas. (Alomar, 1995;139) However, given the proximity of the existing Euroregions to Germany and Austria, there is a certain danger that these regions receive disproportionate treatment in investment and infrastructural terms in comparison to development in eastern regions of the Czech Republic.

Among the main drawbacks to cross-border co-operation are the structural deficiencies on the Czech side, both with regard to non-governmental organisations (NGO), and in the administration of local authorities. Whilst some progress has been made towards the establishment of NGOs, there is still a considerable way to go before a dense network of non-governmental organizations will emerge on the Czech side. Yet, wide-spread activities of NGOs are important for an active social and political interchange between the German and Czech communities. This missing support structure in the NGO field exacerbates the prevailing predicament of local authorities in the Czech Republic, as well as other Central and Eastern European states they find themselves, having small or non-existent budgets, poorly developed regional instruments and skeletal administrations. It is here where the external dimension can be of help.

A yet unexplored question is the extent to which Czech local administrations receive help or benefit from collaboration with their German counterparts. This applies particularly to the degree to which the German Lander (in their own differing ways, e.g. Bavaria and Saxony) are transmitting their own experience of adaption to EU mechanisms to their Czech partners in the preparation period prior to EU accession.

On another level, the interchange of information is key to successful collaboration between the police forces on both sides of the border in regard to countering drug trafficking and other crime. If the Czech Republic were to join the Schengen Agreement, officers from each country would be allowed to operate in the territory of the other member states in hot pursuit, and would take part in cross border surveillance and operations within specified parameters.

These aims tally with German foreign policy priorities to promote stability in Central Europe through both bi-lateral means (treaties of good neighbourly relations) and multi-lateral EU efforts at integration. The latter was most explicitly expressed in the Lamers-Schauble paper, which, in an effort to avoid the possibility that Europe is exposed to centrifugal forces, calls for the integration of German Central and Eastern European neighbours in the post-war West European system.<sup>4</sup>

Cross-border co-operation is thus of importance for social, economic and political reasons. In addition, regional co-operation will be the first sign to the European Union that these regions are capable of working together successfully with others, overcoming differences such as language barriers, economic disparity and racial tensions. Regions which lie in border areas have a particularly important role to play in this process. They can motivate populations at a grass roots level on European issues to create a public opinion in favour of European integration.

The dissemination of information and advice on European Union membership is an important function not only in its own right, but also with regard to the Sudetan German property demands. It could also help to neutralise suggestions that Germany seeks to win undue influence in Czech affairs.<sup>5</sup> In other words, a multilateral rather than bilateral arrangement could help to 'normalise' or strengthen German-Czech relations. The prospective benefits of a Europeanisation of German-Czech relations were detailed by Wolfgang Schauble, leader of the CD/CSU parliamentary group: 'Being a member of the EU also signifies a commitment to the fundamental liberties of the people of Europe. Amongst these is the freedom of movement and residence for citizens of the member states, but also for the Germans. Why should not Germans live and work in Silesia or Bohemia?'<sup>6</sup> This is not, however, a view yet shared by the Czech government, at least as far as the former Prime Minister, Vaclav Klaus, was concerned, who denounced the peril of a lack of a European identity today on which to build a unified Europe.<sup>7</sup> Time will tell how the Czech Republic will accommodate EU provisions on the free movement of people and other internal market arrangements. One possibility is to follow the precedent set by the Danish government in the internal market regulations which allows Denmark to

prevent foreigners from acquiring land or holiday cottages. In spite of this delay, the German government has not made any explicit linkage so far between its support for Czech EU accession and pressure for a relaxation of Czech legal restrictions against foreigners settling in the Czech Republic.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, cross-border co-operation is instrumental in a number of ways: it promotes social and economic development in the concerned regions, enhances German-Czech relations, fosters Czech efforts towards EU accession, and complements EU integration. At the same time, cross-border co-operation is affected or supported by external factors, especially EU policies, norms and activities.

### III. The Role of the European Regional Organisations in Local and Regional Government

With regard to cross-border regional co-operation, EU initiatives appeared in the Association Agreements, which Poland, the former Czechoslovakia and Hungary signed with the EU in October 1990. They contained specific provisions for regional co-operation by calling on the parties to strengthen mutual co-operation for regional development and land use planning. Among other things it involved information and staff exchanges, technological assistance with special emphasis on poorly developed areas, and the co-ordination of activities concerned with the development of border areas adjacent to the EU (at that time meaning Germany). It also provided for EU co-financing in preparing various expert analyses, studies and programmes of interest to regional development policy makers. (Szlachta, 1995)

Visegrad countries, although not benefiting from the structural funds at large, are still strongly influenced by particular EU processes. Among these are the internal market standards, the CAP, environmental policy<sup>9</sup>, as well as the Structural Funds<sup>10</sup> and PHARE programme provision for local democracy and cross-border co-operation.

The phasing-in of EU policies and norms will require structural and policy making reforms which will affect the relationship between central and subnational institutions and is likely to strengthen the autonomy, functional scope and financial capability of subnational entities in the Visegrad countries. This will become a stronger factor during membership negotiations and actual membership, and will be particularly noticeable with regard to EU structural policy, which directly engages subnational governments and private actors with the Commission. (Marks, 1996)



The interest and support of the EU in cross border co-operation between public and para public agencies as well as non-profit making organizations was recognized in the European Commission Agenda 2000. According to this document for each of the border regions between the EU and the countries of CEE concerned, a Joint Programming and Monitoring Committee will be set up consisting of representatives from the countries concerned, which may include regional or local representatives.

The Committee of the Regions (COR), formed in 1993, will provide an additional important body through which local and regional authorities can increase their role and through which cross-border co-operation can be enhanced. COR must be consulted by the Commission and the European Parliament on a number of issues such as education, vocational training, health, culture, transnational European networks, and economic and social cohesion. COR has called the principle of subsidiarity its *leitmotif* and sees itself as the principle's natural guardian. (Jones, 1997)

Positive implication can also be expected from the Assembly of the European Regions (AER), which comprises an extensive network of regions across Europe. Established in 1985, by 1996 it had 171 regional members throughout Europe. However, so far no Czech region is represented, due to the absence of autonomous regions.

A similar positive contribution can be expected from the Steering Committee of Local and Regional Authorities (CDLR), which provides a forum in which representatives from Council of Europe member states exchange information and promote intergovernmental co-operation in the area of local democracy. CDLR activities cover any questions related to the legal framework, structures, tasks or operation of local and regional structures. The CDLR is assisted by committees of experts or groups of specialists which are formed according to the subject being dealt with and reports to the Steering Committee. In particular, activities in the area of transfrontier co-operation are implemented by the Select Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation (IRRCT).

Finally, the Visegrad Group Initiative, as a multilateral attempt, seeks to: (a) develop local government and promote regionalization within the countries, including initiatives to further the development of regional and local economies; (b) protect the environment, by reducing or barring transborder pollution; (c) eliminate infrastructure barriers and incorporate individual countries and their regions into the European system: and (d) open regions to

supranational trade and co-operation, including the development of border areas and Euroregions.

The importance of external factors for the CEE transformation process generally is gradually being recognized in research studies and publications. For example, Pridham, Herring and Sandford (1994) draw on the experiences of external influences in the transition processes of Greece, Portugal and Spain in the 1970s. Two further studies consider the role of international organizations in the transition process in CEE: Hyde- Price (1994) with regard to their contributions in the realms of security and norm setting, and Sperling and Kirchner (1997) with regard to trade, finance, and macroeconomic, environmental and security policies. But no systematic study has yet appeared on the interplay between international and national factors. This applies even more to research which links external influences to local and regional government development in CEE countries (Faltan, 1995; Kraemer, 1995)

#### IV. Conclusion

This paper has tried to show that the EU can have profound implications for local and regional government development in the Visegrad countries, as well as in other CEE countries. We need to get away from the perception that only domestic factors are important and that external ones are secondary. (Pridham and Vanhanen, 1994;3)

Cross-border efforts, as well as decentralization initiatives are equally affected by ongoing domestic, European and international trends. The domestic processes of nation building, economic restructuring (free market economy) and democratization are as much contextual factors as the European Union and globalization. The latter is, at least for the time being, a small but potentially important motivating factor, for local and regional development, in terms of helping to reduce uncertainties with regard to investment and trade flows. In contrast to the global implications, the European Union, due to funding prospects, membership potential, norm setting (the aspect of conditionality for membership) trade interdependence, and actual policies has major implications for the reallocation of tasks, responsibilities and financial management within member states which indirectly bring about further decentralization with the associated strengthening of competencies, resources and autonomy for local and regional authorities. One of the major objectives of the EU is of course to deepen integration in a harmonious and regionally balanced fashion. At another level, the assertion of the principle of subsidiarity is reasserting the national,

regional and local role within a community of countries which is becoming increasingly integrated.(Bennett, 1993;17)

The consequence is a variegated, multi-level governance, where different governing agencies manage different trans-border processes.(Marks, 1996) In addition, two simultaneous processes take place. On the one hand, in efforts to strengthen their position (partly to by-pass the control of national governments), local and regional authorities will seek alliances among regions, use the AER and COR channels, and often establish offices in Brussels. On the other, there are indications that some Visegrad countries, like Poland, have developed practices to take territorially diverse interests into account in their relations with the EU.

Thus, subtle changes are taking place in the relationship between central and subnational levels of government in which the EU is a major factor. In view of these changes we should distinguish between formal and informal powers in local and regional government development. The latter might involve competencies obtained or greater financial maneuverability as a consequence of EU adjustment, rather than a formal redistribution of power along decentralized or federalist lines. The impact can be observed in alterations to the range of functions performed, the degree of autonomy in performing these functions, and the degree to which local and regional institutions are financed from their own or EU sources. Ideally a formal process of devolution or decentralization would be desirable, but, for the time being this does not look feasible in the Visegrad countries. However, legislation on regionalization introduced in the Czech Republic in November 1997 indicates that such a process is underway. But so far these reforms have been more cosmetic in nature rather than installing genuine autonomous governing institutions at the sub-national level.

A different aspect is whether such cross-border activities stimulate greater political participation and commitment and enhance the principle of subsidiarity. This is the belief of some scholars who apply multi-level governance or network approaches to the study of European integration. (Jachtenfuchs, 1996) Whilst there is insufficient evidence that greater political participation is happening in existing EU member states through the activities of regional or local government authorities, at least on a sufficiently broad basis, it is too early to pronounce on likely impacts in the Visegrad countries.

For the moment, the crucial question is whether interregional co-operation arrangements will help to either reduce conflicts or promote trust among the populations of the regions. There is something developing along the lines of shared norms and values, especially among officials of local and

regional administrations, particularly on such issues as the environment. The hope is that the building up of consultation can be translated into routine habits. But mutual responsiveness, trust and a "we-feeling" grow slowly, as experience in Western Europe shows, where the level of trust expressed among citizens of the different EU member states after forty years has not significantly changed.

For a sense of community to emerge, interlocking activities between regions and central governments are needed. They have to take the form of reinforcing mechanisms or complementary activities. This should involve macro-economic policies. As a general rule it can be maintained that countries which prosper economically have citizens which are more "European-minded". And that the reverse is true in countries which experience recessions. Another reinforcing element can be seen in educational tools, or more specifically in the way neighbours are portrayed in history textbooks. Efforts are needed to neutralise inflammatory references about neighbours as enemies and/or to promote the thinking of common histories and destinies.

No spectacular achievements have been made so far in cross-border regional co-operation between Germany and the Czech Republic, as in the Visegrad area generally, but then given the legacy of past animosities and economic and cultural differences between the regions involved, the initial steps which have been taken were important and represent important building stones for further co-operation and development. They will help pave the way for eventual EU membership, contribute to the integration process started either under the Europe Agreements or trade and co-operation agreements, and facilitate the establishment and development of trans-European networks in the areas of transport, telecommunication and energy infrastructure.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For details on the role and development of Euroregions generally see Menno Wolters (1994) and on the development of Euroregions in Central and Eastern Europe see Emil J. Kirchner (forthcoming) "Development and Importance of Interregional Co-operation in Central European States" in R. Kicker, J. Marko and M. Steiner (eds) *Changing Borders. Legal and Economic*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang Verlag.

<sup>2</sup> For further on these five Euroregions see F. Zich, *Euroregions along the Czech-German and Czech-Austrian Borders*, Prague, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 1993; M. Jerabek, "Soziologische Bewertung der grenzübergreifenden Zusammenarbeit am Beispiel der bayerisch-sächsisch-tschechischen Euroregionen" in P. Jurczek, (ed.), *Regionale Entwicklung ueber Staatsgrenzen. Kummunal- und Regionalstudien 2*, Kronach-Munich-Bonn, Carl Link Verlag, 1995, 87- 95; and V. Houzvicka, "Euroregions as Factors of Social Change within the Czech-German Borderland" in J. Musil and W. Strubelt, (eds) *Raumliche Auswirkungen des Transformationsprozesses in Deutschland und bei den oestlichen Nachbarn*, Opladen, Leske and Budrich, 1997, 185-94.

<sup>3</sup> They are represented by the Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft (SL), a radical lobbying group. For further details see Emil Nagengast, "Coming to Terms with a European Identity: The Sudetan Germans between Bonn and Prague", *German Politics*, Vol 5, April 1996, 81-97.

<sup>4</sup> CDU-CSU Fraktion des Deutschen Bundestages, *Überlegungen zur europäischen Politik*, Lamers-Schauble Bericht), 1 September 1994, 14 p.

<sup>5</sup> For example, 62% of the people interviewed (to 32%) think that 'Germany aspires to an economical and political hegemony in Europe' in *Einstellung der Tsechischen Gesellschaft zu Deutschland*, GABAL Analysis and Consulting, Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, July 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Speech by W. Schauble at the Bundestag, 1.6.1995.

<sup>7</sup> See his *Evropa a My'* (Europe and us) in Lidove Noviny, 18 May 1994, p.9

<sup>8</sup> See Emil Nagengast, "Coming to Terms with a European Identity", *op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the European Commission's Overture programme aims to promote cooperation, mainly in the environmental field, between Central and Eastern European regions and those in Western Europe. This programme, covering 50 to 75 per cent of the project cost, involves different participants, including regional authorities, local governments, the small business sector and the banking sector. It aims to bring an inflow of technological know-how, economic co-operation and trade into the regions and cities of Central and Eastern Europe, and to sensitize Western European regions to the environmental problems of Central and Eastern Europe.



<sup>10</sup> For example, the INTERREG programme, established in 1990, enables the European Commission to foster the creation of cross-border co-operation and to endow the Euroregions with legal and economic means. In 1994, INTERREG spent 800 million on Euroregions. Of this, 150 million ECUs available for cross border co-operation between EU and Central European regions. (Kraemer 1995: 64) For the programme to work, this amount of money has to be doubled by national and subnational authorities, according to EU "additionality requirements".





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