

# CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SAFETY IN POLISH-SLOVAK PROJECTS. THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND A CASE STUDY

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*The paper focuses on the issues related to the improvement of safety in the borderland, thanks to the use of EU funds for cross-border cooperation by local governments, dedicated to solving common cross-border problems, inter alia, in the area of risk prevention and elimination of their consequences. The authors analyzed the determinants of the activities conducted by selected local government units in cross-border cooperation to ensure safety, including projects related to risks that could potentially occur in the borderland. The proposals include recommendations on future directions for cooperation between local borderland governments to improve safety in these areas.*

**Key words:** *project, local government, cross-border cooperation, European Union funds.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The formation of favourable conditions for the development of borderlands always refers to the need to solve common problems, whose scale and importance goes beyond borders of the neighbouring regions of the two countries. The issue of cross-border cooperation results from the need to deepen integration and solve problems occurring in the regions located in the borderland of two or more countries. Due to their unique location, the border regions on the one hand are often excluded from large, national infrastructure investments, among others, due to their peripheral location, unique geographical conditions, etc.. However, at the same time, they enjoy the exceptional support of the European Union as regards creating conditions for equal development opportunities for areas disadvantaged in economic or social terms. Special funds flow from the European Regional Development

Fund to the border regions which aim to promote their convergence with better developing areas of the European Community. Both the central government, as well as local regional, district and municipal governments take part in these actions, according to their legal competence.

Due to the existing legal model, the central government is responsible for ensuring public safety, but some responsibilities in this regard are also assigned to local government units. Under law, they are responsible, among others, for some aspects of ensuring safety and preventing various types of risks, specific to the borderlands, due to their specific geopolitical location and often also natural conditions. Borderlands are generally areas with poorer development opportunities, they are peripheral and vulnerable to marginalization, inter alia due to natural and anthropogenic barriers that hinder cross-border integration [1]. Overcoming these barriers and integration of border communities are the most important

challenges facing cross-border cooperation partners, including local governments. An important strategic task for the neighbouring borderland governments is therefore to develop a common model of an integrated development management, among others, in the area of safety, which also requires using significant financial resources. An important support for local governments working together in the borderlands may be the availability of special funds for this purpose, coming from the so-called cross-border cooperation programmes which are dedicated to solving common problems, crucial for these areas, which can include public safety.

The purpose of the paper is to analyze the possibilities of using the so-called cross-border funding by local governments for projects related to safety in a broad sense, in the context of the threats that could potentially occur in the borderlands. The authors also present recommendations for further directions of development of local borderland governments cooperation initiatives aimed to improve safety in these areas.

## **2. DETERMINANTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

Effective development of all cross-border links is conditioned by the existence of fundamental international instruments referring to mutual recognition of neighbours, regulating forms and rules of cross-border communication and developed border infrastructure. Poland has concluded extended treaties on security, mutual friendship, international, economic, cultural and scientific cooperation with its neighbours, and thus it has regulated border relationships [2]. The definition of cross-border cooperation, formulated in the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Communities and Territorial Authorities of 21 May 1980 defines it as any concerted action designed to reinforce and further develop neighbourly relationships

between communities and territorial authorities of two or more number of countries, as well as to conclude agreements and make arrangements necessary to implement such plans. Cross-border cooperation is limited by the framework of characteristics of communities and territorial authorities, in the manner specified by domestic law [3]. The above-mentioned act sanctions actions that actually were often taken previously by the local governments. With the democratization of international relationships, the population living in the territory *“has become currently an active, essential element, decisive through a principle recognized in international law of self-determination of peoples about the shape of its statehood, system and the fate of their national territory.”* [4] Cross-border cooperation in the form of “twinning” agreements between municipalities or cities only needed to be legitimized by the state. By signing this legislation, the Republic of Poland has committed itself not only to approving such arrangements, but also to facilitating and *“supporting this cooperation as much as possible.”* [5]

The European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions highlights cross-border neighborhood cooperation (border regions) and foreign one (authorities at the regional and local level, organizations or institutions representing border areas). In this sense, cross-border cooperation refers not only to the actions taken by local or regional authorities, but also to the joint initiatives of companies, organizations and residents, [6] whose genesis is often associated with previously initiated contacts between local governments.

An important document regulating the cross-border cooperation of local government units is the European Charter of Local Self-Government, setting out the rules for the conclusion of agreements between states about supporting cross-border cooperation and regional cross-border arrangements [7]. The European Charter of Local Self-Government, developed by the Association of European Border Regions, gives

wide powers to regional authorities in matters relating to cross-border cooperation [8]. The first Polish legal act pointing to the possibility of starting cross-border cooperation between Polish municipalities is the Act of 8 March 1990 on territorial self-government, [9] which allows municipalities to create associations. Secondary legislation to the Act on the relationships between municipalities is contained in Ordinance No. 47 of the President of the Council of Ministers of 16 August 1990 [10].

Cross-border cooperation of Poland with neighbouring countries has developed since the early 1990s, mostly in the form of agreements between local governments of the neighbouring border regions, for example agreements about "twinning" cities and agreements under which the Euroregions were created. A Euroregion is a region located in the borderland of two or more states, whose existence is based on a formalized cross-border cooperation on the implementation of common objectives of local governments and other institutions and entities operating on its territory [11]. It can also be characterized as a form of institutionalized cooperation in the border regions of different countries, taking place in full respect of national borders and laws in force in the territories of the countries participating in the creation of the Euroregion [12]. Cross-border cooperation takes on the characteristics of Euroregionalization after introducing fixed, institutional forms of cooperation by creating, among others, associations. Euroregional cooperation can be developed based on: a system of self-government, as a result of initiatives by local communities and their governments; an administration and self-government system, established with the participation of regional authorities and / or central and local government [13].

Initially, cross-border cooperation was mainly based on spontaneous contacts, bottom-up initiatives undertaken at the will of citizens and local government representing them. The issue was addressed, among others, in the Act of 15 September 2000 on the rules for accession of local government units to international associations of local and regional

communities [14]. Taking into account the preservation of the unity of the state, the legislator limited the powers of local government in an international association, compared with the freedom of action in the national association. Accession to such an association must comply with the "Priorities of international cooperation of a province." The local government unit, acting in accordance with the Polish domestic law and foreign policy, cannot transfer public tasks, public property or property rights to the association [15]. An example of local governments associations is the activity of local Polish-Czech-Slovak Beskydy Euroregion, which is based on the so-called self-government model of institutionalizing earlier cross-border cooperation, initiated on each side by the goal-related associations: the "Region Beskydy" Polish Association based in Bielsko-Biala, the Slovak Association: Združenie "Región Beskydy" based in Zilina and the Czech association: Sdružení "Region Beskydy" in Frýdek-Místek [16]. A condition for membership in the structures of the Euroregion is to join the local associations of local government units on each side of the border. Currently, members of local associations belonging to the Euroregion Beskydy is a total of about one hundred units of local government (townships and country districts, urban and rural communes, cities) in the area of the Polish-Czech-Slovak borderland.

### 3. THE ISSUE OF SAFETY IN COOPERATION IN THE BORDERLANDS

As one of the co-authors writes, *"what we inherited from the twentieth century is the problem of ensuring safety of individuals, social groups, communities, organizational units, states as one of the basic objectives of a democratic state. The process of changing the perception of safety, however, began in the late twentieth century. Criticism of a narrow and ethnocentric perception of safety from the angle of a military threat in the national but also international dimension began after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc States."* [17] What changed our perception of safety was a

terrorist attack carried out in the United States in the morning, using hijacked airliners that dug into the twin towers of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon office. The target of the fourth attack (unsuccessful) was most likely the White House. This act of terrorism of previously unknown dimensions attracted attention of the whole world to the fact that "safety should be viewed from different perspectives, and military threats, as basic to humanity, should be seen in terms of a usual stereotype, a result of the period of "cold war" [18]. Discussing the issue of safety it would probably be scientifically correct to refer to terminology. Referring to defining and organizing the content related to safety (Gryz, Kitler, Marczak, Wojnarowski, and many other authors), without engaging into its analysis, a contemporary, traditional and common dictionary definition of safety says: *"state of being safe, freedom of danger, the state peace and confidence."* [19] Safety cannot be analyzed in isolation from threat, therefore it is *"a concept reflecting the lack of threat and its sense; the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threats; a contemporary measure of chances of existence, survival and development of the state, society and its citizens."* [20]. The state is the *"most perfect form of securing human needs in terms of safety (...), safety of the state, taking into account all factors (internal and external, individual and group, natural and resulting from human activity), can be equated with national security."* [21]. *"National security is not only the protection of the people and territory against physical attack, but also protection - by various means - against vital economic and political interests, whose loss would threaten the fundamental values of the state."* [22] Thus, ensuring the security of the state is a complex process dependent on many external and internal factors. Currently, safety is one of the most widely used concepts in daily (social, state) life. The universality of this may give rise to ambiguity, [23] and the concept itself as well as its content, may have different meanings for the individual and for the

group. Features which are significant in perceiving the concept in the individual dimension include: gender, age, state of current knowledge, state of wealth, and in the group dimension: cultural determinants, system of government, geo-strategic location. [24]

Throughout the history of mankind, and especially in contemporary times, maintaining an appropriate level of state security requires international cooperation, cooperation between government departments, including central government, local government, entrepreneurs as well as state institutions. Such cooperation has a unique dimension in the context of the borderlands, especially when these regions border other states. In the present case, the authors refer to the Province of Silesia, which borders two countries: the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. The Province of Silesia, bordering the two countries (the Czech and Slovak Republic), borders with four provinces: Łódź, Małopolskie, Opole and Świętokrzyskie. It was established with the former areas of the provinces of Bielsko-Biała, Częstochowa and Katowice as a result of the administrative reform of the country. The Province covers an area of 12 333.09 km<sup>2</sup>, and 4.62 ml people live in it, which constitutes 12.1% of the population. The population density is 377.4 / km<sup>2</sup>, thus giving the highest density in Poland. The area ranks the 14th out of 16 provinces, while in terms of population, ranks 2nd after Mazowieckie Province [25]. It has 71 cities, including 19 cities having right of the district (powiat). It is characterized by a high proportion of ethnic minorities (German, Czech, Moravian).

The Province of Silesia, together with the Province of Opole and the Czech Moravsko-Silesian Country and the Slovak Zilina Local Government concluded an agreement establishing the TRITIA European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, developing cross-border partnership in order to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants of the Czech -Polish-Slovak border area. It is the first such institution, established on the Polish territory, located in

Cieszyn [26]. In addition, within the framework of the Polish-Slovak cooperation, the project titled: "Innovative development of cross-border cooperation of the institutions in Province of Silesia and the Local Government Żylin Country" was implemented, financed by the European Union under the Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2007-2013 [27]. One of the results is the strategy of the system cooperation among institutions of the Province of Silesia and the Local Government Żylin Country for 2010-2020, preceded by a diagnostic report, specifically analyzing the potential and problems of development in this border area [28]. The project referred to is an example of skillful management of partner relationship between provinces neighbouring on the border, which use European Union funds successfully within the framework of the cooperation [29].

#### **4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLISH-SLOVAK COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF SAFETY AND RISK PREVENTION ON THE BASIS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FUNDS IN THE YEARS 2007-2013 AND 2014-2020**

Among the programmes and funds enabling the direct or indirect financing of cross-border cooperation in the field of safety and risk prevention, the most important role is played by the Cross-Border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 [30]. The strategic objective of the cooperation in the years of 2007-2013 was intensifying partnership-based Polish-Slovak cooperation that will be favourable to the sustainable development of the border area. This goal was implemented, among others, by creating conditions conducive to the improvement of safety.

The development of Polish-Slovak borderlands in 2014-2020 will also be supported through the Cross Border

Cooperation Programme Poland - Slovak Republic. The draft of this programme has already been subjected to public consultation and it is highly probable that in its current shape, it will be implemented as of the beginning of 2015. Under this programme, the issue of public safety shall be addressed in two ways: Infrastructure safety in the borderlands, e.g. transport, communication infrastructure, etc.; improving the quality of cross-border specialist and professional education, inter alia in the field of risk management and security.

From the point of view of the objectives of this study, the latter presentation of the problem of public safety in the borderlands is crucial and it is directly connected with the objectives of the Priority Axis 3- The development of cross-border education and lifelong learning. Within the framework of this axis, the following investment priority has been planned: investment in education and training, including vocational training, to acquire skills and learn for the whole life through the development and implementation of common systems of education and training. The following institutions may apply for the funds for the activities covered by the support under this priority: the bodies of local and regional governments, vocational secondary schools, specialist training institutions and centers, institutions and research centers, NGOs, cultural institutions at the central and regional level in cooperation with partner institutions from the borderlands, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. The projects implemented in this area should focus primarily on supporting the inhabitants of the borderlands area, students from secondary schools and educational institutions offering vocational and continuing education.

**Table 1** shows the analysis of the potential, cross-border activities aimed to improve safety and risk prevention, within the framework of certain priority axes of the Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2007-2013.

**Table 1.** Potential, cross-border activities aimed to improve safety and risk prevention, within the framework of certain priority axes of the Cooperation Operational Programme Poland-Slovak Republic 2007-2013

Source: own study based on the Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2007-2013

Axis no.	Axis name	<b>Selected operational objectives and their interpretation in the context of actions for the widely understood safety and risk prevention</b>
I.	Development of cross-border infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improving direct transport links and communication in the region of the Polish-Slovak borderland, <b>among other activities related to safety in the broad sense are permitted, particularly road safety – cooperation of emergency and public order services,</b></li> <li>- Improving the environmental infrastructure in the border areas, among others, improving ecological <b>safety, preventing natural disasters by developing a flood protection system, monitoring and responding to threats of environmental pollution,</b></li> <li>- Improving cross-border infrastructure in the field of natural disaster protection, among others, <b>development of common systems of civil protection against natural disasters, protection of biotopes on both sides of the border,</b></li> <li>- Using renewable energy sources, including <b>improving energy security.</b></li> </ul>
II.	Socio-economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of cross-border cooperation in tourism – <b>actions aimed to enhance the safety of tourists resting / doing sport in mountainous areas,</b></li> <li>- Protection of natural biodiversity, <b>among other efforts to improve environmental safety, preventive measures associated with the hazards of fauna and flora,</b></li> <li>- Building thematic networks of partnerships and thematic groups, <b>among others, supporting the common rescue system, cooperation on safety on both sides of the border.</b></li> </ul>

From the point of view of highlighting the issues related to improving the level of public safety in the borderlands in the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2014-2020, the proposals of activities addressing these issues and included in this document should be considered as valuable and effective. According to the Programme, the following will be regarded as acceptable:

- Joint cross-border programmes / initiatives for students and teachers in secondary schools in the specialist and vocational education sector (e.g: internships, pilot programmes and scholarships, study visits, participation in educational campaigns, organized e.g. by universities);
- Cross-border implementation of activities supporting the so-called social inclusion and social participation, uniting the border area as a functional area; courses, postgraduate studies, programmes and training;
- Cross-border exchange of good practices in the implementation of programmes/initiatives aimed at specialist and vocational education, and model solutions in the field of education

at the secondary level and in continuing education, as well as good practices in education management and education systems funding;

- Actions aimed to identify the needs in the context of specialist and vocational education (e.g. identifying common problems and gaps in the education offer, implementing joint educational processes and activities in the field of career counselling in the cross-border labour market, as well as adapting educational programmes to the current requirements of the labour market, including cooperation between labour market institutions and educational institutions);

- Activities in the field of risk management and security.

The problem of public safety has been outlined rather broadly in the project of Cross Border Cooperation Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2014-2020. In fact, each of the above areas of cross-border cooperation touches an extremely important problem of education for safety, also in the context of the new threats, which are still emerging and which are often particularly visible in the borderlands. Both the opening of

the internal borders of the European Union, as well as other economic, social or environmental conditions affect the fact that the problem of ensuring safety and preventing various types of threats begins to be increasingly important in the cross-border perspective.

Within the framework of the Cross Border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2007-2013 (axis I and axis II) local governments of municipalities and districts in the borderland areas implemented projects whose objectives were associated with safety and risk prevention. The following include the examples of cross-border projects in this issue [31]:

- Cooperation of firefighters without borders (Porąbka and Kozy municipalities, Turzovka city);
- Construction of flood protection infrastructure in Rajcza and Ošćadnica municipalities;
- Development of the fire protection system of the Polish-Slovak borderland in Ujsoly and Novot' Municipality;
- Common prevention, coordination and readiness for effective fire protection of the environment and the inhabitants of the Habovka - Czarny Dunajec border regions;
- Protection against natural disasters and floods in the border area of the Upper Orava (Trstina city, Jablonka municipality);
- Availability, security, improvement of infrastructure in the Polish-Slovak borderland (municipalities: Osturna, Łapsze Niżne, Żdiar).

The analysis of all the Polish-Slovak projects on the issue of widely understood safety (not including the so-called micro-projects co-financed from EU funds, implemented within the framework of Euroregions) shows that these projects generally focused on flood protection and support for cooperation of fire brigades. In comparison with the allowed types of activities described above (Table 1), it proves a high concentration of co-operation between local government units on those two issues, without taking advantage of the opportunities that Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Republic Slovak 2007-2013 offered.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the reserve projects

list (not selected for funding) for the years 2007-2013. In the area of safety and complex risk prevention nine other proposals on similar subjects are left. This means that, for example, improving safety on roads, in tourism and power industry were not issues popular among the beneficiaries. Therefore, doubts arise about justifiability of considering other activities related to the improvement of safety and risk prevention in the programmes of Polish-Slovak cooperation, if they do not evoke interest of the beneficiaries of these funds. In the opinion of the authors, there may be at least some explanations of narrow focus of local governments on certain types of projects: priority importance of the flood protection system and support for fire brigades in the programme of cross-border Polish-Slovak cooperation (it is determined by the stance of expert evaluators and the selection of projects for funding); financing other types of threats and actions aimed to improve public safety by means of local government funds, and therefore such projects are not submitted for funding; the insufficient knowledge that local governments have on a range of potential security risks specific to the borderlands, and as a result projects submitted for funding focus on very obvious risks, e.g. flood.

## **5. CROSS-BORDER NETWORK OF COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT - A CASE STUDY**

In the Polish-Slovak borderlands, in the Beskydy Euroregion, the project, in which Namestovo City was a partner, was implemented by the Department of Crisis Management in the District Office in Żywiec during the period from March 2010 to January 2011.

The total value of the project was EUR 54 030, the applicant contributed EUR 2 701.50 and the contribution from the state budget was EUR 5 403, and the subsidy from the European Regional Development Fund was EUR 45 925.50. The project was co-financed by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund by 85% under the Cross-Border Cooperation

Poland - Slovak Republic from 2007 to 2013 and from the state budget by 15% [32].

The grounds for preparing this project were the need for mutual interaction of various administrative, safety and rescue services, whose duty is to respond to a crisis situation, or remove its effects. In order to effectively coordinate these services, it is necessary to exchange information, especially between participants in such events, i.e.: crisis management departments, the State Fire Service, Voluntary Fire Service, Police, Emergency Ambulance Service. Communication is also required in order to coordinate the participation of other entities in such emergencies, e.g. Power Emergency Service, Gas Emergency Service, environment protection services, hospitals, railway or the military.

The main objective of the project was to create a radio network of cooperation between Zywiec Staroste and all emergency services operating in the borderland region. The idea was to allow the exchange of information between emergency services and support the activities with forces and means of the partners in the project, and faster, more effective and safer rescue operations during emergency.

Project participants aimed to provide a coordinated, rapid and effective system of responding to events that cause or may cause a state of crisis, to manage the activities of all organizational units of local government and other legal and natural persons in prevention of danger to life, health or property, environmental hazards, reducing the size of the losses and the probability of spread of the threats over a larger area. The solutions implemented in the project enable emergency services from both parts of the borderland to have direct contact, the possibility to call for help and jointly coordinate various types of rescue operations.

During the project implementation, a complementary Slovak partner - Námestovo City undertook to create a network, allowing quick contact with the Polish side in the event of a specific threat. Without establishing an efficient network, effectiveness of operation is limited and extended in time.

In addition, the project implementation has helped to establish mutual cooperation, exchange experiences and overcome language barriers, which is extremely important during collaborative rescue operations. During the exercise, the services of an interpreter can be used. During the operation, it will not be possible due to time.

The project covered all emergency services responsible for the safety of persons and property in the borderland, both in Polish and Slovak areas. Thanks to the fast and efficient flow of information, these services have the possibility not only of forecasting threats, but also of effective and safe conduct of rescue and prevention operations.

The target audience of the project is also citizens of the Slovak-Polish borderland, tourists and people conducting economic activity in the area. Thanks to implemented actions, they can feel safer. Rescuers will arrive at the disaster site more quickly, and the action taken will be more effective thanks to the equipment purchased.

The project was prepared with a view to a permanent cross-border cooperation between the services responsible for safety in the borderland of Poland and Slovakia. The developed bilateral cooperation aimed to serve the mutual exchange of information, supported by forces and resources in time of an emergency. A permanent result of the cross-border project is also the result related to developing permanent structures of cooperation in cross-border protection, mutual assistance in times of crisis and the elimination of its consequences. The implementation of the project contributed to faster and more effective exchange of information about the threats in the areas managed by the project partners, in terms of the safety of persons and property, and which may affect the safety in the area managed by the other partner. In addition, strengthening cooperation in ensuring safety contributed to more efficient and safer rescue operations in case of an emergency occurring on both sides of the border by the emergency services from both Poland and Slovakia. Participation



of rescue services in a joint rescue training and exercises planned in the project made it possible to clarify the principles of cooperation and communication procedures and to develop common methods of rescue work.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the stereotypical perception of a border as a dividing line, in the context of potential risks, occurring on either side in the age of strong European integration, it is difficult to talk about the isolation of neighbouring regions. On the contrary, safety problems extend beyond borders, and in most cases, man has a limited ability to control risks, he can only monitor, prevent them or minimize their effects. All these preventive and rescue actions taken in a cross-border partnership give a clear synergistic effect, and an important stimulus to take them is the availability of the European Union funds, dedicated to the development of borderlands.

Management of cross-border relationships, also in the area of ensuring safety of this region's inhabitants, should be based on plans of cooperation, an example of which may be the foregoing strategy of cooperation between the Province of Silesia and Żyliński Country. Therefore, it is necessary to diagnose these problems at the level of municipalities and districts neighbouring through the border and of the neighbouring provinces. Useful, but still quite limited projects on cooperation of fire brigades or the development of flood protection infrastructure definitely do not exhaust the current problem of ensuring safety in the borderland. It is essential to develop the current hazard map, also taking into account aspects such as terrorism, the effects of extreme weather, climate and seismic change, risks arising from the development of new technologies such as cyberspace crime. These issues are very likely not to be referred to in the draft Cross-border Cooperation Operational Programme Poland - Slovak Republic 2014-2020 [33]. At the same time, within this programme, in the context of educational activities possible to implement, targeted at specific social groups, (e.g. youth, inhabitants of city

and rural areas, inhabitants of the areas exposed to extreme weather, tourists, businessmen, etc.) there is an urgent need for the diagnosis of these problems at the level of bordering municipalities and districts and bordering provinces. An important measure should be to draw up the current map of threats, taking into account aspects such as terrorism, the effects of extreme weather, climate and seismic change, threats arising from the development of new technologies like cyberspace crime. There is therefore an urgent need to also extend education for safety, among the inhabitants. In the era of network and knowledge-based economy, cross-border cooperation, not only bilateral but also involving a number of partners, is certainly an effective form of implementing projects of various types in the borderlands. From the point of view of using EU cross-border funds, it is extremely important to conduct a thorough analysis of projects applying for subsidies and to provide support primarily to such undertakings that produce the best results, in relation to the threats diagnosed.

In the authors' opinion, it is vitally important to improve knowledge that local governments have of conditions for improving public safety in the borderlands because new threats emerge. There is, therefore, an urgent need to also extend education for safety among inhabitants. In the age of a knowledge-based network economy, cross-border cooperation, not only bilateral but also involving a growing number of partners, is certainly an effective form of implementing various types of undertakings in the borderlands. From the point of view of the use of EU cross-border funds, it is extremely important to thoroughly analyse projects submitted for funding and support mainly such undertakings that generate the best results compared to the threats realistically diagnosed. The effective use of EU funds, in conjunction with the integrated planning of the borderland development and activities taken to strengthen cross-border partnerships in the area of public safety are important priorities in the Polish-Slovak cross-border cooperation in the coming years.

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