

## Cross-border cooperation in the shadow of crisis – the Turów Coalmine case

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**Abstract.** Background: The study concerns the inter-governmental dispute between the Polish and the Czech governments on the planned Turów coalmine expansion and its impact on the cross-border cooperation between the Polish and the Czech entities, particularly in the sphere of cross-border partnerships conducting microprojects financially supported by the INTERREG Program. The conflict went before the European Court of Justice in 2021 and was the cause of hostility between the two nations. The conflict was concluded in February 2022, with the signing of the agreement on the future of the Turów coalmine and compensation for the Czechs. Although the dispute has ended formally, but some problems in relations between the Polish and the Czech partners on the borderland still exist. Research problem and questions: The research problem concerns recognizing how inter-governmental disputes at a national level can

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impact on cross-border cooperation at a local level, and in particular the Polish-Czech partnerships conducting cross-border microprojects. It comprises of research questions concerning the impact of this inter-governmental dispute on the ongoing and future Polish-Czech institutional partnerships in cross-border projects and the factors necessary to improve the resilience of cross-border cooperation at a local level to political factors and actors. Methods: The authors used both qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews, media analysis, desk research) and quantitative research methods (survey CATI, CAWI surveys). Conclusions: The study shows slight changes in the intensity, efficiency and approach to the cross-border cooperation; it reveals the future activities essential to improving the Polish-Czech relations in the Nysa Euroregion. It points out the important factors necessary to improve the resilience of cross-border cooperation to political factors.

**Keywords:** cross-border cooperation, crisis, cross-border project, inter-governmental dispute, INTERREG, Nysa Euroregion.

**JEL Classification:** D74, H12, F02, F53, O19

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Misunderstandings and conflicts of various natures can significantly weaken inter-organizational cooperation. They can also impact substantially on numerous forms of specific relations, include cross-border cooperation. To date, conflicts between European Union (EU), countries are rare, despite several increases in the number of member state. Those conflicts that do occur each have a unique impact on cross-border cooperation between the entities on the internal EU borders are unique. One such conflict was the inter-governmental dispute between the Polish and the Czech governments over the planned expansion of the Turów coalmine. The had the potential to negatively impact on cross-border cooperation on the Polish-Czech borderland, especially in the Nysa Euroregion, where many Polish-Czech partnerships have conducted cross-border microprojects. The conflict went before the European Court of Justice in 2021 and caused hostility between Poles and Czechs. The conflict was concluded in February 2022, with the signing of an agreement on the future of the Turów coalmine and compensation for the Czechs. Although the dispute has ended formally, some problems still exist on a local level, and these situations influence relations between the Polish and the Czech organizations conducting partnerships in cross-border microprojects in the borderlands.

This unique phenomenon can form the baseline for a study on the mechanism of deterioration of cross-border cooperation caused by political factors and the development of recommendations on how to rebuild mutual trust and make cross-border cooperation more resilient to such crises. The Polish and the Czech parts of the Nysa Euroregion have been chosen as a testbed for this research. This is the area where the Polish-Czech inter-governmental dispute potentially damaged the internal relations in the Polish-Czech partnerships realizing cross-border microprojects funded by the INTERREG Program. Since the accession of Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Lithuania to the EU, no inter-governmental conflict between Poland and its EU neighbors has affected cross-border relations to such an extent.

A review of media monitoring and field research conducted in the Polish and Czech parts of the Nysa Euroregion, gave rise to the hypothesis that the inter-governmental dispute between Poland and the Czech Republic over the Turów mine significantly affected the mood of Poles and Czechs on the border. Poles

feared potential job losses and the marginalisation of their part of the borderland and blamed the Czechs were for this (Böhm & Opiola, 2019). Czechs, meanwhile, accused their Polish neighbours of ignoring environmental problems and an unwillingness to seek compromise. Similar situations can be observed in other border regions (Benzie, Carter, Carlsen, Taylor, 2019). The impact of the dispute has also been reflected in the deterioration of the cross-border cooperation climate in the Polish-Czech micro projects.

The research problem of this study concerns recognizing how inter-governmental disputes at a national level (between the governments of two EU member states) can impact cross-border cooperation, particularly cross-border partnerships. It is comprised of the research questions concerning both the impact of this inter-governmental dispute on the ongoing and future Polish-Czech institutional relations in cross-border partnerships in microprojects and the factors necessary to improve the resilience of cross-border cooperation to political factors. The research goals, therefore are firstly, to identify the influence of the Polish-Czech Turów-related inter-governmental dispute on cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion, particularly partnerships in cross-border microprojects and secondly, to find solutions to make the region more resilient to such crises.

To answer research questions, quantitative and qualitative research was conducted in the Polish and Czech parts of the Nysa Euroregion. Quantitative research was carried out using CATI/CAWI surveys, while the qualitative research was conducted through desk research, media analysis and individual in-depth interviews were conducted. The research target groups were representatives of the Polish and Czech partners participating in the cross-border projects financed by the INTERREG Program in the Nysa Euroregion. The survey sample was 72 managers of cross-border microprojects, and the research sample for in-depth interviews was 30 representatives of the Euroregion Nysa involved in cross-border microprojects. The study was conducted in the period between March and June 2022.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Cross-border cooperation as a specific type of inter-organizational cooperation developing on borderlands**

Inter-organizational cooperation is a set of specific dependencies between organizations implementing joint ventures that enable the achievement of both common and individual goals (Mattessich, Murray-Close, Monsey, 2001). It involves multi-stakeholder action, meaning the collaboration of cooperating organizations (Kaiser, 2011). The determinant of the development of inter-organizational cooperation is the evolution of mutual relations between the organizations involved in it, which should consolidate and bring benefits to each of the parties (Berlin & Carlström, 2011). Inter-organizational cooperation develops when, in the subjective opinion of the partners, the benefits obtained outweigh the risks associated with cooperation with other entities (Czakon, 2011).

Inter-organizational relationships can develop bilaterally (between two organizations) or in a network (between a greater number of organizations). Most often they take the form of various types of formal partnerships between institutions, entities and companies. These partnerships serve the implementation of jointly set social, economic or environmental goals (Wevers, Voinea & de Langen, 2020), in a manner ensuring optimal use of available resources, tools and mechanisms of cooperation (Baker, 1993). Thus, inter-organizational cooperation serves the development of the social capital of the people and organizations involved in it and the area in which it is conducted (Wróblewski & Walancik, 2021).

The location of inter-organizational cooperation in specific socio-geographical conditions determines its territorial context, which significantly impacts the goals and forms of cooperation and the activities undertaken, including projects. This can be seen on the borderlands of countries where inter-organizational

cooperation develops as cross-border cooperation. This type of cooperation is characterized by factors such as the proximity of contacts (it concerns only directly adjacent border areas) and the regional or local level of cooperation (Borys, 1999).

Cross-border cooperation is an essential pillar of European Territorial Cooperation and, simultaneously, of the EU's cohesion policy. The development of borderlands as areas requiring special support, both to improve socio-economic conditions as well as multidimensional institutional and interpersonal integration, is inextricably linked with building cross-border relations of various natures and scopes. It consists of creating and developing links that go beyond the borders of one country at the local and regional level, thanks to which cross-border cooperation of two or more entities is possible (Hataley, Leuprecht, 2018). Cross-border cooperation serves to overcome barriers in mutual relations between neighboring communities and organizations (Capello, Caragliu, Fratesi, 2018, as well as to undertake joint activities for the development of the borderland, including through joint, synergistic use of resources and potentials on both sides of the border (Scott, 2015).

The development of cross-border cooperation is favored by such factors as a common historical identity and a similarity of language, culture, political system or economic system in neighboring regions, as well as similar socio-economic problems. Suppose the factors favoring the joining of forces of partners in border regions outweigh the factors hindering cooperation, such as historical events, local antagonisms or political conflicts. In that case, we can speak of a positive impact of cross-border cooperation on the implementation of the development goals of the area and the integration of the border community (Kurowska-Pysz, Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2017).

An instrument for the harmonious development of cross-border cooperation is a cross-border partnership, established both within one sector (e.g. two local government units) and intersectoral (e.g. a non-governmental organization and a university). Its task is, among others, the implementation of cross-border projects to overcome common difficulties and synergistic use of the potential of neighboring organizations and territories to dynamize their development (Geddes, 2007). A cross-border partnership is one of the mechanisms of strengthening bilateral and network territorial cooperation between various types of organizations, including in the EU, where since 1990 such activities have been supported by the European Commission with funds from the INTERREG program, financed by the European Regional Development Fund. This program is dedicated to, among others, cross-border cooperation developed through projects (large projects and micro-projects) jointly implemented by partners on both sides of the border. Euroregions distribute funds from the INTERREG program to partnership-based structures of cross-border cooperation established for coordination in a designated area (Medeiros, 2011). Euroregions manage funds for cross-border microprojects. Thanks to these projects, multidimensional development of borderlands is possible; from strengthening cross-border institutional relations between neighboring organizations, through infrastructure projects improving the territorial competitiveness of borderlands, to projects supporting integration of neighbors communing with each other (Stverkova, Pohludka, Kurowska-Pysz, Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2018). Sustainable development of cross-border partnerships is therefore, a desirable mechanism that fulfils the expectations of local communities regarding the possibility of developing inter-organizational cooperation on the borderlands (Durand, Decoville, 2019).

In the above considerations, a lot of attention is paid to the role played in developing cross-border cooperation by organizations operating in border regions, which develop relations with partners on the other side of the border. The subject and nature of their activities, the goals pursued, and their activity level directly shape the image of cross-border cooperation in a given area. Regional and local authorities play a unique role in this process and are often identified as the main actors. This emphasizes the so-called the Madrid Convention (Perkmann, 2007), or the European Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions (Sousa, 2013).

Euroregions are characterized by the highest degree of institutionalization of cross-border cooperation structures. They provide permanent, institutional forms of cross-border cooperation, such as associations, councils, secretariats and working groups integrating partners on both sides of the border (Medeiros, Ramírez, Ocskay, Peyrony, 2021). Euroregional activity is therefore, a platform for the development of secondary, direct institutional relations between partners on both sides of the border (Lewkowicz, 2019). In the Euroregions, the inter-organizational institutional cooperation between local government units and their subordinate units, as well as other public institutions, non-governmental organizations or even enterprises and the media, develops most dynamically. There is no doubt that entrusting Euroregions with the distribution of funds from the INTERREG Program under the so-called microproject funds has improved their availability at a local level (Bielecka, 2019). There was a large increase in the number of cross-border micro-projects in which larger and smaller scale organizations could participate, contributing to a significant strengthening of cross-border institutional ties.

## **2.2. Crises as factors weakening institutional cross-border partnerships on borderlands – the Turów coalmine case**

Cross-border partnerships as institutional forms of inter-organizational cooperation in the borderlands arise and are shaped as a result of the interaction between two groups of factors (Kurowska-Pysz, 2019):

- internal factors related to the development of inter-organizational relations between partners, including their interest in such relationships and the ability to initiate and develop them, as well as the approach to relationships and expectations towards these relationships on the part of each partner,
- external factors related to the conditions under which inter-organizational relations between partners are initiated and developed, including factors related to the national, regional and cross-border environment of partners.

The factors presented above determine the behavior of partners of cross-border cooperation and the relations between them in various ways. It can have either a positive impact (the factors act as catalysts for cooperation) or a negative impact (the factors generate barriers that hinder the initiation, development or maintenance of cooperation) (Kurowska-Pysz, Castanho, Naranjo Gómez, 2018). In practice, the influence of the factors is constantly overlapping, with a varied impact on cross-border cooperation. As a result, cooperation can develop faster or slower or even disappear completely (Sohn, 2014).

An example of these factors coinciding is the situation that led to the Polish-Czech intergovernmental dispute regarding the operation of the Turów mine in Bogatynia, in the Nysa Euroregion, on the Polish-Czech-German border. In the authors' opinion, and supported by conclusions from observations, media analysis and direct interviews conducted in the Nysa Euroregion, is that in this case, we can speak of a simultaneous negative impact of both groups of factors;

- internal factors determining the conditions of cross-border cooperation between partners (such as insufficient current cross-border communication at the level of the Nysa Euroregion, an inability to conduct dialogue to define a balanced package of benefits for partners on both sides of the border, no willingness to work out a compromise enabling the end of the conflict before its escalation to a national level),
- external factors, including primarily political factors at a national level, i.e. differences in government interests on the Polish and Czech sides, which began to play a leading role in this conflict, because none of the local actors on either side of the border had the competence to decide on the further operation of the Turów mine.

The genesis of this dispute goes back many years. The Czech side raised reservations mainly about the technological process of coal extraction in the Turów mine, which, in their opinion, caused periodic water shortages in the Czech communities adjacent to the mining area. The Czechs also brought attention to the high level of noise and environmental damage, including dust and the deterioration of the landscape. The Czechs expected the Polish side to take decisive steps aimed at solving the problem of the Turów mine operations, but this, in their opinion, did not happen. Meanwhile, the Polish side took the position that all activities related to the functioning of the Turów mine were carried out in accordance with the law, with the appropriate involvement of their Czech partners. These activities, including public consultations, were conducted at a local level, but their assessment on either side of the border differed greatly. Until 2020, this problem could not be resolved at a local level. On January 21, 2020, the Turów mine obtained a decision on environmental conditions for the further exploitation of the lignite deposit until 2044, and on March 20, 2020, the Polish Climate Minister granted the mine a license to mine lignite until 2026. On September 30, 2020, in response to these actions, the Czech Republic turned to the European Commission with a complaint against Poland, which, in their opinion, had violated a number of the EU laws regarding the continuation of the Turów mine operations. On December 17, 2020, the European Commission issued an opinion on a breach of the EU law by Poland, stating that the procedure to extend the duration of a lignite mining license was made without the proper environmental impact assessment, in breach of the Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain projects on the environment.

On February 26, 2021, the Czech Republic asked the European Union Court of Justice to order Poland to stop mining lignite in the Turów mine immediately and on May 21, 2021, the Tribunal ordered Poland to suspend production at the Turów mine. After the ruling was issued, Poland started intergovernmental negotiations with the Czech government, promising, among others, to complete the construction of the protective screen at the mine by the end of September 2021. It was only at this stage of the conflict that a special self-governmental working group was appointed to conduct negotiations with the Czechs, who agreed on directional guidelines for the agreement. Due to the fact that the closure of the Turów mine would cause an estimated loss of PLN 13.5 billion, Poland declared in negotiations with the Czech side that it would co-finance environmental and geological objectives, but a lack of progress in the talks caused the Czech side to submit an application to the European Union Court of Justice for Poland to be fined a daily penalty of 5 million EUR for failure to comply with the decision to suspend production. On September 20, 2021, following the failure to stop lignite mining in the Turów mine, the Tribunal imposed a fine on Poland in the amount of EUR 500,000 a day. Earlier, on June 2021, the Polish-Czech intergovernmental negotiations on the further operation of the Turów mine had begun, but they had not brought the positions closer. This was due both to the adamant attitude of the Polish government and the pre-election period in the Czech Republic, which was not conducive to the government of Andrej Babisz, which was ending its mission, to finding a resolution to this matter.

After a change of Polish minister responsible for negotiations with the Czech side (Michał Kurtyka was replaced by Anna Moskwa) and after the formation of a new government in the Czech Republic, and probably also with the strong negotiation commitment of a special cross-border local government group, on February 2, 2022 Poland and the Czech Republic signed a cooperation agreement with regard to the effects on the territory of the Czech Republic resulting from the operation of the Turów lignite opencast mine. Consequently, on February 4, 2022, the Czech Republic withdrew its complaint to the European Union Court of Justice. Under the agreement, the Czech Republic received EUR 45 million in compensation, including money earmarked for the implementation of Polish-Czech microprojects to improve the environmental situation in the areas around the Turów mine and contributing to the restoration of mutual trust in Polish-Czech cross-border relations. The work of the mine has not been suspended, and the EU has committed itself to supervising the agreement for the next 5 years. Poland also undertook to

complete the construction of a barrier that will prevent groundwater outflow from the Czech Republic to Poland and to build an earth embankment to protect the inhabitants of the region against air, noise and dust pollution. In addition, until the end of mining at the Turów mine, noise and air pollution, landslides and groundwater levels will be monitored.

The situation described above illustrates the development of the conflict at government level, which previously took place for many years on the borderland. As a result of insufficient communication between the parties and an inability to resolve a crisis situation at an early stage of its formation, the dispute was grown beyond the border. The authorities were first involved in the conflict at regional and national levels, followed by the institutions of the EU. The deterioration of Polish-Czech relations at an intergovernmental level was accompanied by strong media action on both sides of the border, which had an impact on Polish-Czech relations at a local level, primarily in the Nysa Euroregion.

The analysis of the situation described above shows that the Nysa Euroregion experienced a delayed reaction to the threat, which led to a crisis defined as a sudden or increasing event, threatening life, health, property as well as the human environment, and requiring the involvement of forces and resources which sometimes exceeded local possibilities (Otwinowski, 2010). The crisis resulting from the intergovernmental dispute over the activities of the Turów mine became the culminating phase of a growing threat, understood differently on both sides of the border: for the Czechs - first of all, as a further deterioration of their living conditions in the natural environment, influenced by the Turów mine, for Poles - as the risk of losing jobs and a worsening of their living conditions due to the possible closure of the mine. The moment when the intergovernmental dispute led to radical decisions by the European Union Court of Justice, became a breakthrough between the two qualitatively different phases of this conflict. This crisis ended the current state of affairs, including unsuccessful intergovernmental negotiations, and led to the opening of a new negotiating field, which arose under time pressure (Clark, Deininger, 2020) (daily penalties for Poland were levied), and also due to the possible major threat to the operations of the Turów mine (the decision to close and the loss of work), as well as the circumstances in which this crisis occurred, indicating, among others, an insufficient level of cross-border cooperation and communication, which prevented the problem being solved at a local level.

Observing the development of the dispute over the Turów mine, it was hypothesized that the crisis described above had a negative impact on cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion. This was indicated not only by media reports, but also by some antagonistic behavior by the inhabitants of the Polish-Czech border area and the organizations operating in this area, which supported one side of the dispute or the other.

### **3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND RESEARCH PROCEDURE**

The research problem of the study concerns recognizing how inter-governmental disputes at a national level (between the governments of two EU member states) can impact cross-border cooperation at a local level, especially institutional relations between partners cooperating in the cross-border projects that are financially supported by the INTERREG Program and managing according to the specific methodology related to the rules of the UE support.

Available in the literature and theoretical descriptions of the international conflicts related to multi-level governance structures, especially in borderlands, only partially consider the impact of such disputes at the local level of cooperation, including cross-border cooperation (Noferini, Berzi, Camonita & Durà, 2020). Therefore, one can only use the existing case studies, such as the inter-governmental dispute on the Turów coal mine, to analyze such crises in-depth and specify the impact of such crises on the institutional relations

in borderlands, especially in the cross-border projects that are crucial tools to maintain and extend cross-border cooperation.

To solve the research problem, the following research questions were asked:

1. Does this inter-governmental dispute impact the ongoing Polish-Czech institutional relations, particularly in cross-border projects?
2. What were the behaviors of the Polish and Czech partners in cross-border projects during the inter-governmental dispute on the Turów coal mine?
3. Do Polish and Czech partners in cross-border projects want to continue their cooperation and extend it to new fields and new partnerships?
4. What are the important factors to improve the resilience of cross-border cooperation at a local level to political factors and actors?

The paper is aimed at identification of the influence of the Polish-Czech Turów-related border dispute on cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion, particularly in cross-border projects and finding solutions to make cross-border cooperation more resilient to such crises.

Two specific objectives have been specified in the study:

1. The identification of the aspects of the ongoing and future cross-border cooperation in projects which are negatively affected by the Polish-Czech Turów-related border dispute.
2. The specification of the important factors to improve the resilience of cross-border cooperation on the local level to political factors and actors.

The research process was based on the assumptions of the grounded theory. The incomplete induction method was used (Lisiński, 2016, p. 46). It consists of inductive reasoning, however, on the grounds of observation of only some processes, facilities and phenomena. In empirical sciences, this method makes generalizations based on experiments and facts. The certainty of inductive reasoning occurs when it is possible to study all elements; however, in the case of the research problem defined above, it was not possible. Thus, the induction by incomplete enumeration method was used in the study, in which a general rule is deduced from the limited number of details. Considering the selection of the research sample, results from the research conducted with this method have been deemed highly probable for cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion.

The target groups of the research were the managers of cross-border microprojects conducted in the Nysa Euroregion (the Polish and the Czech part of the Euroregion), representing either project leaders or project partners on both sides of the border. In total, in period 2014-2020 92 entities from the Polish side and 48 from the Czech side participated in the cross-border microprojects. The research sample was: 35 Polish respondents and 37 Czech respondents, representing the types of organizations and fields of cooperation listed in the *Table 1* and the *Table 2*. The structure of the respondents of both sides of the border reflected the structure of beneficiaries of the INTERREG Program in terms of microprojects. On both the Polish and Czech sides prevailed representatives of local self-governments and subordinated entities as well as non-governmental organizations prevailed although, the proportions were different. The fields of cross-border cooperation were related to the type of organization and its mission. Prevailing issues were those related to regional and social development and matters subordinate to local self-government units.



Table 1

## Types of organizations that participated in the research

Country		Total	Type of organization				
			a local government unit	unit subordinate to the local government unit	national institution	non-governmental organization	school or university
Poland	n	35	17	10	0	8	0
	%	100.0	48.6	28.6	0.0	22.9	0.0
The Czech Republic	n	37	13	7	1	14	2
	%	100.0	35.1	18.9	3.0	37.8	5.0

Source: *own calculations*

Table 2

## Fields of cooperation of the organizations that participated in the research

Country		Total	Field of cooperation						
			matters subordinate to local self-government units	education	culture and education	sport and tourism	social affairs	regional and local development	security and crisis management
Poland	n	35	9	2	9	2	2	10	1
	%	100.0	25.7	5.7	25.7	5.7	5.7	28.6	2.9
The Czech Republic	n	37	10	8	0	5	2	11	1
	%	100.0	27.0	21.6	0.0	13.5	5.4	29.7	2.7

Source: *own calculations*

The triangulation of research methods was ensured in the study. Quantitative research was conducted using a survey method, and qualitative research was based on the desk research method and individual in-depth interviews (IDI).

Desk research results are based on the analysis of national and foreign literature on the subject, as well as strategic documents in the Nysa Euroregion. On the grounds of the desk research, scenarios of individual in-depth interviews (IDI) were written and conducted on a sample of 30 representatives of Euroregion Nysa involved in the realization of the cross-border projects (representatives of local governments and units subordinated to them, non-governmental organizations and other public institutions). These interviews allowed the issues included in the CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) and CAWI (computer-assisted web interview) conducted on a sample of 72 representatives of entities involved in the cross-border microprojects in the Nysa Euroregion to be specified.

A non-random sample selection for was used for CATI / CAWI surveys and in-depth interviews, i.e. persons representing entities involved in at least one cross-border project conducted between 2021 and February 2022 in the Nysa Euroregion when the Polish-Czech inter-governmental dispute was under the prevue of the European Court of Justice. The surveys and in-depth interviews were carried out in the period between March and May 2022 on the Polish and Czech sides of the Nysa Euroregion.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. The impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine on the existing institutional relations in the cross-border microprojects

For majority of the Polish and Czech respondents, the Polish-Czech dispute didn't significantly deteriorate, either ongoing peer-to-peer contacts in the Polish-Czech groups implementing joint cross-border microprojects nor communication between Polish and Czech partners in such projects (*Table 3*). Nevertheless, in both cases it was noted that on both sides of the border there was a group of more than ten percent of respondents in whose opinions such deterioration of cross-border contacts and communication had occurred. A much larger number of respondents (considerably more than 20% percent of respondents on both sides of the border) see the Polish-Czech conflict as a general problem in cross-border relations, which may result in the weakening of cross-border institutional ties or deterioration of Polish-Czech good-neighborly relations on the border. The differences between Poles and Czech opinions are not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), and the country effect (measured by V-Cramer coefficient) is weak (*Table 3*).

Table 3

Comparison of assessments regarding the impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine on the aspects of Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation on the Polish and Czech sides in terms of relations

Aspects		very negative		rather negative		neither negative nor positive		rather positive		very positive		p	V
		PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR		
institutional ties linking Polish and Czech partners in projects	n	0	0	11	10	22	27	2	0	0	0	0.397	0.186
	%	0.0	0.0	31.4	27.0	62.9	73.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0		
good-neighborly relations between Poles and Czechs on the border	n	2	5	14	11	18	21	1	0	0	0	0.447	0.198
	%	5.7	13.5	40.0	29.7	51.4	56.8	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0		
people-to-people contacts in Polish-Czech teams that jointly implement cross-border projects	n	0	1	4	7	29	28	1	1	1	0	0.754	0.197
	%	0.0	2.7	11.4	18.9	82.9	75.7	2.9	2.7	2.9	0.0		
communication between Polish and Czech partners in cross-border projects	n	0	0	6	4	27	32	2	1	0	0	0.545	0.124
	%	0.0	0.0	17.1	10.8	77.1	86.5	5.7	2.7	0.0	0.0		

p – probability in Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test, V- V-Cramer coefficient

Source: *own calculations*

Taking into consideration the opinions of four questions together, the synthetic measure “Impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine - relations” (*IDTM*) was calculated – as a sum of points given for each question. Reliability of this indicator is high – the alfa Cronbach coefficient is equals 0.781. In summary, the difference between the opinions of Poles and Czech in the context of the impact of the Turów Mine dispute on relations is statistically insignificant (in Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA,  $p = 0.535$ ) – *Table 4*.

Table 4

Impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine – relations (*IDTM*) by country

Country	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	Median (Me)	Standard deviation (SD)	Skewness (S)	H(df)	p
Poland	35	8	16	11,11	11	1,79	0,6	H(1) = 0.0.026	0.872
The Czech Republic	37	7	14	10,86	12	1,6	-0,84		

H – H-statistics, df – degrees of freedom, p – probability in Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA

Source: *own calculations*

This position is confirmed by the answers given by the respondents to the next question, regarding the interest in the further use of the INTERREG program in 2021-2027, which is possible only based on the implementation of cross-border projects. As shown in Table 5, the vast majority of respondents on both sides do not see a connection between the Polish-Czech inter-governmental dispute and cooperation in cross-border projects and the opinions of Poles and Czech are similar ( $p = 0.923$ ,  $V = 0.047$ ).

Table 5

Beneficiaries' opinions on both the Polish and Czech sides in the context of the impact of the dispute over the Turów mine on the interest in using the INTERREG Czech Republic-Poland program in 2021-2027

Country		Very negative impact	Rather negative impact	Neither negative nor positive impact	Rather positive impact	Very positive impact
<b>PL</b>	n	0	1	32	2	0
	%	0	2.9	91.4	5.7	0
<b>CZ</b>	n	0	3	32	2	0
	%	0	8.1	86.5	5.4	0

 $p = 0.923$ ,  $V = 0.047$ ; p – probability in Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test, V- V-Cramer coefficientSource: *own calculations*

#### 4.2. The behavior of the Polish and Czech partners in cross-border projects during the inter-governmental dispute on the Turów coal mine

The answers obtained in the survey (*Table 6*) and the conclusions of the in-depth interviews indicate that the respondents on both sides of the border tried not to mention the difficult topic of the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine in everyday communication. As pointed out by the interviewees, it was to avoid worsening the atmosphere of good cooperation in projects. The partners of the cross-border projects did not feel competent to comment on this matter, but they expected tense decisions at an intergovernmental level, which they perceived as important for the further development of Polish-Czech relations. The difference in opinions of Poles and Czechs are statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.116$ ), but it's worth noting that the effect size is higher than in the case of other aspects analyzed ( $V = 0.244$ ), but still is not high. The vast majority of Polish partners in cross-border projects (4 from 5 answered that question) and more than half of the Czech partners (59.5%) did not fully share the position of the national government in the dispute over the Turów mine. Thus, most of the entities operating in the border

area and remaining in close cross-border project relationships on a daily basis, presented an independent opinion on this conflict.

Table 6

Beneficiaries' opinions on the Polish and Czech sides regarding the aspect of discussions between partners in cross-border projects regarding the dispute over the Turów Mine

Country		Yes	No	I don't know
PL	n	5	17	13
	%	14.3	48.6	37.1
CZ	n	9	22	6
	%	24.3	59.5	16.2

$p = 0.116$ ,  $V = 0.244$ ;  $p$  – probability in Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test,  $V$  – V-Cramer coefficient

Source: *own calculations*

### 4.3. The impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine on the future institutional relations in the cross-border microprojects

When assessing the impact of the intergovernmental conflict on future cross-border relations, no threat to the continued cross-border cooperation between partners in micro-projects that had already formally ended (i.e. during the period of these projects), was discerned and only a slight threat was perceived in relation to the interest of Poles and Czechs continuing to participate in cross-border projects (approx. 8% of those surveyed on both sides of the border). Respondents noticed a greater threat in relation to the implementation of new cross-border projects or cooperation in new cross-border partnerships. In both cases, a relatively significant number of respondents on both sides of the border (20-30%) noticed the potentially negative impact of this conflict on the prospects for the development of cross-border cooperation.

This problem was also raised in the in-depth interviews. In response to the question about the threat to the continuation of cross-border cooperation resulting from the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine, the respondents on both sides of the border replied that institutional relations within the existing cross-border partnerships were so strong that there was no threat. On the other hand, they were less optimistic about encouraging entities that had not yet participated in it to engage in cross-border cooperation or the preparation of new projects. Concerns were presented that the negative atmosphere around Polish-Czech relations could result in reduced involvement in any new cross-border initiatives. These opinions are similar for Poles and Czech (the differences are statistically insignificant for each aspect –  $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 7

Comparison of assessments regarding the impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine on the aspects of Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation on the Polish and Czech sides in terms of projects

Aspects		very negative		rather negative		neither negative nor positive		rather positive		very positive		p	V
		PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR	PL	CR		
continuation of cross-border cooperation as part of the sustainability of projects that have ended	n	0	0	11	10	22	27	2	0	0	0	0.551	0.180
	%	0.0	0.0	31.4	27.0	62.9	73.0	5.7	0.0	0.0	0.0		
the interest of Poles and Czechs in participation in cross-border projects	n	2	5	14	11	18	21	1	0	0	0	0.892	0,064
	%	5.7	13.5	40.0	29.7	51.4	56.8	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0		
development of cross-border cooperation within new cross-border projects	n	0	1	4	7	29	28	1	1	1	0	0.368	0,167
	%	0.0	2.7	11.4	18.9	82.9	75.7	2.9	2.7	2.9	0.0		
starting cross-border cooperation with new partners in new projects	n	0	0	6	4	27	32	2	1	0	0	0.748	0.130
	%	0.0	0.0	17.1	10.8	77.1	86.5	5.7	2.7	0.0	0.0		

p – probability in Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test, V- V-Cramer coefficient

Source: *own calculations*

Taking into consideration the opinions from the four questions together, the synthetic measure “Impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine - projects” (*IDTM*) was calculated – similarly, as a sum of points given for each question. Reliability of this indicator is high – the alfa Cronbach coefficient equals 0.836. To summarize, the difference between opinions of Poles and Czech in the context of the impact of the Turów Mine dispute on projects is statistically insignificant (in Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA,  $p = 0.680$ ) – Table 7a.

Table 8

Impact of the dispute over the Turów Mine – projects (*IDTM*) by country

Country	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	Median (Me)	Standard deviation (SD)	Skewness (S)	H(df)	p
Poland	35	8	16	11,54	12.00	1,46	0,25	H(1) = 0.170	0.680
The Czech Republic	37	8	16	11.83	12,00	1.76	0.73		

H – H-statistics, df – degrees of freedom, p – probability in Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA

Source: *own calculations*

The above-mentioned position of the respondents was confirmed by their interest in participating in new cross-border micro-projects, which will be implemented following the conclusion of an intergovernmental agreement on the further operation of the Turów mine (02/02/2022). Reluctance to undertake new projects is particularly visible on the Polish side, where such an interest is declared by only 8.6% of respondents, while on the Czech side, which is the main beneficiary of the agreement, such interest

is expressed by as many as 32.4% of respondents. The difference in opinions of Poles and Czechs are statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.082$ ), but it's worth noting that the effect size is higher than in the case of other aspects analyzed ( $V = 0.297$ ) – Table 8.

Table 9

Beneficiaries' opinions on the Polish and Czech sides regarding the inspiration following the dispute over the Turów Mine to develop new areas in Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation

Country		Definitely no level of inspiration	Rather no inspiration	Neither no nor yes	Some inspiration	Definitely a high level of inspiration
PL	n	2	8	22	3	0
	%	5,7%	22,9%	62,9%	8,6%	0,0%
CZ	n	2	7	16	12	0
	%	5,4%	18,9%	43,2%	32,4%	0,0%

$p = 0.082$ ,  $V = 0.297$ ;  $p$  – probability in Fisher-Freeman-Halton exact test,  $V$  – V-Cramer coefficient

Source: *own calculations*

Among the new areas of cross-border cooperation that could develop as a result of the intergovernmental agreement ending the Polish-Czech dispute over the operation of the Turów mine, activities in the field broadly described as environmental protection and the improvement of the landscape, as well as energy transformation are most often mentioned. There were also those who voiced a need to implement projects in the field of crisis management and activities aimed at rebuilding mutual trust in cross-border relations.

#### 4.4. The resilience of cross-border cooperation to political factors

In order to identify the determinants shaping the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises (such as the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine) in the Nysa Euroregion, a cluster analysis was carried out. Ward's method was used as the agglomeration method, for which the distance between the clusters was determined by the square of the Euclidean distance. The purpose of cluster analysis is to create classes (groups, clusters) of objects that are characterized by a high degree of similarity within each group, while the groups of objects themselves show significant differences. Data for cluster analysis was determined based on the assessment of the proposed list of factors that may potentially affect the resilience of cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion. The set of factors that were assessed was created based on a literature review, while the assessment of these factors was carried out by Polish and Czech partners of the cross-border microprojects in the Nysa Euroregion. The assessment consisted of each respondent indicating up to three factors that have the greatest impact on the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises (such as the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine) in the Nysa Euroregion. The cluster analysis was carried out by grouping the respondents according to which factors they indicated as those that, in their opinion, significantly affect the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises in the Euroregion Nysa. The characteristics of the clusters were made based on the information contained therein.

As a result of the cluster analysis carried out in this way, three clusters of respondents were distinguished on the Polish side indicating the determinants of cross-border cooperation resistance to crises

in the Nysa Euroregion, and on the Czech side - two clusters. The determinants included in the identified clusters are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Clusters of respondents indicating the determinants of cross-border cooperation resilience to crises, such as the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine in the opinion of Polish and Czech partners of cross-border microprojects.

Lp.	Factor	Percentage and order of indications of individual factors within clusters				
		Concentration on the Polish side			Concentration on the Czech side	
		I	II	III	I	II
1	Good interpersonal relations in teams implementing cross-border projects	11.1 (5)	58.3 (2)	64.3 (2)	85.7 (1)	69.0 (2)
2	A high level of mutual trust	55.5 (2)	16.7 (6)	57.1 (3)	50.0 (2)	4.3 (6)
3	Basing cooperation on equal benefits for both parties	11.1 (5)	8.3 (7)	85.7 (1)	50.0 (2)	34.8 (3)
4	Durability of alliances between partners of cross-border cooperation	33.3 (3)	16.7 (6)	14.3 (5)	7.1 (4)	4.3 (6)
5	The common interest is the willingness to raise funds from the INTERREG program	0.00 (-)	41.7 (3)	7.1 (6)	7.1 (4)	13.0 (5)
6	Professional approach to cross-border cooperation (knowledge and know how)	11.1 (5)	66.7 (1)	7.1 (6)	7.1 (4)	26.1 (4)
7	Experience in cross-border cooperation	0.00 (-)	0.00 (-)	28.6 (4)	7.1 (4)	8.7 (6)
8	Using own funds to maintain cooperation also outside of projects co-financed from the INTERREG program	0.00 (-)	25.0 (5)	14.3 (5)	0.00 (-)	0.00 (-)
9	Mutual understanding for the needs and problems of partners	100.0 (1)	25.0 (5)	14.3 (5)	0.00 (-)	91.3 (1)
10	Assigning tasks related to cross-border cooperation to specific employees	0.00 (-)	0.00 (-)	0.00 (-)	7.1 (4)	0.00 (-)
11	Including cross-border cooperation in the organization's operational strategy	22.2 (4)	8.3 (7)	7.1 (6)	0.00 (-)	0.00 (-)
12	Common values shared by partners	0.00 (-)	33.3 (4)	0.00 (-)	7.1 (4)	26.1 (4)

Source: *own calculations*

As shown in Table 10, Polish partners of cross-border microprojects formed three clusters of respondents indicating the presented factors of resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises. The first cluster is made up of 25.7% of the respondents, the second - 34.3%, and the third - 40.0% of the respondents.

In the first cluster, the most important factor was the mutual understanding of the problems and needs of partners, which were indicated by all respondents belonging to this cluster (100%). The second factor -

mutual trust, was indicated by just over than half of the respondents from this cluster (55.5%). The third key factor turned out to be the durability of alliances between partners of cross-border cooperation (33.3%). The group of respondents who created this cluster was dominated by local government units and related units (77.8%), while the dominant area of interest for this group of respondents is regional and local development (44.4%). The majority of entities have been dealing with cross-border cooperation for 10 years or more (55.6%) and entities whose number of cross-border partners ranges from 2 to 5 (66.7%).

In the second cluster, the most important determinant shaping the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises was a professional approach to cross-border cooperation (66.7% of respondents to this cluster). Slightly fewer respondents (58.3%) also indicated good interpersonal relations in project teams and common interest related to fundraising under the INTERREG program (41.7%). The second cluster was mainly composed of local government units and related units (83.3%). Equally, 25.0% of the respondents deal with matters subordinate to local government units, culture and entertainment as well as regional and local development, while other areas of activity are represented by smaller groups of respondents. This group is dominated by entities that have been dealing with cross-border cooperation for 10 years or more (50%) and entities with 2 to 5 cross-border partners (66.7%).

In third cluster, the three most important factors influencing the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises were: cooperation based on equal benefits for both parties (85.7% of respondents belonging to this cluster), good interpersonal relations in cross-border project teams (64.3%) and a high level of mutual trust (57.1%). In this group of respondents, the share of local government units and related units was lower than in the first group and amounted to 71.5%, and was relatively speaking the highest when compared to other clusters. The share on the Polish side was recorded for non-governmental organizations (28.6%). The respondents' areas of activity were also varied: the largest number of respondents dealt with matters subordinate to local government units (28.6%), and smaller groups of respondents dealt with culture and entertainment as well as regional and local development (21.4% each). This group of respondents is dominated by entities cooperating with Czech partners for 10 years and more (57.1%) and with more than 5 partners on the other side of the border (57.1%).

None of the three clusters distinguished on the Polish side selected the factor: assigning tasks related to cross-border cooperation to specific employees, which means that for the three groups of respondents described above, this factor is not important in the process of shaping the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises.

Table 10 also shows that on the Czech side, two groups of respondents have emerged, indicating the presented factors of resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises. The first cluster is made up of 37.8% of the respondents, while the second - 62.2% of the respondents.

In the first cluster, good interpersonal relations in cross-border project teams (85.7% of respondents belonging to this cluster) was identified as the most important factor. In turn, a high level of mutual trust and basing cooperation on equal benefits was considered important by 50.0% of the respondents. Shared values shared by the partners (42.9%) came third.

The group of respondents belonging to this cluster was dominated by non-governmental organizations (50.0%). Local government units and related units constituted only 35.7% of the respondents. The dominant area of interest of this group is education and matters subordinate to local government units (28.6% of respondents each), the majority entities that have been dealing with cross-border cooperation for 10 years or more (64.3%) and entities whose number of cross-border partners ranges from 2 to 5 (64.3%).

In the second cluster, the most important determinant shaping the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises was mutual understanding for the needs and problems of partners (91.3% of respondents belonging to this cluster), followed by good interpersonal relations in project teams (69.6%) and basing cooperation on equal benefits. (34.8%). This cluster was dominated by local government units



and related units (65.2%), and the distribution of the respondents' areas of activity was varied. Most respondents deal with regional and local development (34.8%), as well as with matters subordinate to local government units (26.1%). The majority of entities have been dealing with cross-border cooperation for more than 10 years (69.6%) and entities with 2 to 5 cross-border partners (60.9%).

The following factors were not found in any of the three clusters identified on the Czech side:

- using own funds to maintain cooperation also outside of projects co-financed from the INTERREG program,

- including cross-border cooperation in the organization's operational strategy.

This means that for any of the two groups described above, they are not important in the process of shaping the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crises.

## CONCLUSION

The research results show that in the case of the intergovernmental dispute over the future of the Turów mine, the hypothesis about its impact on cross-border cooperation in the Nysa Euroregion was only partially confirmed. As shown in Table 3, most respondents did not notice a significant negative impact as a result of this situation on relations in the cross-border projects they implement. The problems in Polish-Czech relations did not adversely affect the cross-border partnerships that have been functioning for a longer period and existing partnerships even want to further develop cross-border relations. In their opinion, the intergovernmental conflict will not reduce the interest in the INTERREG program, which co-finances such initiatives (Table 5). Although the respondents did not notice a negative impact from the intergovernmental dispute on interpersonal relations in their project teams, they assessed its overall impact on the cross-border institutional ties between organizations that implement cross-border projects much more negatively. The impact of this dispute on good-neighborly relations between Poles and Czechs on the border was assessed even more negatively still. It can be concluded that formal cross-border institutional relations and generally understood good neighborly relations were much more closely related to the official positions of the Polish and Czech governments than the interpersonal relations of partners in cross-border projects. While Polish and Czech institutions and organizations officially confirmed the government's position, people directly involved in the implementation of micro-projects, remaining in close cross-border relations and very well-versed in the situation on the border, mostly presented their own position, closer to the interests of the borderland and not always in line with the position of the national government. It was especially visible on the Polish side. Therefore, it can be concluded that the intergovernmental dispute noticeably worsened Polish-Czech institutional and good-neighborly relations but only slightly influenced interpersonal relations in the existing project partnerships and these conclusions are similar for beneficiaries on both the Polish and the Czech side.

This thesis is also confirmed by the results of research into the impact resulting from the intergovernmental dispute on future institutional cross-border relations in projects. According to the logic of the process of shaping inter-organizational ties, it is the relations at the institutional level that initiate the process of further cooperation, which is accomplished by the creation of cross-border partnerships and the implementation of specific projects. Only thanks to these activities, at a later stage, are interpersonal bonds created in project teams. Respondents who, when the dispute arose, had already managed to develop cooperation in cross-border projects, declared their willingness to continue despite the dispute. This was probably influenced by the interpersonal ties that had arisen. The same respondents negatively assessed the impact of this dispute on cross-border projects (Table 7), the implementation of which requires initial institutional cooperation between the partners. This type of cross-border cooperation turned out to be much more sensitive to the consequences of the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine than cooperation

at the level of partnerships, projects and cross-border interpersonal relations. Beneficiaries on the Polish and Czech sides have similar opinions in this area (the differences are statistically insignificant).

Therefore, it can be concluded that political crisis situations have a stronger impact on the formal institutional cooperation of organizations on the border than on the cooperation that develops on an ongoing basis in cross-border partnerships and projects. In the latter case, inter-organizational relations are strengthened by interpersonal relations that consolidate this cooperation. Therefore, partnerships formed before the outbreak of an intergovernmental dispute and implementing cross-border microprojects, based not only on institutional ties, but also on permanent interpersonal ties, turned out to be resistant to the emerging crisis situation. At the same time, during the intergovernmental dispute over the activities of the Turów mine, the creation of new partnerships and project planning was relegated to the background, as confirmed by interviewees.

The question arises, therefore, about which factors determine the resilience of inter-organizational cooperation to crises, such as the intergovernmental dispute over the Turów mine. An attempt to identify these factors was made in point 3.4., based on the grouping of respondents. The cluster analysis showed a large differentiation of the assessments of the factors examined on the Polish and Czech sides. On the Polish side, three clusters of determinants of the resilience of cross-border cooperation were selected, and on the Czech side - two clusters. The characteristics of individual clusters were based on the assessment of three key determinants of resistance indicated by the respondents and the dominant characteristics of the respondents. In this way, five crisis resilience profiles have been created for cross-border cooperation.

Table 11

Profiles of cross-border cooperation resistance to crises

Resistance profiles	Polish side			Czech side	
	Profile 1	Profile 2	Profile 3	Profile 1	Profile 2
Name	Long-term cross-border cooperation to meet the needs together	Professional cross-border cooperation for the use of INTERREG funds	Mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation based on trust and personal relationships	Mutually beneficial cross-border cooperation based on trust and personal relationships	Cross-border cooperation to meet needs through the collective achievement of benefits.
Determinant number 1	Mutual understanding for the needs and problems of partners	Professional approach to cross-border cooperation	Basing cooperation on equal benefits for both parties	Good interpersonal relations in teams implementing cross-border projects	Mutual understanding for the needs and problems of partners
Determinant number 2	A high level of mutual trust	Good interpersonal relations in teams implementing cross-border projects	Good interpersonal relations in teams implementing cross-border projects	A high level of mutual trust Basing cooperation on equal benefits for both parties	Good interpersonal relations in teams implementing cross-border projects

Determinant number 3	Durability of alliances between partners of cross-border cooperation	The common interest is the willingness to raise funds from the INTERREG program	A high level of mutual trust		Basing cooperation on equal benefits for both parties
Characteristics of partners	Mostly local government units, focused on regional and local development, with extensive experience in cross-border cooperation and a limited number of partners	Local government units and subordinate units with various areas of activity dominate, with extensive experience in cross-border cooperation and a limited number of partners	Local government units and non-governmental organizations with various areas of activity, with extensive experience in cross-border cooperation and a large number of partners.	Non-governmental organizations with various areas of activity dominate, with extensive experience in cross-border cooperation and a limited number of partners	Mostly local government units, focused on regional and local development, with extensive experience in cross-border cooperation and a limited number of partners

Source: *own compilation*

As shown in Table 11, the third Polish profile of resilience of cross-border cooperation to crisis situations is very similar to the first Czech profile. If cross-border partnerships are established by organizations that fit into these profiles on both sides of the border, it will be a good sign of its maintenance and development despite potential crises. The cooperation between organizations belonging to the first Polish profile and the second Czech profile will also be relatively resistant to crises, as in both cases mutual understanding of needs is placed first, and the determinant of a high level of mutual trust on the Polish side is replaced by a related determinant on the Czech side i.e. good relations in project teams. The only clearly separate profile is the second one on the Polish side, which treats crisis-resistant cross-border cooperation as an instrument of effective fundraising from the INTERREG program. This profile has no clear counterpart on the Czech side.

The profiles of cross-border cooperation resistance to crisis situations presented may constitute a certain determinant of the selection of partners for cross-border microprojects in the Nysa Euroregion. The study focuses on the analysis of three key determinants shaping the designated profiles, while the further direction of study will be to deepen this analysis and its reference to other factors that may complement the description of the profile, e.g. the number and type of cross-border projects, the role in the project (leader - partner), budget, etc. Based on the methodology described, it is possible to carry out an analogous cluster analysis in another Euroregion. Still, its results may reveal other determinants of the resilience of cross-border cooperation to crisis situations. This scientific problem, however, has great research potential, due also to the growing number of crisis situations that directly affect the border (e.g. the COVID-19 pandemic or the migration crisis).

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