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**Master's Thesis**

**2022**

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**Euroregions and INTERREG V-a: A comparative analysis  
of projects at the Czech-Polish border**

Master's thesis

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Study program: European Studies

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Year of the defense: 2022

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on 22 July 2022

Leticie Outhierová

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leticie Outhierová', written in a cursive style.

## References

OUTHIEROVÁ, Leticie. *Euroregions and INTERREG V-a: A comparative analysis of projects at the Czech-Polish border*. Praha, 2022. 69 pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of International Studies. Department of European Studies. Supervisor Mitchell Young, M.A., Ph.D.

**Length of the thesis: 126 026 characters**

## **Abstract**

Euroregions are a popular type of cooperation between sub-state actors in the Czech-Polish border area. However, their impact on regional development is still a subject of debate among academics. This thesis aims to explore if the Euroregions affect how their members use EU funds. For this purpose, the members' and non-members' projects, realized within the framework of the INTERREG V-a program between 2014 and 2020, are compared. They are compared in terms of price, number and type of participants, specific themes, and general thematic goals. The thesis is narrowed down to bilateral Euroregions in the Czech-Polish border - specifically to the Euroregions Glacensis, Praděd, Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia. The research also offers a comparison between the four selected Euroregions. The results indicate that members' projects are significantly more expensive and involve a larger number of participants. Differences were also spotted regarding the themes and thematic objectives. In comparison with each other, the members' projects of selected Euroregions also had different characteristics. This thesis inquires whether the distinction between members' and non-projects exists.

## **Abstrakt**

Euroregiony jsou populárním druhem spolupráce mezi substátními aktéry v česko-polském pohraničí. Jejich dopad na regionální rozvoj je však stále předmětem debaty mezi akademiky. Tato práce si klade za cíl zjistit, zdali Euroregiony mají vliv na to, jakým způsobem jsou koncipovány členské projekty realizované za pomoci evropského financování. Pro tento účel jsou komparaci podrobeny projekty členů a nečlenů, které vznikly v rámci programu INTERREG V-a mezi lety 2014 a 2020. Porovnávají se co do ceny, počtu a typu účastníků, konkrétních témat a obecných tematických cílů. Práce je zúžena na bilaterální Euroregiony v česko-polském pohraničí – konkrétně na Euroregiony Glacensis, Praděd, Slezsko a Těšínské Slezsko. Výzkum rovněž nabízí porovnání členských projektů vybraných Euroregionů s cílem zjistit, jestli se rovněž budou lišit v analyzovaných kritériích. Výsledky výzkumu poukazují na to, že členské projekty jsou v průměru značně dražší a zahrnují větší množství účastníků. Rozdíly byly zaznamenány i na úrovni tematického zaměření. Projekty členů vybraných Euroregionů také vykazují v porovnání mezi sebou rozlišné charakteristiky. Tato práce nabízí primární výzkum toho, jestli odlišnost mezi členskými a nečlenskými projekty existují.

## **Keywords**

Euroregions, Cross-border cooperation, Multilevel governance, INTERREG V-a, Czech-Polish borders

## **Klíčová slova**

Euroregiony, Přeshraniční spolupráce, Víceúrovňové vládnutí, INTERREG V-a, Česko-polské pohraničí

## **Title**

Euroregions and INTERREG V-a: A comparative analysis of projects at the Czech-Polish border

## **Název práce**

Euroregiony a INTERREG V-a: Komparativní analýza projektů česko-polského pohraničí

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude to the supervisor of this thesis, Mitchell Young, M.A., Ph.D., for his valuable help, moral support, and knowledgeable feedback. I could not have undertaken this journey without the steady encouragement of my family.

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## Introduction

Decentralization is a global trend reinforcing the multilevel character of the EU and its constituent Member States. Over the years, we can observe the development of new administrative units and an expansion of the local and regional sphere of influence that often goes hand in hand with enhancing their powers. Moreover, we can witness the genesis of new forms of sub-state cooperation with a pronounced European overlap – the best example are Euroregions. The EU, via the Commission's funding programs, is a strong proponent of these forms of cross-border cooperation. In this context, the most significant program is INTERREG, which has a long tradition of supporting border areas. Not only can Euroregions and their members recourse to INTERREG to subsidize cross-border projects, but via this program, they also get access to finances for microprojects funds that Euroregions individually manage.

Even though Euroregions are an established and popular form of institutionalized cross-border cooperation, there is no official definition of a Euroregion, nor are there centralized EU standards that would give them a common shape. For the purpose of this thesis, Euroregions are defined as territorial units composed mainly of subnational authorities (towns, cities, administrative regions, and districts). Still, they could also include public institutions (universities) and civic organizations (e.g., leisure clubs) as well as private ones. These actors from different nation-states voluntarily engage in joint cross-border activities based on a common organizational structure set by an agreement. The formation of Euroregions is often attributed to the emancipation of the substate level, voluntarily and independently engaging in cross-border cooperation with their counterparts. Their collaboration in the frame of Euroregions is animated firstly by the need to tackle common issues (related to areas such as transport, infrastructure, environment, and tourism), secondly by the willingness to enhance access to European funding, or also by the intention to link neighboring regions from separated states having common cultural, linguistic, or historical background.

The way Euroregions alter the access and usage of the EU funds is the center of interest for this thesis. As some scholars question the very contribution of Euroregions to regional development, this research aims to explore if the Euroregions affect how their members use EU funds. In other words, do members' projects that were realized thanks to the financial support of the EU have different characteristics than non-members' projects? This thesis is affiliated with the part of literature concentrating on the link of Euroregions to European regional policy, especially to respective funding programs. In this context, same-minded studies focus mainly on

microprojects that the EU finances in the frame of the INTERREG program. However, a more in-depth analysis of the difference in the use of European funds between Euroregions' members and non-members is missing. As Euroregions are linked to the EU values and dispose of a unique connection to the INTERREG program via the microprojects fund, there is room for assumption that members could also have a different approach to the EU subsidies. The members' experience and know-how gained through the microproject fund and due to the network, in general, could alter how standard INTERREG projects are designed compared to non-members' projects. This thesis aims to elaborate on four hypotheses:

H1: Projects that include Euroregions' members will have different characteristics than the ones without them. This research focuses on four of them: the cost, the number and type of participants, the theme, and the thematic objective.

H2: The difference between non-members' and members' projects will be directly proportional to the number and share of members in the project.

H3: Leadership is a factor determining the quality of the project. Thus, projects with members in the lead would have different characteristics than projects that, albeit including members, are not directed by them.

H4: The nature of membership may vary substantially as all Euroregions differ in size, priorities, budget, organizational structure, etc. Therefore, a variation between members' projects from different Euroregions is expected.

This thesis is conceived as a comparative analysis of INTERREG V-a standard projects in the programming period 2014-2020 that took place in the Czech-Polish borderland. The chosen territory was defined by the INTERREG program and encompassed the border area eligible for the funding. In order to address the hypotheses, all projects were divided into groups according to the share of members that they included. Additionally, a group that differentiated projects led by members was created. The thesis also compares members' projects of four selected Euroregions – notably Glacensis, Praděd, Silesia, and Cieszyn Silesia. These are four out of six Euroregions that belong to the studied area. They were selected for common traits – they are bilateral and include only Czech and Polish members. In contrast, the two Euroregions, Nisa and Beskydy, that are not included in this comparison promote trilateral cooperation engaging in the case of Nisa German and the case of Beskydy Slovak members. Concentrating only on the four selected Euroregions allows one to elaborate on each state's multilevel specificity in

more depth instead of superficially dealing with four different multilevel settings. Also, concentrating on two post-communistic and centralized states would reveal more of the development of a multilayered governmental system in Central Europe. The empirical part is based on the Cluster analysis, which is well suited for comparing similarities and differences between groups.

The thesis is divided into two parts – the theoretical and the empirical. The theoretical part first offers general insight into the multilevel governance concept. In the following chapter, the concept is narrowed down to the field of study, notably the manifestation of multilevel governance in the EU. After that, two chapters are devoted to cross-border cooperation. The first one copes with how cross-border cooperation is promoted in the EU. It is followed by a chapter concentrating on the features of cross-border cooperation in the Czech Republic and Poland. The next chapter is devoted to Euroregions. It provides the definition, outlines the evolution and historical background, and most importantly, the overview of same-minded studies. Lastly, the specificity of selected Euroregions is described. The empirical part includes a detailed description of the methodology used to test the hypotheses. The following chapter consists of the INTERREG V-a standard projects analysis and concentrates mainly on the difference between members' and non-members' projects. The next one is conceived as a comparative analysis of Euroregions based on the projects their members participated in. The results are contextualized in the discussion.

# 1. Theoretical part

## 1.1 The multilevel governance concept

This thesis is based on theoretical findings of the multilevel governance concept (MLG). This approach is valuable for this thesis because it emphasizes the role of subnational actors that have been undervalued in other grand theories of European integration. MLG also approaches the emergence of new independent forms of subnational cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it also concentrates on the interaction between different levels in the international context. The multilevel approach helps depict the nature of collaboration between two governance levels (subnational and supranational) that have seen their share in the policy- and decision-making progressively grow in recent years.<sup>2</sup>

Gary Marks laid the foundation for the MLG concept in 1992 and has further developed the MLG approach with his co-author Liesbeth Hooghe. They have aimed to theoretically reflect the growing role of the subnational and supranational levels in global politics. They have observed a redistribution of authority and power among different levels attributed to globalization and related trends such as decentralization and reterritorialization.<sup>3</sup> In the context of the empowerment of local, regional, and supranational actors, the MLG concept focus on the erosion of the exclusive position of the nation-state in the global political order. As Bruszt states, MLG “[...] has been freely used by policymakers and scholars to refer to any of the [...] change in territorial government, the remaking of territorial developmental governance or just the ending of the decision-making monopoly of the government implying some involvement of the regions in policymaking and implementation in one form or another at multiple levels.”<sup>4</sup>

Hooghe and Marks differentiate between two types of MLG. Type I is based on federalism and describe a stable administrative and juridical structure. The links between the levels are thus

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<sup>1</sup> Arjan Schakel, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Multilevel Governance and the State“, *Oxford Handbooks Online* (2014): 2-3, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199691586.013.14> (downloaded 16 February 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Stefania Zerbinati, „Multi-level Governance and EU Structural Funds: An Entrepreneurial Local Government Perspective“, *Local Government Studies* 38, no. 5 (October 2012): 580, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2011.649914> (downloaded 22 February 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Simona Piattoni, „Multi-level Governance: a Historical and Conceptual Analysis“, *European Integration* 31, no. 2 (March 2009): 165, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036330802642755> (downloaded 30 January).

<sup>4</sup> Laszlo Bruszt, „Multi-Level Governance – The Eastern Versions Emerging Patterns of Regional Developmental Governance in the New Member States“, *EUI Working Paper SPS*, no. 13 (2007): 1, (downloaded 26 February 2022).

considerably formal.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, only a few levels can be distinguished – central, intermediate, and local – and their membership do not intersect. On the other hand, Type II serves to understand a less formal and more organic multilevel system. Each level is usually defined by a specific task it should fulfill. The membership in respective multilevel structures might overlap and might look fragmented. The design of Type II is significantly more flexible and is formed by the legal context of the area where it is evolving.<sup>6</sup>

Marks' conceptualization of MLG is, to its more significant part, linked to the research on the qualitative evolution of European integration. He recorded that European policymaking is developing a non-hierarchical system of cooperation between different levels, newly accentuating especially the subnational level.<sup>7</sup> He referred mainly to the changes introduced by the Maastricht treaty, notably the empowerment of both supra- and subnational spheres. There was significant stress on the regional and local dimensions of the European integration that have been promoted by introducing the cohesion idea and boosted by expanding the funding possibilities for subnational actors.<sup>8</sup>

MGL gained significance and popularity for researchers focusing on the Europe of regions concept. They predicted a significant role for regions in the EU policymaking because of the internationalization of policies where sub-national actors were particularly engaged. The need to tackle common problems on a larger scale thus opens the door for the regions to enter the international arena and engage in cross-border cooperation.<sup>9</sup> The spreading of regionalism among MS and ongoing deborderisation of the EU space has spurred the relocation of power in favor of the subnational level.<sup>10</sup> Some proponents of the “Europe of regions” concept adhered to the idea that the supranational and subnational character of the EU will be reinforced to the point that the nation-state will no longer play the central role in the European decision-making process. Although Europe of regions is a concept that has been more or less abandoned by

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<sup>5</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Types of Multi-Level Governance“, *European Integration online Papers* 5, (2001): 5-6, (downloaded 1 March 2022).

<sup>6</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Unraveling the Central State, but How? Types of Multi-level Governance“, *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 2 (May 2003): 237-238, (downloaded 18 February 2022).

<sup>7</sup> Pier Domenico Tortola, „Clarifying Multilevel Governance“, *European Journal of Political Research* 56, (2017): 236, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12180> (downloaded 13 February 2022).

<sup>8</sup> Paul Stephenson, „Twenty years of multi-level governance: ‘Where Does It Come From? What Is It? Where Is It Going?’“, *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no. 6 (May 2013): 820, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2013.781818> (downloaded 3 March 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Brian Hocking, „Bridging Boundaries: Creating Linkages. Non-Central Governments and Multilayered Policy Environments“, *WeltTrends*, no. 11 (1995): 42, (downloaded 16 February 2022).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

scholars and replaced by “Europe with the regions,” the interest in the rising potential of the sub-state level continues to animate many researchers.<sup>11</sup>

The MLG approach can, however, encounter some limits. Many researchers have continuously criticized the MLG for being too descriptive and missing a normative dimension that would permit it to compete with other theories of European integration.<sup>12</sup> The definition of basic terms that MLG is operating with is also somewhat unclear and unanimously understood by scholars using it. For example, the term governance is sometimes used to refer to the social order in general but also to legal regulations – the same stand for the term level that can have either territorial or jurisdictional meaning.<sup>13</sup> In our case, defining the terms subnational or substate level is crucial, as it is often used in this thesis. Both terms denote actors from both local (e.g., communities, towns, cities) and regional (e.g., regions, districts) governance levels. They can legally engage in international organizations and constitute the Euroregions in the Czech and Polish contexts.

## **1.2 Multilevel governance in the EU**

### **1.2.1 The state of art**

We can distinguish two different approaches in the research on the manifestation of the MLG in EU that reflects the two types of MLG described in the previous chapter.<sup>14</sup> On one hand, scholars are also concentrating on the multilevel aspect of the EU political system. They emphasize the recalibration of the state-centered order and the retreat of the nation-state from their ultimate position as gatekeepers. According to them, this gives rise to a multilayered and non-hierarchical regime in which the subnational level plays an important role.<sup>15</sup> Piattoni is one of the authors that concentrated on the erosion of the state primacy in the context of regionalization. She observes that international regimes such as the EU give rise to new

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Keating, „A Quarter Century of the Europe of the Regions“, *Regional & Federal Studies* 18, no. 5 (2008): 633, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560802351630> (downloaded 3 February 2022).

<sup>12</sup> Carolyn Moore, „A Europe of the Regions vs. the Regions in Europe: Reflections on Regional Engagement in Brussels“, *Regional and Federal Studies* 18, no. 5 (October 2008): 523, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560802351564> (downloaded 12 February 2022).

<sup>13</sup> Michael Keating, „Europe as a Multilevel Federation“, *Journal of European Public Policy* 24, no. 4 (2017): 621, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1273374> (downloaded 13 February 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Simona Piattoni, „Multi-level Governance: a Historical and Cenceptual Analysis“, 165.

<sup>15</sup> Michaël Tatham, „Going Solo: Direct Regional Representation in the European Union“, *Regional and Federal Studies* 18, no. 5 (October 2008): 493-494, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560802351523> (downloaded 26 February 2022).

regulations and thus affect the domestic governmental structure.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, Sykes and Shaw note that some early predictions about the massive expansion of the subnational level into the EU political system have been exaggerated. Even though the subnational actors have grown in significance, they have not become new pillars of European governing.<sup>17</sup> Others like Tatham or Hocking studied the interaction between supranational and subnational levels, particularly potential state-bypassing.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, researchers such as Moore or Keating are opposed to the assumption that the empowerment of the local level in the EU political system is a matter of bypassing the state.<sup>19</sup> The link established between the subnational and supranational level is primarily functional, and it is encouraged by states themselves. According to Keating, a recalibration of the political order is observable, but the changes are not dramatically affecting the state's role.<sup>20</sup>

Considerable numbers of researchers focus on the multilevel nature of policymaking as, in the search for greater effectiveness, the Commission attributes a significant role to the subnational level because of its expertise in specific policies and knowledge of the terrain. The principal research interest is naturally regional/cohesion policy.<sup>21</sup> The 1988 reform of structural funds paved the way to their participation in EU policymaking that have grown ever since.<sup>22</sup> Bruszt stresses the "... a notion of partnership that was about the distribution of authority among national and regional players in developmental programming, implementation, and monitoring."<sup>23</sup> Over the years, European regional policy became less redistributive to benefit a more endogenous approach. It focuses on growth and especially on the distinctiveness that would make regions more competitive on a larger scale.<sup>24</sup> The focus on regions has also been projected to their much

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<sup>16</sup> Simona Piattoni, „Multi-level Governance: a Historical and Conceptual Analysis“, 173-75.

<sup>17</sup> Olivier Sykes and David Shaw, „Investigating Territorial Positioning by Sub-state Territories in Europe“, *Regional and Federal Studies* 18, no. 1 (February 2008): 59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560701847977> (downloaded 30 March 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Brian Hocking, „Bridging Boundaries: Creating Linkages. Non-Central Governments and Multilayered Policy Environments“ and Michaël Tatham, „Going Solo: Direct Regional Representation in the European Union“.

<sup>19</sup> Carolyn Moore, „A Europe of the Regions vs. the Regions in Europe: Reflections on Regional Engagement in Brussels“, 519.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Keating, „Europe as a Multilevel Federation“, 616.

<sup>21</sup> Marc Smyrl, „Does European Community Regional Policy Empower the Regions?“, *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration* 10, no. 3 (July 1997): 289, (downloaded 2 March 2022)

<sup>22</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Michael Keating, „The politics of European union regional policy“, *Journal of European Public Policy* 1, no. 3 (October 1994): 373, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501769408406965> (downloaded 27 January 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Laszlo Bruszt, „Multi-Level Governance – The Eastern Versions Emerging Patterns of Regional Developmental Governance in the New Member States“, 2.

<sup>24</sup> Olivier Sykes and David Shaw, „Investigating Territorial Positioning by Sub-state Territories in Europe“, 55-56.

more active role in policies and programs. The cohesion policy becomes the workhorse of these changes by stressing international territorial cooperation and spatial development. This significantly contributed to the empowerment of the substate level.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, scholars direct their attention towards the new role of the substate level in the EU. The growing importance of subnational actors, intensive regionalization in the is undeniable. It has implications for the territorial organization of respective states and policymaking.<sup>26</sup> Subnational units are integrated by the Commission also in the EU's policies and decision-making via regional offices in Brussels.<sup>27</sup> The growing importance of the subnational level for the EU is visible with the creation of the Council of regions that were not endowed with substantial powers but signaled a shift of attention towards these new actors.<sup>28</sup>

### **1.2.2 The manifestation of multilevel governance in the EU**

The Commission has a considerable affiliation to MLG and its influence on the empowerment of the subnational level is thus often examined. The Commission promotes transnational regionalism in several strategic documents (e.g. in Territorial Agenda of the EU or the European Spatial Development Perspective).<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the Commission is open to lobbying from the part of all sorts of substate network that has seen their influence on policymaking augmented over the years.<sup>30</sup> The Commission also puts emphasis on the representation of the substate level due to the economic liberalization that amplifying the vulnerability of formerly protected regions. This implies not only economic issues but also social ones that the EU needed to tackle in order to secure sustainable growth. Therefore, with the cooperation with substate units, the EU searches in the frame of several policies to reduce these disparities.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>25</sup> Robert Leonardi and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, „Multi-level governance in the EU: Contrasting structures and contrasting results in cohesion policy“, *RSA Research Network on Effectiveness, Added Value and Future of EU Cohesion Policy* 1, (2011): 5, (downloaded 14 March 2022).

<sup>26</sup> Stefania Zerbinati, „Multi-level Governance and EU Structural Funds: An Entrepreneurial Local Government Perspective“, 578.

<sup>27</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Europe with the Regions“: Channels of Regional Representation in the European Union“, *The Journal of Federalism* 26, no 1 (1996): 82, (downloaded 17 February 2022).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>29</sup> Olivier Sykes and David Shaw, „Investigating Territorial Positioning by Sub-state Territories in Europe“, 55-56.

<sup>30</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Michael Keating, „The politics of European union regional policy“, 384-385.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Keating, „Europe as a Multilevel Federation“, 619.



democratic legitimization has motivated to engage subnational units in policymaking. All in all, MLG also plays a significant role in the EU rhetoric.<sup>32</sup>

The subnational actors find themselves in front of the task of territorial positioning. Sykes and Shaw defined it as “[...] a means of describing the process by which regional actors develop an awareness of a territory’s spatial position in relation to changing EU geography and a strategic appreciation of, and response to, changing European policy contexts.”<sup>33</sup> The subnational level has to operate in both the national and transnational spheres. The transnational interaction is two-sided. Firstly, they have to situate themselves in the EU multilevel polity and find their place in the EU policymaking. The links between them and the supranational level are now more often direct without a national mediator. Secondly, they engage also in cooperation with their foreign counterparts.<sup>34</sup>

Moreover, not only the powers of the subnational level were extended but there is still more, and more new subnational units created in the MS over the years.<sup>35</sup> The decentralization of nation states implies the creation of new administrative regions and districts that acquire new competences in certain policies.<sup>36</sup> However, there is also another type of subnational actors that gained importance in recent years. These often have a strong European affiliation as they associate international partners to pursue common goals. An example could be Euroregions. A part of researchers inquire to what extent is the EU – notably the Commission – might be linked with the increase of new subnational units but are not reaching a consensus. Schakel claims that European integration, in general, does not have such an impact on subnational authority. Their growing role appears to be the consequence of the growth of the state responsibility in various areas and its willingness to manage them more effectively.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, Sykes and Shaw attribute the shift of power towards the subnational and supranational level to the

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<sup>32</sup> Yannis Papadopoulos, „Accountability and Multi-level Governance: More Accountability, Less Democracy?“, *West European Politics* 33, no. 5 (2010): 1031, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2010.486126> (downloaded 19 February 2022).

<sup>33</sup> Olivier Sykes and David Shaw, „Investigating Territorial Positioning by Sub-state Territories in Europe“, 61.

<sup>34</sup> Elin Royles, „Sub-State Diplomacy: Understanding the International Opportunity Structures“, *Regional and federal studies* 27, no. 4 (2017): 397-398, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2017.1324851>, (downloaded 25 February 2022).

<sup>35</sup> Arjan Schakel, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Multilevel Governance and the State“, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Gary Marks, Liesbet Hooghe and Arjan H. Schakel, „Patterns of Regional Authority“, *Regional and Federal Studies* 18, no. 3 (2008): 171, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560801979506> (downloaded 15 March 2022).

<sup>37</sup> Arjan Schakel, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Multilevel Governance and the State“, 7.

Europeanization of governance.<sup>38</sup> Also, Piattoni stresses the role of the EU in shaping the status of the subnational level.<sup>39</sup>

### **1.3 Cross-border cooperation in the EU in the context of multilevel governance**

This chapter focuses on cross-border cooperation. First of all, this term needs to be defined. This thesis follows Perkmann, who defines cross-border cooperation as “[...] a more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous subnational authorities across national border.”<sup>40</sup> The cross-border cooperation evolves in cross-border regions that can take to forms of Euroregions or Working Communities.<sup>41</sup> Since the concepts of cohesion and sustainable development reached a prominent position in the frame of European regional policy, cross-border cooperation has become key for the EU.<sup>42</sup> Most importantly, cross-border cooperation is linked to the harmonious development and functioning of the single market and is thus at the center of the EU’s interest. The border areas are coping with a specific social and economic situation. These territories often lie at the periphery and do not get access to the benefit that the European integration.<sup>43</sup>

Spatial and territorial planning are in the competence of Member States. However, in the frame of community programs, the EU is enabled to act in this matter. Since the late 1980s, the EU started to develop financial and technical tools to promote cross-border cooperation in the frame of regional policy.<sup>44</sup> According to Uceda and Vicente, an important turning point was the passing of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999, that expressed the ambition to create a common conception of the European territory. Moreover, it emphasized

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<sup>38</sup> Olivier Sykes and David Shaw, „Investigating Territorial Positioning by Sub-state Territories in Europe“, 58.

<sup>39</sup> Simona Piattoni, „Multi-level Governance: a Historical and Conceptual Analysis“.

<sup>40</sup> Marcus Perkmann, „Cross-border Regions in Europe: Significance and Drivers of Regional Cross-border Cooperation“, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10, no. 2 (2003): 156, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776403010002004> (downloaded 23 March 2022).

<sup>41</sup> Markus Perkmann, „Policy entrepreneurship and multilevel governance: a comparative study of European cross-border regions“, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 25, no. 6 (December 2007): 861, <https://doi.org/10.1068/c60m> (downloaded 13 February 2022).

<sup>42</sup> Corey Johnson, „Cross-Border Regions and Territorial Restructuring in Central Europe: Room for More transboundary Space“, *European Urban and Regional Studies* 16, no. 2 (2009):182, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776409102190> (downloaded 26 February 2022).

<sup>43</sup> Martín Uceda and Joan Vicente, „Territorial Development and Cross-Border Cooperation: A Review of the Consequences of European INTERREG Policies on the Spanish-French Border (2007-2020)“, *Sustainability* 13 (October 2021): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132112017> (downloaded 3 March 2022).

<sup>44</sup> Sara Svensson, „The Bordered World of Cross-border Cooperation: The Determinants of Local Government Contact Networks within Euroregions“, *Regional & Federal Studies* 25, no. 3 (2015): 279, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597566.2015.1043995> (downloaded 17 April 2022).

that many issues (related to transport, ecology, or wider debate such as sustainability, cohesion, etc.) that the border regions are coping with transcend the national delimitations. The challenges they share are connecting them into notional supra-state macro-regions.<sup>45</sup>

The emphasis on overcoming the divergence and inequalities between regions led to the creation of the INTERREG fund in 1998 in the frame of the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF).<sup>46</sup> Up today, it is the most important instrument that supports cross-border cooperation. As Uceda and Vicente specifies, “[s]ince the fund is promoted by the European Commission, it is EU institutions rather than member states that have the decision-making powers, even if the latter is the administrating authority.”<sup>47</sup> The budget of INTERREG is continuously growing from programming period to the other and border regions take great advantage of it.<sup>48</sup> There are, in total, three funding streams available – cross-border cooperation, trans-national cooperation, and inter-regional cooperation. The first mentioned focuses on border areas, the second one on larger territories (macro-regions), and the third promotes networks.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, in the programming period 2014-2020 that is central for this thesis, the cross-border and territorial dimensions became an official pillar of the ERDF.<sup>50</sup>

Innovation at the European level that became relevant, especially for Euroregions, was the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), created in 2006. This instrument aimed to facilitate the establishment and institutionalization of cross-border organizations. The latter often face difficulties caused by the differences in administrative systems between respective states, which the EGTC should help to overcome.<sup>51</sup>

Camonita, Guimera and Noferini devoted their research to new types of cross-border cooperation. He differentiates between three types according to the territorial scale, the actors and their position in the multilevel system, and the cooperation’s objective. First, Type L (local)

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<sup>45</sup> Martín Uceda and Joan Vicente, „Territorial Development and Cross-Border Cooperation“, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Andrzej Miszczuk and Andrzej Jakubowski, „Evolution of the EU cohesion policy towards border regions“, in *Cohesion policy and development of the european union's regions in the perspective of 2020*, ed. Arthur Jan Kukuła (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2015), 170.

<sup>47</sup> Martín Uceda and Joan Vicente, „Territorial Development and Cross-Border Cooperation“, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Frédéric Durand, „What types of cultural cooperation exist in European cross-border areas?“, *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, (December 2021): 7, <https://doi.org/10.1080/04353684.2021.2015245> (downloaded 27 March 2022).

<sup>49</sup> „About Interreg“, The official website of the INTERREG program, INTERREG, <https://interreg.eu/about-interreg/>, (downloaded 19 April 2022).

<sup>50</sup> Martín Uceda and Joan Vicente, „Territorial Development and Cross-Border Cooperation“, 4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Gianluca Spinaci and Gracia Vara-Arribas, „The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC): New Spaces and Contracts for European Integration?“, *EIPASCOPE*, (February 2009): 6, (downloaded 17 March 2022).

is associated with cooperation directly in the border area, engaging mostly communalities and focusing primarily on infrastructure, environmental and socio-economic development. Eurocities are excellent examples of this Type. The second Type S (supralocal) has a larger territorial scope and includes multilevel actors. This is characteristic of Euroregions or associations of municipalities that predominantly emphasize the development of the border region. Lastly, Type R (regional) refers to cooperation with a more significant territorial impact that promotes interregional aspects and concentrates on know-how sharing. INTERREG is often supporting such multiregional projects belonging to this Type.<sup>52</sup>

#### **1.4 Czech Republic and Poland – multilevel governance and cross-border cooperation**

The divergence between the subnational level among MS is significant. They significantly differ in power related to the national context. This divergence is likely to last and shape the form of the substate level across the EU. The level of decentralization and especially the competencies granted to the subnational units eventually influence their capacity to establish close relations with the EU, thus affecting its funding use.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, it is important to devote some attention to the specificity of the national context in which the subnational level evolves, as it could also affect the character of the Euroregions as such.

The Czech Republic and Poland are both post-communist countries where centralization was highly developed, and new subnational actors were created only after the fall of the iron curtain. It was not until 1990s that the first step towards decentralization was made in the Czech Republic. The accession to the EU and its conditionality had a visible effect on decentralization in both countries.<sup>54</sup> In 1998, 8 NUTS regions were created on the Czech territory and soon after, in the year 2000, Czech regions (*kraje*) were officially established.<sup>55</sup> Their position was still relatively weak, but over time, their powers were slightly enhanced, notably in the frame of

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<sup>52</sup> Francesco Maria Camonita, Antoni Durà Guimerà and Andrea Noferini, „A Territorial Scale-Based Model for Euroregions and its implications for Cross-Border Cooperation in maritime contexts“, *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 66, no. (June 2020): 522-523, <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/dag.592> (downloaded 8 March 2022).

<sup>53</sup> Arjan Schakel, Liesbeth Hooghe and Gary Marks, „Multilevel Governance and the State“ 4

<sup>54</sup> Sylwia Dołzbłasz, „Cross-Border Co-Operation in the Euroregions at the Polish-Czech and Polish-Slovak Borders“, *European Countryside* (2013): 104, <https://doi.org/10.2478/euco-2013-0007> (downloaded 18 March 2022).

<sup>55</sup> Michael Baun, Jiří Lach, James T. LaPlant and Dan Marek. „Decentralizace v české republice: Evropská unie, politické strany a vznik krajské samosprávy“, in *Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis Facultas Philosophica: Politologica* 3, ed. Pavel Marek (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2004), 134.

regional policy that is linked to European funding.<sup>56</sup> All in all, the Czech Republic still stays a relatively centralized state with a small proportion of powers concentrated in the hand of the substate level.<sup>57</sup>

Poland is divided into 16 voivodeships (*województwo*), the equivalent of Czech *kraje*, since 1998. Moreover, the territory is composed of 314 districts (*powiat*). In 2007 regions were empowered in a considerable share of the agenda dealing with European funds, and the decentralization of management is still in progress. Also, local governments gradually gained significance and, to date, exert control over one-third of public expenditures. In comparison with the Czech Republic, Poland's decentralization was more intense.<sup>58</sup> As Yoder notes “[...] the competences of these two countries’ regions are not spelled out in the kind of detail that voivodeship functions are, and there is little mention of them playing the kind of role that Polish regions might in [...] shaping of the inhabitants’ national, civic and cultural consciousness, as well as nurturing and developing local self-awareness.”<sup>59</sup>

European programs played an important role in the development of institutionalized cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Poland. Especially, the program Phare helped to overcome administration and institutional obstacles hampering more intense cooperation. Up today, Euroregions are the most developed manifestation of cross-border cooperation between these two countries. The first Euroregion established in the Czech-Polish borderland was Nysa in 1991 and encompassed German members. In this geographical area, cross-border cooperation was initiated at the local level. Concrete Euroregions thus include mainly towns and cities instead of regions.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Michael Baun and Dan Marek, „Regional Policy and Decentralization in the Czech Republic“, *Regional and Federal Studies* 16, no. 4 (December 2006): 421, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560600989011> (downloaded 25 March 2022).

<sup>57</sup> Sara Svensson, „The Bordered World of Cross-border Cooperation“, 279.

<sup>58</sup> Diana Pitschel and Michael W. Bauer, „Subnational Governance Approaches on the Rise—Reviewing a Decade of Eastern European Regionalization Research“, *Regional & Federal Studies* 19, no. 3 (2009): 333, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13597560902957450> (downloaded 28 March 2022).

<sup>59</sup> Jennifer Yoder, „Leading the Way to Regionalization in Post-Communist Europe: An Examination of the Process and Outcomes of Regional Reform in Poland“, *East European Politics and Societies* 21, no. 3 (2007): 439-440, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325407303786> (downloaded 30 March 2022).

<sup>60</sup> Jerzy Regulski, *Local Government Reform in Poland: An Insider's Story* (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 2003), 183-185.

## 1.5 Euroregions

This chapter is devoted to Euroregions. Firstly, it is essential to start with the definition. In the literature, it is possible to come across two essential understandings of the term Euroregion. Firstly, it refers to the territorial dimension - a Euroregion is an international subnational unit constituted of separate subnational units belonging to different national frames. As Camonita puts it, “Euroregions can be described as bounded territorial units formed by (at least) two contiguous sub-national units belonging to two separate states.”<sup>61</sup> In other words, the term can be understood as the spatial delimitation of the territory where a particular type of cross-border cooperation takes place. On this account, Branda additionally notes that the term Euroregion is used to describe either the national part of a Euroregion or the whole Euroregion.<sup>62</sup> Secondly, some authors adopt an institutional approach when operating with this term. They are referring to the organizational structure that supports cross-border collaboration.<sup>63</sup> To summarize, “[...] the term Euroregion can refer both to territorial units, made of the aggregate territories of the participating authorities, and to organizational entities, usually identifies with the secretariat.”<sup>64</sup>

We can also define a Euroregion according to key features. Medeiros stresses that true Euroregions should promote cooperation across multilevel actors. Thus, the interaction between European, governmental, regional, and local actors in the frame of the Euroregion is a crucial trait. Moreover, the domains of cooperation should be various, combining all sorts of policies (infrastructure, environment, culture, education, etc.). Medeiros considers only Euroregions with strong, firmly established, and stable cooperation over time.<sup>65</sup> Following Durà and his coauthors, the cooperation should take the form of joint projects or at least permanent services.<sup>66</sup> The type of actors engaged in the cooperation can also be an essential part of the definition.

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<sup>61</sup> Francesco Maria Camonita, Antoni Durà Guimerà and Andrea Noferini, „A Territorial Scale-Based Model for Euroregions and its implications for Cross-Border Cooperation in maritime contexts“, *Documents d’Anàlisi Geogràfica* 66, no. (June 2020): 518, <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/dag.592> (downloaded 8 March 2022).

<sup>62</sup> Pavel Branda, „Euroregiony v České republice komparativní analýza“, *Současná Evropa* (January 2009): 72, (downloaded 13 March 2022).

<sup>63</sup> Alberto Gasparini, „The Euroregion as an Institutional Technology for Planning and Managing the Cross-Border Cooperation“, *Teorija in praksa* (2014): 264-265, (downloaded 16 March 2022).

<sup>64</sup> Markus Perkmann, „The rise of the Euroregion. A bird's eye perspective on European cross-border co-operation“, *Department of Sociology, Lancaster University* (2003): 6, (downloaded 29 January 2022).

<sup>65</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, „(Re)defining the Euroregion Concept“, *European Planning Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 2011): 142-143, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2011.531920> (downloaded 26 February).

<sup>66</sup> Antoni Durà, Francesco Camonita, Matteo Berzi and Andrea Noferini, *Euroregions, Excellence and Innovation across EU borders. A Catalogue of Good Practices* (Barcelona, Department of Geography, UAB, 2018), 24, [https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/recot\\_crii\\_catalogue\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/recot_crii_catalogue_0.pdf) (downloaded 16 February 2022).

Svensson stresses that Euroregions are not only a cluster of subnational units – private actors participate too.<sup>67</sup>

Acknowledging what was described above, Euroregions fall under the Type II of MLG as their institutionalization is rather flexible and can evolve in different forms. Furthermore, they lack a strong legal position and are characterized by a goal-oriented approach. Euroregional cooperation is driven by common goals which are defined in a common strategy. For the purpose of the thesis Euroregions are defined as territorial units composed mainly of subnational authorities (towns, cities, administrative regions, and districts), but could possibly also include public institutions (universities), civil organizations (e.g., leisure clubs) and private actors. These actors belonging to different nation-states and voluntarily engage in joint cross-border activities that are based on a common organizational structure set by an agreement.

### **1.5.1 The raise of Euroregions and their link to the EU**

Today, there are nearly 150 Euroregions in Europe.<sup>68</sup> This chapter presents brief evolution of this type of cross-border cooperation. Additionally, we look in more detail at the characteristics and functions attributed to them. In the last part, we situate the research on Euroregions in broader academic debates.

The first Euroregion was found in the late 1950s at the Dutch-German border by local authorities when cross-border cooperation flourished. It was named EUROREGION and served as a model for subsequent cross-border cooperation. Several other Euroregions have been established in the following years.<sup>69</sup> Before being supported by the EU, it was mainly the Council of Europe that coordinated and promoted the development of institutionalized cross-border cooperation between states. Namely the Madrid convention signed in 1980 bounded its signatories to endorse the local and regional actors to connect with their counterparts across the borders that would result in stable cooperation in the matter of common goals.<sup>70</sup> However, the

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<sup>67</sup> Sara Svensson, „The Bordered World of Cross-border Cooperation“, 278-279.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>69</sup> Markus Perkmann and André Spicer, „‘Healing the Scars of History’: Projects, Skills and Field Strategies in Institutional Entrepreneurship“, *Organization Studies* 28, no. 7 (July 2007): 1109, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607078116> (downloaded 18 March 2022).

<sup>70</sup> Luis De Sousa, „Understanding European Cross-border Cooperation: A Framework for Analysis“, *Journal of European Integration* 35, no. 6 (2013): 673, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2012.711827> (downloaded 13 March 2022).

boom dates to the 1990s.<sup>71</sup> Medeiros attributes the growing number of Euroregions to the EU funding and especially to the introduction of the INTERREG Programme in the same period.<sup>72</sup> Another factor explaining the rising number of new Euroregions in the 1990s can be associated with the accession of new Member States. It was mainly in Central Europe where Euroregions became a widespread type of cross-border cooperation.<sup>73</sup> Medeiros interprets this popularity as a demonstration of a strong will to cooperate.<sup>74</sup> The bottom-up character of the Euroregions further increases their symbolical value. According to Branda, Euroregions are the most advanced form of institutionalized cross-border cooperation in today's EU.<sup>75</sup>

In the previous chapter, we dealt with the definition of Euroregions. Here we elaborate on the characteristic and function of Euroregions in more detail. The first important thing is that Euroregions visibly differ from one another. This is because Euroregions are highly dependent on the national contexts they are working in as it determines the scope and intensity of the cooperation. It derives also from the different legal powers and experience of the founding substate actors.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, scholars note some features that they all share. They are stable over time, have their own administrative and financial resources, and have an independent decision-making structure. Organizationally, Euroregions consist of a council, secretariat, working groups, and have a system of presidency. Each Euroregion has its members (primarily towns and cities). Not only do Euroregion encompass subnational authorities, but they can also be constituted of chambers of commerce, universities, CSOs, NGOs, and private actors.<sup>77</sup> Branda adds that Euroregions also have their own identity that one can distinguish from the identity of its members.<sup>78</sup>

Euroregions are connected to European integration. They are closely linked to the INTERREG Programme and serve as implementing agencies of the EU regional policy. Over the years,

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<sup>71</sup> Iaroslav Petrunenko, Svitlana Belei, Maryna Petchenko, Nataliia Kovalenko, Olena Bodnar and Nataliia Maslak, „Organizational and Financial Principles for the Development of Euroregions“, *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration* 8, no. 3 (July 2020): 158, (downloaded 17 March 2022).

<sup>72</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, „(Re)defining the Euroregion Concept“, 146.

<sup>73</sup> David Turnock, „Cross-border cooperation: A major element in regional policy in East Central Europe“, *Scottish Geographical Journal* 118, no. 1 (2002): 31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00369220218737134>, (downloaded 16 March 2022).

<sup>74</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, „(Re)defining the Euroregion Concept“, 143

<sup>75</sup> Pavel Branda, „Euroregiony v České republice komparativní analýza“, 72.

<sup>76</sup> Joanna Kurowska Pysz, Castanho, Rui Alexandre and Gómez, José Manuel, „Cross-border cooperation – The barriers analysis and the recommendations“, *Polish Journal of Management Studies* 17, no. 2 (2018): 134 and 137, <https://doi.org/10.17512/pjms.2016.17.2.12> (downloaded 1 March 2022).

<sup>77</sup> Eduardo Medeiros, „(Re)defining the Euroregion Concept“, 142-143.

<sup>78</sup> Pavel Branda, „Euroregiony v České republice komparativní analýza“, 72.



Euroregions have proved to be better suited for pursuing EU regional policy goals than larger scale working groups. The Commission has approached them to promote multilevel governance and territorial cohesion. The Commission believes that they contribute to the reduction of barriers between neighboring regions and states. As Noferini and his co-authors observes, "Euroregions are usually considered to be 'laboratories' for establishing more horizontal, participative, consensual and generally low-level hierarchical practices [...]." <sup>79</sup> The creation of Euroregions reflects a call from below for more functional and pragmatic governance. Moreover, Euroregions might be viewed as an instrument for identity building and overcoming stereotypes. <sup>80</sup>

Euroregions themselves focus primarily on EU projects because of the opportunity that funds present for their development. However, all border regions are not cooperating via Euroregions as Euroregions are not the only way to access EU financial support. It is also important to emphasize that the Euroregions do not create a new administration level but rather serve as a coordination platform for its members (as the Type II of MLG suggests). <sup>81</sup> Noferini sees Euroregions as "[...] somewhat formalized forums for negotiating actors' preferences across the border. They contribute to reducing transaction costs and consolidating a cross-border space." <sup>82</sup>

The expansion of Euroregions has spurred debates about the erosion of the nation states' position. For some, establishing a more intense cross-border cooperation (like the Euroregions) has been interpreted as evidence of the rescaling process in the EU. As Noferini illustrates, "[...] Euroregions can be conceived of as a process of cross-border reterritorialization, which means the reorganization of social, economic, and political activities at the sub-national scale, which transcends the traditional Westphalian system." <sup>83</sup> However, the emergence of

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<sup>79</sup> Andrea Noferini, Matteo Berzi, Francesco Camonita and Antoni Durà, „Cross-Border Cooperation in the EU: Euroregions Amid Multilevel Governance and Re-Territorialization“, *European Planning Studies* 28, no. 1 (2020): 38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2019.1623973> (downloaded 2 March 2022).

<sup>80</sup> Honorata Howaniec and Marcin Lis, „Euroregions and Local and Regional Development—Local Perceptions of Cross-Border Cooperation and Euroregions Based on the Euroregion Beskydy“, *Sustainability* 12, no. 18 (September 2020): 5-6, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187834> (downloaded 12 March 2022).

<sup>81</sup> Pavel Branda, „Euroregiony v České republice komparativní analýza“, 72.

<sup>82</sup> Andrea Noferini, Matteo Berzi, Francesco Camonita and Antoni Durà, „Cross-Border Cooperation in the EU“, 39.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

Euroregions should not be seen as a symptom of territorial fragmentation but rather as an element of emerging MLG in the EU.<sup>84</sup>

### 1.5.2 The membership in Euroregions

Policymakers attributed the Euroregions an essential role as they are designed to foster cross-border cooperation and enhance the links between local bodies that are expected to spill over to other areas outside the scope of the Euroregion. However, even though Euroregions are a popular form of cooperation in border regions, it has been continuously pointed out that they have a low impact on Euroregions on policymaking. They are often considered to be organizationally and legally weak and thus lack political leverage.<sup>85</sup> In the words of Svensson “[...] it is too early to speak about the presence of integrated political networks within Euroregions [...]”.<sup>86</sup> From the point of view of the substate actors the membership in a Euroregion is not mandatory to access the INTERRG funding as the eligible area is determined by the NUTS III. Dołzbłasz claims that this “[...] may lead to resignation from participation in euro-regional associations.”<sup>87</sup>

Some researchers focused on the determining factors of the Euroregions’ success and favorable conditions for cross-border cooperation. For example, Kurowska Pysz draws the line between internal and external barriers. The first represents the language barrier, lack of experience and knowledge about the CBC, and region-specific conditions. As for the external barriers, we can mention the degree of legal autonomy or available financial resources stemming from national or European funds and support programs. Moreover, a different environmental protection standard can create a significant barrier to cooperation.<sup>88</sup>

Contrasting with Kurowska Pysz and Medeiros, Svenson focuses on factors facilitating cross-border cooperation. Besides the cultural and linguistic affinity of cooperating regions, she proves that the capacity of actors to engage in cooperation (influenced by the number of inhabitants, financial resources, and autonomy) plays an even more prominent role. In her research, she provides evidence that when regional or local actors have already established solid

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<sup>84</sup> Markus Perkmann, „The rise of the Euroregion. A bird's eye perspective on European cross-border co-operation“ 11.

<sup>85</sup> Sara Svensson, „The Bordered World of Cross-border Cooperation“, 279 and 292.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 292.

<sup>87</sup> Sylwia Dołzbłasz, „Cross-Border Co-Operation in the Euroregions at the Polish-Czech and Polish-Slovak Borders“, 105.

<sup>88</sup> Joanna Kurowska Pysz, Castanho, Rui Alexandre and Gómez, José Manuel, „Cross-border cooperation – The barriers analysis and the recommendations“, 136-142.

domestic networks and developed inter-municipal links, their ability to cooperate internationally rises. She further investigates the influence of the relationship between central governments on cross-border cooperation and concludes that it is not a determining factor. Lastly, she analyzes the juridical status of the cross-border area (she compared EGTC with regular Euroregions). Her findings imply that this factor is not essential.<sup>89</sup>

Relying on the social capital theory, Svensson contributed significantly to the research on the impact of membership in the Euroregion. She analyzed Euroregions as contact networks and aimed to unravel the inner dynamics.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, Svensson made another important contribution relevant to this thesis by focusing on the motivation of substate actors to engage in Euroregional cooperation. The analysis of expectations and aims of the constituent unit helps unravel the nature of the membership and Euroregional function because the praxis might often vary from the value to the value of the rhetoric. Svensson recognizes three reasons for joining a Euroregion that is often mentioned in the academic literature. The first accentuated reason to join a Euroregion is to tackle common issues that, because of differences in regulatory and administrative systems across the borders, might encounter difficulties. Secondly, the Euroregion is a platform that makes accessing EU funds easier and more effective. Lastly, she recognizes that Euroregions might stem from common values and culture, especially in cases where the border region formerly integrated was divided by a border. On the ground of interviews with local and regional members of the Euroregions, she concludes by adding another point and emphasizing the normative dimension of the motivation that results in a “[...] belief that cooperation is something that is expected.”<sup>91</sup>

This thesis aims to test the second function of the Euroregion, thus its effect on the use of European funds. Svensson notes that substate actors are dominantly motivated by this reason rather than by consideration linked to policymaking. Moreover, the reason is attributed to the rise of Euroregions in central Europe and is thus relevant for the scope of this research.<sup>92</sup> Medve-Bálint brought empirical evidence on the effect of Euroregions on the allocation of

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<sup>89</sup> Sara Svensson, „The Bordered World of Cross-border Cooperation“, 289-291.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Sara Svensson, „Forget the policy gap: Why local governments really decide to take part in cross-border cooperation initiatives in Europe“, *Eurasian Geography and Economy* (2013): 420, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2013.871498> (downloaded 18 March 2022).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 411.

Phare and INTERREG programs when he discovered a correlation between the membership in a Euroregion and the size of funding the specific area obtained.<sup>93</sup>

#### 1.5.4 Selected Euroregions

This chapter presents selected Euroregions – Glacensis, Praděd, Silesia, and Cieszyn Silesia. It concentrates on essential characteristics concerning the area the Euroregions cover, the number of inhabitants, and the organizational structures. Figure 1 shows the location of Euroregions at the Czech-Polish borders.

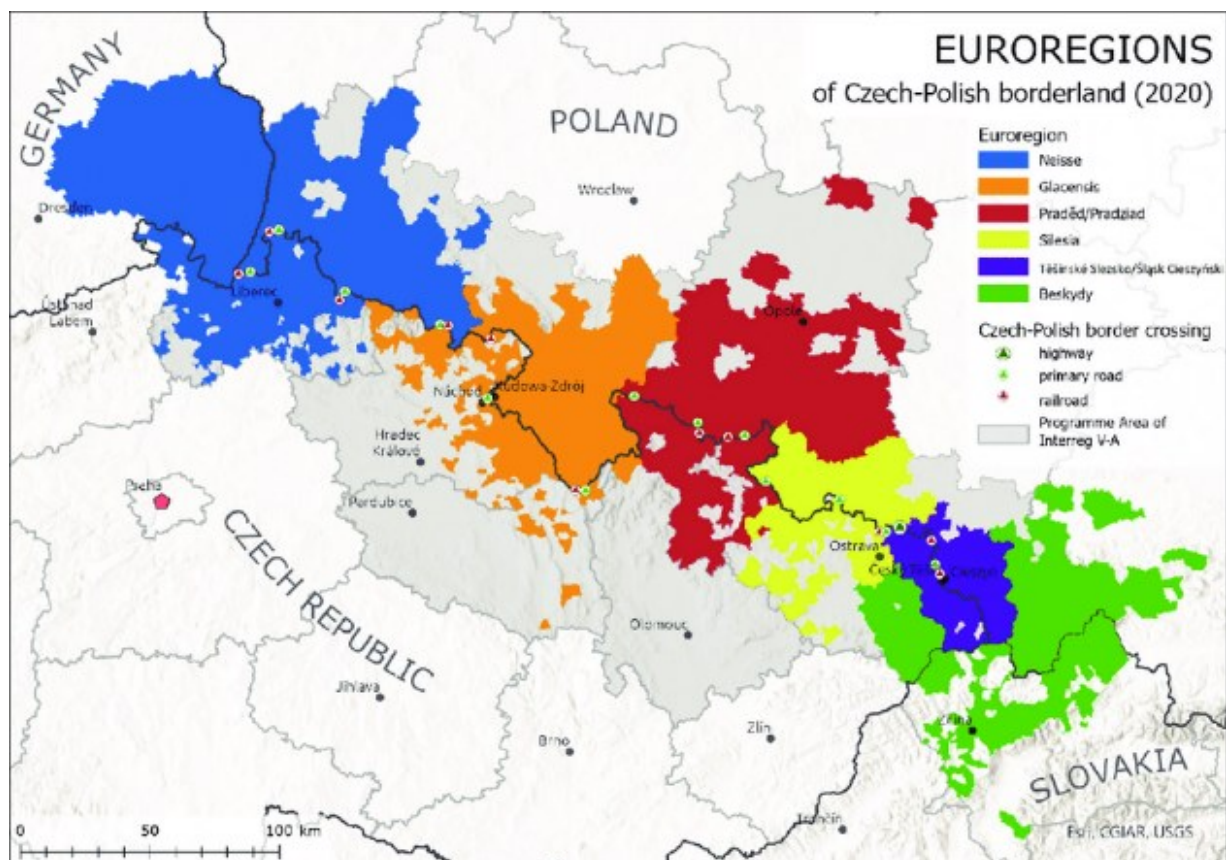


Figure 1- Euroregion at the Czech-Polish border<sup>94</sup>

#### Glacensis

Glacensis is the largest Euroregion at the Czech-Polish borders. It operates in three Czech *kraj* (Královéhradecký, Pardubický and Olomoucký) and in the Polish *Województwo dolnośląskie*. It comprises 10 Czech districts (Náchod, Rychnov nad Kněžnou, Hradec Králové, Trutnov,

<sup>93</sup> Nicola Bellini and Ulrich Hilpert, eds, *Europe's Changing Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 158.

<sup>94</sup> Hynek Böhm, „The Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Czech-Polish Cross-Border Cooperation: From Debordering to Re-Bordering?“, *Moravian Geographical Reports* 29, no.2 (2021): 142, <https://doi.org/10.2478/mgr-2021-0007> (downloaded 17 March 2022).

Jičín, Chrudim, Svitavy, Ústí nad Orlicí, Pardubice and Šumperk) and 6 Polish ones (kłodzki, ząbkowicki, wałbrzyski, strzeliński, świdnicki, dzierzoniowski). The Euroregion was created in 1996 by one Czech and one Polish interest association of artificial persons with independent organizational structure. Glacensis aims to enhance common special planning and support the establishment of commercial ties. Infrastructure and environmental protection are other areas that the Euroregion is active in.<sup>95</sup>

The Euroregion has a common Council represented by a chairman. The Council consists of three Czech and three Polish representatives elected by the two national associations forming the Euroregion. The Council is responsible for making decisions regarding the allocation of financial resources. It has the right to create working groups and appoint members of the Auditorial Committee and the Secretariat. The Council session is organized twice a year. The Secretariat is responsible for the administrative procedures of the Euroregion. In the frame of the Euroregion, also shared specialized working groups are established. Finally, the Auditorial Commission engages in the monitoring of Euroregions activities.<sup>96</sup>

### **Praděd**

Euroregion Praděd is uniting the Olomoucký kraj at the Czech side of the border and *Województwo opolskie* on the Polish one. It includes Czech districts Olomouc, Bruntál, Jeseník and Polish bistricts brzeski, kędzierzyńsko-kozielski, kluczborski, krapkowicki, namysłowski, nyski, oleski, opolski, prudnicki, and strzelecki. We can date the first steps of cross-border cooperation to 1991 when the city of Jeseník organized a conference for Czech and Polish municipalities in the region. Although new forms of cooperation were established shortly after the conference, the Euroregion was founded only in 1997 by Czech and Polish associations of municipalities. The focus of the Euroregion is to ensure harmonious regional development and infrastructural accessibility and to promote economic ties. Additionally, it emphasizes environmental protection and tourism.<sup>97</sup>

The Euroregion consists of two common bodies: the Parliament and Presidium. The Parliament has 30 members, half Czech, the other half Polish, and is the highest body of the Euroregion. The Parliament elects the six members of the Council. The General Assembly unites all

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<sup>95</sup> „Euroregion Glacensis“, The official website of the Euroregion Glacensis, Euroregion Glacensis, <https://www.euro-glacensis.cz/> (downloaded 5 April 2022).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> „Euroregion Praděd“, The official website of the Euroregion Praděd, Euroregion Praděd, <https://www.europraded.cz/> (downloaded 7 April 2022).

Euroregion's members and approves all the financial frames and primary organizational documents.<sup>98</sup>

## **Silesia**

The Euroregion Silesia covers the land of 2,787 km<sup>2</sup> with approximately 766 000 inhabitants. It includes 4 Czech districts (Opava, Bruntál, Nový Jičín, Ostrava-město) in the Moravskoslezský *kraj* and 4 Polish districts (raciborski, głubczycki, wodzisławski, rybnicki) of the *Województwo śląskie* and *Województwo opolskie*. It was created in 1998 by Polish and Czech associations of municipalities. Its purpose is to support projects at the border and promote the integration and harmonious development of the covered area. The Euroregion concentrates mainly on infrastructure, environmental issues, and tourism.

The Presidium is the highest instance embodied by ten representatives (5 Polish, 5 Czech). The Presidium approves joint projects, is responsible for the financial planning, sets the priority axes of the Euroregion, and elects the Chairman of the Euroregion. It assembles once a year. The Chairman is the head of the Presidium and represents the Euroregion. The last organ of the Euroregion is working groups that are established by the Presidium. They are either permanent or could be established ad-hoc to deal with special issues.<sup>99</sup>

The Euroregion Silesia consists of 79 members. From the Czech side, it has 57 members. The large majority of them are municipalities. Other members are the Silesian University in Opava, local chambre of commerce and two civic associations (Místní akční skupina Opavsko and Místní akční skupina Hlučínsko). On the Polish side of the border, the Euroregion gathers in a total of 22 municipalities.<sup>100</sup>

## **Cieszyn Silesia**

The smallest Euroregion at the Czech-Polish borders is Těšínské Slezsko Euroregion. It is formed by Moravskoslezský *kraj* and *województwo śląskie*. It was established in 1998 by two regional associations 1998. The Euroregion servers as a platform for know-how sharing in fields such as spatial planning and regional development.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> „Euroregion Silesia“, The official website of the Euroregion Silesia, Euroregion Silesia, <https://euroregion-silesia.cz/>, (downloaded 5 April 2022).

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> „Euroregion Těšínské Slezsko“, The official website of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, <https://www.euregio-teschinensis.eu/en/> (downloaded 8 April 2022).

The Euroregion is composed of two bodies: the Council and the Secretariat. Eight members of the Council (4 from the Czech side and 4 Polish) meet twice a year. Among its responsibilities, we can name appointing the Secretariat and adjacent working groups (not considered an official body of the Euroregion). Moreover, the Council has control over financial planning. The Secretariat has an administrative and executive function. The Euroregion on itself does not have a legal subjectivity.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> „Euroregion Těšínské Slezsko“, The official website of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, <https://www.euregio-teschinensis.eu/en/> (downloaded 8 April 2022).

## 2. Empirical part

### 2.1 Methodology

This thesis aims to answer the question, whether projects including Euroregions' members have different characteristics than the one without them. Given the thesis's aim, a quantitative approach is the most convenient. It enables concentration on many projects and is thus suitable for determining the influence of the membership on a larger scale. The results of the quantitative analysis could also be more viable when generalizing observed trends. This thesis focuses on finding the link between membership (the independent variable) and project quality (the dependent variable).

The focus of this thesis is narrowed down to the INTERREG V-a program. This choice was motivated by the accessibility and entirety of the appropriate data set. It is also a program closely related to Euroregions as they are responsible for managing microprojects funds that are directly linked to INTERREG. Furthermore, I have chosen to focus on Euroregions at the Polish borders. There are in total six Euroregions in this area. Two of them are tripartite, and the rest is bilateral. I have decided to concentrate only on bilateral Czech-Polish Euroregions for two reasons. Firstly, this allows to elaborate on the multilevel specificity of each state in more depth instead of superficially dealing with four different multilevel settings. Also, concentrating on two post-communistic and centralized states would reveal more of the development of a multilayered governmental system in Central Europe. Including Euroregions with German parts would hamper this potential.

The main research question is worded as follows: Do membership in an Euroregion affects the character and quality of INTERREG V-a standard projects in which respective members take part? In other words, do projects that include Euroregions' members differ from the rest of the projects? In order to answer these questions, four hypotheses were tested:

**H1:** Projects that include Euroregions' members will have different characteristics than the ones without them. This research focuses on four of them: the cost, the number and type of participants, the theme, and the thematic objective.

**H2:** The difference between non-members' and members' projects will be directly proportional to the number and share of members in the project.



**H3:** Leadership is a factor determining the quality of the project. Thus, projects with members in the lead would have different characteristics than projects that, albeit including members, are not directed by them.

**H4:** The nature of membership may vary substantially as all Euroregions differ in size, priorities, budget, organizational structure, etc. Therefore, a variation between members' projects from different Euroregions is expected.

In order to address these hypotheses, the Cluster Analysis was used. This methodology is used in variety of research fields and aims to find similar patterns of incidence. Thus, thanks to the Cluster analysis defined groups can be compared and at the end provides a set of similarities and differences between them. It is a method that is very flexible and works directly with the hypothesis.<sup>103</sup>

The empirical part consists of two sections. The first one concentrates on the differences between projects that included members and those that did not. This section thus covers H1, H2, and H3. To determine the differentiation of members' and non-members' projects, the following variables were selected: the cost, the number and type of participants, the theme, and the thematic objective. These variables should expand the findings of Medve-Bálint, showing that projects of Euroregions' members have a higher prize.<sup>104</sup> This thesis also tests if the number of participants is increased. Moreover, themes and thematic objectives are also a subject of inquiry to determine if membership in a Euroregion could affect members' projects' focus. As the Euroregions provide an institutionalized network the number of projects concentrating on administration is expected to be lower than in non-members' projects.

In order to determine the impact of the membership in relation to the number of members participating in the projects, they have been divided into the six groups:

- **G-All:** All projects
- **G-MemOnly:** Projects including members only
- **G-MemMaj:** Projects with the majority of members (including projects which 50% members)
- **G-MemMin:** Projects with a minority of members
- **G-MemLead:** Projects with members in the lead
- **G-NoMem:** Projects with no members

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<sup>103</sup> Charles Romesburg, *Cluster Analysis for Researchers* (New York: LULU PRESS, 2004), 238.

<sup>104</sup> Nicola Bellini and Ulrich Hilpert, eds, *Europe's Changing Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 158.

Consequently, the G4 includes projects from G1, G2, and G3. The purpose of this group is to determine if the role of the leader is a significant variable that could affect the quality of the projects (H3).

In order to find a variation between members' and non-members' projects (and thus answer H1, H2, and H3) I separately analyzed six variables in each group: the projects' cost, the main theme, the thematic objective, the number of participants in the projects, as well as their legal status and national affiliation. In the case of the thematic objectives and themes, the number of occurrences of each variant was analyzed. Additionally, Figures showing the share of each variant for all groups were created. This was necessary as all groups contained a different number of projects. The same applies to the analysis of participants' legal status and national affiliation. When focusing on the number of participants and the projects' cost, I determined the average for each group. Moreover, as the average result may misrepresent the data, categories were created to give a more relevant picture of the share of both projects' cost and number of participants. Based on the prize, the projects were divided into five categories:

- **XS-cost:** bellow 99 999
- **S-cost:** 100 000-499 999
- **M-cost:** 500 000-999 999
- **L-cost:** 1 000 000-3 000 000
- **XL-cost:** above 3 000 000 000

The differences between the number of participants were tracked according to three categories that are coded in the following manner:

- **S-part:** included 2 participants
- **M-part:** included 3-5 participants
- **L-part:** included 6 or more participants

The second section of the empirical part is reserved entirely for H4 and is conceived as a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). This methodology “[...] requires in-depth knowledge of cases (often part of qualitative analysis) but is also capable of generating findings that can be generalised across wider populations (quantitative analysis).”,<sup>105</sup> The analyzed cases were Euroregions Glacensis, Praděd, Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia. Firstly, I proceeded to divide projects that include members according to the Euroregion their participating members belong.

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<sup>105</sup> Nigel Simister and Vera Scholz, „Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)“, *Intrac for civil society*, (2017): 3, <https://www.intrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Qualitative-comparative-analysis.pdf> (downloaded 17 March 2022).

After that, the same variables as in the first section were analyzed to determine if the projects may also vary according to the Euroregions. This step served the purpose to reveal the differentiation between Euroregion. Obtained results are then put in relation with the Euroregions financial, geographical, and organizational aspects defining them. The analyzed factors were concretely:

- **Financial:** the existence of a common account, tools for financing common projects, budget for the period 2014-2020,
- **Geographical:** the number of inhabitants, the area covered by the Euroregions,
- **Organizational:** the organizational structure, the meeting interval of the highest body.

The purpose of this section is to compare Euroregions between each other and thus find the factors that could possibly accentuate the effect of membership on the projects. In other words, I seek a correlation between the characteristics of the Euroregions and their differentiation.

The measured secondary data was accessed via the official European portal [www.keep.eu](http://www.keep.eu). The data were organized in one Excel Sheets document. It contained information about participants and projects realized in the frame of INTERREG V-a in the Czech-Polish borderland between 2014 and 2020. Data concerning participants included details about the projects they participated in, the organization's name in different languages, the address, location, NUTS I, II, and III, website, legal status, eligible budget, and ERDF contribution. The second part of the data sheet included all projects' names in different languages, a description of the projects' goals and expected results, the project's budget, EU funding, website, details about the topics, thematic objectives, specific objectives, INTERREG priorities, projects' start, and end.

For the purpose of this analysis, the software Microsoft Excel was used, because the tools that it proposes are sufficient for the aims of this thesis. I first proceed to the differentiation of projects with members and those that do not include them. For this purpose, I compared all 507 participants with a list of Euroregions' members. The result was a list of projects divided according to the Euroregions the participants belonged to. Consequently, the precise number of participating members per project was specified. This cleared the way for comparing the list with the sheet containing all projects and thus differentiating members' and non-members' projects. The number of Czech and Polish members per project and their legal status were determined as well. This working procedure allowed not only to obtain the correlation matrix linking membership to the differentiation of variables but also to compare the engagement of Czech and Polish members.

Here it is important to elaborate on membership. For the purpose of this thesis the membership is defined by the admission in the individual Euroregions' list of members on official websites. The Euroregions themselves regulate the conditions of membership. The most common members are towns, cities, or larger regional administration units, but Euroregions are also open to local public or private organizations. For practical reasons, I did not consider organizations with a strong link to the members (e.g., schools) as members. Firstly, they have a separated administration. Secondly, although the town could likely influence and motivate affiliated organizations to participate in INTERREG projects, it would represent a methodologically impossible challenge to trace.

The analysis of members' and non-members' projects did not cover all possible variables from the original data set. The reason is that not all of them are relevant for the research or would considerably widen the scope of the thesis. Hence, I decided to concentrate on the four following variables: the projects' cost, the number of partners in the projects, the main themes, and the thematic objectives. These categories are deemed sufficient to detect a differentiation between members' and non-members' projects.

The methodological approach of this thesis might meet some limits. Firstly, this thesis does not adopt an explanatory approach to the issue. Hence, we focus more on finding if the membership is a variable with considerable impact and how its effects manifest. The primary contribution of this thesis is thus to provide an analysis of a research problem that could be further deepened in studies concentrating on the cause-and-effect relationship. Moreover, the design of this thesis and the chosen data set do not offer insight into the circumstances of the project development. By this, I mean, for example, the motivation or attitudes of actors involved in analyzed projects that would allow a better understanding of the context that affected the quality of the projects. Altogether, there could be potentially other relevant factors influencing the project's quality more than the membership in a Euroregion. Nevertheless, alternative explanations related to the research issue are addressed in the discussion.

## **2.2 Members' and non-members' INTERREG V-a standard projects**

This first section of the empirical part is devoted to shedding light on H1, H2, and H3. Firstly, the number of projects in each group is analyzed. The second chapter of this section comments on the participants, notably their exact number per group, legal status, and national affiliation.

After that, the projects' cost is the center of interest, followed by the thematic objectives and themes.

**Number of projects**

In total, this study examines 152 projects. The following table indicates the number of projects in each group. If we do not count G-All, the largest group is G-NoMem containing project 79. The second largest group is G-MemMaj, with 42 projects that most members have joined. In contrast, there were only 12 projects with a minority of members (G-MemMin). Lastly, 19 projects fall in the G-MemOnly (see Figure 2).

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>Number of projects</b>	152	19	42	12	38	79

Figure 2 - Number of projects per group

Figure 3 provides a more detailed picture of the share of G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, G-MemMin, and G-NoMem on the total number of projects. As shown, more than half of the INTERREG-Va standard projects belong to G-NoMem. The rest included one or more Euroregion members. Only 8 % of all projects fall in G-MemMin. The Figure 4 illuminates how many projects (out of all in which at least one member participated) were actually led by members (G-MemLead). This was the case for approximately 1/3 of the respective projects.

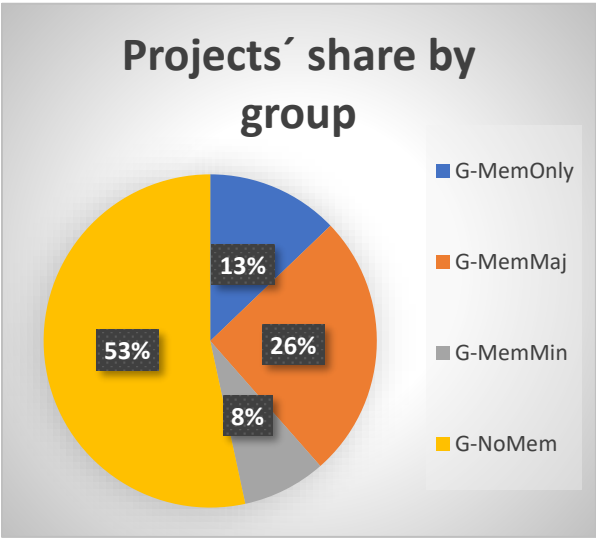


Figure 3 - Number of projects per group (share)

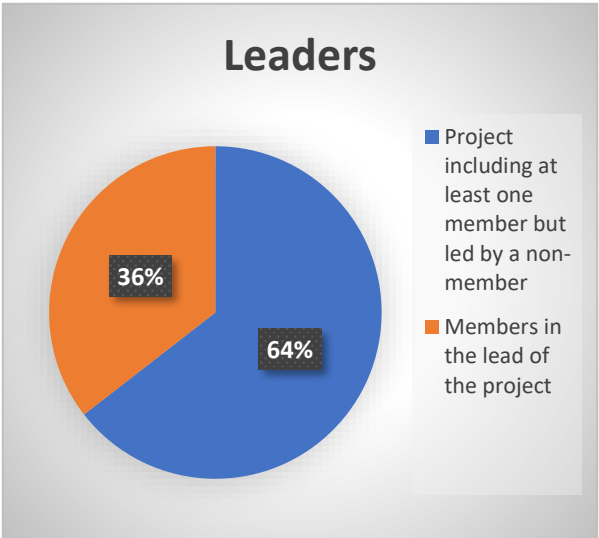


Figure 4 - Share of projects' leaders

## Participants

The total number of participants in the INTERREG-Va standard projects at the Czech-Polish border was 507. There were 270 participants in projects that included at least one member and 237 participants in the rest of the projects. It thus reflects the share of members' and non-members' projects. There was a significantly higher number of participants with a public legal status in all groups. The majority of private status participants was concentrated in the G-NoMem. As for the share of Czech and Polish participants, it was relatively balanced in all groups. In this regard, there is thus no particular difference between members' and non-members' projects. Moreover, G-MemLead does not stand out as well (see Figure 5).

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>Participants (CZ/PL)</b>	507 (259/248)	63 (34/29)	149 (73/76)	58 (29/29)	136 (71/65)	237 (123/114)
<b>Participants with private status (CZ/PL)</b>	106 (68/38)	4 (4/0)	14 (13/1)	18 (12/6)	13 (12/1)	70 (39/31)
<b>Participants with public status (CZ/PL)</b>	401 (191/210)	59 (30/29)	135 (60/75)	40 (17/23)	123 (59/64)	167 (84/83)
<b>Number of projects</b>	152	19	42	12	38	79

Figure 5 - Type of participants per group

Figures 6 and 7 present the average number of participants per group. The average number of participants per project is 3,3. All groups including members' projects record an average or above-average number of participants. G-MemMin significantly exceeds the average with 4,8 participants per project. In contrast, G-NoMem has the smallest average number of participants per project and is the only group with a below-average result.

The highest number of participants are concentrated in G-MemMin and G-NoMem. G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, and G-MemLead, thus all groups with the most significant share of members in projects, did not include any Polish private participants, and there were only a minority of Czech ones. When excluding G-MemMin, it would be possible to conclude that projects that included members and those that did not differ in the number of private and public participants. The deviation of G-MemMin remains to be explained. G-MemLead does not vary from the rest of the projects containing members.

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>Average number of participants per project (CZ/PL)</b>	3,3 (1,7/1,6)	3,3 (1,8/1,5)	3,5 (1,7/1,8)	4,8 (2,4/2,4)	3,6 (1,9/1,7)	3 (1,6/1,4)
<b>Average number of participants with private status per project (CZ/PL)</b>	0,7 (0,4/0,3)	0,2 (0,2/0)	0,3 (0,3/0)	1,5 (1/0,5)	0,3 (0,3/0)	0,9 (0,5/0,4)
<b>Average number of participants with public status per project (CZ/PL)</b>	2,6 (1,2/1,4)	3,1 (1,6/1,5)	3,2 (1,4/1,8)	3,3 (1,4/1,9)	3,2 (1,5/1,7)	2,1 (1/1,1)

Figure 6 - Average number of participants per type

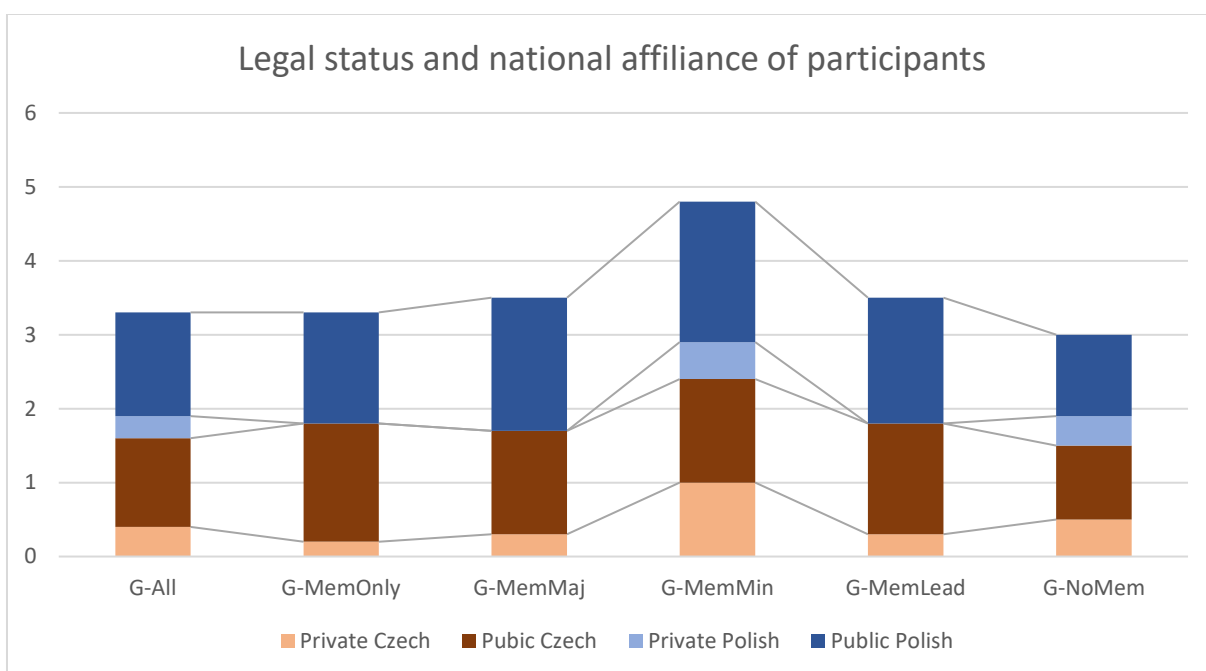


Figure 7 - Legal status and national affiliation of participants

However, analyzing only the average can often be misleading. Therefore, Figure 8 provides the number of projects divided by size into three groups. These three groups were created according to the number of participants: S for projects with only two participants, M engaging 3-5 organizations, and L for the project having six and more participants.

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>S</b>	75	10	20	0	19	45
<b>M</b>	57	8	17	9	15	25
<b>L</b>	20	1	5	3	4	9

Figure 8 - Size of the projects according to the number of participants

Figure 9 shows the exact numbers organized by the share of project sizes per group. Again, there is a remarkable difference between G-MemMin and the rest of the groups. All groups are constituted by a significant number of S projects (approximately 50 %), but G-MemMin does not include a single one. On the other hand, G-MemMin has the most outstanding share of M and L projects. Otherwise, the share of the L project was similar in all groups (10 %) except for G-MemOnly, where there was less than 5 %. In all groups (excluding G-MemMin), the share of S projects was superior to that of L projects, with G-NoMem having the highest share. However, these differentiations are only subtle, and here again, we cannot see a clear division between projects including members and those that did not – with the exception of G-MemMin, that have different features than all analyzed groups.

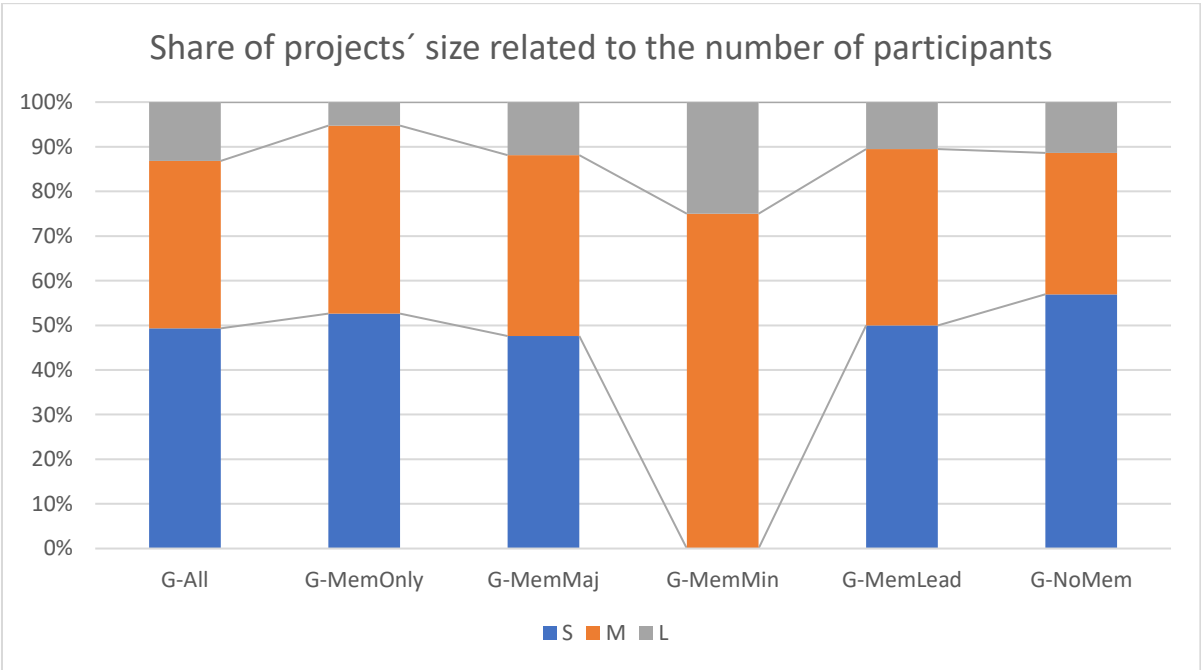


Figure 9 - Share of projects' size related to the number of participants

**Projects' cost**

The average cost of the 152 analyzed projects was 1 326 000 €. All projects with one or more members have an above-average cost (see Figure 10 and 11). In contrast, only projects that do not include a single member have, on average, less financially demanding projects. For a clearer picture, the groups G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, and G-MemMin were put together, thus all projects in which at least one member has participated (G-MemLead excluded because it contains projects' duplicates), and compare it with the G-NoMem, the difference in the average cost is more than 700 000 € (Figure 12). Nonetheless, projects realized only among members have smaller budgets compared to the ones also including non-members. A direct proportion



between the number of members participating in the project and the project cost is thus not observable. This is also accentuated by the fact that the highest average budget (2 120 000 €) was recorded in the G-MemMin. What should be noted is that the leadership does not seem to affect the project's average cost as G-MemLead have comparable results with G-MemOnly and G-MemMaj.

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>Average cost (in euros)</b>	1 326 000	1 516 000	1 548 000	2 120 000	1 558 000	1 042 000

Figure 10 - Average cost of projects

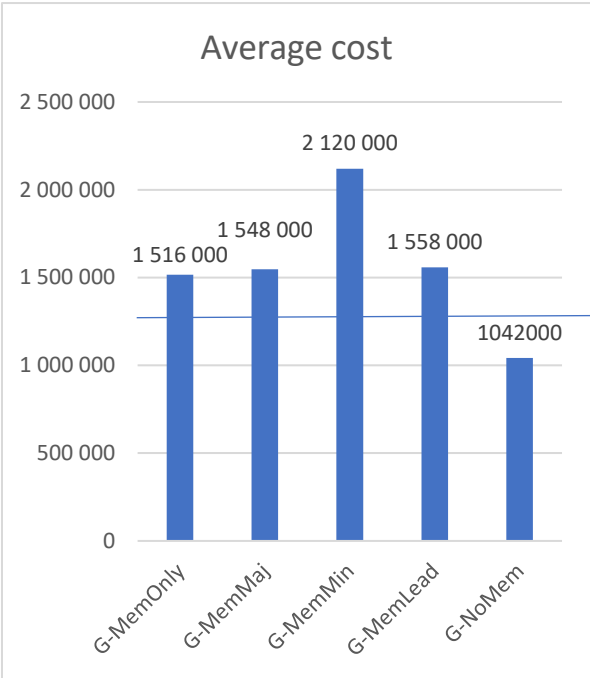


Figure 11 - Average cost of projects (chart)

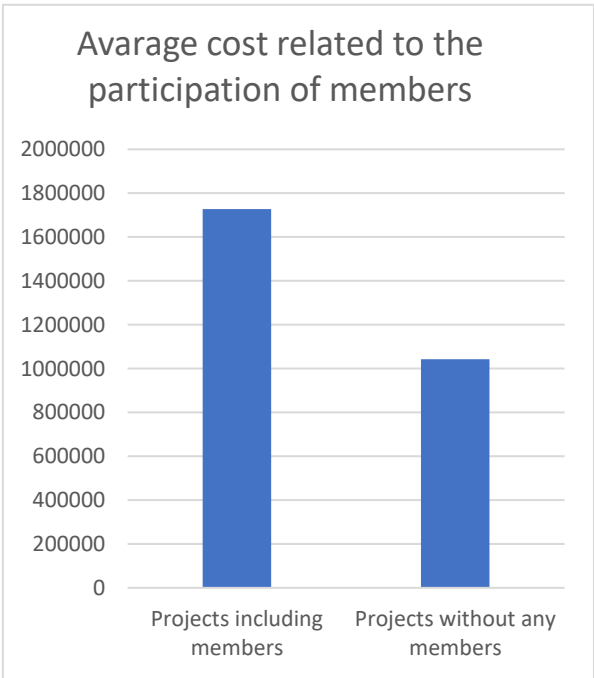


Figure 12 - Average project cost (members and non-members)

Furthermore, I analyzed the most common budget size for each group (see Figure 13 and 14). In the case of G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, and G-MemMin (in other words, projects including at least one member), the number of L projects takes the lead. On the contrary, S projects had a minor share, especially in these groups. Projects including only members show the highest rate of L projects. However, projects in which also non-members participated recorded a higher rate of XL projects. As for the G-MemLead, it has similar characteristics to G-MemOnly. Overall, member-led projects have a higher share of L projects than other categories. In G-MemLead, we can also note the smallest share of M projects. This contrast with G-NoMem, which is predominantly small-sized. We can also observe that the share of L and XL projects is notably

minor in the G-NoMem. There is a noticeable correlation between the projects' cost and the members' involvement.

	G-All	G-MemOnly	G-MemMaj	G-MemMin	G-MemLead	G-NoMem
<b>XS</b>	5	0	2	0	1	3
<b>S</b>	60	4	9	3	9	44
<b>M</b>	36	5	9	3	7	19
<b>L</b>	35	8	14	4	16	9
<b>XL</b>	16	2	8	2	5	4

Figure 13 - Projects' size related to the prize

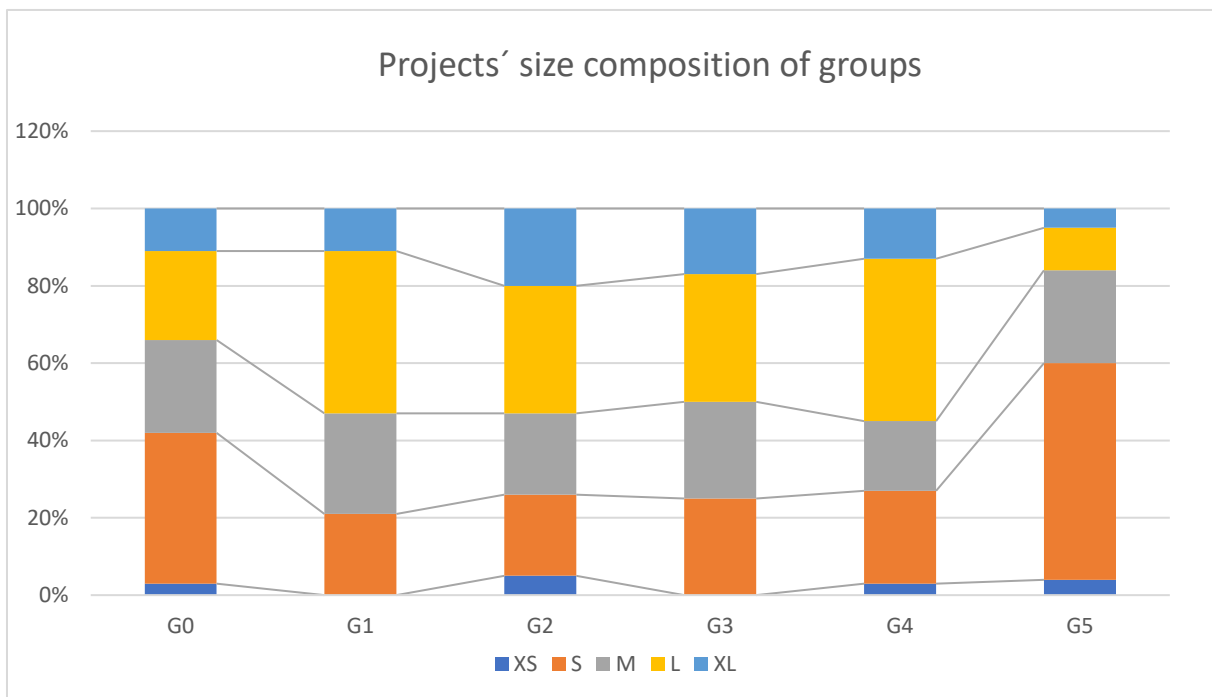


Figure 14 - Projects' size composition of groups

### Thematic objective

All projects in the frame of INTERREG V-a had to select a thematic objective (TO) set by the program. In the 2014-2020 programming period, there were 11 of them:

- (01) Research an innovation
- (02) Information and Communication technologies
- (03) Competitiveness of SMEs
- (04) Low-carbon economy
- (05) Combating climate change
- (06) Environment and resource efficiency
- (07) Sustainable transports
- (08) Employment and Mobility
- (09) Social inclusion
- (10) Better education, training

(11) Better public administration<sup>106</sup>

In the analyzed data set, one can identify four thematic objectives: Combating climate change (TO-Clim), Employment and Mobility (TO-Empl), Better education, training (TO-Educ), and Better public administration (TO-Admi). In total, 69 projects concentrated on TO-Admi and 61 on TO-Empl. A significantly smaller number of projects have chosen TO-Educ (13) and TO-Clim (8) as it could be observed in Figure 15.

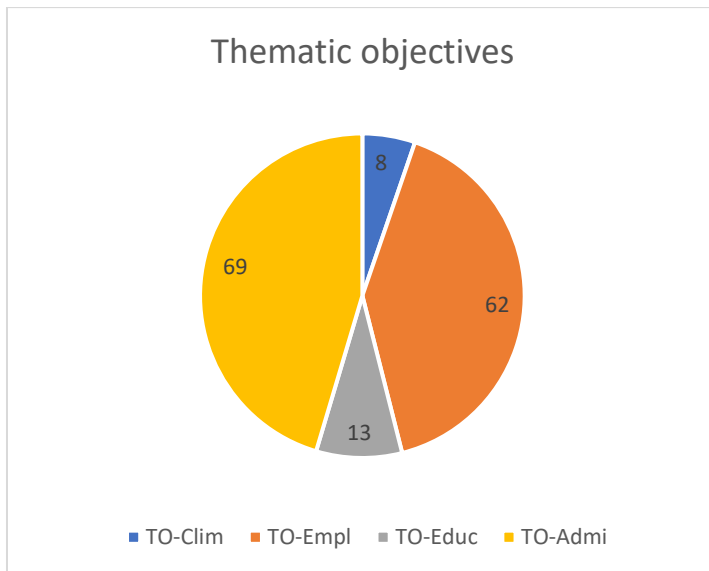


Figure 15 - Thematic objectives

Now let's take a look at the distribution of projects' thematic objectives among groups. In projects that included Euroregions' members (G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, G-MemMin, and G-MemLead), the TO-Empl dominates – in each group, above 60 % of projects were related to this objective (see Figure 16 and 17) This clearly differs from G-All and especially from projects that do not include any member. In G-NoMem, projects concentrate mainly on the TO-Admi. Also, most projects within the TO-Educ are in G-NoMem, even though a small share of this TO is observable also in G-MemMaj. Among all groups with members, G-MemOnly have the biggest share of projects related to climate. In contrast G-MemMin do not record any project belonging to TO-Clim. However, G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, G-MemMin and G-MemLead do not differentiate between one another to the extent as they vary from G-All and G-NonMem. The leadership of the member do not seem to affect the choice of a TO. All, in all, we can observe that projects' including members have made a choice of specific TO those deviates both from the average and from projects' in which no member take part.

<sup>106</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/INTERREG-2014-2020/](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/european-territorial/INTERREG-2014-2020/)

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-MemOnly</b>	<b>G-MemMaj</b>	<b>G-MemMin</b>	<b>G-MemLead</b>	<b>G-NoMem</b>
<b>TO-Clim</b>	8 (5%)	3 (16%)	2 (5%)	0	3 (8%)	3 (4%)
<b>TO-Empl</b>	62 (41%)	12 (63%)	25 (60%)	8 (67%)	24 (63%)	17 (22%)
<b>TO-Educ</b>	13 (9%)	0	2 (5%)	0	0	11 (14%)
<b>TO-Admi</b>	69 (45%)	4 (21%)	13 (30%)	4 (33%)	11 (29%)	48 (60%)

Figure 16 - Thematic objectives (share)

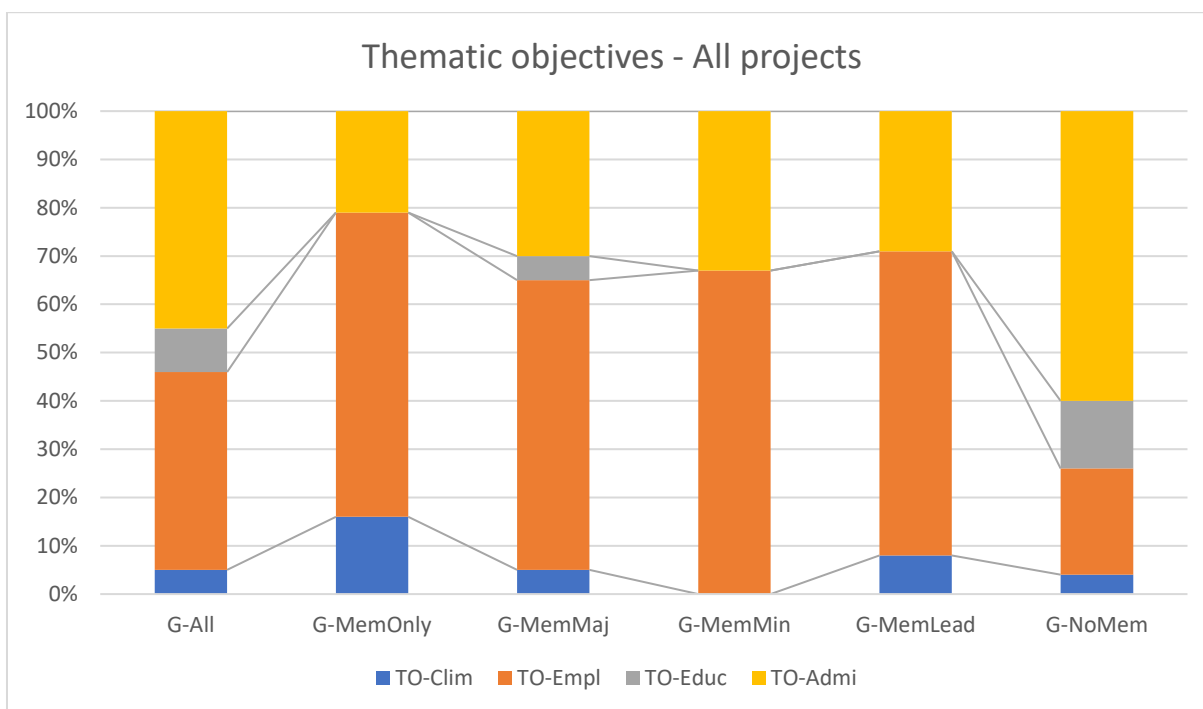


Figure 17 - Thematic objectives (all projects)

## Theme

This section concentrated on the projects' main theme. Compared with the Thematic objectives that are more general, themes serve to specify what the projects focus on. In total, one can identify 23 themes. Their list and distribution among the groups are provided in the Figure 18.

	<b>G-All</b>	<b>G-Mem Only</b>	<b>G-Mem Maj</b>	<b>G-Mem Min</b>	<b>G-Mem Lead</b>	<b>G-No Mem</b>
<b>Agriculture and fisheries and forestry</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Climate change and biodiversity</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Clustering and economic cooperation</b>	3	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Community integration and common identity</b>	16	3	6	1	6	6

<b>Cooperation between emergency services</b>	6	2	1	0	2	3
<b>Cultural heritage and arts</b>	11	1	2	1	2	7
<b>Education and training</b>	3	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Evaluation systems and results</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Governance, partnership</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Health and social services</b>	8	0	0	0	0	8
<b>ICT and digital society</b>	2	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Improving transport connections</b>	2	0	2	0	1	0
<b>Infrastructure</b>	1	0	1	0	1	0
<b>Institutional cooperation and cooperation networks</b>	19	1	5	1	5	12
<b>Labor market and employment</b>	9	0	2	0	0	7
<b>Managing natural and man-made threats, risk management</b>	1	1	0	0	1	0
<b>Regional planning and development</b>	2	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Renewable energy</b>	2	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Safety</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Social inclusion and equal opportunities</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Sustainable management of natural resources</b>	3	0	0	1	0	2
<b>Tourism</b>	57	11	21	8	20	17
<b>Waterways, lakes, and rivers</b>	1	0	1	0	0	0

Figure 18 - Projects' themes

In absolute numbers, projects concentrating on tourism have been the most popular. Other three themes - institutional cooperation and cooperation networks, community integration and common identity, and cultural heritage and arts – can be found among the most often repeated. Around a half (11 out of 23) of themes are present only in G-NoMem. These are namely: agriculture and fisheries and forestry, climate change and biodiversity, clustering and economic cooperation, education and training, evaluation systems and results, governance, partnership, health, and social services, ICT and digital society, regional planning, and development, renewable energy, and safety. These were mostly rare themes that (except for the theme of health and social services) have not been connected to more than three projects.

All groups, regardless of the involvement of members, concentrate predominantly on tourism. Tourism has a share of more than 50 % in G-MemOnly, G-MemMaj, G-MemMin, and G-MemLead (see Figure 19). Although projects focusing on tourism also have the highest share in the G-NoMem, their share (above 20 %) does not stand out compared to the groups with members. In this regard there is a visible difference between projects' including and not including members. However, there are also variabilities between groups including members. For example, G-MemMin have the smallest ratio of themes. We can partly explain this due to the small number of projects in this group in general. This logic can be tracked also in the case of G-MemMaj that as a group with 42 projects (the most from groups including members) has the largest variety of themes. Concerning G-MemLead there are again no significant deviation from the other groups.

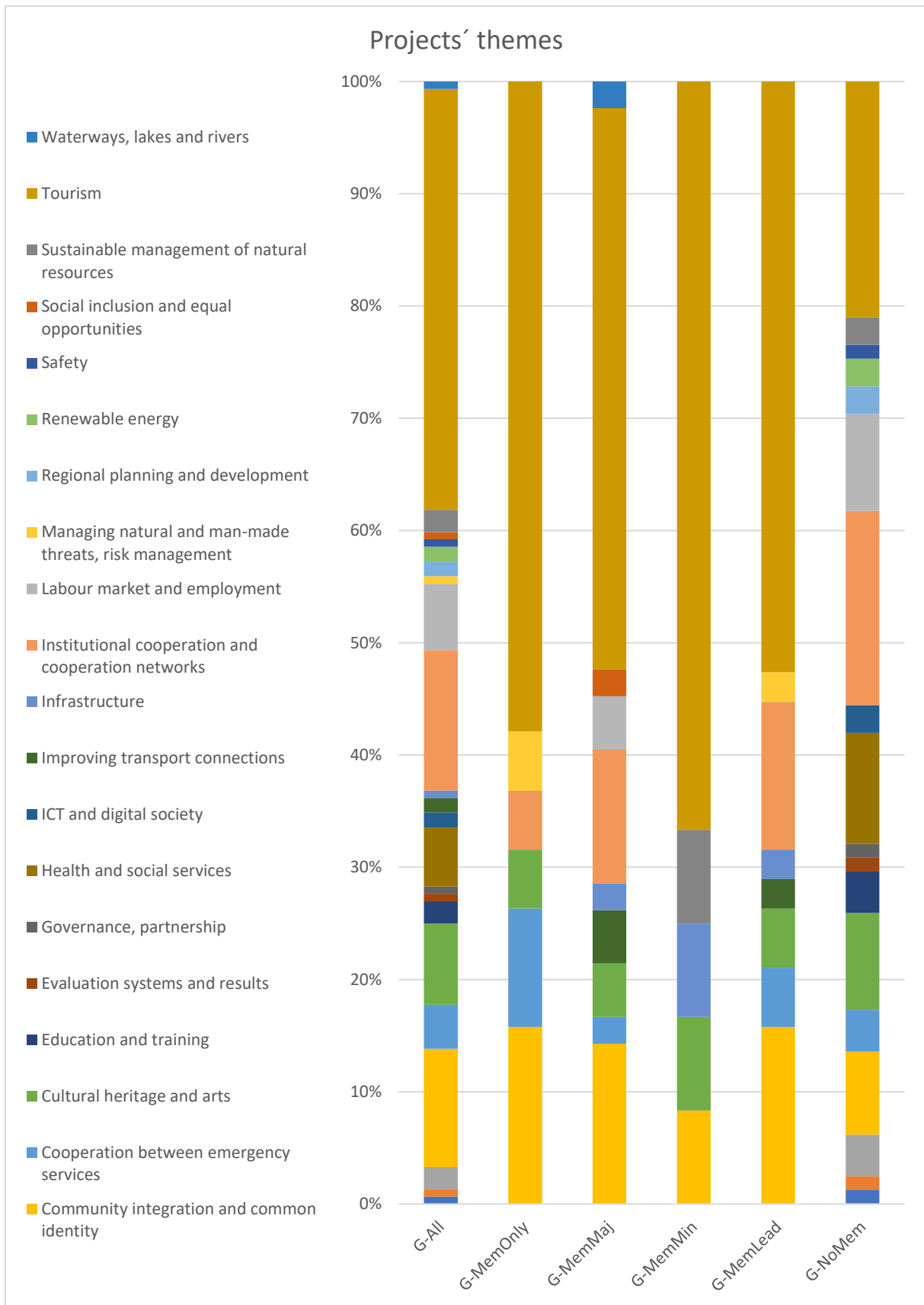


Figure 19 - Projects' themes (chart)

## 2.3 Euroregions and INTERREG V-a standard projects

This section analyzes all projects that included at least one Euroregion member. As Euroregions have different financial contexts, organizational structures, and geographical determinants, it is logical to assume that projects their members took part in will have different characteristics. In this chapter, the same variables as in the first section are subjected to the analysis starting with the number of projects in each Euroregion and further developing the participants, projects' cost, thematic objective, and theme.

### Number of projects

The number of projects that were analyzed in this section is 80. The Euroregions vary significantly in the number of projects their members participated in (see Figure 20). In this regard, the most active Euroregion was Glacensis, which outnumbered with 41 projects all other Euroregions. Praděd with 16 and Cieszyn Silesia with 15 projects are comparable. Lastly, Silesia's members participated in 8 projects in total.

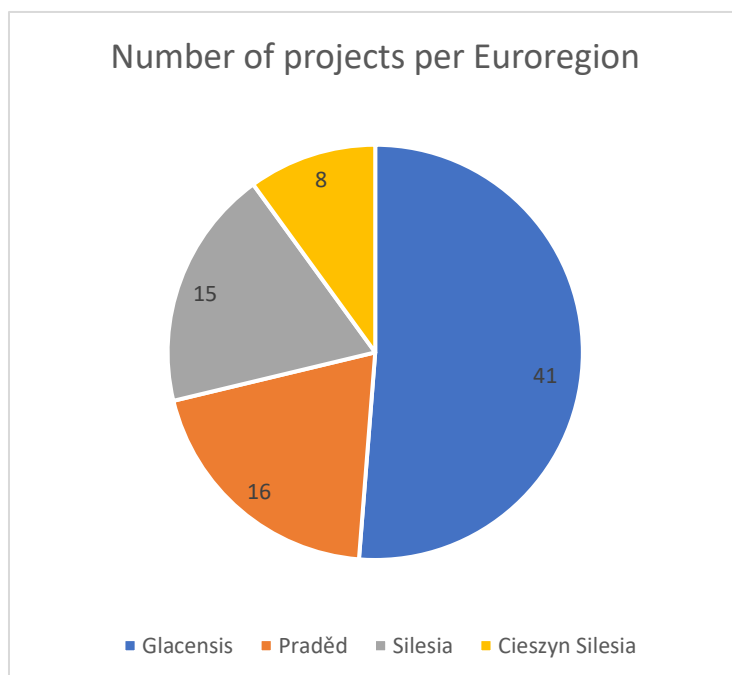


Figure 20 - Number of projects per Euroregion

If we take a glance at the distribution of previously analyzed groups per Euroregions (Figure 21), it is possible to observe that Glacensis has the highest share in each one. Only Glacensis and Cieszyn Silesia encompassed projects led by their members. Moreover, both have a very similar structure – all groups are represented relatively evenly. Praděd with the smallest amount of projects have the highest share of G-MemMin projects as well as Silesia.



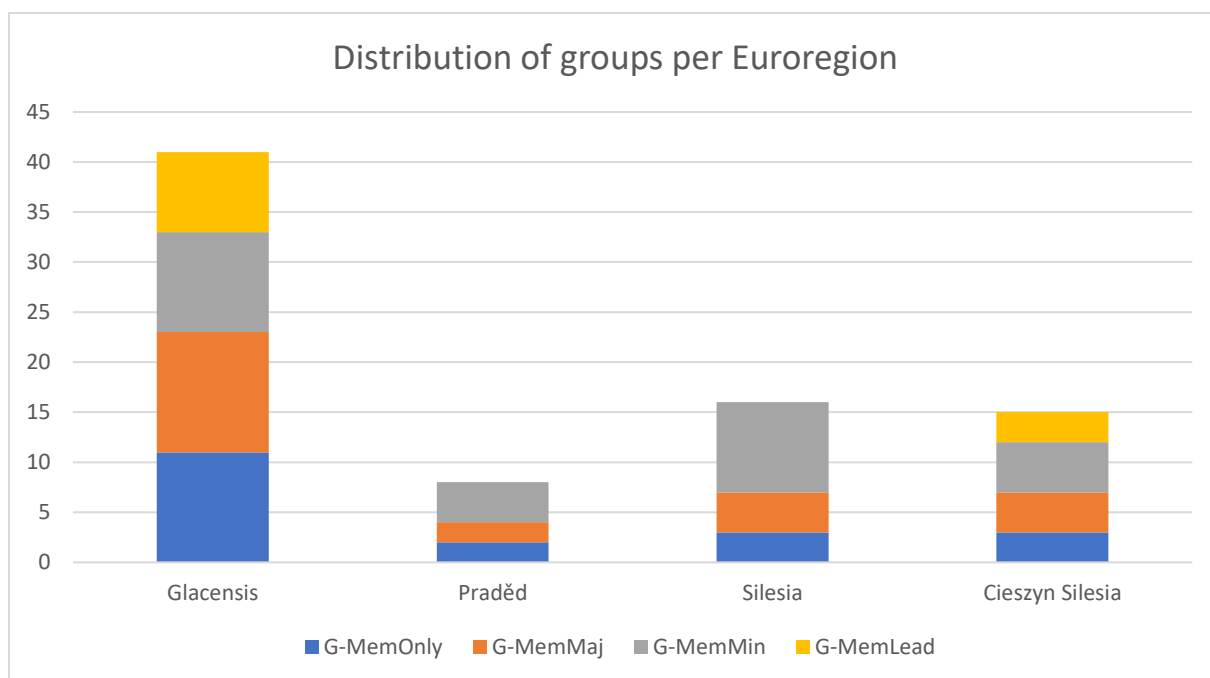


Figure 21 - Distribution of groups per Euroregion

Figure 22 provides a more nuanced view on the total number of participants. If we look at the share of participating members rather than at the absolute number, we can observe that members from Cieszyn Silesia were particularly active in INTERREG Program. Almost half of them participated in one or more projects. Less than one-third of members from the Euroregion Glacensis have engaged in INTERREG projects. As for the Euroregion Praděd and Silesia, only about 10 % of members have seized the opportunity to be part of an INTERREG project.

	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>Number of members in total (PL/CZ)</b>	147 (37/110)	115 (44/71)	79 (22/57)	31 (17/14)
<b>Participating members (CZ/PL)</b>	46 (15/31)	14 (7/7)	18 (8/10)	17 (10/7)
<b>Share of members participating in an INTERREG V-a standard project</b>	28 %	14 %	10 %	48 %
<b>Number of projects in which members have participated</b>	41	16	8	15
<b>Members per project</b>	1,12	0,88	2,25	1,13

Figure 22 - Euroregions' members

In most cases, the engagement of Czech and Polish members is balanced as Figure 23 shows. However, the disproportion between Czech and Polish members of the Euroregion Glacensis worth noticing. Another comparison can be drawn upon the average number of members per project. The Euroregion Silesia differ perceptibly as the members have the tendency to concentrate in projects – they are on average two in one project. On the other hand, with the Euroregion Praděd, we can observe the opposite trend. Its members participate individually in more projects. Both Euroregions Cieszyn Silesia and Praděd stand in the middle with one project per members in average.

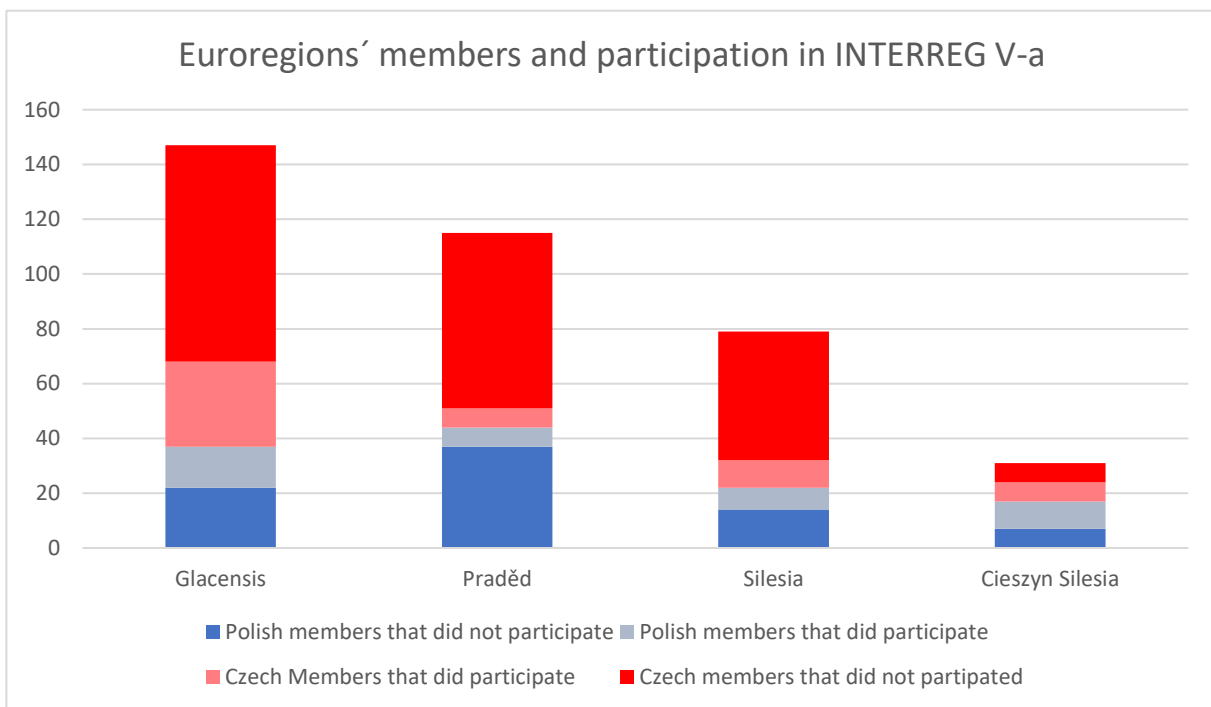


Figure 23 - Euroregions' members and participation in INTERREG V-a

## Participants

The average number of participants per project was 80. In absolute numbers, projects including Glacensis members had the highest number of participants as the number of projects was also the highest (see Figure 24). In all Euroregions the number of Czech participants with private status significantly outstands compared to those from Poland. On the contrary Polish participants with public legal status were more active in projects than the Czech ones.

	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>Participants (CZ/PL)</b>	160 (79/81)	66 (34/32)	37 (22/15)	58 (27/31)
<b>Participants with private status (CZ/PL)</b>	25 (18/7)	7 (7/0)	3 (3/0)	11 (10/1)

<b>Participants with public status (CZ/PL)</b>	135 (61/74)	59 (27/32)	34 (19/15)	47 (17/30)
<b>Number of projects</b>	41	16	8	15

Figure 24 - Participating members

On average there are 4,1 participants in projects attributed to Euroregions which is more than the average of 3,3 participants all projects included (see Figure 25). Although Glacensis had the largest number of projects and participants, when we look at the average distribution, the results are most often below average. Among all Euroregions, Silesia has the highest average numbers of participants with 4,6 of them per project. In the frame of the Euroregion Silesia, Czech participants are noticeably more active than the Polish ones.

	<b>Glacensis</b>	<b>Praděd</b>	<b>Silesia</b>	<b>Cieszyn Silesia</b>	<b>Average (all combined)</b>
<b>Average number of participants per project (CZ/PL)</b>	3,9 (1,9/2)	4,1 (2,1/2)	4,6 (2,7/1,9)	3,9 (1,8/2,1)	4,1
<b>Average number of participants with private status per project (CZ/PL)</b>	0,6 (0,4/0,2)	0,4 (0,4/0)	0,4 (0,4/0)	0,7 (0,6/0,1)	0,5
<b>Average number of participants with public status per project (CZ/PL)</b>	3,3 (1,5/1,8)	3,6 (1,7/3,9)	4,2 (2,3/1,9)	3,1 (1,1/2)	3,6

Figure 25 - Participating members (average)

For the purpose of better comparison of Euroregions concerning the number of participants in projects, three categories were established (Figure 26). If the projects had only two member it was assigned to the group S. In case there were 3-5 participants, these projects were labeled as M. Finally, if the projects gathered more than six participants it came under the letter L.

	<b>Glacensis</b>	<b>Praděd</b>	<b>Silesia</b>	<b>Cieszyn Silesia</b>
<b>S</b>	16	8	3	5
<b>M</b>	17	4	3	9
<b>L</b>	8	4	2	1

Figure 26 - Size of projects related to the number of participants

The share of L projects is comparable in each Euroregion. However, there are some noticeable differences between the share of M and S projects. In Glacensis and Cieszyn Silesia, M projects constitute more than 40 % of all projects. That contrasts with Euroregion Praděd where only 23 % of projects belonged to this category. The share of M and S projects was balanced in

Euroregions Glacensis and Silesia. In the frame of Euroregion Praděd, S projects clearly dominated whereas in Cieszyn Silesia it was M projects that took the lead (see Figure 27).

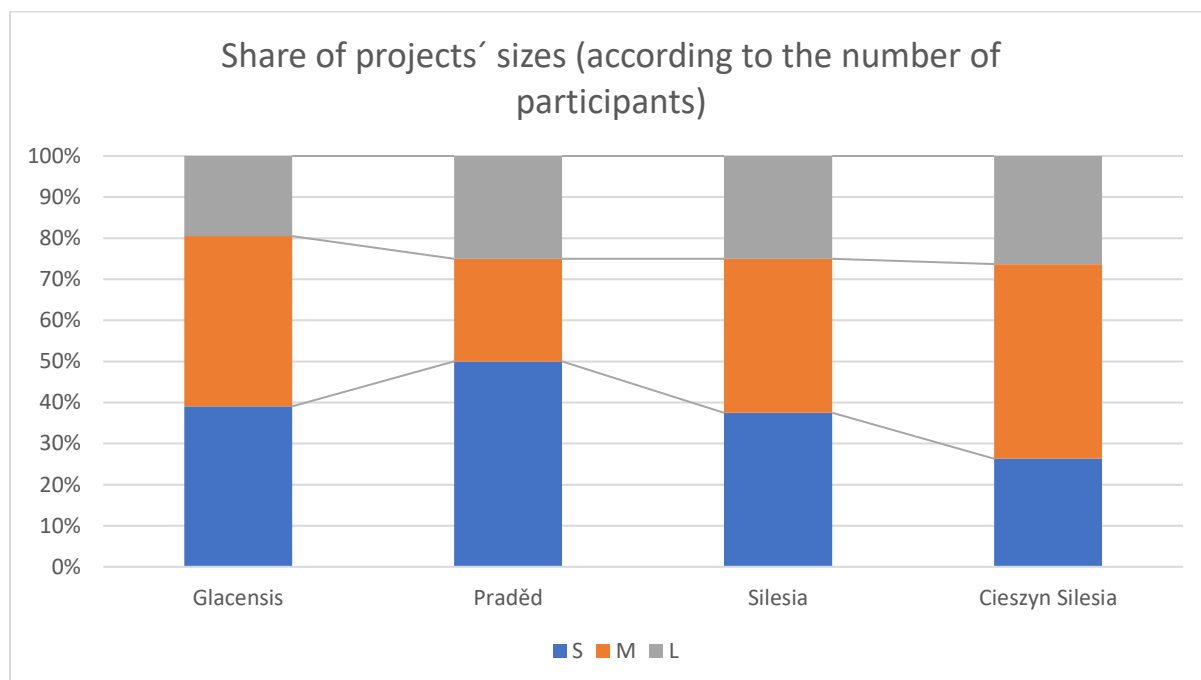


Figure 27 - Share of projects' sizes related to the number of participants

### Projects' cost

The average cost of projects that included one or more Euroregion's members is 1 629 000 €. Compared to the average cost of all projects, it is almost 300 000 € more as Figures 28 and 29 show. However, as the table and Figure show, the projects that included members from the Silesia Euroregion are remarkably below average. Projects including members from the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion have an overall average cost. On the other hand, both Glacensis and Praděd were significantly more expensive.

	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>Average cost</b>	1 882 000 €	1 889 000 €	1 116 000 €	1 391 000 €
<b>Number of projects</b>	41	16	8	15

Figure 28 - Average cost

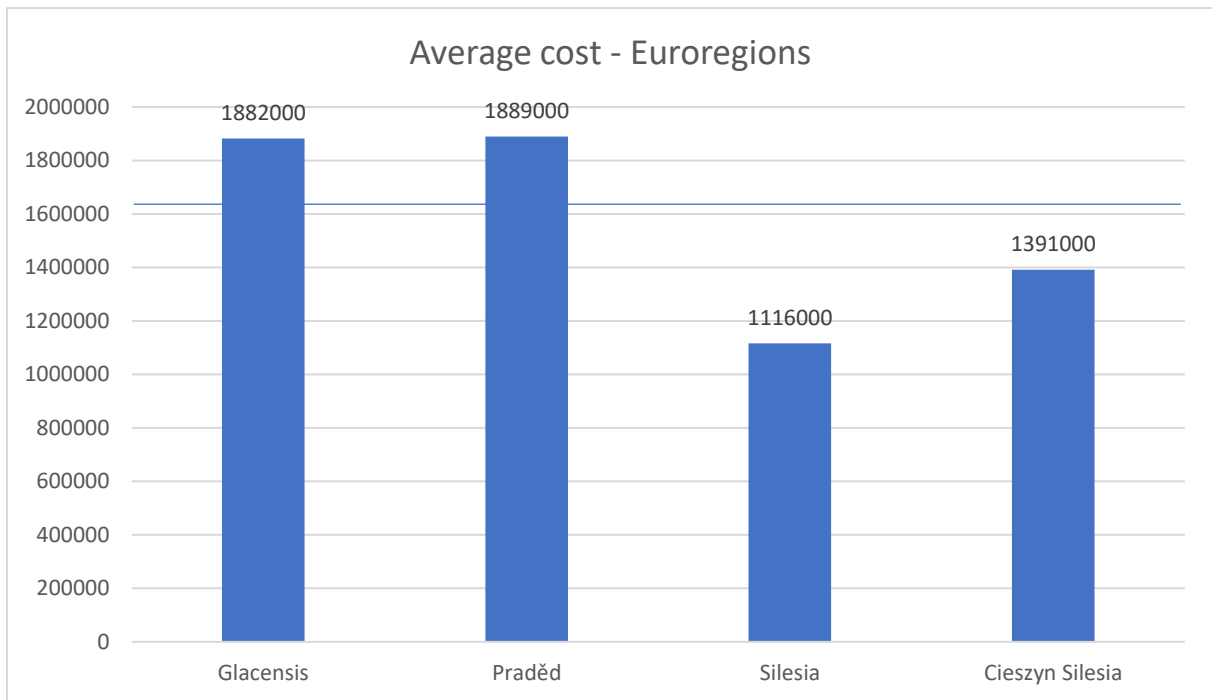


Figure 29 - Average cost (chart)

If we look closely at the share of the projects per Euroregion (Figure 30 and 31), we can note that the Euroregion Silesia differs from other Euroregions by the share of L projects. On the other hand, no XL projects were realized in the frame of this Euroregion. Euroregion Silesia also has the smallest share of S projects. We can also spot a visible disproportion of L and XL projects of Euroregion Praděd in comparison with Glacensis and Cieszyn Silesia. The proportions of M-sized projects are similar – about 25 % of M projects could be recorded in all Euroregions. Overall, if we combine L with XL projects and S with XS projects, the share of these two new merged categories would be alike in all Euroregions except for Silesia.

	Number of projects	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>XS projects</b>	2	1	1	0	0
<b>S projects</b>	17	9	3	1	4
<b>M projects</b>	18	9	4	2	3
<b>L projects</b>	28	14	3	5	6
<b>XL projects</b>	15	8	5	0	2
<b>Number of projects in total</b>	80	41	16	8	15

Figure 30 - Size of projects related to their cost

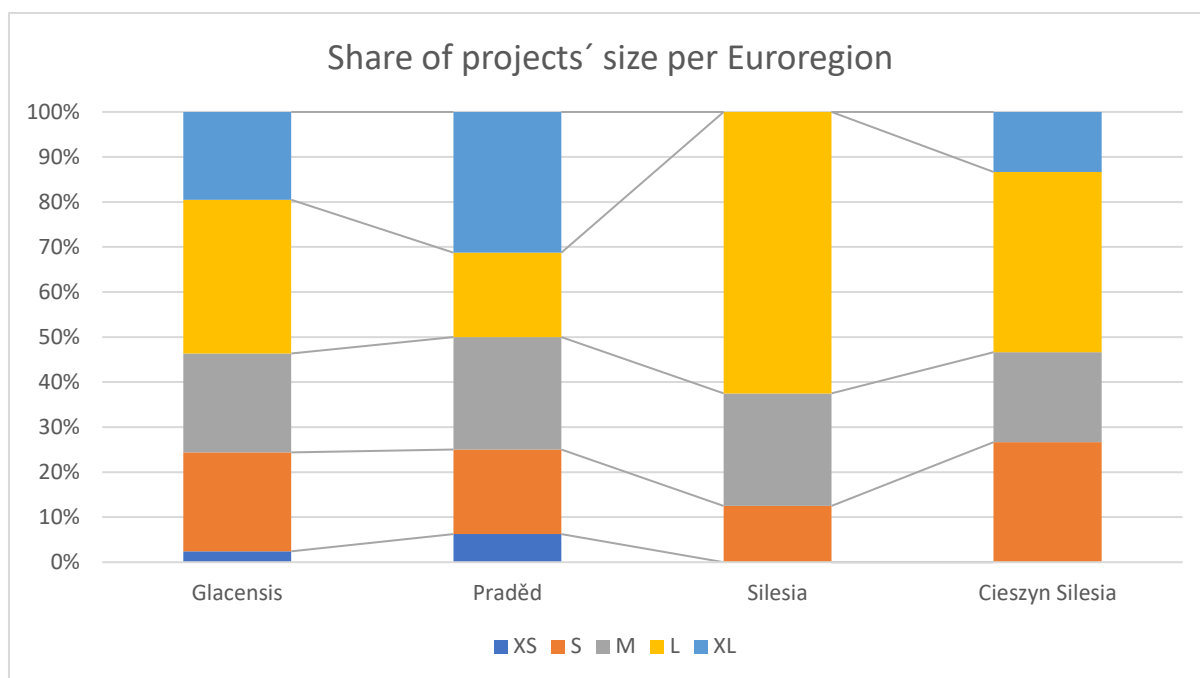


Figure 31 - Share of projects' size per Euroregion

Figure 32 analyzes the distribution of projects' sizes among Euroregions. We can observe that members of Euroregion Glacensis took part in more than 50 % projects of all categories. The Euroregion Praděd concentrates some significant shares as well. Silesia has a less considerable share in most size categories.

	Number of projects	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>XS projects</b>	2	50 %	50 %	0	0
<b>S projects</b>	17	54 %	20 %	1 %	25%
<b>M projects</b>	18	50 %	22 %	11 %	17 %
<b>L projects</b>	28	50 %	11 %	18 %	21 %
<b>XL projects</b>	15	53 %	34 %	0	13 %

Figure 32 - Distribution of projects according to their size

### Thematic objective

Unlike the first section that included all projects, the TO-Empl is dominant by the Euroregion's members (see Figure 33). The TO-Admi that prevailed in the first part of our analysis forms only ¼ of the total share. Both TO-Clim and TO-Educ are minor compared to the other two.

	In total	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>TO-Clim</b>	5	2	1	1	1
<b>TO-Empl</b>	50	28	7	6	9
<b>TO-Educ</b>	2	0	1	0	1
<b>TO-Admi</b>	23	11	7	1	4

Figure 33 - Thematic objectives (Euroregions)

When comparing the Euroregions, we can note that the TO-Empl takes the lead (see Figures 34 and 35). Only in the case of the Euroregion Praděd it is on the same level as TO-Admi. Euroregions Praděd and Cieszyn Silesia also differ from the others by having a small share of projects belonging to the TO-Educ. The TO-Clim is present in all Euroregions.

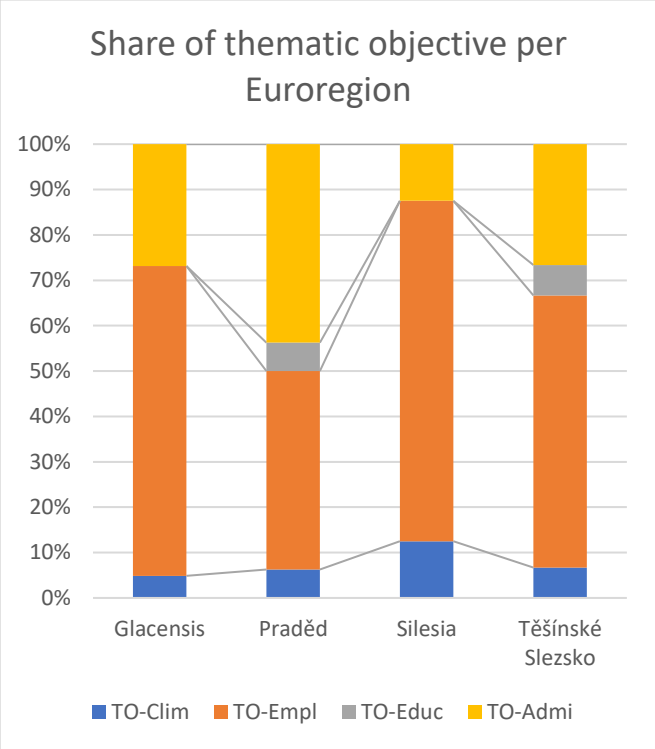
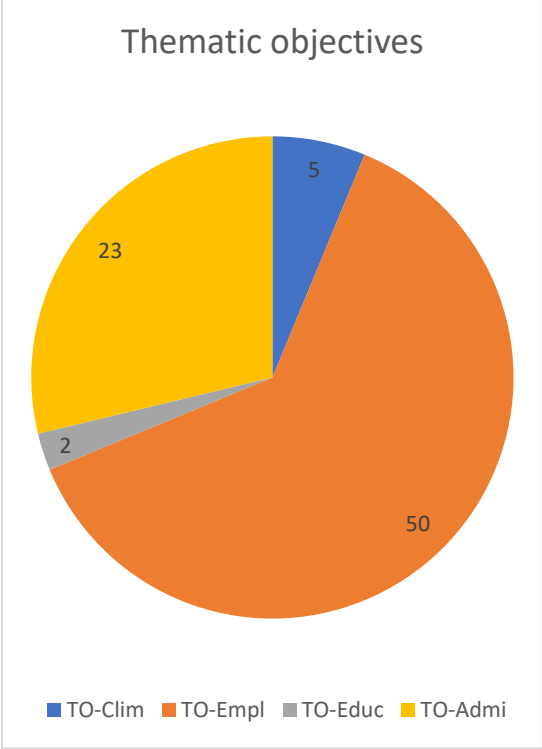


Figure 34 - Thematic objectives (chart)

Figure 35 - Share of thematic objective per Euroregion

**Theme**

Members of the Euroregions took part in projects that had 12 different themes as Figure 36 shows. By far the most popular theme is tourism. The projects also often dealt with community integration and common identity. Other popular choices of the project’s orientation were cultural heritage and arts, institutional cooperation networks, and sustainable management of natural resources. Out of 12, 3 topics (infrastructure, managing natural and man-made threats, risk management, and waterways, lakes, and rivers) were present only in one Euroregion.

	In total	Glacensis	Praděd	Silesia	Cieszyn Silesia
<b>Community integration and common identity</b>	11	5	3	0	3
<b>Cooperation between emergency services</b>	3	1	1	1	0
<b>Cultural heritage and arts</b>	6	4	2	0	0

<b>Improving transport connections</b>	2	0	0	1	1
<b>Infrastructure</b>	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Institutional cooperation and cooperation networks</b>	7	2	3	1	1
<b>Labor market and employment</b>	2	0	1	0	1
<b>Managing natural and man-made threats, risk management</b>	1	1	0	0	0
<b>Social inclusion and equal opportunities</b>	2	1	1	0	0
<b>Sustainable management of natural resources</b>	6	1	5	0	0
<b>Tourism</b>	38	26	0	5	7
<b>Waterways, lakes, and rivers</b>	1	0	0	0	1

Figure 36 - Themes (Euroregions)

All Euroregions except for Praděd have a substantive share of tourism-related projects (see Figure 37). On its side, members from Euroregion Praděd focused their projects mainly on Sustainable management of natural resources Community integration and Common identity. Only the theme of institutional cooperation and cooperation networks have been spotted in all Euroregions but has a marginal share in Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia.



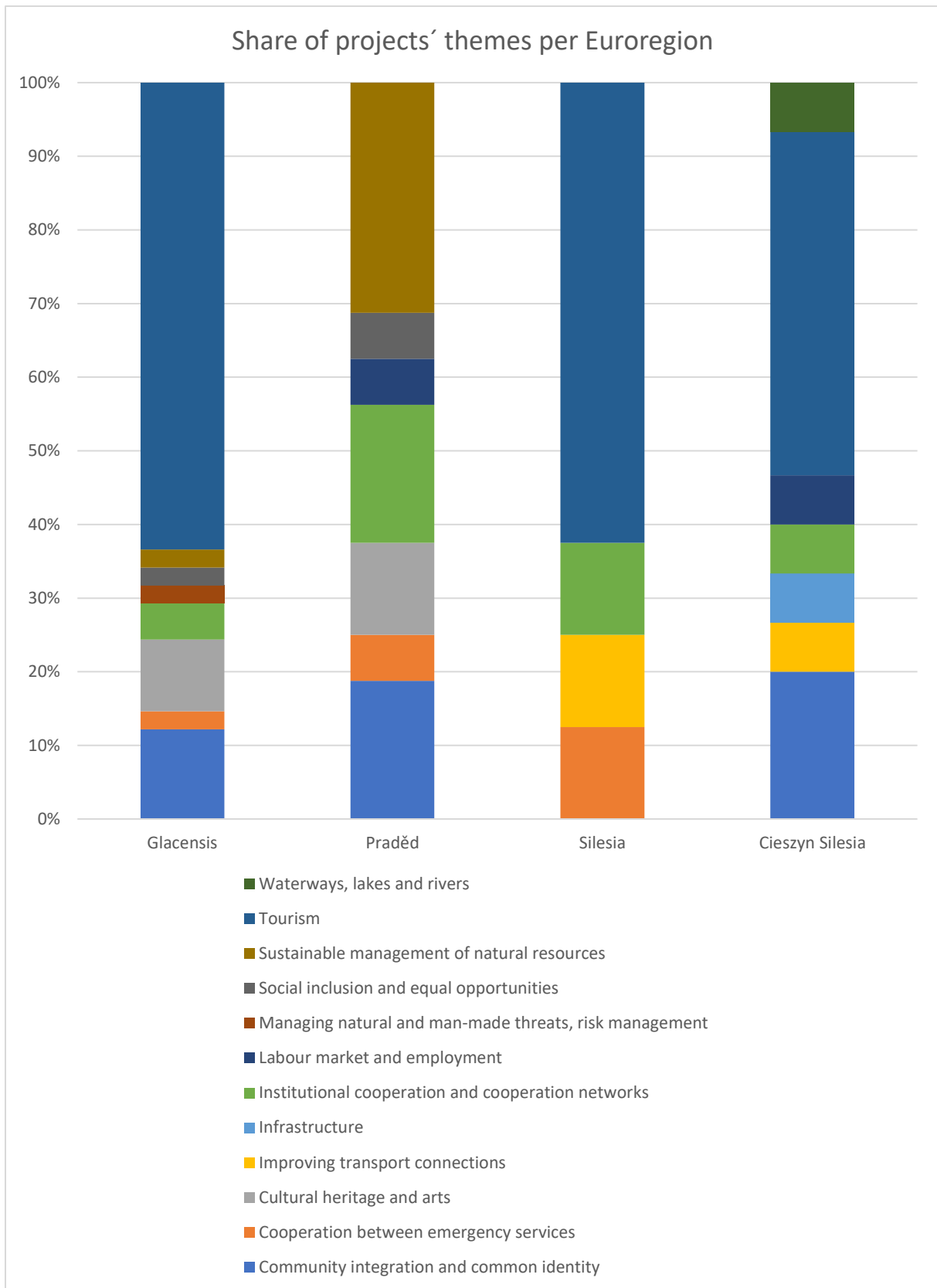


Figure 37- Share of projects' themes per Euroregion

## Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings and connects them with the hypotheses that were outlined above. Additionally, it describes trends and the implication for the field of research. Lastly, the limitation of the thesis and the findings' generalization are discussed.

### Hypothesis 1

*Projects that include Euroregions' members will have different characteristics than the ones without them. This research focuses on four of them: the cost, the number and type of participants, the theme, and the thematic objective.*

Starting with the H1 that stated projects that include Euroregions' members will have different characteristics than the ones without them. Almost half of the INTERREG V-a standard projects included at least one member, which illustrates that Euroregions are important recipients of this funding program. In most cases, members' projects often have more than one member. This implies that members usually take advantage of the Euroregional network and engage in joint projects.

When comparing the number of participants, there is a visible difference between non-members' and members' projects. The average number of participants per project is smaller than the rest of the groups, including members. There is no statistically significant difference in the number of Polish and Czech participants and participants with local and private status. However, the G-MemMin is deviating from what remains to be explained. In the case of projects' costs, more variations can be observed. The groups including members have significantly higher prices (on average over 600 000 € more, thus about 1/3 higher) than the ones without them. All groups, including at least one member, have an above-average size, whereas the G-NoMem is the only group below average. Also, the share of costly projects is much smaller in the case of the G-NonMem where the share of projects below 500 000 € dominated. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Euroregions facilitate its members to participate in and organize larger projects.

There are some observable differences in the thematic objectives as well. Groups including members tend to focus mainly on objectives related to employment and mobility. In the G-NoMem the share of projects that selected this objective is minimal. The thematic objective concentrating on enhancing administrative capacities prevails. Lastly, the members' and nonmembers' projects differ also in the theme. Although tourism was the most popular theme

of all, the share of it in groups containing members was significantly higher than in the G-NoMem. On the other hand, in the G-NoMem there was a wide variety of themes. However, this could be attributed to a large number of projects in this group compared to the others. The analysis thus confirms that projects including Euroregions' members have different characteristics than those without them. Considerable differences have been spotted, especially regarding the average cost and the number of participants. Moreover, the projects and members prioritize slightly different thematic objectives and themes.

## **Hypothesis 2**

*The difference between non-members' and members' projects will be directly proportional to the number and share of members in the project.*

With the H2, it was tested if the difference between non-members' and members' projects would be directly proportional to the number and share of members in the project. Regarding the average number of participants, all groups, including members, have similar results exempt from the G-MemMin. Also, in the context of the participants' legal status and national affiliation, this group records different shares; notably, the percentage of private participants is much higher. Moreover, all projects belonging to the G-MemMin have more than two participants. In contrast, in other members' groups, the share of these projects was about 50 %. The G-MemMin showed outstanding results also in the case of the projects' average cost. With more than 2 000 000 € per project, it was the group with the highest average price. Other groups did once gain recorded comparable results.

Groups including members were slightly different concerning the choice of the thematic objective. For illustration, the G-MemOnly has the highest share of projects related to climate change and the smallest percentage of projects coping with administration. In my opinion, this could be attributed to the advanced development of the Euroregional cooperation that is already well-equipped for further administrative collaboration. Finally, the theme of the projects varied according to the groups, but this differentiation is not linked to the number of members in the groups. All in all, the H2 was not confirmed by the analysis. The share of members in a project does not seem to affect any of the study's parameters (exempt from the thematic objective). The observed deviation of the G-MemMin could be possibly attributed to the bigger number of projects it encompassed. However, further research would be needed to clarify this matter.

### **Hypothesis 3**

*Leadership is a factor determining the quality of the project. Thus, projects with members in the lead would have different characteristics than projects that, albeit including members, are not directed by them.*

This thesis also worked with the hypothesis that leadership is a factor determining the quality of the project. Thus, projects with members in the lead would have different characteristics than projects that, albeit including members, are not directed by them (H3). The percentage of projects, including members led by one, was 64 %. The members thus often take the role of the projects. Nonetheless, the project's leadership does not imply any qualitative changes. In all parameters that were analyzed, the G-MemLead showed very similar results to the rest of the groups, including at least one member. The H3 was thus not confirmed either.

### **Hypothesis 4**

*The nature of membership may vary substantially as all Euroregions differ in size, priorities, budget, organizational structure, etc. Therefore, a variation between members' projects from different Euroregions is expected.*

Finally, this thesis concentrated on the differentiation of projects according to the Euroregions that their members belong to (H4). The first significant difference was spotted in the number of projects. Glacensis encompassed more than half of all members' projects (41 out of 80). On the contrary, Silesia members took part in only eight projects. These results correlate with the number of members in total. Thus, it would be possible to conclude that the more members a Euroregion has, the more members will participate in an INTERREG project. The differences between Euroregions are also visible in the case of participants. The share of participating members is very variable. In the case of Cieszyn Silesia, almost half of its members took part in the INTERREG project, which contrasts with Praděd and Silesia, where the share is around 10 %. The data also show differences in the average number of members per project. Members of the Euroregion Silesia tend to concentrate on projects, whereas Praděd's members usually participate in projects that include mostly non-members. Also, the size of the projects according to the number of participants slightly varies. Regarding the project's average cost, a correlation between the area and the number of inhabitants might be found. That would imply that the larger area the Euroregion covers and the higher the number of inhabitants, the more expensive the projects will be.

Regarding the thematic objective, Glacensis and Cieszyn Silesia tend to have comparable shares. However, Silesia has a significantly higher share of the TO-Emp1, and in the case of Euroregion Praděd, the TO-Emp1 does not take the lead as for the rest of the Euroregions. Cieszyn Silesia and Glacensis have once more similar statistics when it comes to the themes primarily concentrating on tourism. This theme was also popular among Silesia's members. On the other hand, the Euroregion Praděd does not include any tourism-related projects. All in all, it is possible to claim that the H4 was confirmed. However, a more detailed analysis would be needed to determine the root cause for this variation. It would be interesting to look for models of convergence in the data. For instance, Glacensis and Cieszyn Silesia are similar in many aspects, even though the total number of projects is different given the number of members.

This thesis encountered some limitations. Firstly, due to the scope of the thesis, further research would be needed in order to generalize the results. Also, it would be necessary to examine the trend for a more extended period, which would shed more light on some general trends. It would also be helpful to enlarge the studied sample because the size of the studied group significantly differed. Although steps were taken to prevent it from impacting obtained results significantly, the research would benefit from adding more subjects. The analysis would also merit a deeper statistical approach with more complex calculations. Additionally, the results cannot be used to estimate the value of the Euroregion for the development of the cross-border area because it was not the quality but rather the differentiation between members' and non-members' projects studied. I would suggest conducting studies examining the behavior of Euroregions' members in the broader context, as the Euroregion is not the only aspect influencing it.

## Conclusion

From the point of view of multilevel governance, Euroregions represent a less formal type of cooperation primarily linked to the EU regional policy. Their significance for the development of the cross-border area is often put into question. This thesis aimed to unravel if Euroregions affect how their members use EU funding by comparing members' and non-members' standard projects realized in the frame of INTERREG V-a.

This thesis focused on testing four hypotheses. The results of the analysis provided by this thesis provide evidence that membership in a Euroregion is a factor influencing the character of the projects in the frame of INTERREG V-a. Hence the H1 was confirmed. The most significant differences between projects, including members and those that do not, are the average price of the projects and the number of participants. The results imply that projects of Euroregions' members are more expensive and encompass more participants. There are also slight variations concerning the themes and thematic objectives. On the other hand, the number of members included in the projects does not seem to have such an impact, and also, the leadership was proven not to be a factor influencing the projects' character. Thus, both H2 and H3 were not confirmed.

The comparison of the four selected Euroregions (Glacensis, Praděd, Silesia, and Cieszyn Silesia) implies that the differences may also be spotted among them starting from the fact that all four have different structures, member bases, and scopes. Regarding the projects, the total number of them and the share of members that took part in at least one varies substantially. The variation in average price is the most significant and seems to correlate with the area that the Euroregion covers and the number of inhabitants. The results thus confirmed the H4.

However, it should be noted that to generalize the results, and further research would be needed. Although this thesis has encountered some limitations, it has contributed to understanding the effect of Euroregions on accessing and using EU funds. Moreover, it could serve as a basis for further comparison of Euroregions at the Czech-Polish border. In future research, it would be useful to determine the root cause of the observed differentiation between members' and non-members' projects. Also, it could be interesting to analyze in a similar way trilateral Euroregions and examine if the differences are manifesting themselves as well.

## Summary

The main focus of this thesis is Euroregions. The main goal was to explore if the Euroregions affect how their members use EU funds. In other words, do members' projects that were realized thanks to the financial support of the EU have different characteristics than non-members' projects? To answer this question, the Cluster analysis was used. It allowed the creation of groups that could be compared with each other. The thesis aimed to address four hypotheses:

H1: Projects that include Euroregions' members will have different characteristics than the ones without them. This research focuses on four of them: the cost, the number and type of participants, the theme, and the thematic objective.

H2: The difference between non-members' and members' projects will be directly proportional to the number and share of members in the project.

H3: Leadership is a factor determining the quality of the project. Thus, projects with members in the lead would have different characteristics than projects that, albeit including members, are not directed by them.

H4: The nature of membership may vary substantially as all Euroregions differ in size, priorities, budget, organizational structure, etc. Therefore, a variation between members' projects from different Euroregions is expected.

The H1 was confirmed as the projects of Euroregions' members are substantially more expensive and include more participants. Also, in terms of thematic objective and themes, some differences were spotted when comparing members' and non-members' projects. On the other hand, H2 and H3 were not confirmed as no proportional differentiation was spotted between groups of projects that included a different share of members, and the leadership did not significantly alter the analyzed variables. Finally, the H4 was confirmed because the total number of projects and the percentage of members participating in at least one varies substantially from Euroregion to Euroregion. The variation in average price is the most significant and seems to correlate with the area that the Euroregion covers and the number of inhabitants.

All in all, this thesis aspired to enhance the understanding of the effect of Euroregions on accessing and using EU funds. Moreover, the analysis presented in this research could serve as a basis for further comparison of Euroregions at the Czech-Polish border.

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