

CHANGES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ALONG THE HUNGARIAN-SLOVENIAN BORDER IN THE 20TH CENTURY

At the end of the 20th century the integration processes fastened in Europe. Between 1920-1990 the dividing role of the borders were dominant in Central-Europe, but in the last decade its bounding factor as well.

The new borders of Hungary cut the previous administrative devices putting an end to the traditional cooperations. Along the Hungarian - Yugoslavian border mainly centralisation determined the changes of the administration system. The 1950 and 1970 laws and development concepts forced a lot of settlements to administrative units within which the development sources were located to the central settlements.

The self government act was born in 1990 which allowed the settlements to create voluntary associations and separateness as well.

Along the Prekmurje area given to Yugoslavia between the two World Wars the administrative centre was Murszombat. In 1928 8 smaller devices were created, than in 1929 the Prekmurje area was enclosed to the Drava administrative area having Maribor as its centre. After the 2nd World War Murszombat and Lendva functioned as centres up till 1999.

In the separate Slovenian state at the end of the century a decentralized process started due to which new central units were organised.

Along the Hungarian-Slovenian border the administrative changes taken place in the last decade can help the connection to the regional and micro-regional development programs of the EU.

Keywords: the Mura region, administrative centers, administrative changes

SPREMINJANJE UPRAVNIH ODNOSOV V SLOVENSKO-MADŽARSKEM OBMEJNEM PODROČJU V 20. STOLETJU

Konec 20. stoletja zaznamujejo pospešeni integracijski procesi v Evropi. Med 1920 in 1990 je prevladovala razdvajajoča vloga meja v Srednji Evropi, v zadnjem desetletju pa tudi povezujoča.

Nove madžarske meje so preselele prejšnje upravne enote in zavrele tradicionalno sodelovanje. Ob madžarsko-jugoslovanski meji je centralizacija določila spremembe v administrativnem sistemu. Zakoni in razvojni koncepti iz obdobja med 1950 in 1970 so številna naselja potisnili v upravne enote, znotraj katerih je bil razvoj centraliziran.

Leta 1990 je bil sprejet odlok o samoupravi, ki je tem naseljem dopustil svobodno povezovanje, kakor tudi ločevanje.

V Prekmurju, ki je bilo Jugoslaviji dodeljeno med obema vojnoma, je bilo upravno središče Murska Sobota. Leta 1928 je nastalo 8 manjših enot, potem pa je bilo leta 1929 Prekmurje priključeno dravski upravni enoti z Mariborom kot središčem. Po drugi svetovni vojni sta bili do 1999 središči Murska Sobota in Lendava. V samostojni Sloveniji se je ob koncu stoletja začel proces decentralizacije, kar je sprožilo nastanek novih upravnih enot.

Upravne spremembe ob madžarsko slovenski meji v zadnjem desetletju lahko pripomorejo k vključevanju v regionalne in mikroregionalne razvojne programe EU.

Ključne besede: Prekmurje, upravna središča, upravne spremembe

As a result of political and economic changes in the last decades of the 20th century, European integrational processes have sped up. Therefore it has become necessary to investigate those borderland areas (e.g. along the Hungarian-Slovenian border), which became peripheral zones of the state bodies after World War I. For seven decades it was the isolating function of the border that was expressed in these regions, but in the third millennium the link functions have strengthened. Between members of the European Union, Euro-regional co-operations and developments have been initiated, and the borderland settlements can now take advantage of these (Figure 1).

The borders that were created between Hungary and its neighbours after World War I operated as sharp separating lines, cutting into two lands, administrative units, and disrupting traditional social and economic connections.

The civilian administrative system was established in Hungary after the Austrian-Hungarian reconciliation was signed in 1867 and was regulated by a series of acts and resolutions. The process was completed in 1886 when already a modern transportation infrastructure was present to assist the operation of public administration units. An intensive relation system was established between the public administration centres and the settlements belonging to them, which was later broken up because of the changes to national borders.

The border between Hungary and the Serbo-Croat-Slovenian Monarchy crossed the territories of Vas and Zala counties, between Felsőszölnök (Gornji Senik) and Kerkaszentkirály. As a result of public administrative reforms and acts, before World War I there were 10 districts and 2 towns with settled council (Kőszeg and Szombathely) in county Vas, and 13 districts and 2 such towns (Nagykanizsa and Zalaegerszeg) in county Zala. As a consequence of border changes, both counties suffered considerable territorial loss. Almost the entire Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) district in county Vas with its 111 settlements went to the Serbo-Croat-Slovenian Monarchy, as well as 11 villages from the Szentgotthárd (Monošter) district. County Zala lost the entire Csáktornya (Čakovec) and Perlak (Prelog) districts, together with 40 settlements and the district capital from the Alsólendva (Lendava) district (Figure 2). The new border crossed two railway lines and more than ten public roads, and created 24 dead-end villages on the two sides (Majdán J. 1996). When drawing the new borders, no ethnic aspects (villages with Slovenian population remained in Hungary, and Hungarian settlements went to the new South-Slavic state) or educational and religious connections were considered.



NEW BORDERS – NEW SITUATION

The creation of the new borders had a dual effect in Hungary's public administration. To substitute for lost district centres new ones were designated, and counties that were cut through by borders were merged, with their former names remaining (Figure 3).

In Vas county, villages left from the original Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) district were attached to the mutilated Szentgotthárd (Monošter) district, and this new unit then operated as the Szentgotthárd-Muraszombat district, with Szentgotthárd (Monošter) functioning as district centre. In Zala county, the losing of Alsólendva (Lendava) brought about a serious situation, because out of the 13 district centres of the county, in addition to the towns, only Keszthely, Tapolca and Alsólendva were fully functional public administrative centres with both land registry and district court operating in them. After a temporary period lasting several years, finally Lenti became the centre of this mutilated district, with the settling of specialist officials and the establishment of necessary institutions soon being started. Nevertheless, this town failed to replace the lost Alsólendva (Lendava).

It was also necessary to re-organise the former joint notary offices along the border. New centres were Gáborjánháza in the Hetés region, and Magyarszombatfa in the Őrség region. These settlements took over the public administrative role of Dobronak (Dobrovnik) and Pártosfalva (Prosenjakovci), respectively, which both went to Slovenia.

Even as early as during the border-defining negotiations and associated field surveys in the Serbo-Croatian-Slovenian Monarchy, the name »Muravidék« (Mura region) was used for the area falling between the river Mura and the new border, and it was treated as one public administrative unit. Muraszombat (Murska Sobota), with Slovenian majority, became the centre. Soon the officials were replaced: Hungarian civil servants, teachers and priests lost their positions, and only those were allowed to stay who were born in the Mura region and spoke the local Slovenian dialect (Göncz L. 2001). Functions of a registry office were taken over by parishes, with the possibility of secular marriage being wiped out in this region. The Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) and Alsólendva (Lendava) courts continued to operate with temporary regulation until 1922, then were brought under the supremacy of the Maribor District Court. This system continued until 1938 when a district court was established also in Muraszombat (Murska Sobota). The re-organisation of the public administration was a multi-stage process. First a joint notary office was created in 1928, comprising 8 villages of which 3 had mixed Hungarian-Slovenian population. One year later ban's districts were established in the south-Slav state and the Mura region was grouped with the Drava Ban's

District having Maribor as centre. Together with this action, the local governments were deprived of all forms of their former independence. (These measures were taken due to an internal crisis in the Yugoslavian state.)

As a consequence of new state borders, connections in religious life also changed. In the analysed region, Roman Catholics are found in the Hetés and the Vend regions, whereas people in the Őrség are Lutheran and Calvinist. The religious centre of the Hetés villages used to be Dobronak (Dobrovnik), but after their separation, the Catholic believers built a church and a vicarage in Gáborjánháza (Mohos M. 2000). In the Vend region, the Catholic believers in Ritkaháza became separated from the parish of Nagydolinc (Veliki Dolenci). The majority of Calvinists in the Őrség remained on the Hungarian side of the border, and could practise their religion in the churches of Velemér and Kerca. The majority of Lutherans were found in villages on the Slovenian side of the border (Őrihodos/Hodos, Domonkosfa/Domanjševci, Bükkalja), but some remained in settlements on the Hungarian side. Members of this denomination had built their church in Őrihodos (Hodos) at the end of the 19th century and the one in Domonkosfa (Domanjševci) in 1902, but believers in Őrbajánháza could not go to these after the borders were changed. On both sides of the border long time had to pass until life could adapt to the altered conditions.

From autumn 1938 until spring 1941 Hungary's borders changed every year. The Mura region once again belonged to Hungary between spring 1941 and autumn 1944. During these three and a half years, the original conditions were restored in public administration: Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) and the settlements belonging to it went to Vas county, while the villages of the Alsólendva (Lendava) district became part of Zala county.

At the end of World War II, in accordance with the armistice agreement, the Hungarian Temporary National Government invalidated the former acts and resolutions concerning state border modifications. Although significant colonisation programmes were implemented in the Hungarian-inhabited territories of the neighbouring countries between the two world wars, Hungary's state frontiers continued to be different from the ethnic borders (Mohos M. 1998.) The public administrative division of the country was harmonised with the Trianon border lines by the Prime Minister's »4330/1945 ME« resolution, the mutilated counties were merged, and, with regard to geographic factors and traffic connections, territorial dispositions were also ordered. »Dispositions itemised in point 29 should have been carried out by 31 December 1945, but as it is obvious from the List of Settlements released in 1947, the order was not fully executed« (Hajdú Z. 2001. p171).

Between 1945-1948 several concepts were formulated for the reformation of public administration, but true changes occurred only after the transformation of the political system. The number of counties was reduced from 25 to 19, those of the districts from 150 to 140. »Various aspects were considered when formulating the new district territories. In the case of districts along the western and southern state borders, frontier control had the highest priority. When formulating district borders and designating their centres, the results of centrum vs. attraction zone studies performed by the Central Bureau of Statistics were utilised, but the structures revealed were not used as an absolute basis.« (Hajdú Z. 2001. pp. 184-185)

Neither the public administration reform in 1949-1950 nor the »Council Act I.« announced on 19th May 1950 caused important changes at district or county level along the Hungarian-Slovenian border. With unchanged territory, the Szentgotthárd (Monoštor) district remained part of Vas county, and the Lenti district, enlarged with the western part of the obliterated Nova district, continued to function as part of Zala county. The independence and belonging relations of the settlements changed considerably between 1950-1952. (The grouping or unifying of villages that were formerly disjunct in this region composed mostly of small villages was started even before the birth of the Council Act: between 1939-1950 Bajánsenye was created by merging Dávidháza, Kotormány, Senyeháza and Órbajánsenye, and in 1942 Kercaszomor was born from the fusion of Kerca and Szomor.) Ritkaháza (Ritkarovci) and Permise (Verica) were also interesting cases in the Vend region. In 1944 these two mini-villages, with 202 and 183 inhabitants, respectively, were fused under the name Vashegyalja. Two years later Ritkaháza (Ritkarovci) separated itself, and Permise used the name Vashegyalja until 1950 when the two villages were united again under the temporary name Ritkaháza (Ritkarovci) which was replaced a year later with Kérvölgy. In most of the villages separate village councils were erected, and only those mini-villages were brought under the direction of common village councils which, even in the civil system, used to belong to joint notary offices (e.g. Orfalu-Andovci, Gödörháza, Szíjártóháza, Zalasombatfa, etc.).

From the point of view of the borderland settlements, a confidential order in 1950 by the Minister of the Interior and a settlement developmental programme connected to the first five-year plan bore more importance than the Council Act I. According to the ministerial decree a 15 km wide zone along the Yugoslavian border could be accessed only by those bearing a border-zone pass. In the settlement developmental programme the settlements were grouped in 9 categories, with this classification determining the access to the developmental resources of the central budget. 47.47% of the settlements in the country were placed in the III/C group identified as having no access to the central financial resources and perceived as ones to be wound up in the long run (Figure 3).

With a few exceptions the studied borderland villages were destined for reduction, with one argument being their low population sizes. (The programme supported the development of settlements hosting more than 2000 inhabitants.) As a consequence of the ministerial decree and the settlement developmental programme, intensive emigration started from these villages, with mostly the young, active people being affected.

After the implementation of the Council Act I, only minimal changes occurred in the public administration of the region. Until 1971 the relation system of the settlements functioned mostly like two decades before, but in 1971 two determining changes occurred.

One was the Council Act III, with important components being the transformation of district councils into district offices, the reinforcement of settlement councils and the establishment of large-village common councils. The other element was the production of the National Concept for Settlement Network Development (Hungarian abbreviation: OTK) which ranked the settlements of the country (including the capital and the settlements of the Budapest agglomeration) in 11 groups, based on their central roles. 64.54% of the settlements went to the »Other« category with no central importance, but now these were no longer considered as ones to be wound up.

According to the OTK, settlements along the Hungarian-Slovenian border were declared as lower-level centres (seats of the large-village common councils, e.g. Rédics), and the centralisation of still existing institutions of lower-level provisioning was started at the council seats. These fusions had rational (e.g. financial) reasons, but traditional relations were disregarded when forming these units, and too many settlements were brought under the direction of a single centre (e.g. Rédics had supremacy over seven villages). Due to the discontinuation of lower age education in primary schools and because of the bad traffic connections, families with children moved to the seat settlements and small towns. As a consequence of these migration processes, the population of borderland villages continued to decrease (in 1990 the population of 10 settlements out of 21 was below 200, with 5 of them having less than 100 people).

Among the settlements with central roles, situated nearest to the villages, Lenti was classified a medium-level centre, and Szentgotthárd (Monošter) medium-level partial centre in which classification, instead of the institutional network, the number of settlements belonging to the district was the crucial factor.

In the OTK concept six planning and economic districts were established, matching the county borders. The territory of Transdanubia was divided into a northern and a southern district the border between which coincided with the border separating Vas and Zala counties, thus cutting into two also the Hungarian-Slovenian border (Figure 4).

In 1984 another reform proceeded in Hungarian public administration, during which the system of districts was discontinued, with their roles taken over by town and city vicinities. Along the Hungarian-Slovenian border, the former Lenti district was transformed into the Lenti vicinity with identical territory, whereas the former Szentgotthárd (monošter) district became a smaller Szentgotthárd vicinity. Villages in the Őrség were attached to the Körmend vicinity (Figure 5). A positive consequence of the reform was that the former large villages Lenti and Szentgotthárd (Monošter) became towns.

In Yugoslavia the former public administration system remained after World War II, until the early 1960s. The establishment of the Yugoslavian self-administrational system meant the complete sovereignty of self-administrational units, with no other levels being intercalated between the state and the self-governments. In the area of the Mura region, two »Község« territories were established, this unit corresponding to district level in the Hungarian system. In the former Alsólendva (Lendava) district the Lendva (Lendava) »Község« was formed in 1963, to which 34 settlements belonged in addition to the centre, including the Hungarian villages of the Őrség and the Vend regions. 17 of the villages in the »Község« were dominantly Hungarian, while the remaining 17 had Slovenian population. One third of the inhabitants of Lendva (Lendava) were Hungarian, and two third were Slovenian and »Yugoslavian« (the latter category including all those being neither Hungarian nor Slovenian). Settlements in the northern Mura region became part of the Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) »Község« with predominantly Slovenian population.

THE PAST DECADE ON THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER...

The political and economic changes in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th century have considerably changed the life of the various countries. The self-governmental reform of public administration in Hungary, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia on the other side of the border including the formation of the sovereign Slovenian state, have caused an entirely new situation in the settlements themselves. The modification of the Constitution in 1990, and the Act LXV./1990 provided the new legal framework in which the multi-level public administration survived in Hungary (capital, county, town, village), but local governments with equal basic rights were formed. The citizens practise local governing by electing their board of local representatives for a term of 4 years. When formulating the Act of Local Governments, the basis were the Hungarian self-governmental traditions and the European Charta of Self-Governments accepted in 1985 by the European Council.

Important elements of the Act are that the local governments can freely undertake duties, and that they are financed from the central budget (its form being the per-capita ratio) but also have other sources of income (a certain proportion of personal income taxes born at the place, automobile taxes, trade taxes, and other taxes collected by the local government, e.g. the estate tax).

Several elements related with the operation of local governments are determined in the Act by the number of inhabitants: settlements with populations smaller than 1000 people form and maintain joint notary offices of a certain number of villages, to fulfil their administrative duties. However, places with fewer inhabitants can still establish their own administrative office provided that a qualified notary is employed. The compulsory duties of the local governments of settlements are: settlement development and structuring, protection of the natural and built environment, husbandry of flats, water management and rainfall drainage, sewage system management, supply of healthy drinking water, primary education, basic health and social duties, illumination of public areas, maintenance of local public roads and cemeteries, local fire prevention and public security, enforcing the rights of national and ethnic minorities.

The Local Government Act has allowed the association of local governments, regulated the conditions of new village establishment and town declaration. The amendment of the Act, having been in force since 1994, contained minor corrections in line with the experience and demands that arose during the four years of operation. For example, it became possible to form local sub-governments, and for local governments to support civil organisations. From the point of view of those with non-Hungarian mother tongue living in the country, the Minority Act passed in 1933 had great importance, since for 13 minorities it has become possible to form minority self-governments. (The Act has great significance also because minorities still do not have parliamentary representation in Hungary.)

As a result of the legal regulation, connections between villages along the Hungarian-Slovenian border also transformed. The small and micro-villages, the population of which kept declining as a result of natural decrease, formed joint notary offices which contained settlement associations partly similar to and partly different from the compositions of the former village common councils. Joint notary offices were formed in Apátistvánfalva (other members: Kétvölgy and Orfalu), in Bajánsenye (other members: Kercaszomor, Magyarszombatfa, Velemér), in Szentgyörgyvölgy (together with Márokföld), in Tornyiszentmiklós (together with Dobri), and in Rédics. The Rédics joint notary office is one of such Hungarian public administration units that contain the highest number of settlements: 11 villages belonged to it, all but the seat itself being micro-villages. Some villages along the Hungarian-Slovenian border have become members of joint notary offices that were located off the border: Kerkaszentkirály went to the

Csörnyeföld joint notary office, Nemesnép to Csesztreg, Felsőszölnök (Gornji Senik) to Alsószölnök (Dolnji Senik). The latter is a specially interesting case, because the seat village is also situated in the borderland, but along the Hungarian-Austrian frontier. Several of the villages in the region have used their rights to separate themselves from the original associations formed back in 1990, and established new ones (This has happened to the Bajánsenye joint notary office, of which Magyarszombatfa separated itself in 1994 and founded a new notary office, and two years later, together with Velemér also separating, established their common joint notary office. In 1997 Kercaszomor also left the Bajánsenye joint notary office, founding its own. By this action the group of settlements, which was forced into a common administrative unit by the OTK and the Council Act III, now broke up.

The importance of collaboration between settlements is in the basic duties specified in the Self Government Act. In small and micro-villages the family doctor surgery system, the kindergarten and the schools can operate only if several villages collaborate. Joint operation is necessary also for the sake of the drinking water and sewage system, for water management and for the protection of the natural environment, since the borders of settlements do not coincide with landscape boundaries.

After the approval of the Minority Act, Slovenian minority self-governments were established in Apátistvánfalva (Števanovci), in Felsőszölnök (Gornji Senik), in Kétvölgy (Virica-Ritkarovci), and in Orfalu (Androvci). Another minority found in the region is that of the Gypsies, with larger populations living in villages of the southern parts of the border section.

The villages, using the possibilities of forming associations, entered the Őrség-Göcsej-Hetés Regional Developmental Association the purpose of which is the development of tourism, especially rural tourism and eco-tourism. The objectives of this association are well justified by the fact that due to the borderland situation and to natural circumstances here, there were no large industrial and agricultural plants in the area, thus nature could remain intact, relative to other parts of the country.

...AND ON THE OTHER SIDE.

On the other side of the border, first time in history, an independent Slovenian state was established following the disintegration of former Yugoslavia: a referendum was held on 23rd December 1990, and the country was declared on 26th June the following year. Two historically »indigenous« ethnic groups were officially recognised within the territory of Slovenia: that of the Italians and the

Hungarians, both being supported by the state, on the grounds of positive discrimination. The centre of Hungarians in Slovenia is Lendva (Lendava), with the press (the weekly »Népújság« and the Muratáj monthly paper), radio and television studios being concentrated there. The Hungarian Ethnic Cultural Institute also operates there, coordinating relations between Hungarians in Slovenia and the mother country, publishing books in Hungarian, organising conferences, cultural events and exchange programmes. The constitution of the independent Slovenian state and the Public Administration Act (SzK 67/94. section 4) establish that the actions and affairs in public administration as well as the release of official documents must be done in Slovenian and in the language of the ethnic communities, and it is allowed for each ethnic community to delegate 1 representative into the Parliament. The regulations make it possible in the mixed ethnicity Mura region that bilingual educational institutions operate, whereas in the seaside region the Italian community can have education in their mother tongue. For these Italians learning Slovenian as a foreign language is compulsory but the special subjects are taught in their mother tongue. The reason for the difference between the two minorities in respect of the language of education is said to be the difference between the historic background of the Italian and the Hungarian communities.

In the years after Slovenia became independent, the elements of the public administration of the Former Yugoslavia continued to operate in the country, including the Mura region: Muraszombat (Murska Sobota) »Község« and Lendva (Lendava) »Község«. It was in the very last years of the 20th century that, as a result of a decentralisation process, the »Községs« could transform into smaller public administrative units uniting only a few settlements. In the organisation of the new »Község« system ethnic aspects as well as land attributes were considered: in the northern part of the large Lendva (Lendava) »Község« with mixed ethnic composition Slovenian and mixed population administrative units were established. The majority of the »Községs« were set up in 1999; among them Kobilje (Kebele) is purely Slovenian, whereas the rest (Sal - Šalovci, Hodos - Őrihodos, Dobronak - Dobrovnik) have mixed population, and still there is another mixed »Község« just being set up, with Szentlászló (Motvarjevci) being the centre (Figure 6). The determining motivation in forming mixed ethnicity administrative units is financial, since, because of the positive discrimination, the governmental support is larger in places where there are also Hungarians. As a result of these changes Dobronak (Dobrovnik) and Hodos (Őrihodos) regained their central roles, and Lendva (Lendava), though the number of the settlements associated with it decreased, remained the centre for small and micro-villages in its neighbourhood. For this small town, unlike for Muraszombat (Murska Sobota), the existence of the Hungarian Centre of nation-wide importance is a benefit, because the scientific

and cultural intellectuals from not only the Mura region but also from entire Slovenia and even Hungary are involved in its activities.

The corresponding organisation for the Institute of Hungarian Ethnic Culture in Slovenia is the Slovenian Cultural Centre operating in Szentgotthárd (Monošter), with similar importance for the Slovenians of Hungary. The independent radio station of the Slovenian people in Hungary, i.e. Radio Monošter, broadcasts from this Centre which was inaugurated in 1998. It is the Centre to provide the background for organising Slovenian cultural life in Hungary, sometimes arranging festivals. Apart from this institution in Szentgotthárd, it is the Savaria Museum in Szombathely and the Slovenian Department of the local Teacher Training Faculty where scientific research is done for exploring the characteristics of this ethnic minority.

The political and public administrative changes in the last decade of the 20th century established the circumstances for borderland settlements to reorganise their traditional relations. Local governments have initiated sister connections with settlements across the border, they can finance the meetings between their cultural or sport clubs. It is by this way how the traditional relations between the settlements of the Órség and Hetés regions along the Hungarian-Slovenian border were re-established: between Hodos (Őrihodos) and Magyarszombatfa, Morvarjevci (Szentlászló) and Szentgyörgyvölgy, and between the two peripheral small-scale centres Dobronak (Dobrovnik) and Csesztreg.

TOWARDS THE UNION

After the political and economic transition process, European accession is the greatest task for Central-European states. The Union has precisely defined the requirements the candidate countries should meet. Among these, harmonisation with the Union's public administration system is an important one, and for Hungary the establishment of regional units is crucial. The regional self-government »is a body within the individual states, with elected boards, placed between the central and the local public authorities, which operates on the basis of subsidiarity (...) The regions should have the possibility to shape their interregional and cross-border relations. The regions also have the right to join in the work performed by various European organisations.« (Hajdú Z. 2001. p279)

It was in 1998 that Hungary's National Spatial Developmental Concept was born, with a new regional division (Figure 7). Where this division is significantly different from the former one is just Transdanubia: it is divided into three regions, with Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala counties grouped with the West-Transdanubian one. This division has caused much debate because the two »bet-

rer-developed« counties are unwilling to accept Zala county. However, a benefit can be that by this way the Austrian-Hungarian and the Slovenian-Hungarian borderlands belong to the same administrative region. The advantage of being a borderland area is that together with the neighbouring country's borderland regions they can be parts of Euro-regions. An especially favourable feature of the studied region is that it is the border area of three countries of which one is a member and two are candidate countries. Euro-regional co-operation here can have a special advantage in that these regions of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia that can now form a Euro-region used to belong to a single economic-political unit for hundreds of years, and the inhabitants have lived in similar cultural environments. The nine decades of separation will hopefully fade into a bad dream.