

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND CROATIA IN ISTRIA AFTER 1991

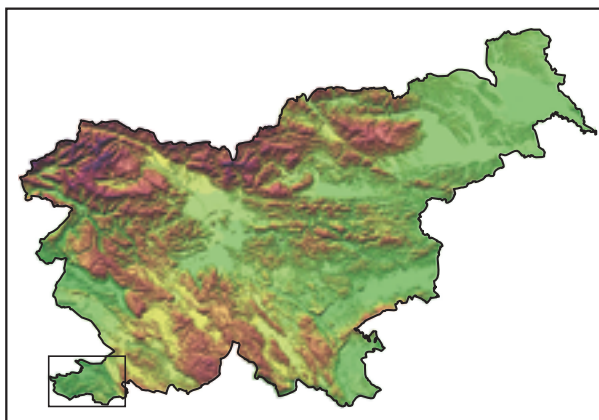
ČEZMEJNO SODELOVANJE MED SLOVENIJO IN HRVAŠKO V ISTRI PO LETU 1991

Primož Pipan



PRIMOŽ PIPAN

Rakitovec–Slum local border crossing.
Poslopje novega mejnega prehoda za obmejni promet Rakitovec–Slum.



Cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Croatia in Istria after 1991

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ABSTRACT: The paper discusses the impact of the international border established in 1991 on cross-border cooperation. It focuses on the impact of the Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia on Border Traffic and Cooperation (SOPS) and introduction of the Schengen Agreement as a result of Slovene accession to the EU. The paper highlights the effect of the border on local population. It uses a number of interviews to present the people's attitude to the new realities of the border while at the same time determining the impact of the border on local development and the organisation of Italian national minority in Istria. In conclusion, the paper outlines the three areas formed along the border with regard to the changes in the intensity of cross-border cooperation and the related local development. Finally, the paper attempts to indicate the future development of the area in the context of cross-border cooperation along the EU's external border.

KEYWORDS: political geography, borders, cross-border cooperation, SOPS, Italian minority, Istria, Croatia, Slovenia

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1 Introduction

In the period between the fall of the iron curtain and accession of formerly communist Central European countries in the EU, their borders became increasingly open. A number of border areas resulting from borders established after the First and the Second World War dividing urban, densely populated areas where the people had been engaged in intensive mutual communications, has again received the opportunity for intensive cross-border cooperation. The disintegration of some multinational communist countries resulted in new border areas (Bufon 1993). One of such areas established after the disintegration of Yugoslavia is the area along the Slovenian-Croatian border.

After the independence of Slovenia, the length of its national borders extended by 670 km as the result of the border with Croatia. The newest Slovenian national border is at the same time the longest representing 50.2% of the total of 1340 km of land borders. From the historical point of view, the border between Slovenia and Croatia is an old one, as for the most part the border was established between the 10th and 12th century, which makes it one of the oldest and the most stable borders in Europe. As the border was in the past mostly an internal administrative border within larger countries (Austria-Hungary and Yugoslavia), the border areas were traditionally connected and intertwined in economic and social terms. This was particularly true for the western part of the Slovenian-Croatian land border, between the Adriatic Sea and Čičarija, as that part contrary to the remaining one did not have a border until after the Second World War.

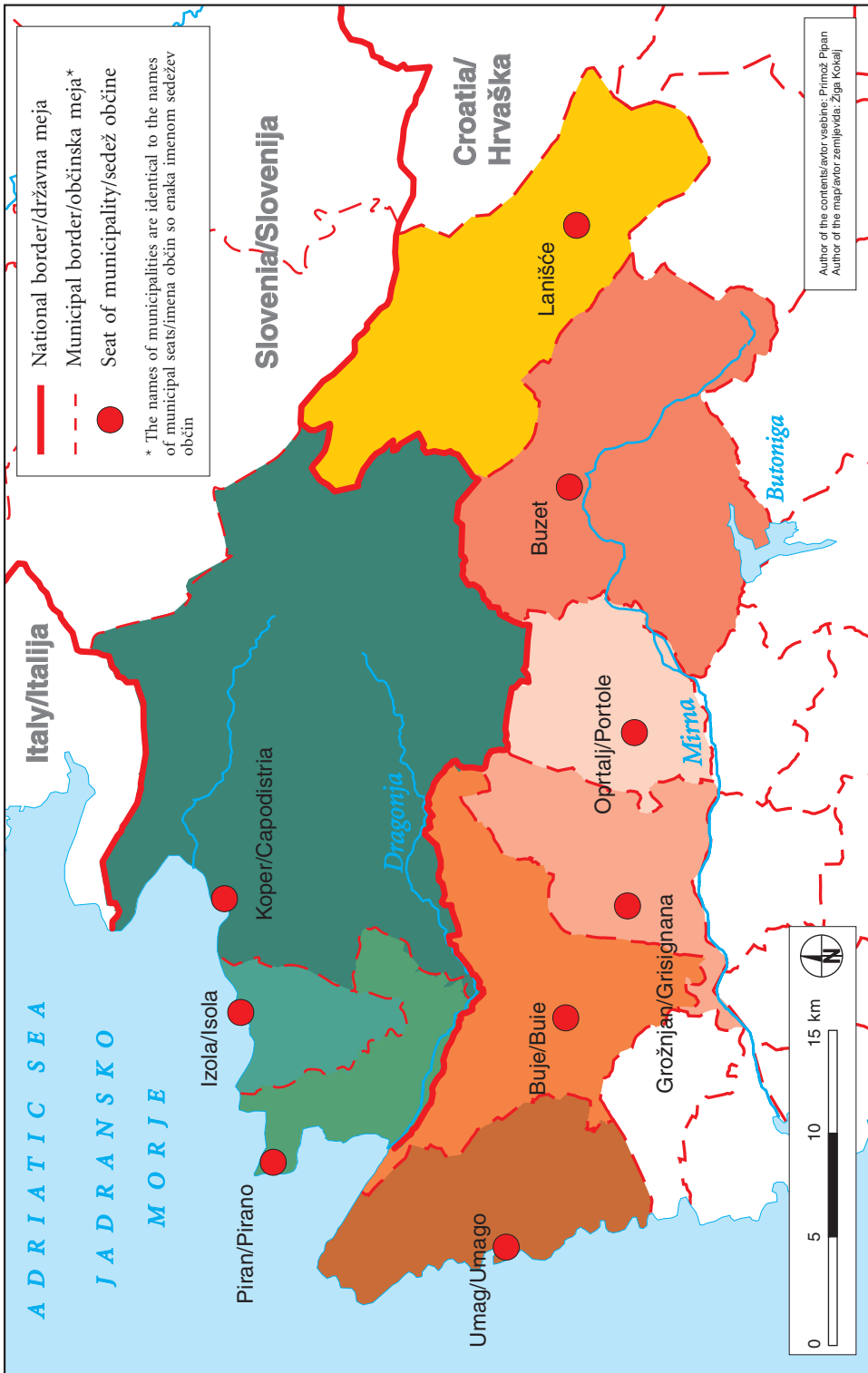
The aim of this paper is to present how the new national border between Slovenia and Croatia affected cross-border cooperation in the area of Slovenian municipalities of Koper, Izola and Piran and Croatian municipalities of Umag, Buje, Oprtalj, Grožnjan, Buzet and Lanišče. The paper focuses on the border's function in the context of cross-border cooperation; the border as a generator of development, the border as a filter or the border as an obstacle. It further discusses implementation of the Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia on Border Traffic and Cooperation (SOPS), presents the attitude of the local population to the Agreement and the consequences of introducing the Schengen border regime on the Slovenian-Croatian border as the external border of the EU on cross-border cooperation.

2 Methodology

When selecting and studying the relevant literature and obtaining information from Croatian and Slovenian government institutions, I have used the results of preceding studies conducted between 1996 and 1998 (Bufon 2001; Požš 1999; Ravbar 1999; Špes 2001; Repolusk 1999; and Kržišnik-Bukić 1999). They were based on quantitative data obtained by surveys in Slovenian and Croatian border municipalities. They followed the method developed by Mr. Bufon on the example of cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Italy in the Goriška region (Bufon 1995). I used interview as the basic method with the aim of getting an updated and deeper insight in changes in the life of people living in border area. I interviewed 45 people on both sides of the border as a part of the fieldwork conducted. In addition to representatives of various ministries, the police, municipalities, local communities, public and privately owned companies and societies, I have also interviewed people living directly along the border for whom the quality of life crucially depends on the border's openness. The first part of the interviews was conducted in April and May 2004 immediately before and after the Slovenian accession to the EU. Due to the changes in cross-border relations, I have conducted additional interviews in 2006, which provided an integrated picture of cross-border cooperation in the studied area during the two years of Slovenian membership in the EU.

3 Regional outline of the studied area

The studied area included Slovenian municipalities of Koper, Izola and Piran and Croatian municipalities of Umag, Buje, Oprtalj, Grožnjan, Buzet and Lanišče in the north of the Istrian peninsula. After the majority of Italians moved out of the Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste in 1954, the *litoralisation*,



◀ Figure 1: The studied municipalities.

which additionally emptied the coast's hinterland, had the biggest impact on the present look of the region. Many people moved in from the other parts of the former Yugoslavia thus changing the national composition of the area.

The Slovenian part is marked by a stable local government structure, as opposed to the other part where reorganisation of the local government in the last decade of the 20th century resulted in the division of large municipalities into a number of smaller ones. Koper and Piran are among the above-average developed municipalities in Slovenia for which it is characteristic that they are the most economically significant areas of the country, important employment centres for the surrounding population and are at the same time marked by above average population growth and net migration inflows. The municipality of Izola is also among the above-average developed municipalities (Nared 2002). Those three municipalities make the Littoral-Karst statistical region one of the most developed regions in Slovenia second only to the Central Slovenian region. Although the number of people at the municipal level never fell after 1954, many villages in the hinterland experienced depopulation during that entire period. There were 78,846 people in 2002 in the three Slovenian municipalities with the area of 384 km² and population density of 205 people per km², namely 16,758 in the municipality of Piran, 14,549 in the municipality of Izola and 47,539 in the town municipality of Koper (Popis ... 2002; Slovenske občine ... 1998).

Unlike Slovenian municipalities, the Croatian municipalities of Umag, Buje, Grožnjan, Oprtalj, Buzet and Lanišće are the result of a number of reorganisations of local government in recent decades. After the preceding reorganisation, the municipalities of Umag, Novigrad and Buje merged in 1975 to form the new municipality of Buje, which existed until 1993. The term »Upper Buje Region« as the name for the underdeveloped area between Momjan in the west and Zrenj in the east originates from that period. As a result, the municipalities of Buje and Buzet had access to a special »development fund« in the former Yugoslavia.

While the bulk of assistance received by the municipality of Buje was invested in tourist development on the coast, the hinterland was still lagging behind in development. The plan was that the income from tourism on the coast would finance the development of the underdeveloped hinterland in the Upper Buje Region. This has not happened as after the reorganisation of local government in 1993 the area of the municipality of Buje was divided into municipalities of Umag, Brtonigla, Novigrad, Buje and Grožnjan, which are a part of the Istria Region with the capital based in Pazin. The former municipality of Buzet was divided into municipalities of Buzet and Lanišće. The municipality of Oprtalj was established from a part of the former municipality of Buje and certain villages from the former municipality of Buzet. The below-average development of municipalities of Grožnjan, Oprtalj and Lanišće resulted in those municipalities receiving aid based on the Areas of Special State Concern Act (Zakon o poručjima ... 2003), while Buzet has the status of a »hilly-mountainous area« (Odluka ... 2002, Odluka ... 2003) enjoying numerous tax breaks. The number of people has been decreasing in municipalities of Lanišće, Oprtalj and Grožnjan since 1953. Population was initially falling in Buzet but has since remained stagnant at the 1971 level for three decades. The municipality of Buje saw a slight increase in population after 1971 while the number of people more than doubled in the municipality of Umag between 1953 and 2001 (Zupanc 2001a; Zupanc 2001b). There were 26,464 people in 2001 in the six Croatian municipalities with the area of 619 km² and population density of 43 people per km² (five times less than in the Slovenian municipalities), namely 12,901 in the municipality of Umag, 5,340 in the municipality of Buje, 785 in the municipality of Grožnjan, 981 in the municipality of Oprtalj, 6,059 in the municipality of Buzet and 398 in the municipality of Lanišće (Osnovni podaci ... 2004; Stanovništvo ... 2001).

4 Major changes in cross-border contacts after 1991

From the point of view of classic socio-geographic studies, three aspects, which the interviewed persons on both sides of the border deem the most important, should be noted as regards the changes in cross-border cooperation after 1991. Namely, work, health care and education.

Migration from the less developed Croatian municipalities to the newly developing municipal centres of the Slovenian Istria – Koper, Izola, Piran and Portorož – was characteristic for the period after 1955.

There are currently more than 4,000 persons originating from the former municipality of Buzet, who migrated before 1991 because of better employment prospects, and their descendents living in the municipality of Koper (Lay 1998). Additionally, many people from the Croatian municipalities daily migrated to work in the Slovenian municipalities before the independence of both countries. During the 1991–1995 recession, when companies in the Slovenian Istria massively laid off workers, the Croatian citizens were among the first to go. As companies were also closing at that time in the Croatian Buje Region (Mlinotest, Biteks and Digitron) or the staff numbers were drastically reduced (Metalko), the result was economic hardship of the people. Some of them found new jobs in Italy where they have been working for more than a decade now. Those working in the area between Trieste and Udine are daily commuting from Croatia. Others, who found work in the area of Pordenone or the Veneto Region, return home for the weekends. Cross-border cooperation in the sense of workforce mobility has been virtually non-existent between the Croatian and Slovenian Istria after 1991.

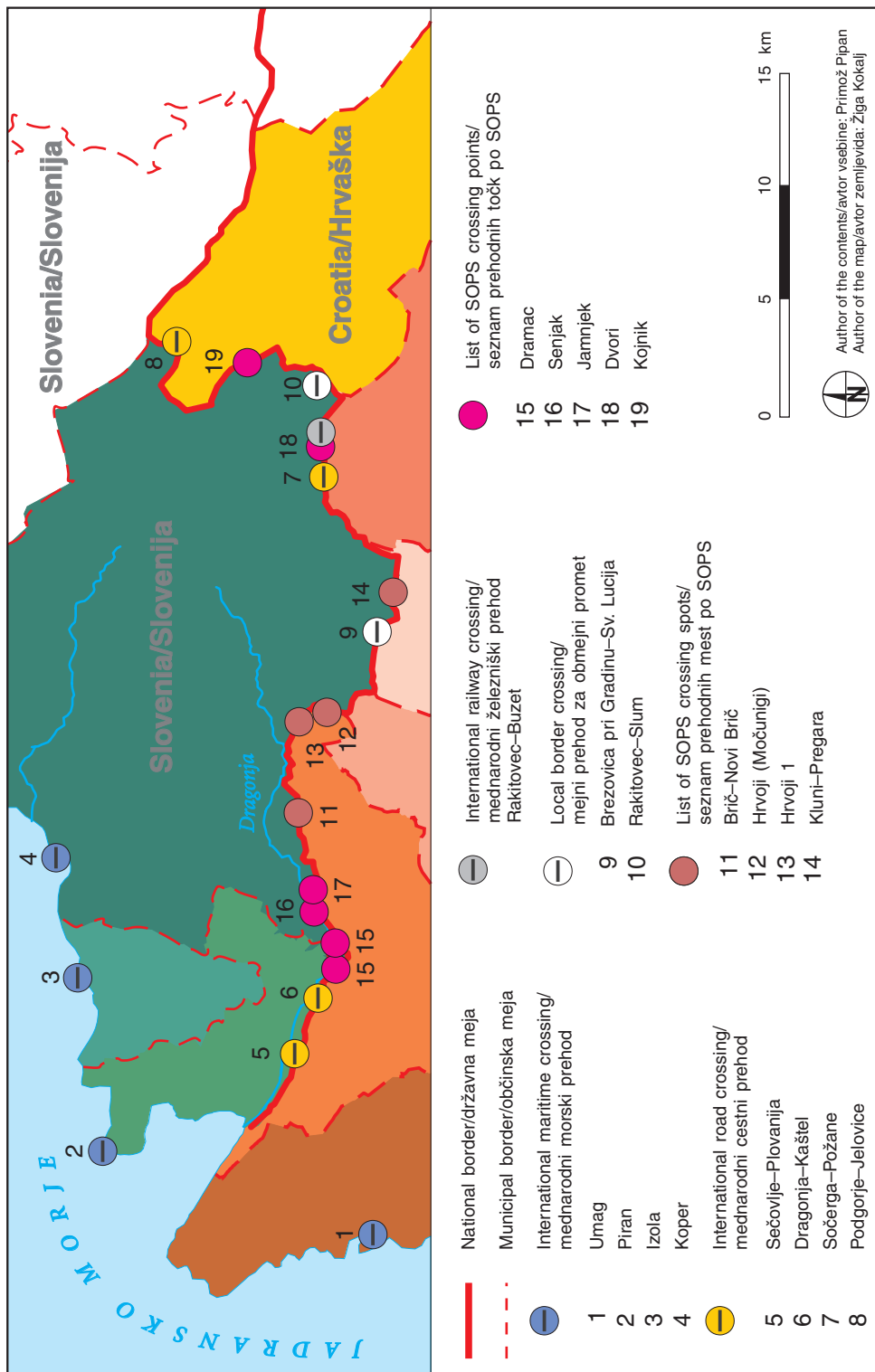
There have been substantial changes in cross-border cooperation with regard to health care. The new hospital in Izola combining the units from Piran, Izola and Koper was completed in 1982. It was intended as the central hospital for northern Istria, including the Croatian part, and hence it was also built with a self-imposed contribution from Croatian citizens from the then municipalities of Buje and Buzet. However, after 1991 the people from that area must pay for all services of the Izola hospital. Only Croatian pensioners receiving pensions from Italy use the hospital's services. As the health care centres in Umag, Novigrad and Rovinj offer mostly just first aid, people from the Buje and Buzet regions are forced to visit the only hospital in the Croatian Istria, i. e. the one in Pula. It is the nearest hospital where they can be taken for emergency care in the case of accidents and at the same time the nearest maternity hospital. While there is only a 30-minute drive by car from Buje to Izola outside the rush hours, the 80-kilometre drive to Pula can last more than an hour.

Many Croatian citizens attended secondary schools in Koper and Izola before 1991 staying at dormitories for secondary-school students during the week and returning home for the weekends. A number of them continued their education at the university in Ljubljana instead of choosing those in Zagreb or Rijeka. Croats continued to attend Slovenian secondary schools until the mid-Nineties of the previous century while the practice was later discontinued due to unregulated financing. The education protocol concluded between Slovenia and Croatia entering into force in 2003 stipulate for citizens of both countries attendance of primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities under the same terms applying to the citizens of the domicile country (Uredba o ratifikaciji ... 2003). Despite the agreement, data of Slovenian secondary schools show that Croatian citizens rarely attend schools in the area. At individual colleges and schools being a part of the newly-established University of Primorska with the head office in Koper, which is the nearest higher education institution for people from the northern Croatian Istria, the total number of students in all years of study exceeds five only at Turistica – College of Tourism Portorož. Croatian citizens no longer decide to study in Slovenia primarily because of the long process of nostrification of Slovenian certificates and diplomas. Several interviewed Croats mentioned examples of the nostrification process lasting up to three years during which they could not get a job in Croatia for which they have obtained qualification in Slovenia.

5 The impact of SOPS and the Schengen Agreement on the openness of the border

The border control between Slovenia and Croatia has been gradually introduced in practice since 1991. The border infrastructure on the roads connecting the two countries was at first temporary and later permanent. It first appeared on major roads and only later on regional and local roads. Until the border infrastructure was built, the area was patrolled by the police from time to time. The ministries of the interior of the two countries agreed by a protocol concluded in 1991 and 1992 on a facilitated regime for the local population. They were able to cross the border as was the case before, except that they had to carry an ID card or passport and comply with the customs restrictions regarding carrying of goods.

Figure 2: Border crossings between Slovenia and Croatia in the studied area. ►



The facilitated regime was in place until the entering into force of the Agreement between the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia on Border Traffic and Cooperation (SOPS), the purpose of which was to regulate the border traffic between the two countries, improve living conditions of the people living at the border and provide the greatest possible freedom of economic cooperation in the border areas (Zakon o ratifikaciji ... 2001). It was based on similar international agreements concluded by the former Yugoslavia with Austria and Italy and has also introduced some new features of which the common tourist areas should be singled out with regard to the studied area.

After prolonged negotiations, the two countries initialled SOPS on 25 April 1997 and signed it on 28 April 1997. The Croatian parliament ratified the Agreement that same year (16 September 1997), while Slovenia has postponed the ratification for another four years, as in the opinion of one of the parties forming the ruling coalition as well as the entire opposition in the 1996–2000 parliamentary term, the Agreement prejudiced the determining and marking of the national border between the Parties to the Agreement thus indirectly affecting the determining of the base point for establishing the maritime border in the Piran Bay, Article 59 of the Agreement (»The provisions hereof shall not in any way prejudice the determination and marking of the border between the Parties hereto«) notwithstanding. After Slovenia ratified the Agreement, it entered into force on 5 September 2001 (Bohte 2000; Celar 2002).

The border infrastructure under SOPS (primarily the local border crossings) had to be built by 1 May 2004 when Slovenia became a full member of the EU. From that point on, the Slovenian–Croatian border became an external border of the EU waiting for implementation of the Schengen regime and requiring approval of the European Commission for any changes.

During the application of the protocols, the general public adopted the term »green border« for the Slovenian–Croatian border, which was supposed to mean a more permeable, »user-friendly« and »soft« border in comparison with the previously existing borders with Italy, Austria and Hungary. The media have created the image of a »green border« which locals can cross at any point on the existing roads, trails and paths outside the official checkpoints. The term »local« was expanded to the majority of Slovenian and Croatian citizens. As a matter of fact, the term has an older origin, as it was used as an expert term in the context of protecting the green border between Slovenia and its neighbouring countries during the Yugoslav era, according to the information provided by the Koper Police Directorate. From the technical point of view this entails protection of the national border by government authorities outside officially designated border crossings and has nothing to do with free crossing of the border outside such crossings.

Due to the delays in construction of local border crossings in line with SOPS in Istria, crossing of the border in accordance with the protocols ended just before the Slovenian entry in the EU, i. e. on 30 April 2004, when Brezovica pri Gradinu-Sv. Lucija and Rakitovec-Slum local border crossing were opened among the last ones in the country. Until then the new national border outside the three international border crossings, i. e. Sečovlje-Plovanija, Dragonja-Kaštel and Sočerga-Požane, was virtually non-existent and police controls, which should prevent transit passengers from crossing the border on local roads, were rare. Relatively lively cross-border traffic was still going on in practice in Brezovica pri Gradinu, Rakitovec and Podgorje. Transit tourist traffic to Croatian Istria took place in Hrvoje. The road paved with asphalt on the Croatian side as late as in 2002 is also entered on foreign car maps and represents the shortest route between Ljubljana and the northwestern coast of Croatian Istria. Stops of tourists, including those from third countries, earned a substantial part of income of organisations and individuals engaged in catering and tourism in areas adjacent to the border.

The cross-border traffic has been regulated from the state's point of view with the construction of local border crossings in Istria in line with SOPS. Despite criticism from the European Commission saying that SOPS makes the border too easy to cross with regard to the Schengen border standards, it should be noted that local border crossings are, with rare exceptions, intended exclusively for holders of border passes. The crossings representing the shortest route to owners of real estate on the other side of the border to their holdings and crossings representing the only possible road link to real estate on the other side of the border are intended only for rare holders of border passes. According to data provided by the Koper Police Directorate, there are less than 50 eligible persons on the Slovenian side of the studied area. Introduction of the Schengen regime will mean that roads with crossings will be protected by barriers for which only the eligible persons will have the key. All other existing trails will be physically closed.



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Figure 3: The road through the transit town of Hrvoji, where car traffic intensive for local conditions took place until 30 April 2004, is empty after the Slovenian accession to the EU and implementation of SOPS and the Schengen regime.

If implementation of SOPS normalised crossing of the border from the state's point of view, the border has closed from the point of view of the locals and the transit passengers travelling to Croatian Istria. With the simultaneous entry of Slovenia in the EU and relaxation of the border regime between Slovenia and the neighbouring EU Member States, it has resulted in the end of the open border era for the people living along the Slovenian-Croatian border. The stopped transit tourist traffic on roads outside international border crossings resulted in turnover in catering facilities falling by more than a half.

Easier crossing of the border for tourists would be enabled by a tourist zone under SOPS, however such a zone is not intended for transit tourists but for those staying in the area. The initiative for such a zone came from Rakitovec, one of the most remote parts of the studied area, where locals are very active in a number of societies. At first, the envisaged area was small, limited only to the narrow area of the Karst edge, but later when the initiative was embraced by the municipalities at the border it has expanded westwards to include the Piran Bay. The issue of sea border has, as was the case with SOPS, become the main obstacle for the planned Sea-Karst-Istria tourist zone. All activities related to establishing of the tourist zone were halted after the Slovenian accession to the EU.

With the approval from the European Commission, the Podgorje international border crossing, which can be used by all citizens of the EU and third countries, was opened on 18 July 2005, however the Commission did not give its approval to the extension of the tourist navigation regime in the Piran Bay during the tourist season. The regime enabled swimmers from both sides of the Bay to go with boats to the other side of the Bay without any border formalities between sunrise and sunset. It is highly unlikely that anyone will sail to Piran and Umag to the border police just to go to the nearby Kanegra.

Talking with people about the border and cross-border cooperation reveals resignation. The border has created a sense of being trapped and isolated among locals as it has completely cut off the area from Croatia in terms of traffic. They are literally being in a dead end according to their own words. The border regime under SOPS and the future Schengen border regime represent a sort of second Berlin Wall to them. Some feel that it is like returning back to 1947, in Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste, the only



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Figure 4: According to data from the Koper Police Directorate, 19,441 persons crossed the Brezovica pri Gradinu – Sv. Lucija local border crossing in 2005.

difference being that today there is no danger of being shot by border guards when crossing the border. They believe that roads should be opened to all EU citizens.

The attitude towards the border and the current situation in cross-border cooperation is well represented by the words of an interviewed person: *»... We're playing a sort of Europe around here. And now we've prospered so much that we added a border between us. Brussels like wants a border. Well, if we told Brussels things as they are, they would put the border elsewhere. It should be in the interest of Brussels for us to be able to move, not to be closed in a matchbox for 50 years and now for another 50, OK, let's say 10... Isn't it time for us to begin to live in harmony as we should? I think that if they want to strictly enforce their economic interests they should control that not a truck passes by without paying tax. But they should not restrict the people. We feel like Indians in some reserve...«.* Another one thinks along similar lines: *»... Let there be borders if they have to be, but people should be free, we are living in the third millennium after all! My father needed a pass to go to his field fifty years ago. And now we are again moving in a circle. I don't think it's in Europe's interest to have abandoned villages in Istria...«.*

6 Italian minority as a connecting factor between the two countries

The activities of Italian minority in Istria were until 1991 based on the premise of a common federative state and not on two individual republics of Croatia and Slovenia. The minority was developing as a single entity, linked into one national body on which the border between the two republics had virtually no impact. The development of minority institutions and infrastructure followed that pattern with the territorial distribution in both Croatia and Slovenia.

In Rijeka in Croatia there is the Italian National Theatre (il Damma Italiano) and the main publishing company of the minority, »Edit«, which in addition to textbooks for Italian schools and other literature

in Italian language publishes the daily »La Voce del popolo«, children's periodical »Arcobaleno«, the publication »Panorama« and the literary magazine »La Battana«. Rovinj hosts the Historical Research Centre (Centro di Ricerche Storiche) functioning as the documentary and research centre for the Italian minority. In Koper in Slovenia there has been a radio programme since 1949 joined in 1971 by a TV programme in Italian language (Radin, Radossi 2001).

There have been no significant problems with the availability of printed media and radio and television programmes for the Italian minority in Slovenia and Croatia since 1991. However, the new border between the two countries had a negative impact on minority schools. The bases for the school network of Italian minority in the studied area was set by the Special Statute of the London Memorandum in 1954. The Statute guaranteed the Italian minority in Yugoslavia, as it did the Slovenian minority in Italy, the right to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in their mother tongue. It has also determined school districts, which were then cut by the new border. The school district of the Italian secondary school »Pietro Coppo« in Izola in addition to the three Slovenian municipalities also included the former Croatian municipality of Buje. Before 1991, 25% of students were from the former Croatian municipality of Buje with the remaining 75% distributed evenly between the municipalities of Piran, Izola and Koper. The number of Croatian students in Italian schools in Slovenia fell dramatically after 1991. Although the agreement between the two countries provides for free education there have been problems with nostrification of diplomas. There are virtually no students from Croatia in Izola today, while the number of students from Croatia at the Italian Gymnasium in Piran does not exceed ten. Whereas before 1991 many students graduating from the Italian secondary school in Buje went to study in Ljubljana, they are now attending universities in Italy (Trieste, Udine, Venice and Padova) or in Pula, Rijeka and Zagreb. There were also problems with Croatian and Slovenian teachers rotating between Italian schools in both countries until 1991. Administrative complications related to work permits resulted in frequent shortages of qualified teachers on Italian schools in the 1991–2000 period (Sau 2001).

Changes in the political system in Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 also had an impact on the internal transformation of the Union of Italians of Istria and Rijeka (UIIF – *L'Unione Italiana dell' Istria e di Fiume*), which acted as the umbrella organisation for Italian minority during the Yugoslav era. The Union of Italians (UI – *Unione Italiana*), a new minority organisation which became the legal but not the political successor of UIIF, was established in Rijeka in 1991 (Radossi 2000). UI expressed its support to the fastest possible inclusion of the two newly independent states in the European structures. It also expressed its wish that despite the two new states UI would act as a single minority organisation linking the Italian minority in both countries for the good of the Italian minority and for optimal performance of its infrastructure. Although it is not a widespread practice, it is not contrary to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe encouraging minorities from neighbouring countries to cooperate (Framework Convention ... 1995).

However, the central governments of the two new internationally not yet fully established states interpreted the idea as a threat to their sovereignty and an attempt to turn the clock back to the Yugoslav era. They took the position that as independent countries they can separately establish standards for the Italian minority set by international agreements in line with the international obligations assumed from the former Yugoslavia. The Gordian Knot was not resolved until 1998 when UI was officially registered in Slovenia while the relations between the two governments and UI did not normalise until after 2002. Today, UI is an organisation officially recognised in Croatia and Slovenia, has two registered offices and acts as a single entity in both countries.

The Italian minority acts as a bridge for cross-border cooperation at the local level. While minority representatives have the guaranteed post of a deputy mayor in Slovenian municipalities, they have won the mayor's offices in the majority of Croatian municipalities directly at local elections.

7 Conclusion

The new national border between Slovenia and Croatia in Istria changed life of all those living along the border. The new border in the studied area mostly appears as a filter and an obstacle to cross-border cooperation. The process of toughening the border has been visible since 1991 with the cross-border links such as education, hospital care and visiting friends gradually discontinued. The process of closing the border

in comparison to the previous relative openness began with the Slovenian accession to the EU due to implementation of SOPS and introduction of the Schengen border regime. Where cross-border cooperation was well developed, the border mostly represents an obstacle or a filter in relations between people on both sides of the border. Where such cooperation was less developed, the border acts as a minor development factor. The more an area is remote and less developed the greater the interest of local population for cross-border cooperation and vice versa.

Fieldwork has revealed three areas with a distinctive attitude towards cross-border cooperation. In the area of Sečovlje and Dragonja in the west, the border represents a filter for cross-border cooperation despite the two international border crossings, which is present as the decline of contacts between locals residing on both sides of the border. The reason lies in traffic jams (queues) in transit resulting from border controls at international border crossings introduced after 1991 representing an obstacle to locals in cross-border contacts. On the other hand, the cross-border tourist traffic, which due to delays in introduction of the border regime between 1991 and 2004 went on without hindrances in the central area of Hrvoji, Topolovec and Brezovica pri Gradinu, represented a development factor for local economies on both sides of the border. After Slovenia became an EU member, the area experienced the process of »*berlinisation*«, i. e. closing of the border. As regards the eastern area around Rakitovec, the border does represent an obstacle in communications between locals, however it acts at the same time as a reason for investments in infrastructure by the central and local government. In the area, which was due to its remoteness neglected in terms of development when compared to the other areas, the border as a factor of local development acts primarily as motivation for overcoming obstacles.

The Croatian part seems more interested in cross-border cooperation with Italy than with Slovenia. Fishermen from Croatian Istria will be forced to export their catch to Italian Trieste via the Starod-Pasjak border crossing due to EU phytosanitary regulations, extending their route by 150 km in comparison with the nearest route via the Sečovlje and Dragonja border crossings. The Croatian side has therefore expressed the desire for a direct ferry link between Umag and Trieste (Žerjavič 2004). On the other hand, residents of Buje, Grožnjan, Oprtalj and Buzet find their national capital Zagreb more accessible by car via Ljubljana than via Rijeka because of better roads and cheaper tolls.

The obstacles to cross-border cooperation could be eased by the European Commission with a more flexible approach to the studied area, by for example reclassifying the Hrvoji crossing under SOPS to a border crossing for EU and Croatian citizens intended for cars. The same applies to local border crossings Brezovica pri Gradinu and Rakitovec.

Although Croatia should become an EU member in the near future, the present border regime between the two countries would be eased only when Croatia also introduced the Schengen regime. A prerequisite would be for Croatia to establish a protection system complying with the Schengen standards at its eastern borders. Slovenia due to become a member of the Schengen area on 21 December 2007 has been preparing ten years (1997–2007) to introduce the Schengen regime on its 670 km long land border with Croatia. The Croatian border with Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro is 1198 km long (A Concise ... 1993). Given the permeability of the border it is unrealistic to expect Croatia to become a member of the Schengen area before 2020 unless its eastern neighbours entered the EU and the Schengen area. According to that scenario, cross-border contacts in the studied area will until then be a hostage of the »Fortress Europe«, which simultaneously with liberalisation of internal borders erects walls where previously were none.

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Čezmejno sodelovanje med Slovenijo in Hrvaško v Istri po letu 1991

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IZVLEČEK: Članek obravnava vpliv leta 1991 nastale državne meje na čezmejno sodelovanje. Osredotoči se na vpliv Sporazuma med Republiko Slovenijo in Republiko Hrvaško o obmejnem prometu in sodelovanju (SOPS) in uvajanju schengenskega reda, ki je posledica vstopa Slovenije v EU. Izpostavi vpliv meje do lokalnega prebivalstva. S pomočjo številnih intervjujev oriše njegov odnos do nove mejne realnosti, hkrati pa ugotavlja vpliv meje na lokalni razvoj ter organiziranost italijanske narodne manjšine v Istri. V sklepu oriše tri območja, ki so se ob meji izoblikovala glede na spremembe v intenzivnosti v čezmejnem sodelovanju in s tem povezanim lokalnim razvojem. Na koncu poskuša nakazati prihodnji razvoj tega območja v kontekstu čezmejnega sodelovanja ob zunanji meji EU.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: politična geografija, meje, čezmejno sodelovanje, SOPS, italijanska manjšina, Istra, Hrvaška, Slovenija

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1 Uvod

V obdobju po padcu železne zavesne in vključevanju nekdanjih socialističnih srednjeevropskih držav v EU, so meje med njimi postale bolj prehodne. Številna obmejna območja, ki so nastala kot posledica po prvi in drugi svetovni vojni začrtanih meja, ki so razdelile že urbanizirana, gosteje poseljena območja, kjer je prebivalstvo že intenzivno medsebojno komuniciralo, so zopet dobila priložnost za intenzivnejše čezmejno sodelovanje. Posledično z razpadom nekaterih večnacionalnih socialističnih držav, se na tem prostoru pojavijo nova obmejna območja (Bufon 1993). Eno takšnih obmejnih območij, ki je nastalo ob razpadu Jugoslavije, je območje ob slovensko-hrvaški meji.

Z osamosvojitvijo Slovenije se je dolžina njenih državnih meja na račun meje s Hrvaško podaljšala za 670 km. Ta najmlajša slovenska državna meja je hkrati njena najdaljša, saj predstavlja kar 50,2 % od skupno 1340 km kopenskih državnih meja. Z zgodovinskega vidika je meja med Slovenijo in Hrvaško star pojav, saj je v njenem večjem delu razmejitev nastala že med 10. in 12. stoletjem in se tako uvršča med najstarejše in najbolj stabilne v Evropi. Ker je imela v preteklosti večinoma vlogo notranje administrativne meje v okviru večjih državnih enot (Avstro-Ogrska, Jugoslavija), so bila obmejna območja vzdolž nje tradicionalno gospodarsko in socialno medsebojno povezana in prepletena. To še posebno velja za najzahtodnejši odsek slovensko-hrvaške kopenske meje med Jadranskim morjem in Čičarijo, saj se tu z izjemo ostale meje prva razmejitev med državama pojavi šele v času po drugi svetovni vojni.

Namen članka je pokazati, kako je novo nastala državna meja med Slovenijo in Hrvaško vplivala na čezmejno sodelovanje na območju slovenskih občin Koper, Izola, Piran in hrvaških občin Umag, Buje, Oprtalj, Grožnjan, Buzet ter Lanišče. Članek se osredotoča na funkcijo meje v kontekstu čezmejnega sodelovanja; meja kot generator razvoja, meja kot filter ali meja kot ovira. Pogloblja se v udejanjanje Sporazuma med Republiko Slovenijo in Republiko Hrvaško o obmejnem prometu in sodelovanju (SOPS), osvetli odnos lokalnega prebivalstva do Sporazuma in posledice uvajanja zunanje schengenske meje EU med Slovenijo in Hrvaško na čezmejno sodelovanje.

2 Metode

Po izboru in pregledu relevantne literature ter pridobivanju informacij s strani hrvaških in slovenskih državnih institucij sem se oprl na rezultate predhodnih raziskav med leti 1996 in 1998 (Bufon 2001; Požoš 1999; Ravbar 1999; Špes 2001; Repolusk 1999; Kržišnik-Bukić 1999). Ti slonijo na kvantitativnih podatkih, pridobljenimi z anketiranjem v slovenskih in hrvaških obmejnih občinah. Zgledujejo se po metodi, ki jo je razvil Bufon na primeru čezmejnega sodelovanja med Slovenijo in Italijo na Goriškem (Bufon 1995). V želji po novejšem in globljem vpogledu v spremembo življenja prebivalcev ob meji sem kot osnovno metodo uporabil intervju. Na obeh straneh meje sem v sklopu terenskega dela opravil intervjuje s 45 osebami. Poleg predstavnikov ministrstev, policije, občin, krajevnih skupnosti, javnih in privatnih gospodarskih subjektov, društev, sem intervjuval še prebivalce, ki živijo neposredno ob meji in katerih kvaliteta življenja je odločilno odvisna od stopnje njene odprtosti. Prvi del intervjujev je bil opravljen v aprilu in maju 2004, tik pred in takoj po vstopu Slovenije v EU. Zaradi sprememb nastalih v čezmejnih stikih, so bili leta 2006 opravljeni še dodatni intervjuji, ki so zaokrožili celotno sliko čezmejnega sodelovanja na obravnavanem območju v času dvoletnega članstva Slovenije v EU.

3 Regionalni oris preučevanega območja

Območje proučevanja zajema slovenske občine Koper, Izola, Piran in hrvaške občine Umag, Buje, Oprtalj, Grožnjan, Buzet ter Lanišče na severnem delu istrskega polotoka. Po izselitvi večine italijanskega prebivalstva iz območja cone B STO leta 1954 je na današnje pokrajinsko podobo najbolj izrazito vplivala litoralizacija, ki je dodatno izpraznila obalno zaledje. Iz ostalih delov bivše Jugoslavije se je priselilo precejšnje število priseljencev, ki so spremenili nacionalno sestavo območja.

Slovensko območje, za razliko od ostale države, kjer se je v devetdesetih letih dvajsetega stoletja po reorganizaciji lokalne samouprave zgodila delitev velikih občin na številne manjše, zaznamuje stabilnost lokalno-samoupravnih struktur. Glede na klasifikacijo razvitosti občin v Sloveniji spadata Koper in Piran

med »močno nadpovprečno« razvite, za katere je značilno, da predstavljajo gospodarsko najpomembnejša območja države, so pomembna zaposlitvena središča za okoliško prebivalstvo, hkrati pa jih zaznamuje nadpovprečna rast prebivalstva in pozitiven selitveni saldo. Občina Izola prav tako spada med nadpovprečno razvite občine (Nared 2002). Obalno-kraška statistična regija je zaradi teh treh občin za Osrednjeslovensko regijo, drugo najbolj perspektivno območje v Sloveniji. Kljub temu, da po letu 1954 na občinski ravni število prebivalcev nikoli ni nazadovalo, mnoga naselja v zaledju ves čas doživljajo depopulacijo. Na območju treh slovenskih občin je leta 2002 na 384 km² površine in gostoti 205 preb/km² živel 78.846 prebivalcev; v občini Piran 16.758, v občini Izola 14.549 ter v Mestni občini Koper 47.539 prebivalcev (Popis ... 2002; Slovenske občine ..., 1998).

Hrvaške občine Umag, Buje, Grožnjan, Oprtalj, Buzet in Lanišče so nasprotno od slovenskih rezultat številnih reorganizacij lokalne samouprave v zadnjih desetletjih. Po predhodni reorganizaciji so se leta 1975 občine Umag, Novigrad in Buje združile v občino Buje, ki je obstajala do leta 1993. Iz tega obdobja se je, kot sinonim za manj razvito in zaostalo območje med Momjanom na zahodu ter Zrenjem na vzhodu, uveljavil pojem »Gornja Bujščina«. Na njen račun sta imeli občini Buje in Buzet dostop do posebnega denarnega »sklada za nerazvite« v okviru SFRJ.

Medtem ko je bila v občini Buje večina pomoči investirana v razvoj turizma na obali, je zaledje še naprej razvojno nazadovalo. Načrtovano je namreč bilo, da bodo dohodki od turizma na obali financirali razvoj nerazvitega zaledja v Gornji Bujščini. To se ni zgodilo, saj so po reorganizaciji lokalne samouprave leta 1993 na območju občine Buje nastale občine Umag, Brtonigla, Novigrad, Buje in Grožnjan, ki so del Istrske županije s sedežem v Pazinu. Nekdanja občina Buzet se je delila na občini Buzet in Lanišče. Občina Oprtalj je nastala iz dela nekdanje občine Buje ter iz nekaterih naselij nekdanje občine Buzet. Podpovprečna razvitost občin Grožnjan, Oprtalj in Lanišče je botrovala, da so te deležne pomoči preko »zakona o področjima posebne državne skrbi« (Zakon o področjima ... 2003), medtem ko ima Buzet status »brdsko-planinskega področja« (Odluka ... 2002; Odluka ... 2003), ki uživa številne davčne olajšave. V občinah Lanišče, Oprtalj in Grožnjan je po letu 1953 prisotno stalno upadanje števila prebivalcev. V Buzetu je na začetku upadalo, sedaj pa že tri desetletja stagnira na ravni iz leta 1971. Občina Buje po letu 1971 beleži rahel vzpon, v občini Umag pa se je število prebivalcev med leti 1953 in 2001 več kot podvojilo (Zupanc 2001a; Zupanc 2001b). Na območju šestih hrvaških občin je leta 2001 na 619 km² površine in gostoti 43 preb/km² (petkrat manj kot v slovenskih občinah) živel 26.464 prebivalcev; v občini Umag 12.901, v občini Buje 5340, v občini Grožnjan 785, v občini Oprtalj 981, v občini Buzet 6059 ter v občini Lanišče 398 prebivalcev (Osnovni podatki ... 2004; Stanovništvo ... 2001).

Slika 1: Občine proučevanja.

Glej angleški del prispevka.

4 Najpomembnejše spremembe v čezmejnih stikih po letu 1991

Z vidika klasičnega socialnogeografskega proučevanja velja v zvezi s spremembami v čezmejnem sodelovanju po letu 1991 izpostaviti tri vidike, ki jim intervjuvanci z obeh strani meje pripisujejo največji pomen. To so delo, zdravstvena oskrba ter izobraževanje.

Za obdobje po letu 1955 je značilna migracija prebivalstva iz manj razvitih hrvaških občin v novo razvijajoče se občinske centre Slovenske Istre, Koper, Izolo in Piran oziroma Portorož. Na območju občine Koper danes živi okoli 4000 prebivalcev nekdanje občine Buzet in njihovih potomcev, ki so se zaradi boljših zaposlitvenih možnosti tja izselili pred letom 1991 (Lay 1998). Ob tem se je pred osamosvojitvijo obeh držav veliko prebivalcev iz hrvaških občin dnevno vozilo na delo v slovenske občine. V času gospodarskega zastoja med 1991 in 1995, ko so podjetja v slovenski Istri množično odpuščala zaposlene, so se med prvimi na seznamih znašli hrvaški državljani. Ker so istočasno zapirala vrata tudi podjetja v hrvaški Bujščini (Mlinotest, Biteks, Digitron) ali pa se je število zaposlenih drastično znižalo (Metalko), so se njeni prebivalci znašli v težkem ekonomskem položaju. Nekateri izmed njih so si novo zaposlitev poiskali v Italiji, kjer so zdaj zaposleni že več kot desetletje. Tisti, ki so zaposleni na območju med Trstom in Vidmom, se tja iz Hrvaške vsakodnevno vozijo na delo. Ostali, ki so si delo našli v Pordenonski pokrajini ali deželi Veneto, se domov vračajo ob koncih tedna. Čezmejnega sodelovanja v smislu mobilnosti delovne sile med hrvaško in slovensko Istro, po letu 1991 ni oz. je le ta minimalna.

Občutne spremembe v čezmejnem sodelovanju so se pojavile na področju zdravstvene oskrbe. Leta 1982 je bila zgrajena nova bolnišnica Izola, v kateri so združili prejšnje enote iz Pirana, Izole in Kopra. Zaradi namere, da bo to osrednja bolnišnica za območje severne Istre; vključno hrvaške, je bila grajena tudi s samoprисpevkom hrvaških državljanov iz takratnih občin Buje ter Buzet. Po letu 1991 morajo prebivalci slednjih, vse obiske oziroma storitve v njej plačati. Izolsko bolnišnico obiskujejo le tisti upokojenci s Hrvaške, ki prejemajo italijanske pokojnine. Ker zdravstveni domovi v Umagu, Novigradu in Rovinju v glavnem nudijo le prvo pomoč, so prebivalci Bujsčine in Buzetščine primorani obiskovati edino preostalo bolnišnico v hrvaški Istri, ki se nahaja v Pulju. Ta je najbližje mesto, kamor jih v primeru nezgode odpeljejo na urgenco, hkrati pa tudi najbližja porodnišnica. Medtem ko je iz Buj do Izole v času izven prometnih konic le 30 minut vožnje z avtomobilom, znaša čas potovanja v 80 km oddaljeni Pulj več kot eno uro.

Pred letom 1991 je mnogo hrvaških državljanov obiskovalo srednje šole v Kopru in Izoli, kjer so bili med tednom nastanjeni v dijaških domovih, ob koncih tedna pa so se vračali domov. Mnogi med njimi so svojo kasnejšo izobraževalno pot pogosteje kot na univerzah v Zagrebu ali na Reki, nadaljevali v Ljubljani. Hrvati so slovenske srednje šole obiskovali še do sredine 90. let prejšnjega stoletja, kasneje pa se je ta tok zaradi neurejenih razmer glede financiranja prekinil. Leta 2003 je začel med Slovenijo in Hrvaško veljati protokol na področju izobraževanja, ki za državljane obeh držav predvideva obiskovanje osnovnih, srednjih, višjih in visokih šol v drugi državi pod enakimi pogoji, kot veljajo za državljane domače države (Uredba o ratifikaciji ... 2003). Kljub sporazumu so po podatkih slovenskih srednjih šol v obravnavanem območju pri njih šolajoči se hrvaški državljani bolj redka izjema kot pravilo. Na posameznih visokih šolah in fakultetah v okviru novo ustanovljene Univerze na Primorskem s sedežem v Kopru, ki je za prebivalce severne hrvaške Istre najbližji visokošolski zavod, število študentov v vseh letnikih skupaj presega število 5 le na Turistici – fakulteti za turizem v Portorožu. Hrvaški državljani se ne odločajo več za izobraževanje v Sloveniji predvsem zaradi dolgotrajnega postopka nostrifikacije slovenskih spričeval in diplom. Več hrvaških intervjuvancev je navajalo primere, da je postopek nostrifikacije trajal do tri leta, v tem obdobju pa se diplomiranci niso mogli zaposliti na delovnem mestu na Hrvaškem, za kate-rga so pridobili izobrazbo v Sloveniji.

5 Vpliv SOPS in schengenskega pravnega reda na prehodnost meje

Slika 2: Točke prehoda državne meje med Slovenijo in Hrvaško na obravnavanem območju. Glej angleški del prispevka.

Mejna kontrola med Slovenijo in Hrvaško se je od leta 1991 dalje v praksi uveljavljala postopoma. Na prometnicah med državama je najprej začela nastajati začasna, kasneje pa stalna mejna infrastruktura. Najprej se je pojavila na glavnih prometnicah, šele kasneje na regionalnih ter lokalnih. Tam, kjer te še ni bilo, so občasno delovale policijske patrulje. Ministrstvi za notranje zadeve obeh držav sta se v letih 1991 in 1992 zapisniško dogovorili o olajšavah za obmejno prebivalstvo. Ti so mejo lahko prestopali tako kot prej, le da so morali s seboj imeti osebno izkaznico ali potni list in se držati carinskih omejitev za prenos blaga.

Olajšave so veljale do uveljavitve Sporazuma med Republiko Slovenijo in Republiko Hrvaško o obmejnem prometu in sodelovanju (SOPS), katerega namen je bil urediti obmejni promet med državama, izboljšati življenjske razmere obmejnega prebivalstva in omogočiti čim bolj prosto gospodarsko sodelovanje na obmejnem območju (Zakon o ratifikaciji ... 2001). Zgleduje se po podobnih meddržavnih sporazumih, ki jih je SFRJ sklenila z Avstrijo in Italijo, vpeljuje pa tudi nekatere novosti, od katerih velja za obravnavano območje izpostaviti skupna turistična območja.

Državi sta SOPS po dolgih pogajanjih parafirali 25. 4. 1997 in podpisali 28. 4. 1997. Hrvaška je sporazum še istega leta (16. 9. 1997) ratificirala v Saboru, Slovenija pa je z ratifikacijo odlašala nadaljnja štiri leta saj naj bi po mnenju ene izmed koalicijskih strank in celotne opozicije v mandatu državnega zbora 1996–2000 sporazum kljub 59. členu (»določbe tega sporazuma v ničemer ne prejudicirajo določitve in označitve državne meje med pogodbenicama«) prejudiciral mejo med državama, s tem pa posredno vplival na določitev izhodiščne točke za določitev morske meje v Piranskem zalivu. Po slovenski ratifikaciji sporazuma 19. 7. 2001 je ta stopil v veljavo 5. 9. 2001 (Bohte 2000; Celar 2002).

Mejno infrastrukturo po SOPS (predvsem maloobmejne prehode) je bilo potrebno zgraditi do 1. maja 2004, ko je Slovenija postala polnopravna članica EU. Kasneje je slovensko-hrvaška meja namreč postala zunanja meja EU, z bodočim schengenskim pravnim redom, kjer je za kakršne koli posege potrebno soglasje Evropske komisije.

V obdobju veljave zapisnikov se je za slovensko-hrvaško mejo v širši javnosti uveljavil pojem »zelena meja«, ki naj bi v pogovornem jeziku v primerjavi z do tedaj obstoječimi mejami z Italijo, Avstrijo in Madžarsko predstavljal bolj prepustno, prebivalcem prijaznejšo »mehko« mejo. Mediji so ustvarili podobo o »zeleni meji« katero naj bi domačini lahko prehajali kjerkoli na obstoječih cestah, kolovozih in poteh izven uradnih kontrolnih točk. Pojem »domaćin« se je v zavesti ljudi razširil na večino prebivalcev Slovenije oz. Hrvaške. V resnici ima ta pojem starejši izvor, saj se je po informacijah Policijske uprave Koper, kot strokovni termin uporabljal v kontekstu varovanja zelene meje med Slovenijo ter ostalimi sosednjimi državami že v času SFRJ. S tehničnega vidika to pomeni varovanje državne meje s strani državnih organov izven uradno določenih mejnih prehodov in nima ničesar skupnega s prostim prehajanjem meje na območju izven njih.

Zaradi zamud pri izgradnji maloobmejnih prehodov po SOPS v Istri se je prehajanje meje po načelu zapisnikov izteklo šele na predvečer vstopa Slovenije v EU 30. 4. 2004, ko sta med zadnjimi na celotni meji v državi začela obratovati maloobmejna prehoda Brezovica pri Gradinu-Sv. Lucija ter Rakitovec-Slum. Do takrat je bila na območju izven treh mednarodnih mejnih prehodov Sečovlje-Plovanija, Dragonja-Kaštel in Sočerga-Požane, nova meja med državama le navidezna, kontrole mejne policije, ki naj bi tranzitnim potnikom preprečevali prehod meje po lokalnih cestah pa so bile redke. V Brezovici pri Gradinu, Rakitovcu in Podgorju je v praksi še vedno potekal dokaj živahen lokalni čezmejni promet. V Hrvojih je prevladoval tranzitni turistični promet v hrvaško Istro. Cesta, ki so jo na hrvaški strani asfaltirali šele leta 2002, je vrisana tudi na tujih avtokartah, po kilometrih pa predstavlja najkrajšo pot med Ljubljano in severozahodno obalo hrvaške Istre. Ti postanki turistov; tudi iz tretjih držav, so organizacijam in posameznikom, ki se na neposrednem obmejnem območju ukvarjajo z gostinstvom in turizmom, prispevali znaten del njihovega zaslužka.

Z izgradnjo maloobmejnih prehodov po SOPS v Istri se je z vidika države uredil čezmejni promet. Kljub kritikam Evropske komisije, da SOPS mejo dela preveč prepustno glede na schengenske mejne standarde je potrebno izpostaviti, da so mejni prehodi za obmejni promet z redkimi izjemami namenjeni izključno imetnikom obmejnih prepustnic. Prehodna mesta, ki lastnikom nepremičnine na drugi strani meje predstavljajo najkrajšo pot do nje in prehodne točke, ki predstavljajo edino možno cestno povezavo do nepremičnine na drugi strani meje, so namenjene le redkim imetnikom obmejnih prepustnic. Po podatkih Policijske uprave Koper je takšnih upravičencev na obravnavanem območju na slovenski strani manj kot 50. Zaradi schengenskega pravnega reda bodo ceste s prehodnimi mesti in prehodnimi točkami zaklenjene z zapornicami, katerih ključke bodo imeli upravičenci. Vsi ostali obstoječi kolovozi bodo fizično zaprti.

Če se je z uveljavitvijo SOPS z vidika države normaliziralo prehajanje meje, se je z vidika domačinov in tranzitnega prometa na poti v hrvaško Istro meja zaprla. Ob sočasnem vstopu Slovenije v EU in sproščanju prometa na mejah med Slovenijo ter sosednjimi državami članicami EU je to za prebivalce ob slovensko-hrvaški meji v Istri pomenilo konec obdobja odprte meje. Zaradi ustavljenega tranzitnega turističnega prometa na cestah izven mednarodnih mejnih prehodov je v gostinskih objektih promet upadel za več kot polovico.

Turistom prepustnejšo mejo bi omogočila turistična cona v okviru SOPS, ki pa ni namenjena tranzitnim, temveč stacionarnim turistom. Pobuda za ustanovitev takšne cone je prišla iz Rakitovca, enega najbolj obrobni delov obravnavanega območja, kjer so prebivalci izredno dejavni v številnih društvih. Sprva predvidoma majhno območje, omejeno le na ožje območje kraškega roba, je bilo kasneje, ko so zamisel prevzele obmejne občine razširjeno na zahod, vključno s Piranskim zalivom. Problem morske meje med državama, pa je podobno kot pri sprejemanju SOPS tudi pri načrtovani turistični coni Morje-kras-Istra postal glavni kamen spotike. Po vstopu Slovenije v EU so vse aktivnosti v zvezi z ustanavljanjem turistične cone zastale.

S soglasjem Evropske komisije je bil 18. 7. 2005 sicer odprt mednarodni cestni mejni prehod Podgorje, ki ga lahko uporabljajo vsi državljani EU in tretjih držav, hkrati pa Evropska komisija ni dala soglasja za podaljšanje posebnega režima turistične plovbe v Piranskem zalivu v času turistične sezone. Ta je kopalcem iz obeh strani zaliva omogočal, da so se s čolni brez mejnih formalnosti odpravili na drugo stran zaliva

med sončnim vzhodom in zahodom. Malo verjetno je, da bo kdo plul v oddaljeni Piran in Umag do mejne policije samo zato, da bi priplul do bližnje Kanegre.

Iz pogovorov z informatorji je glede meje in čezmejnega sodelovanja zaznati malodušje. Meja pri domačinih ustvarja občutek utesnjenosti in zaprtosti, saj je to območje prometno popolnoma odrezala od Hrvaške. Po njihovih besedah so se znašli dobesedno v slepem črevesu. Mejni režim SOPS in bodoči schengenski mejni režim za njih predstavljata nekakšen drugi berlinski zid. Po mnenju nekaterih je tako, kot če bi se vrnili nazaj v leto 1947, v cono B STO, s to razliko, da danes ni nevarnosti, da bi bili pri prehodu meje ustreljeni s strani graničarjev. Po njihovem bi morale biti ceste prehodne za vse državljane EU.

Odnos do meje in trenutnega stanja čezmejnega sodelovanja lepo ponazarjajo besede naslednjega informatorja: »... *Mi se tukaj gremo neko Evropo. In zdaj smo toliko prosperirali, da smo dali še mejo vmes. Kao Bruselj hoče mejo. Bruselj, če bi mu povedali situacijo kakršna je, bi jo postavil kam drugam. Bruslju bi moralo biti bolj v interesu, da se lahko gibamo, da nismo zaprti v eni škatlici šibic že 50 let in zdej bomo še drugih 50, ma recimo da bo 10 ale ... A ni že enkrat čas, da zaživimo složno kot je treba. Jaz mislim, da je, če pa hočejo svoje ekonomske interese dosledno uveljavljat, pa naj tukaj gledajo, da ne bo šel tu kamion mimo, ne da bi plačal davek. Ljudi naj ne omejujejo. Počutimo se kot Indijanci v nekem rezervatu ...*«. Drugi zopet misli podobno: »... *Meje naj bodo če že morajo biti, vendar narod bi moral biti prost, saj vendar živimo v tretjem tisočletju! Moj oče je pred petdesetimi leti za dostop do njive potreboval prepustnico. In zdaj se spet vrtimo v enem začaranem krogu. Mislim, da ni v interesu Evrope, da ima v Istri porušene vasi ...*«.

Slika 3: Cesta skozi prehodno mesto Hrvoji, kjer je do 30. 4. 2004 potekal za lokalne razmere dokaj številčen tranzitni promet z osebnimi avtomobili, po vključitvi Slovenije v EU zaradi udejanjanja SOPS in schengenskega pravnega reda sameva. (Primož Pipan).

Glej angleški del prispevka.

Slika 4: Po podatkih Policijske uprave Koper je leta 2005 promet potnikov čez mejni prehod za obmejni promet Brezovica pri Gradinu – Sv. Lucija znašal 19.441 oseb. (Primož Pipan).

Glej angleški del prispevka.

6 Italijanska narodna manjšina kot povezovalc med državama

Delovanje italijanske narodne manjšine v Istri je bilo do 1991 zasnovano na ravni skupne federativne države in ne na dveh posameznih republikah Hrvaški in Sloveniji. Manjšina se je razvijala enotno, povezana v celostno narodnostno telo, na katero meja med republikama praktično ni imela nobenega vpliva. Temu je sledil razvoj manjšinskih institucij in njihove infrastrukture, ki je prostorsko razporejena tako na Hrvaškem, kot v Sloveniji.

Na Hrvaškem na Reki delujeta Italijansko narodno gledališče (*il Dramma Italiano*) in krovno manjšinsko založniško podjetje »Edit«, ki poleg učbenikov za Italijanske šole in ostalih knjižnih del v italijanskem jeziku izdaja dnevnik »*La Voce del Popolo*«, otroško publikacijo »*Arcobaleno*«, publikacijo »*Panorama*« in literarno revijo »*La Battana*«. Rovinj je sedež Centra za zgodovinsko raziskovanje (*Centro di Ricerche Storiche*), s funkcijo dokumentacijsko-raziskovalnega središča za italijansko manjšino. V Kopru v Sloveniji od leta 1949 deluje radijski program, 1971 pa se mu je pridružil še televizijski program v italijanskem jeziku (Radin, Radossi 2001).

Z dostopnostjo tiskanih medijev in radijskih ter televizijskih programov za italijansko manjšino na Hrvaškem in Sloveniji, po letu 1991 ni bilo večjih težav. Zato pa je nova meja med državama negativno vplivala na manjšinsko šolstvo. Temelje šolske mreže za italijansko manjšino na proučevanem območju določa Posebni statut Londonskega memoranduma iz leta 1954. Ta je italijanski manjšini v Jugoslaviji, podobno kot slovenski manjšini v Italiji zagotovil posamezne vrtce, osnovne ter srednje šole v njihovem materinem jeziku. Ta je določil tudi šolske okoliše, med katere pa se je vrinila nova meja. Okoliš italijanske srednje strokovne šole »*Pietro Coppo*« v Izoli je namreč poleg treh slovenskih občin obsegal še nekdanjo hrvaško občino Buje. Pred letom 1991 so 25 % njenih učencev predstavljali učenci iz nekdanje hrvaške občine Buje, ostalih 75 % pa so bile enakomerno porazdeljene med občine Piran, Izolo in Koper. Po letu 1991 je se število hrvaških učencev v italijanskih šolah v Sloveniji drastično znižalo. Čeprav sporazum med državama učencem omogoča brezplačno šolanje, so se pojavile težave v zvezi z nostrifikacijo spričeval. V Izoli danes praktično ni več učencev s Hrvaške, število vpisanih hrvaških državljanov v vse oddelke Italijanske gimnazije v Piranu pa ne preseže števila 10. Če so pred letom 1991 številni dijaki, ki so končali italijansko

srednjo šolo v Bujah odšli študirat v Ljubljano, jih zdaj pot do univerzitetne izobrazbe vodi v Italijo (Trst, Videm, Benetke, Padova) ali pa v Pulj, Reko ali Zagreb. Težave so je pojavile tudi med hrvaškimi in slovenskimi pedagogi, ki so do leta 1991 rotirali na italijanskih šolah v Sloveniji ter na Hrvaškem. Zaradi administrativnih zapletov z delovnimi dovoljenji je v obdobju 1991–2000 na italijanskih šolah pogosto primanjkovalo zadostno število usposobljenih pedagogov (Sau 2001).

Sprememba političnega sistema leta 1990 v Sloveniji in na Hrvaškem je vplivala tudi na notranjo preobrazbo Zveze Italijanov Istre in Reke (UIIF – *L'Unione Italiana dell' Istria e di Fiume*), ki je bila krovna organizacija za italijansko manjšino v obdobju SFRJ. Leta 1991 je bila na Reki ustanovljena nova manjšinska organizacija Unija Italijanov (UI – *Unione Italiana*), ki je postala pravna, ne pa tudi politična naslednica UIIF (Radossi 2000). UI je izrazila svojo podporo za čimprejšnjo vključitev dveh novih neodvisnih držav v Evropske strukture. Izrazila je tudi željo, da bi kljub dvema državama v dobro italijanske manjšine in zavoljo optimalnega delovanja njene infrastrukture, UI kot enotna manjšinska organizacija povezovala italijansko manjšino v obeh državah. Čeprav to ni razširjena praksa, pa ni v nasprotju z okvirno konvencijo Sveta Evrope o zaščiti narodnih manjšin, ki manjšine iz sosednjih držav spodbuja k medsebojnemu sodelovanju (Framework Convention ... 1995).

S perspektive osrednjih oblasti dveh novih, v mednarodnih odnosih še razvijajočih se držav, je bila ta zamisel interpretirana kot grožnja njuni suverenosti in poskus vrnitve nazaj v obdobje SFRJ. Zavzeli sta stališče, da lahko kot neodvisni državi v skladu z mednarodnimi obveznostmi, ki sta jih prevzeli od Jugoslavije vsaka zase ločeno zagotavljata standard za italijansko manjšino, določeno z mednarodnimi pogodbami. Gordijski voz je bil razrešen šele leta 1998, ko je bila UI uradno registrirana tudi v Sloveniji, odnosi med državama in UI pa so se normalizirali po letu 2002. UI je danes organizacija, ki je uradno registrirana na Hrvaškem in v Sloveniji, ima dva sedeža in enotno deluje v obeh državah.

Italijanska manjšina predstavlja most za čezmejno povezovanje na občinski ravni. Če imajo v slovenskih občinah njeni predstavniki zagotovljeno eno mesto za funkcijo podžupana, so si njeni predstavniki v večini hrvaških občin županska mesta priborili kar neposredno na lokalnih volitvah.

7 Sklep

Nova državna meja med Slovenijo in Hrvaško v Istri je vsem prebivalcem, ki živijo ob njej, spremenila življenje. Nova meja se na obravnavanem območju, v kontekstu čezmejnega povezovanja, večinoma pojavlja kot filter in ovira v čezmejnem sodelovanju. Proces zapiranja meje je zaznati od 1991, ko so bile postopoma prekinjene čezmejne povezave kot so delo, šolanje, bolnišnična oskrba, obiskovanje prijateljev. Z vstopom Slovenije v EU se zaradi uveljavitve SOPS ter uvajanja schengenskega mejnega režima, glede na prejšnjo prepustnost prične proces zapiranja meje. Kjer je bilo čezmejno sodelovanje že prej dobro razvito, meja v odnosih med prebivalci na obeh straneh večinoma predstavlja oviro ali filter. Kjer je bilo le to prej slabše razvito pa meja predstavlja vlogo rahlega razvojnega dejavnika. Bolj ko je območje obrobno in manj razvito, večji je interes lokalnega prebivalstva za čezmejno sodelovanje ter obratno.

Na podlagi terenske raziskave je moč izpostaviti tri območja z različnim odnosom do čezmejnega sodelovanja. Na območju Sečovelj in Dragonje na zahodu, kljub dvema mejnima prehodoma za mednarodni promet meja predstavlja filter za čezmejno sodelovanje, kar se kaže v upadanju stikov med lokalnim prebivalstvom na obeh straneh meje. Vzrok za to so prometni zastoji (čakalne vrste) tranzitnega prometa, ki so posledica mejne kontrole na mednarodnih prehodih po letu 1991 in domačinom na obeh straneh meje predstavljajo oviro v čezmejnih stikih. V nasprotju s tem je čezmejni tranzitni turistični promet, ki je zaradi zamud pri uvajanju mejnega režima med leti 1991 in 2004 neovirano potekal na osrednjem območju Hrvojev, Topolovca in Brezovice pri Gradinu, predstavljal razvojni dejavnik lokalnim ekonomijam na obeh straneh meje. Po vstopu Slovenije v EU je za to območje značilna berlinizacija oziroma situacija zaprte meje. Vzhodnemu območju okoli Rakitovca meja sicer predstavlja oviro v komunikaciji med prebivalci, istočasno pa je vzrok za investicije v infrastrukturo s strani države ter občine. Na območju, ki je bilo zaradi obrobne lege v preteklosti, v primerjavi z ostalimi razvojno najbolj zapostavljeno, meja kot dejavnik lokalnega razvoja nastopa predvsem v vlogi motivacije za preseganje ovir.

Hrvaško območje izkazuje večjo afiniteto po čezmejnemu sodelovanju z Italijo kot pa s Slovenijo. Ribiči iz hrvaške Istre bodo zaradi schengenskih fitosanitarnih predpisov primorani svoj ulov v Italijanski Trst izvažati prek mejnega prehoda Starod-Pasjak, kar v primerjavi z najbližjo potjo prek mejnih prehodov

Sečovlje in Dragonja predstavlja dodatni 150 kilometrski ovinek. Na hrvaški strani zato obstaja želja za uvedbo neposredne trajektne povezave med Umagom in Trstom (Žerjavič 2004). Po drugi strani pa je prebivalcem Buj, Grožnjana, Oprtalja in Buzeta njihova državna prestolnica Zagreb z osebnim avtomobilom zaradi boljših prometnih povezav in cenejših cestnin, dostopnejša prek Ljubljane kakor pa preko Reke.

Ovire nastale v čezmejnem sodelovanju med državama bi lahko omilila Evropska komisija s prožnejšim pristopom do obravnavanega območja; na primer prekategorizacija prehodnega mesta po SOPS v Hrvojih v mejni prehod v državljane EU in Hrvaške, ki bi bil namenjen prometu z osebnimi avtomobili. Enako velja za mejna prehoda za obmejni promet Brezovica pri Gradinu in Rakitovec.

Čeprav naj bi Hrvaška v bližnji prihodnosti postala članica EU, bi se sedanji mejni režim med državama sprostil šele takrat, ko bi postala tudi članica schengenskega prostora. Pogoj za to je, da na svojih vzhodnih mejah vzpostavi sistem varovanja, ki bo ustrezal schengenskim standardom. Slovenija, ki naj bi članica schengenskega prostora postala 21. 12. 2007, se je na uvedbo schengenskega mejnega režima na 670 km dolgi kopenski meji s Hrvaško pripravljala 10 let (1997–2007). Hrvaška meja s Srbijo, Bosno in Hercegovino ter Črno Goro je dolga 1198 km (A Concise ... 1993). Glede na njeno precejšnjo prepustnost ni realno pričakovati, da bi Hrvaška postala članica schengenskega prostora pred letom 2020, razen če bi v EU in hkrati še v schengenski prostor vstopile še našete države. Po tem scenariju bodo čezmejni stiki na obravnavanem območju vse dotlej talec »Trdnjave Evrope«, ki sočasno s popolno liberalizacijo notranjih meja, postavlja zidove tam, kjer jih prej nikoli ni bilo.

8 Literatura

Glej angleški del prispevka.