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## **BORDER TWIN TOWNS IN THE V4 COUNTRIES - PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH TOURISM AS A WAY OF EXPLOITING THE POTENTIAL OF THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF TOWNS<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** The border twin towns (urban settlements adjacent to each other but at the same time separated by a state border) are a particular example of historic towns in Europe. In Europe, approx. 50 border twin towns can be indentified, of which more than half are in East-Central Europe. For a long time, these towns on the borders of V4 had been developing in similar socio-political conditions. Since the 90s of the XXth century, along with the process of transformation and taking steps towards the integration with the EU, the growth opportunities for the border areas had changed.

Within framework of the above the aim of this paper is to analyze the potential of historical towns and cities located on the Polish border from the point of view of the links between the cultural heritage of these towns and tourism development.

**Key words:** border twin towns, historical and cultural heritage, Poland

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The border twin towns are a particular example of historic towns in Europe. The twin towns are urban settlements, adjacent to each other and at the same time separated by a state border (Jańczak, 2013b; Schulz, 2002). In Europe, approx. 50 border twin towns can be indentified, of which more than half are in East-Central Europe (Schulz, 2002). The border twin towns in Europe were created in different periods of history. The biggest change on the European map in this regard had been brought by armed conflicts. Here can be mentioned, among others, changes brought on the political map by wars in the Napoleonic period, as well as after World War I and II.

For a long time, the border twin towns on the borders of V4 had been developing in similar socio-political conditions. Since the 90s of the XXth century, along with the process of

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transformation and taking steps towards the integration with the EU, the growth opportunities for the border areas had changed. The border twin towns had had a number of benefits as a result of this process. Membership in the European Union had brought a variety of international programmes in the field of cross-border cooperation. These had aimed at the social and cultural integration, as well as the economic recovery of the border areas. Border towns had gained a much broader legal personality, which was associated with changes in the management from the administrative model to the model of local government and referred to the general concept of the European Union, assuming the transfer of competences from the central level to the regional and local level (Jańczak, 2013b; Schulz, 2002). Border twin towns had relatively quickly joined cross-border cooperation initiatives, including the activities of Euroregions (Adamowicz & Bergier, 2004; Molendowski & Ratajczak, 1998; Prokkola, 2008).

The first results of this cooperation, including those in the field of culture and tourism, are already seen. The key direction seems to be the urban development, based on cultural tourism (Merski, 2002). Previously developed commercial function (the so-called: shopping tourism) loses the right of existence as a result of the deepening of European integration, where one of the dimensions is the common customs and monetary union.

The aim of this article is to analyze the potential of historical towns and cities located on the Polish border from the point of view of the links between the cultural heritage of these towns and tourism development. Particular attention will be paid to the cross-border projects implemented in cooperation with neighbouring countries and regions which concern the issues of protection and sharing of cultural heritage and tourism development in the border areas.

## THE BORDER TWIN TOWNS

The border twin towns in Europe were created in different periods of history. Some of the border twin towns were built from the new as neighbouring towns on both sides of the border (Jańczak, 2013b). According to Jańczak, border twin towns have a threefold origin (Jańczak, J. 2013a, 2013b). These are:

- divided towns as a result of changes in national borders, occurring most often after important political events (e.g. In Europe-after World War I and II), the most common line between the town was the river, which became the new border between the two neighbouring states;
- duplicated towns, the creation of which was associated mostly with the building of the counterpart town of the town which sits on the border, on the other side;
- connected towns, associated with the existence of significant geographical barriers, both sides of which were independent towns (in this case the bridge was a connector, which integrates (parried) them into a whole town (e.g. Giurgiu-Ruse, Vidin-Calafat) (Jańczak, 2013a).

Taking into account the historical aspect, the process of creating border twin towns in Europe can be summarized in four phases (Jańczak, 2013a). As the first established towns, where the division was associated with a medieval feudal division of lands, settled later in many parts of Western Europe in the form of state borders (e.g. Tui-Valencia on the Portuguese-Spanish border; Irun-Hendaye-on the Spanish-French border). Another group consists of the cities and towns separated by the Napoleonic era as Rheinfelden- Rheinfelden (Baden) and Laufenburg-Laufenburg (Baden)-both on the German-Swiss border; Haparanda-Tornio-on the Swedish-Finnish border; Herzogenrath-Kerkrade-on the German-Dutch border, Laufen on the Salzach River-Oberndorf bei Salzburg-on the German-Austrian

border and Baarle-Hertog – Baarle-Nassau-on the Belgian-Dutch border (Jańczak, 2013b). Establishment of divided cities and towns in Western Europe corresponds with the first two phases of their development as per definition by (Jańczak, 2013a). However, changes in the map of Central and Eastern Europe in terms of the formation of divided cities and towns took place in the time of the World War I and World War II. Pedigree of some divided towns in Central and Eastern Europe is associated with the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy and the emergence of new countries in Europe. During this period, the following towns were created: Cieszyn-Cesky Tesin-on the former Polish-Czechoslovak border (now the Polish-Czech border), Komarno-Komárom and Esztergom-Sturovo-on the former Czechoslovak-Hungarian border (now the Slovak-Hungarian border) and Ceske Velenice-Gmund, at the former Czechoslovak-Austrian border (now the Czech-Austrian) and Bad Radkersburg-Gornja Ragona-at that time the former border between Austria and Yugoslavia (now the Austrian and Slovenian border). In the same period, towns of Valda and Valka on the Estonian-Latvian border were divided.

In contrast, the boundary changes after World War II had an effect on the towns divided by the Polish and German border, such as Słubice-Frankfurt (am Oder), Gubin-Guben, Zgorzelec-Görlitz, as well as the town of Brest-Terespol-at the former Polish-the USSR border (now the Polish – Belarus border). For towns from Polish-German borderland it should be noted that, due to the division on the Polish side, a total exchange of population took place. The German population that lived in the town by the age was replaced by the people brought from the East, who were not culturally affiliated with the place and their assimilation to the new conditions was very long and, according to some experts, may even continue to this day.

Border twin towns in the V4 region (The Visegrád Group, also called the Visegrád Four: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are divided towns. As these were created as a result of changes in national borders, which took little account of the ethnic-nationality aspects of residents and their cultural heritage. This is particularly evident in the case of towns on the western Polish border, where complete replacement of the population took place. Divided towns are characterized by complex history, which is also reflected in their ethnic and religious structure. Most of them have roots in the medieval times, and some even in the ancient times (Jańczak, 2013a; 2013b). Shifting boundaries and thus the new political situation relatively quickly rolled up upside down many local and regional socio-economic systems. The direction of economic connections had changed as these towns had become mostly peripheral centres whose function was to perform border control. Existing cultural connections between the inhabitants were reduced, sometimes were even absent, as in the case of Western Poland. It can be assumed that the border was a kind of wound in the urban tissue that had healed over time, and the two neighbouring urban organisms began to work together as a single entity. This process however depends on two major factors. First, fundamental is the attitude of two neighbouring states to each other, expressed in the mutual political, social, cultural and economic relations. The more entrenched these relationships are, the less noticeable the division of urban organism into two parts is. Another important factor is time: the shorter the period of the town division, the stronger the animosities at the level of power. These will decrease (if are not incited by the national element) over time.

Border towns have begun to undertake the first forms of co-operation from the 60s of XXth century, along with the development of the idea of twinning towns in Europe (Jańczak, 2013a, 2013b, Schultz, 2002). The interaction within the framework of Euroregions had played an important role. From the beginning, almost all of the divided towns belonged to the Euroregions initiative. Currently, some of the towns are trying to create strongly related organisms, such as Eurocity (e.g. the Eurocity Gubin-Guben). Cooperation of cities and towns covers a number of problem areas. These include: communication, security, technical infrastructure, social infrastructure, provision of utilities, environmental protection, urban

common policies and cooperation in culture, education and tourism promotion. Among the most important programmes aimed at cooperation of border towns available by the European Union's policy are: the Operational Programme of Cross Border Cooperation Czech Republic-Poland 2007-2013, as a continuation of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA Features-Poland, the Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) Programme Czech Republic-Republic of Poland for the years 2014-2020, the European Regional Development Fund under the Operational Program of Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) Poland (Lubuskie District)-Brandenburg 2007-2013, the European Regional Development Fund in the framework of the Community Initiative Programme INTERREG III A Free Country of Saxony-Republic of Poland (Lower Silesia Province), the Small Projects Fund of the Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) Programme Poland (Lubuskie)-Brandenburg 2007-2013.

## **TOURISM AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPMENT OF BORDER TOWNS**

National borders play an important role from the point of view of tourism. Generally, according to Timothy (2002), three basic border – tourism relations can be identified: border as a simulator of development of tourism, border as a barrier to the development of tourism, border as a factor of modification of the cultural landscape and travel space. Więckowski (2010) indicates that the border areas and border towns can be characterized by a variety of conditions and level of development of tourism. He distinguishes five types of tourist space in the border areas. These are: 1) the areas of the undeveloped tourist function; 2) the areas of natural value (attract tourists mainly because of its natural potential, both for leisure and cognitive purposes. Boundary which runs across the national park can be a barrier, especially if protection plans do not involve the universal exploration of the park); 3) the transit zone-(the effect of transit on the development of cross-border tourist space can affect in many ways: from the absence of any action to the construction of the equipment necessary for the transit, such as parking, catering, gas stations up to the construction of the full service facilities for tourism); 4) combined tourist centres (merged resorts)-these are leisure centres, located on both sides of the border, forming a joint tourist offer in the field of leisure tourism and qualified tourism e.g. skiing. This type of collaboration is typical for mountain areas, although in Central Europe, compared to the Alpine countries, the process of offer integration is at the early stages of development), and 5) cross-border tourist towns that form adjacent to each other organisms, including the divided town that can supplement its tourist offer, turning into the centre of tourist services in the region.

The last type of tourism space in border areas relates directly to the divided towns. Więckowski (2010) suggests that a border can be seen as a kind of tourist attraction, which exceeds or wakes the thrill, implies an overcome of new barriers and familiarisation with something else located abroad; thus, the very existence of the border in the town can be an impulse for tourism development. It should be emphasized that the border may be part of the economic benefits, of which tourists are the beneficiaries (Więckowski, 2010). Different tax rates reflected in various commodity prices, as well as the differences in exchange rates, can provide an important impulse, conducive to the development of shopping tourism in the area. A similar process may occur in relation to the services sector (see the case of beauty salons, hairdressers and dentists, localized in Polish towns along the Germany border set to customers from Germany). In the case of shopping tourism one can speak about the existence of two streams of tourist traffic. These are: the “close” movement of residents from the border areas, sometimes even going abroad every day in order to purchase goods or services and the tourist traffic of the inhabitants of the interior of the country, who go over the border less frequently, but in reality they do more shopping. The border may also create opportunities for the development of these socio-economic sectors, which in some of the border countries

can be legally limited, for example: the development of a network of casinos at the border (e.g. Gevgelija (on the Macedonian-Greek border) and Blagoevgrad (on the Bulgarian-Turkish border). Border towns may also provide tourist facilities for the whole region, if the region has favourable conditions for tourism development (Więckowski, 2010). Speaking of tourism in border divided cities (twin towns), one cannot forget about their transit function. Most of these urban centres in the V4 countries are located on major transport routes (road, rail); this creates the need for adequate tourist infrastructure necessary to serve people in transit. This trend, however, has limited growth opportunities, as currently in the European Union the role of borders as barriers has been reduced to a minimum and the benefits of transit service are usually associated with price advantage.

Więckowski (2010) makes a note of the process of "turning away towns from each other," and the so called "buffer zone" (neighbouring to the river as the border areas, objects located directly on the border, but in the back of the town) which were neglected. With the increase in tourist traffic, follows the process of bonding of two organisms, which involves, among others: construction of bridges, walking trails and paths. Passenger transport is intensified between the two towns.

An important element of the development of the tourist offer of divided cities and towns is their cultural heritage (Więckowski, 2010). For a long time these urban settlements had a common history, hence, they are deeply embedded in the history of the region and strongly linked to it. Most of the cities and towns preserved material relics from the past in the form of monuments. Many valuable objects are exhibited in museums. Border towns were usually shared disproportionately in terms of cultural heritage, historic urban tissue and cultural institutions. The historical part of the town generally remained on the side of one state, and industrial areas or the communication infrastructure was left on the side of the other. In the initial period after the division of towns, it was usually tried to compensate for losses associated with the loss of infrastructure, strengthen the border function, while not focusing on the issue of heritage and culture. Only later the efforts were made to create cultural institutions, but it has to be emphasized, however, that in many cases, their activities were affected by national issues. Often, governmental policy favoured the elimination of the heritage associated with the neighbouring nation, as a foreign heritage. Because most often cities and towns were divided during the war, certain antagonism had persisted for a long time and even prevented the towns from undertaking joint cultural events.

A special case related to the cultural heritage is represented by the border towns of western Poland. The population of the Polish part is very weakly associated with the heritage of these cities and towns. As mentioned above, these are immigrants whose historical roots were associated with other areas.

## CASE STUDIES

This part of the study discusses the activities of border twin towns on the Polish border, in the sphere of culture and tourism, relating to cross-border aspects. The authors make an attempt to characterize all divided border cities and towns in Poland.

### *Cieszyn and Český Těšín*

Cieszyn and Český Těšín is a border twin town on the Polish-Czech border, which was set on the river Olza in 1920 (Sosna, 1993). Since then, it operates as two separate towns (except for the period of 1938-1945): Cieszyn (within the Polish borders): occupying the right-bank part of the town with the historic centre and the Český Těšín (within Czechoslovakia-now the Czech Republic): occupying the left bank, an industrial part of the town with a railway

station. Two towns, forming the urban agglomeration, have a very long but complicated story. Cieszyn developed in the Xth century as a town, defending the southern border of Poland. From approx. 1290. Cieszyn was a capital of the independent Cieszyn Principality, then formed on the basis of the principality of the region – a capital of the Śląsk Cieszyński region (Sosna, 1993; Stiasny, 1938).

From the time of the Reformation, Cieszyn was a town diverse in terms of religion, and of mixed ethnic composition. In addition to Poles, the Germans, Czechs, the Jews, and in the late XIX and early XX century also the Hungarians lived here. The dispute over the territorial affiliation of the Śląsk Cieszyński led to the division of the town in 1920 (Sosna, 1993; Stiasny, 1938; Zenderowski, 2002). Division of Cieszyn brought to both towns a significant change; as a result, many native inhabitants of Cieszyn migrated to Austria or Germany, their place was taken by the newcomers from the Polish or Czech lands. The two parts of the former uniform town faced a difficult process of integration with new nation states and development of new economic connections. In 1921 Cieszyn had over 15,000 inhabitants and in 1938 there lived already 18.5 thousand people (Nowak, 1998). New connections have been gradually rebuilt, especially with the rest of the province of Śląsk, to which Cieszyn belonged since 1922, among others due to the expansion of the railway line. On the other hand, most common municipal buildings remained on the Polish side, which made it easier to effect a takeover of power in the town by the new Polish institutions. The Poles, Germans and Jews all worked for the benefit of the town located in a difficult position. Much greater changes have occurred in the left-bank part of Cieszyn, which was so far only an industrial suburb.

Within several years, Český Těšín was transformed into a fully-fledged town with all the necessary structures, facilities and infrastructure, new schools and public buildings. Český Těšín was also an important centre of the Polish minority, Polish schools and major Polish organizations were established here. Population of both towns was characterized by a high level of social activity as in every town there were over 150 different types of associations.

After joining the so-called: Zaolzie to Poland in October 1938, both parts of the town were combined, and the seat of the town became the town hall in Český Těšín, now called the Western Cieszyn. The town also remained united during World War II, when Cieszyn was incorporated into the German Reich (Sosna, 1993; Nowak, 1998; Zenderowski, 2002). After World War II the town, despite the age and traditions, developed in the direction of investment in the heavy industry.

But the social life of Cieszyn was not dominated by this new function; it remained as a town where the local intelligentsia and bourgeoisie were able to preserve the memory of the old traditions. Further development, including educational functions of the town, resulted in genuine cooperation with the authorities of Český Těšín, organizing a number of joint projects and ventures; this took place in the 90s the XXth century. Today Cieszyn is a lively border town with 40 thousand of residents. Until the Polish accession to the Schengen structures, the town was the largest border crossing point in southern Poland (Žerański & Dembiniok, 2010). Sitting on a busy migration and trade route, this town was the place where met different nationalities, cultures and religions. Hence the town played an important role as a centre of culture and tourism, after Ustroń and Wisła. The town hosts a headquarter of the Euroregion of Śląsk Cieszyński. There is a department of the University of Silesia; every year it hosts the festivals such as the International Festival "Bez Granic (Without borders)", Film Festival "Kino na granicy" ("Cinema Hranici")-presenting Czech, Polish, Slovak and Hungarian movies, or the Festival of Vocal Music "Viva il canto". In 2002-2005 one of the largest film festivals "Era New Horizons" took place in the town, which really popularized the town. In addition, here operates a number of cultural institutions and organizations (including the theatre and the innovative Silesian Castle of Art and Enterprise).

Testimony of the centuries of the Cieszyn development are still numerous monuments from the Romanesque to Art Nouveau style. Among them, 841 are protected, including 99 through the entry in the register of monuments.

Above the historic urban system of the town dominates the Castle Hill with: XIth century Romanesque rotunda of St. Nicholas, a Gothic castle tower from the XIVth century (the so-called: Piast Tower), the palace of the Habsburgs from the XIXth century, surrounded by an English park. In the town, tourists can visit religious monuments, among other: the Parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene from the turn of the XIII / XIVth centuries, the Church of St. George from the turn of the XIV and XVth centuries, the Church of St. Trinity from the turn of the XVI / XVIIth centuries with neo-Gothic tower; the Church of Jesus in Cieszyn (the largest Lutheran church in Poland), Shomre-Szabos Synagogue (1928). Around the Market Square and the Old Town of Cieszyn preserved historic buildings. An interesting attraction are the buildings at Przykopa Street – located on the stream, also known as the "Venice of Cieszyn." Multiculturalism and multinationalism of the town is highlighted in the cemeteries: Jewish, Catholic and Evangelic. A real pearl of the town, providing the continuity of the development of the town, is the Bracki Castle Brewery in Cieszyn, operating since 1846 (Nowak, 1998; Sosna, 1993).

Český Těšín is a town which has a rich cultural potential. The history of the town and its culture can be seen in the Museum of Těšín (Muzeum Těšínska), with a dozen of exhibitions, a library containing 20 thousands of books, about 20 exhibitions per year and its own magazine published continuously since 1957. The museum of Těšín is one of the four museums located in the Moravian-Silesian region, whose collections mostly concern the history and geography of the Czech part of the Śląsk Cieszyński Region. The oldest museum exhibits date back to the early nineteenth century, and its activity itself dates back to 1802.

Partnerships between cities and towns, divided by a border, did not end with the establishment of an administrative border between two countries. By 2007, one of the largest Polish-Czech border crossings operated between Cieszyn and Český Těšín. At the turn of 1989-1990 activities started in Český Těšín, whose primary purpose was the reestablishment of contacts between Czech and Polish communities lying in the border regions and the opening of the Czech-Polish borders. Fruitless talks of Polish and Czech authorities motivated to ensure the development of Czech-Polish cooperation at the regional level.

In the early 90s small associations of towns, cities and municipalities formed in the Polish and Czech part of the Silesia. Their task was the cooperation with partners on the other side of the border. After the transition (1989-1990) in Poland, the Association of Municipalities of Upper Silesia was established, which also included some Czech municipalities. In 1992, the Association of Municipalities of Northern Moravia and Silesia was established. Both entities had joined in September 1992 into the Association of Towns and Municipalities of Upper Silesia and Northern Moravia. In the second half of the 90s of the XXth century, the Polish-Czech co-operation was carried out in smaller, more co-joint regions. In the 90s of the XXth century, these two countries had begun to apply efforts to join the European Union. There were chances of obtaining financial support for new projects from the European Union. In 1998 the conversation between the representatives of the Polish and Czech part of Cieszyn had ended up; these had led to the establishment of the Euroregion of Śląsk Cieszyński.

Particularly intensive development relates to the areas associated with transport and technical infrastructure, tourism and tourist traffic (Realizacja Wspólnych Projektów... 2013). In terms of cross-border cooperation, culture is the most developed field. The following projects had been carried out within the framework of the Euroregion of Śląsk Cieszyński in the years 1999-2002:

- REGIOTOUR – construction of bicycle route through the Euroregion of Śląsk Cieszyński-Těšínské Slezsko (implemented in August 1999-August 2000, budget: 385 875 euro)
- BESKIDOMAP-development of tourism in the region of Žermanicka and Cierlicka dams and Goczałkowice Lake (implemented in August 1998-June 1999, budget: 14 120 euro).
- IMAGE PROSPECT-development of promotion materials about the Euroregion (implemented July 2001-April 2002, budget: 4 186 euro)
- INTERTURISM – development of a joint Czech-Polish tourism strategy in the Beskid Śląski and Moravia (implemented in June 2001-March 2002, budget: 9 933 euro) (Realizacja Wspólnych Projektów... 2013).

The cooperation of towns and cities was also carried out within the framework of the Operational Programme of Cross Border Cooperation Czech Republic-Poland 2007-2013, as a continuation of the Community Initiative INTERREG IIIA Features-Poland, which was implemented in 2004-2006 (Realizacja Wspólnych Projektów... 2013). The aim of the projects under these programmes were manifold: strengthening mutual economic, social and cultural commonwealth of nature protection, tourism development, establishment of active labour market. Of particular importance for the development of culture and tourism in both towns were the records relating to the implementation of the action: Supporting the development of tourism, the priority axis: Improvement of conditions for the development of entrepreneurship and tourism: conservation and restoration of natural and cultural wealth, the development of cultural traditions, maintaining and continuing the existing craft traditions. Co-financed projects aimed at improving the technical modernization, maintenance, rehabilitation of the existing historical monuments and their groups (e.g. historic buildings, fortifications, churches), and other cultural facilities. Particular attention was given to the restoration and protection of cultural heritage, for example: local folklore, monuments, historic buildings or groups, including religious buildings, fortifications, historic urban facilities, technical and tourism and significant elements of the cultural landscape of initiating and supporting cultural events, developing local and cultural traditions, and its adaptation in tourism (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej... 2007).

Projects aimed at the improvement and enhancement of access to information (also multilingual) about tourist and cultural offer of border area, related to the promotion of the area, local natural and cultural elements, as well as tourism services and products were also supported (Realizacja Wspólnych Projektów... 2013). Projects aimed to create an information system on cultural resources and the tourist area of the Polish-Czech border.

A special instrument, which is used to fund smaller projects in the field of social initiatives is called the Micro Fund (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej... 2007). The primary objective of the Fund is to develop and support the development of co-operation between the communities on both sides of the border, with a great focus on improving the social, cultural and economic cooperation. Particular attention is paid to the projects targeting: the rehabilitation and protection of cultural and historical heritage, for example. small monuments including religious buildings (crosses, chapels, calvaries, penitential crosses), fortifications, buildings of historical, technical and tourism potential and significant elements of the cultural landscape; support and promotion of traditional and new tourism products (e.g. regional cuisine, regional crafts); organizing joint cultural events (festivals, performances, exhibitions, art workshops); support local community projects in the social, cultural, recreational and educational field, community-orientated integration in the border area, supporting the identity and traditions of neighbouring communities. Currently, both towns cooperate in the Cross Border Cooperation Programme Czech Republic-Republic of Poland for the years 2014-2020 (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej... 2007).



The establishment of the Polish-Czech cooperation since 1990, on the basis of culture, had resulted in a large initiative – the International Theatre Festival "On the Border"; since 2004 called "Without Borders". Other examples of cooperation between the two towns on the basis of historical and culture tourism are Revitalpark 2010 (under which the Friendship Bridge was revitalized), "Ogród Dwóch Brzegów" 2013-2015 (implementation of the development strategy of the border area in Cieszyn and Český Těšín) (Realizacja Wspólnych Projektów... 2013). So far, the following historic and recreational areas were revitalized: the Castle Hill and Park Masaryk, park "Pod Wałką and "Park of Adam Sikora".

In Cieszyn, on the Polish as well as on the Czech side, theatres play an important cultural and educational role at a supra-regional level: The Adam Mickiewicz Theatre (Poland) and the Těšínské Theatre (Czech Republic). These two institutions lead a multilateral cultural activity by inviting and organizing performances: theatres, musical theatres, operas, operettas, ballet, folk bands recitals, musical concerts, cabarets. Těšínské Theatre in Český Těšín is a phenomenon on the map Czech and Polish theatres, because under one roof there are three fully professional theatre teams of different nationalities – the Czech Scene, the Polish Scene and the Dolls Tale Scene. The Polish Scene is the only one fully professional theatre, acting outside the country. The Polish scene outside its constant activity (with the 62 seasons, the Polish Scene had given 434 launches, which were watched by about 3,000,000 viewers) meets the educational and more patriotic tasks, because of the presence of live Polish language. It is one of the few institutions that allow contact with the Polish literary language and lively Polish word. The Doll Tale Scene was used to play for children from kindergartens and primary schools with the Polish language of instruction. Nowadays, they also perform for children from Czech kindergartens and primary schools in the Moravian-Silesian region. These three stages cooperate with each other. The most famous joint initiative is the Moravia and Silesia Theatres Festival.

In 2012, a project "Info Tessin" was carried out in Cieszyn and Český Těšín (Kaczmarczyk, 2012). The result of this project was a painted map of the towns with the products that promote both historic towns, and in particular the major tourist attractions. The city plan of Cieszyn and Český Těšín was made, based on aerial photographs. In addition, two replicas on canvas, folded tourist map and a site map (for internet and mobile users) were produced.

### *Ślubice – Frankfurt (Oder)*

Ślubice – Frankfurt (Oder) create a cross-border conurbation which hosts approx. 85 thousand residents. Until 1945, the town Ślubice was part of the German Frankfurt, naming Dammvorstadt (Kilian & Knefelkamp, 2003). Nowadays, the name of the Polish part of the cross-border is Ślubice. Blowing up the bridge over the Oder, together with leading through the tram line in 1945 by the German army was a symbol of separation of Ślubice from the German Frankfurt. Since the end of World War II, the boundary between Poland and Germany runs along the line of the river Neisse and Oder. In the years 1972-1980 the border between Poland and the German Democratic Republic was opened for passenger traffic, without the need to show visas and passports (Kilian & Knefelkamp, 2003; Kurzwelley et al., 2010). In 1972 Ślubice and Frankfurt an der Oder establish an official town twinning programme. During this period, there were conducted numerous exchanges, joint projects and private contacts.

In 1991, after the change of regime in Poland and Germany, Frankfurt and Ślubice authorities signed a "Joint Statement", according to which both towns start a cooperation in the areas of the town development, municipal services, traffic, culture, education, sports, retail and tourism, and also want to support settlement of Polish-German and European institutions. Two years later, the "Agreement on cooperation towns of Ślubice and Frankfurt

on the Oder” ([www.Slubice.pl](http://www.Slubice.pl); access: 01.09.2014) was signed, which establishes regular meetings of the authorities of both towns, local government executive bodies and the joint sessions of Municipal Councils. In the same year the Euroregion Pro Europa Viadrina ([www.Slubice.pl](http://www.Slubice.pl); access: 01.09.2014) was officially formed.

In 1993 a session of the two towns Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice was organized, for the first time. In 2003, "The concept of Integrated Strategy of Ślubice and Frankfurt on the Oder, 2003" ([www.Slubice.pl](http://www.Slubice.pl); access: 01.09.2014) was adopted, under which the following projects were organized: The European Garden 2003, Hanseatic Days of Modern Times and the celebration of the 750th anniversary of the town of Frankfurt (Oder). A year later "The Concept of Common Development and Cooperation of the Cities of Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice", was signed. This document provided a common fight against unemployment, a common concept of tourism and joint participation in the project "The Twin City" (Ślubicko-Frankfurcki Plan Działania 2010-2020, 2010). In 2004-2006 Ślubice and Frankfurt (Oder) cooperate within the framework of the European network of the twin towns (the "Twin City Network" created the association "Twin City Association (CTA)", which is a member of the European Federation of Twin Cities EUROMOT (<http://www.Slubice.pl> (01.09.2014)). During 2009, the vision of the European Twin-City for 2020 was finally developed.

Today the metropolitan area of Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice is an important academic centre; it is the seat of the Collegium Polonicum (i.e. a joint teaching and research unit of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań and the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) (1994) (Kurzweily et al., 2010)). This is one of the most important functions of agglomeration. Because of the old tradition and multi-ethnic and multi-religious past, the town plays an important cultural role in the region. In 2012 the "Educational Path on historic places of Ślubice" – a network of 12 Polish-German information boards was opened which present all important objects and places in the town (<http://www.Slubice.pl> (01.09.2014)).

There are several cultural centres in Ślubice: the District House of Culture (1957-1975), the Ślubicki House of Culture (1975-1977), the Ślubicki Inter-Cultural Centre (since 1977), the Military Culture Centre. In 1962 the Ślubice Cultural Society (STK) was found, which in 1987 was converted into the Society of Friends of the Ślubicka Land (<http://www.Slubice.pl> (01.09.2014)). The main cultural institution in the town remains Ślubicki Municipal Cultural Centre (SMOK), in which operates the gallery "Window", a youth cultural centre, a cinema and a concert hall. Every year in the town, with the SMOK initiative, the Feast of the Oder, now replaced by the Municipal Hanseatic Days (HanseStadtFest) takes place. This initiative is co-organized with Frankfurt (Oder). Annually in Ślubice and Frankfurt (Oder) the Theater Festival UNITHEA also takes place. In Ślubice the Ślubickie Musical Society is located, which organizes the International Meeting of Music "Musica Autumn" permanently inscribed in the cultural calendar of the town (Kurzweily, et al., 2010). The cultural life of the town is also defined by some local associations (Ślubfurt e.V., the Ślubicka Land Lovers Association, the Association of Our Small Homeland) ([www.Slubice.pl](http://www.Slubice.pl) (01.09.2014)).

The European Twin-City Ślubice – Frankfurt (Oder) collaborate on the flagship project entitled: "Building the future on the foundations of a common history: Construction of the German-Polish Centre Bolfras mouse in Frankfurt (Oder) and Preparations for the construction of the Kleist Tower in Ślubice (Stage I) "Beacons" for a cross-border, Frankfurt-Ślubice tourism marketing" (<http://www.bolfras-kleist.eu>; access: 01.09.2014). The objective of the project is to rebuild the Bolfras House on the Frankfurt side, as a parallel to the historic site of the sixteenth century, and on the Ślubice side, the elaboration of the technical documents including the reconstruction of the Kleist Tower (concerning the discovery of the remaining foundation, creating of the construction plans, reinforcement and ground preparation, as well as the intended use). The cost of the project is estimated at 4.2 million Euro. Funds for the project were obtained from the European Regional Development Fund

under the Operational Programme of Cross Border Cooperation Poland (Lubuskie District)-Brandenburg 2007-2013. The transboundary nature of the project and its importance for the historical consciousness of both towns should serve as a basis for creation of a common policy that will strengthen the tourist attractiveness of both towns and significantly contribute to the long-term integration of the two towns (<http://www.bolfras-kleist.eu>; access: 01.09.2014). In the newly raised building in Frankfurt (Oder) will be located the "Polish-German Centre Bolfas House" (the Polish-German tourist information, the "Hanseatic room" as a banquet hall preserving the tradition of the Hanseatic League, offices and conference centre) less than 500 meters away from the border bridge, which connects Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice. The Kleist tower was built in 1892 with help from old residents' donations to commemorate the poet Ewald Christian von Kleist, who died in the Seven Years' War (<http://www.bolfras-kleist.eu>; access: 01.09.2014). It was built on a hill as a lookout tower. Efforts to rebuild the buildings were taken for many years, on both sides of the Oder (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska (Województwo Lubuskie) – Brandenburgia 2007-2013, 2012) The project will help to rebuild historically significant buildings, which residents from Ślubice and Frankfurt will be able to equally identify and use.

Activities within the cultural field in Ślubice and Frankfurt (Oder) had resulted in a productive cooperation to promote tourism in both communities, and in 2012 in accession of the Ślubice community as a supporting member of the Association of Tourism in Frankfurt. Supporting membership is the first step to the ordinary membership and the establishment of the Association of Tourist of Frankfurt (Oder) and Ślubice. Then Ślubice and Frankfurt (Oder) will have a first Polish-German Tourist Association on the Polish-German border. The Association will lead to the establishment in Frankfurt (Oder) of a Tourist Information centre, common to both towns. Currently, both municipalities present a joint tourist product: educational tours for students of different levels of education, e.g. at the ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin).

### *Zgorzelec – Görlitz*

The history of the cross-border agglomeration **Zgorzelec-Görlitz** is similar to the history of Ślubice. These are the modern border twin towns on the Polish-German border. In 1945, as a result of determining the border between the German Democratic Republic and the Poland on the Lusatian Neisse, Zgorzelec became an independent administrative unit within the Polish borders. Previously, it was the eastern suburb of the German city-Görlitz (Nebelung, 2010). At the beginning of May 1945, the Germans destroyed the bridge Zgorzelec-Görlitz Old Town, which was rebuilt in 2004. On 6 July 1950 the agreement between the Polish People's Republic (PRL) and German Democratic Republic (GDR) was signed, which claimed the "Border of Peace and Friendship on the Neisse." At the turn of the 40s and 50s of the XXth century, thousands of Greeks and Macedonians, persecuted in their homeland because of political beliefs settled in the town.

A construction of the power plant in Turów was a breakthrough (50s of the XXth century) in the post-war history of the town. At that time Zgorzelec had residential, commercial and cultural functions. In the early 60s, the town's population exceeded 20 thousand people, to reach more than 30 thousand in 1970. In 1957, the rail border traffic resumed (suspended after 1945.), and after the introduction in 1971 of the passport-free traffic, Zgorzelec had become one of the most important border crossings in the west of the country (Dobrzyński, & Fokt, 2003).

Since 1991, Zgorzelec and Görlitz started to talk about partnerships. Many years later, Zgorzelec and Görlitz proclaimed: first on May 5, 1998 – the Europatown, and second: on July 8, 2003 the Europe-City (die Europastadt). The cooperation of these two towns is today

advanced enough, and in 2006 the two towns bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture, but did not receive the award.

Görlitz (and with it Słubice-today on the Polish side) is one of the few German towns, undamaged during World War II, and thus had undisturbed spatial layout and monuments from all eras of history. In addition to the religious monuments: the Holy Sepulchre (Heiliges Grab) from 1504-replica of the tomb of Jesus Christ, the St. Peter and Paul Church (St. Peter and Paul) from the XVth century, the St. Nicholas Church (Nicolas) from the XIIth century, the Trinity Church (Dreifaltigkeitskirche) from the years 1234 to 1245, the Church of Our Lady (Frauenkirche) from 1473, the Cathedral of St. James (St. Jakobus) from 1900, the Lutheran Church (Lutherkirche) from 1901, the synagogue (1911), on the German side the status of the monument possess: the Old Town Hall from the XVIth century, the towers Dicker Turm, Reichenbacher Turm and Nikolaiturm, The Nikolaizwinger Gate, the Ochsenbastei Tower, Kaisertrutz-remains of medieval fortifications, the water castle Tauchritz (1306), the Main Railway Station (1846), the viaduct (1847), the department store Strasbourg-Passage (1887), and the department store Hertie-Kaufhaus (1913).

The Silesian Museum (Das Schlesische Museum) is located in Görlitz, in a historic building Schönhof from 1526 (Nebelung, 2010). According to the register of the National Institute for Heritage on a list of monuments in Zgorzelec are inscribed: town buildings (residential buildings around the Market Square, the architectural ensemble Nyskie Suburbs) as the historic town, along with a complex of urban parks, from the years 1870-1930, the monumental building of the Municipal House of Culture (1898-1902), the water tower and the viaduct on the Lusatian Neisse and the churches: St. John the Baptist Church (1905-1907) and St. Boniface Church (1929-1930) (Dobrzyński, & Fokt, 2003).

The towns: Zgorzelec and Görlitz first signed the partnership agreement in 1980. Neighbouring towns work together today within the framework of Europe 1998 where they had been declared as one town, in various fields of cooperation. In addition to the Polish-German kindergartens and primary schools there is also a bilingual gymnasium. In the field of sport, every year a Europe Marathon, which runs across the bridge is organized. The winner gets an international prize-the Bridge Prize of the town Zgorzelec-Görlitz (called also "Brückenpreis"). Within the framework of cultural cooperation, the Silesian music festival is organized.

Towns also cooperate within the framework of the Euroregion Neisse. So far, they had jointly co-organized the "Euro-regional Harvest Festival on the Border of Lower Silesia-Saxony"-a project financed by the European Regional Development Fund in the framework of the Community Initiative Programme INTERREG III A Free Country of Saxony-Republic of Poland (Lower Silesia Province). The aim of the project was the development of cross-cultural cooperation (Programu Inicjatywy Wspólnotowej INTERREG III A...2004).

Currently Zgorzelec, in partnership with the German town Görlitz, carries out the following projects related to tourism and culture

- The "Polish-German sculpture and handicraft workshops" funded under the Small Projects Fund Poland-Saxony 2012-2014 in the Euroregion Neisse. Project value: 11,352.50 Euro (<http://pl.plbb.eu>; access: 01.09.2014).

- The "Feast of the Upper Lusatian" funded under the Small Projects Fund Poland-Saxony 2012-2014 in the Euroregion Neisse. The project involves organizing a 2-day Polish-German folk cultural event "Feast of the Upper Lusatian". Project value: 9737.00 Euro (<http://pl.plbb.eu>; access: 01.09.2014).

- The "Promotion without borders" project co-funded by the Small Projects Fund Poland-Saxony 2012-2014 in the Euroregion Neisse. The idea of the project is the development and optimization of the partnership districts in Zgorzelec and Görlitz aimed at promoting the common border region. Actions undertaken within the project should lead to the creation of a positive image of the area, dissemination of information about the region, the identification

of the inhabitants of the Polish-German frontier and the professionalization of activities in the field of territorial marketing. Project value: 17,647.00 Euro (<http://pl.plbb.eu>; access: 01.09.2014).

- "The International Lusatian Triathlon" funded under the Small Projects Fund Poland-Saxony 2012-2014 in the Euroregion Neisse. The project involves the organization and staging of a sports event "International Lusatian Triathlon" in Europe City Zgorzelec/Görlitz. Project value: 16,634.00 Euro (<http://pl.plbb.eu>; access: 01.09.2014).

- The "We play and paint in a common Europe" project co-funded by the Small Projects Fund Poland-Saxony 2012-2014 in the Euroregion Neisse. The project involves strengthening and intensification of cooperation in the field of culture and sports among the youth of Poland and Saxony, by running art competitions and soccer tournaments. Project value: 7543.00 Euro (<http://pl.plbb.eu>; access: 01.09.2014).

### *Gubin-Guben*

*Gubin – Guben* is an urban agglomeration, through which flows the river the Neisse – now a contemporary Polish and German border. It is located in the Polish part of the Lower Lusatia-geographical province, mostly located on the German side. As in the case of agglomerations Zgorzelec-Görlitz and Ślubice-Frankfurt (Oder), until 1945, Polish Gubin was the district of the German town Guben (Kowalski, 2010). This medieval town, which received city rights on Magdeburg law in the XIVth century, since the XVIth century (from 1526) belonged to the Czech Republic, then in 1620 with the entire Lower Lusatia region became part of Saxony, then, according to the provisions of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, became part of Prussia and Brandenburg. During World War II the town ended up with the massive destruction (approx. 90%). After the determination of the post-war Polish border along the Oder and the Lusatia Neisse, the right-bank part of the town was incorporated into Poland, under the present name. Current population was displaced to Germany (Kowalski, J. 2010). To the Polish town attended repatriates from Eastern Borderlands. Till 21 December, 2007 here were located the road and rail border crossings between Germany and Poland (Kowalski, 2010; Pilaczyński, 2010). The town, due to its complicated history, from the beginning was inhabited by people of different faiths and nationalities, which resulted in a multicultural and multi-religious character of the town.

The town had a trade character, due to its favourable location on the Slavonic-Germanic border, on trade routes from north to south from West Pomerania to the Czech Republic (along the Oder-The Lusatian Neisse) and from the west to the east from Lusatia to Poland. The town had established business relationships with Scottish, Hungarian and Polish merchants. In the XIXth century, in the western suburbs of Gubin, the mechanical spinning wool, first in Lusatia, was established. Since then, Gubin has been known as a textile centre (Kaczmarek, 2011).

After 1989, the two towns on both sides of the border, had begun efforts towards cooperation and common development. The partnership of Guben and Gubin had become an important factor for bringing into being, by the City Council of both towns, the concept of the "Eurocity Gubin-Guben" (1998) (Kaczmarek, 2011). Its basic premise is the idea of the town across borders, referring their architectural solutions to the urban tradition before 1939. The spatial Concept of Gubin – Guben Eurocity assumes overcoming mutual prejudices by emphasizing the common cultural heritage. Special emphasis was placed on the creation of walking and shopping arcades between Gubin and Guben and on the development of the Theatre Island which, according to this concept, should be restored as a cultural and recreation centre of both towns. In February 2001, there was held a joint session of the municipal councils of Guben and Gubin, during which a resolution to implement the common approach was adopted (Gubin i Guben tworzą przyszłość,...)

For 40 years Guben and Gubin have been hosting a joint urban festival "Spring of the river Nisse," which is a combination of a variety of artistic events, cultural and sports activities. This event provides an opportunity for the direct meetings between Poles and Germans. In 1997, for the first time as part of its celebration, The Europe Day was held on the Island Theatre, which ran under the banner of Polish-German integration (Gubin i Guben tworzą przyszłość,...).

History of the Gubin-Guben Eurocity has a particular importance. It is planned to recall the post-heritage of the town through the revitalization and reuse of industrial objects of both towns for educational, developers, commercial and tourism purposes.

The agglomeration Gubin-Guben has a high tourism potential due to the efforts of local authorities, both on the Polish and German side of the border, in order to recover the pre-war character of the town, before the division by an artificial administrative boundary. Despite of the war damage, valuable for the town are preserved buildings: the old town hall, inside the preserved walls, along with towering above the town gothic cathedral of Holy Trinity, from the mid-fifteenth century. During World War II the church was almost completely destroyed (Kowalski, 2010). To save the monument, in 2005, the Foundation "Fara Gubińska-Meeting Polish-German Centre" and the German "Association for Supporting Reconstruction of Fary" was established, which looked after the cathedral; this had led to its restoration. The town of Gubin has an extensive network of parks: The Island Theatre, The Alexander Waszkiewicz Park, The Adam Mickiewicz Park, The 5 Division Park, representing recreational facilities of the town (Kowalski, 2010).

The Eurocity Gubin-Guben is an example of the so-called twin town, or town, parts of which are located in two countries. Two towns for many years developed independently from each other. After the political transition in 1989, the two urban organisms had began to think about the partnership. Gubin is now a headquarter of the Polish office of the Euroregion "Spree-Neisse-Bober", an association of 65 municipalities in the region of Lubuskie, Wielkopolska and the Lower Silesia Voivodeships. Euroregion aims to contribute to the creation of cross-border development concepts and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Programme in the Euroregion (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska – Saksonia 2007 – 2013, 2008). The main goal of the Euroregion "Spree-Neisse-Bober" is the development of cultural and business relations on the Polish – German borderland. The purpose of the Euroregion is also the promotion of direct contacts between the towns on both sides of the border and promotion of accelerated growth and mutual adaptation of the social and technical infrastructure systems of a cross-border range (Program Operacyjny Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska – Saksonia 2007 – 2013, 2008).

The activity of the Euroregion "Spree-Neisse-Bober" focuses on the implementation of projects (including network projects) under the Small Projects Fund CBC Programme Poland (Lubuskie)-Brandenburg 2007-2013. Only by 2012, Guben and Gubin in a partnership, completed 68 projects. The most notable examples of cooperation are:

- The "Green Path" Project (the total value of the project: 1 736 117,53 Euro), which is aimed at the renovation and re-construction of pedestrian and bicycle routes and modernization of existing parks and memorial places of historical meaning. All activities are linked and coordinated on both sides of the border in such a way that the routes will interconnect the most important points in Gubin and Guben. In this way, the historical centre of Eurocity will get a new functional and usable quality.

- The "Tourist development of the Theatre Islands of Gubin-Guben Eurocity" Project (the total value of the project: 903 788.09 Euro), the aim of which is to revive the degraded urban areas. The project involves the revitalization of degraded land, located in the vicinity of the old town at the mouth of the river Lubsza and the river Nisse. As a result, the existing green complex and urban park were renovated and new pedestrian viewpoints were created. The Theatre Island obtained improved conditions for water sports, cycling and tourism.

- "Development of Water Tourism on the Neisse in Gubin-Guben Eurocity. Water Tourism Gubin-East Quay the Lusatian Neisse" (The total value of the project: 518 791.39 EUR). The aim of this project was the adaptation of the Lusatian Neisse waterfront through the construction of e.g.: infrastructure for water sports, mainly canoeing (Wspólny Dokument Wdrożeniowy... 2011).

### *Brześć - Terespol*

Brest - Terespol are two twin towns, located on the Polish – Belarusian border, and are a typical example of a divided town. The Polish – Belarus border is also the eastern border of the European Union. The present border line comes from the arrangements in 1945, after the end of World War II (Jadczyk, 1999). Brest - Terespol is currently the largest border crossing between Poland and Belarus. The Polish – Belarusian border had undergone a number of changes, depending on the political situation. In 1939, after the demarcation of the border between Germany and the USSR (on the river Bug), the frontier fortification complex Brest Fortress fell in the whole to the Soviet Union. On the Polish side there remained only a small fragment – Terespol.

The compounds of Brest and Terespol were very complex and turbulent. Terespol and Brest are historic medieval towns with complicated history. Property, passing in the history of the reign of Polish families, in the XVIIth century fell into the hands of the Czartoryski family. The family Czartoryski makes Terespol its greatest assets. Terespol for centuries was inhabited by people of different nationalities and faiths. The testimony of history are today preserved monuments: the Roman Catholic church, the Holy Trinity, the Orthodox Church of St. Apostle John the Theologian, the Orthodox cemetery chapel of the Resurrection and the Pentecostal church (Ganzer, 2013). However, the most famous post-war memorabilia are: the Independence Monument, the Monument of Remembrance to Soldiers of the Red Army and the Monument to the WOP [in Polish: Wojska Ochrony Pogranicza (Border protection forces)] soldiers, all of which lie within the border protection arrangements. In the town and in its surroundings have survived forts from the Brest Fortress complex, located mostly on the Belarusian side, in Brest, occupying the historic centre of the town. The Kobryński forszadt, located in the XIXth century inner town of Brest, consists of a regular network of streets and settlements, from the XIXth and XXth century. It is now a monument of urban art.

In the years 1919-1939 Brest with Polesie became part of the Polish Republic and was in 1921 the capital of the Polesie province (Brześć – brama Polesia, 2005; Jadczyk, 1999). Terespol was then a satellite town. Terespol and Brest, as border twin towns, perform today different functions and underwent through the different paths of development.

Today Terespol has no industry. Currently, residents are dependent mainly on trade and services, and work in the companies and institutions related to the operation of border crossings with Belarus, with heavy traffic (they also support the land transit traffic from Russia), using the benefits of the location of the town on the border with the European Union, and on the international route E30 Cork (Ireland) -Omsk (Russia) (<http://www.eduteka.pl> (01.09.2014)). In the neighbourhood of Terespol there is a dry transshipment road-rail port Małaszewicze, which is today the largest transfer station in Europe (<http://www.malaszewicze.3i.pl/port.html> (01.09.2014)). Brest is a big industrial centre (including machinery industry, furniture), cultural (museum of Brest Fortress) and science (universities) and commercial ("Sodrułestwo" Trade in Brest). Currently there lives there approx. 320 thousands of residents (<http://www.stat.gov.pl> (30.08.2014)). It is also the main centre of Polish culture in Belarus (Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska – Białoruś – Ukraina 2007-2013, 2006).

The Polish-Belarusian cooperation has been in existence since 1995, the Cross-Border Association Euroregion Bug, which focuses on: the province Lublin in Poland, the Brest region of Belarus, the circuit Volyn and the two regions of Lviv oblast in Ukraine (<http://euroregionbug.pl>; access: 02.09.2014). The Euroregion Bug was established to develop cooperation in the fields of the development of border areas e.g.: zoning; transport and communications; education, health, culture, sport and tourism. Cross-border projects undertaken in the area of the Euroregion are implemented with the help of European funds, including the Small Projects Fund within the National Programme PHARE - Polish Eastern Border and the Neighbourhood Programme Poland - Belarus - Ukraine INTERREG IIIA / TACIS CBC (Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska – Białoruś – Ukraina 2007-2013, 2006). These initiatives, however, have a local character. Within these three funds, most projects were related to cultural activities, e.g.: fair folks, the days of friendship towns, museum publications, organization of trade fairs and other trade events as well as the exchange of children and young people under the cooperation of schools. The beneficiaries in this sector were local governments, museums, sports companies and the Euroregion (Program Współpracy Transgranicznej Polska – Białoruś – Ukraina 2007-2013, 2006). The second group includes the development of tourism projects, aimed at promoting tourism values of the border regions, marking hiking trails and producing tourist guide books (<http://euroregionbug.pl/content/view/12/18/>; (02.09.2014).

An example of cooperation in the field of culture from the Polish-Belarusian-Ukrainian partners is the implementation of the Project "Culture of a border area as a bridge in the integration process of local communities in the Euroregion Bug" (Kultura pogranicza pomostem integracji społeczności lokalnych w Euroregionie Bug) (<http://euroregionbug.pl>; access: 02.09.2014). Among others, the aim of the project is to support local community initiatives of the Cross-Border Association Euroregion Bug in the field of supporting common cultural traditions, the development and cooperation between the Polish and Belarusian cultural and scientific institutions, to support and popularize the common cultural traditions of the border region Wisznice - Brest; presentation and popularization of the folk culture of Nadbużański border communities and raising awareness of the inhabitants of the border on the cultural diversity of Euroregion Bug (<http://euroregionbug.pl>; access: 02.09.2014). These actions are related to the development of a common strategy for cross-border cooperation in the field of culture, training for elected representatives improving their competence in the field of cultural cooperation.

Since 2011, Poland and Belarus have been holding discussions on the reconstruction of an international pedestrian crossing Terespol-Brest for tourists. This project would involve the reconstruction of the Terespolski Bridge on the river Bug (on the border) (<http://euroregionbug.pl>; access: 02.09.2014). Thus, tourists could walk to explore the fortress of Brest. The project connects to the plans of the reconstruction of the XIXth century Brest fortress. It should be added that the tourism traffic is currently restricted due to the visa requirements, both for Poles and Belarusians.

## CONCLUSIONS

The complicated history of the border lands, including the divided towns, existing monuments, reference to the old traditions and customs of the former inhabitants of these towns, and the existence of the satellite centres of cultural life (on both sides of the border) creates an opportunity for the construction of the tourism offer in the field of cultural tourism. To attract tourists, the offer should be unique. Border towns have a number of opportunities to build such an offer.



The development of the cultural tourism offer should be treated as a long-term process. Promotion of cross-border tourism is not easy. Border towns, while having a high cultural potential, have poor competitive advantage compared to the major tourism centres of the country, including important centres of cultural tourism. Due to its peripheral location, near the border, away from the main urban centres of the country, these regions are regarded by tourists in terms of the periphery, border, which can only be reached by taking a trip abroad. It has to be remembered, that border regions have one advantage over many other places-the tourists pass them in transit. Steps must be undertaken to attract tourists and encourage them to stop when en route.

First steps in stimulating the development of tourism based on the cultural heritage in border towns of V4 have already been taken. They result from the cooperation of towns in different spheres of social and economic life, have their impact on the promotion of cultural and tourism offer of the town. First steps in border towns most often include the activities of marking heritage and its regeneration, then the creation of joint tourist routes, including routes of the cultural tourism, often of a transboundary nature. Border towns become an arena of different cultural, sports and entertainment events which can attract visitors from both sides of the border. Some of the collaborating towns strive to emphasise the importance of their heritage, including attempts to nominate themselves for entry on the heritage list of UNESCO.

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