

# LACE-Phare CBC

## Assessment Report: SLOVAKIA – HUNGARY

### 1 Profile of the cross-border region:

#### 1.1 Definition of the border or cross-border region

The South border of the Slovak Republic (i.e. the border between the Slovak Republic and Hungary) at the distance of 668.6 km belongs to the longest state border of Slovakia (40.0% from the total 1,672 km border) from the Slovak-Austrian border in the Bratislava-Region till the Slovak-Ukrainian border in the SE Slovakia (Košice Region). This border is largely demarcated by the river streams of the Danube and the Ipeš. From Slovak side the border regions are mainly lowland areas, the Hungarian border regions are more hilly-mountainous ones. The detail SWOT analysis of the Slovak-Hungarian border region was done by the Joint Programme Document of Phare CBC Programme Hungary – Slovakia (draft from April 28, 2000).

The **Slovak part of the border regions** is represented by five provinces (“kraje”) with their capitals in Trnava, Nitra, Banská Bystrica and Košice. Small part of the Slovak-Hungarian border line belongs also to the Bratislava Province (“kraj”) with the important road and railway cross-border check points in Bratislava-Rusovce (Slovakia) – Rajka (Hungary). The Slovak-Hungarian border districts (NUTS II level) are Bratislava V., Senec, Dunajská Streda, Komárno, Nové Zámky, Levice, Veľký Krtíš, Lučenec, Rimavská Sobota, Revúca, Rožňava, Košice-countryside and Trebišov. The total number of population (in five regions) is 3.3 million, the area 28,752 sq. km; population density 105.3 inh./sq. km – data to 31. 12. 1998. Regions eligible for financing from the Phare CBC Programme are Bratislava, Trnava, Nitra, Banská Bystrica and Košice.

The **Hungarian part of the border regions** is represented by six counties: Győr-Ménfőcsanak (a part of West Transdanubium), Komárom-Esztergom (a part of Middle Transdanubium), Nógrád and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, the fifth (almost neighboring) county – Heves (all a part of Northern Hungary) with an intensive cross-border co-operation with the Slovak partner (Rimavská Sobota District) has not an immediate border with Slovakia. The sixth county is Pest (a part of Central Hungary) with small areas near to the border: Pilisvörösvár, Szentendre Szob and Vác. The total number of population (at six mentioned counties) is 2.24 millions, the area 21,256 sq. km; population density 105.3 inh./sq. km. All these six counties are eligible for Phare CBC Programme.

#### 1.2. Political / administrative structures

**In Slovakia:** since the last implemented administrative-territorial arrangement (July 1, 1996) are in operation eight provinces/regions with regional state administrative councils and together 79 districts (“okres”) with district state administrative councils. At regional and district level does not exist the self-governmental structure. This structure exists, besides the national parliament only at the lowest administrative level – at the municipalities level (together 2 878 communities, incl. 136 communities declared as the towns) with the elected self-governmental councils of local governance. For cross-border co-operation the most important administrative structures are the Regional Councils. This situation would be significantly changed after introducing the new concept of decentralization and modernization of they public administration (most probably to become into force during the year 2001). The

new self-governmental structures with the elected regional parliaments with the strong competence file will be at the NUTS III level the most important administrative partner for cross-border co-operation. The considered newly established regional self-governmental system would respond to the NUTS II (four “great“ regions – West-, Middle- and East Slovakia and Bratislava: at present time with only statistical and partially planning functions), NUTS III and also NUTS IV level. The number of self-governmental regions is still under consideration (most probably 11 + Bratislava, the capital). Alternative models are also under consideration as regards the future existence and competencies of the district state administration offices.

**In Hungary:** The lowest administrative authorities which carry out the local autonomy in approx. 3200 communities and towns are the local councils and mayors. Together 19 counties and Budapest (capital) have one General Assembly and one Regional Development Council. The county is divided to certain number of micro-regions. The local authorities and the Regional General Assemblies (self-governmental structures) have the right to manage the cross-border co-operation. According the Hungarian Act No. XXI/1996 and its Amendment No. XCII/1999 on Regional Development and Physical Planning Hungary consists from 7 regions, incl. the Central Region-Budapest and Pest County is the Region (NUTS II) governed by the Regional Council, which are responsible for regional development. Regional system creates NUT II – NUTS IV. The NUTS IV is the lowest regional structure – “the small region“ which has not an administrative function.

### 1.3 Main socio-economic characteristics

#### ***1.3.1 Economic structure***

The Slovak – Hungarian cross-border regions vary significantly in terms of economic potential. From Slovak side the most developed areas are in Bratislava and Košice environments, and also the regional and district capitals have their promising development potential. On the other hand the central and eastern part of the Slovak –Hungarian border area belongs to the most upward areas of Slovakia counting e.g. with the district level of unemployment as well as the level of infrastructure. It is most probably that the regional and district capitals will play more important role as the development poles in the future. Northern part of Hungary in their western part towards the Danube-River belongs traditionally to the most developed industrial and nowadays to the most dynamic part of Hungary with low unemployment rate, relatively high level of GDP per capita. Of course, also this part needs more developed infrastructure and more intensive successfully done structural transition of economy. The NE part of Hungary belongs to the less developed area of Hungary with high unemployment rate, shortage of capital investments and a serious social tensions. Development of cross-border co-operation would bring a new development potential to both parts.

#### ***1.3.2 Employment***

Bratislava Region has the leading position in economy of Slovakia. The dominant economic sector in the whole Slovakian border region to Hungary plays industry in spite of its lowering share on the GDP. Leading position in agriculture plays the Trnava and Nitra Regions. The unemployment rate in Bratislava Region is only 5.1%, in contrary the middle part of South Slovakia has the highest unemployment rate with more than 33 % (Rimavská Sobota District) and more than 30% Veľký Krtíš and Revúca Districts.

The best situation within the framework of the Hungarian border region with Slovakia is in the Győr-Ménfőcsanak-Sopron Region: population are predominantly employed in the third sector

and developed industry (mainly engineering), less important here is the agricultural sector. Agriculture is the most important sector in the NE Slovak-Hungarian border regions.

### ***1.3.3 Agriculture***

The most developed economic sector of the rural part of the Slovak-Hungarian border regions is agriculture, with relatively very good natural conditions for its development – both for plant and cattle production. Of course, also this sector ought to overcome their specific transition problems. There are a lot of successful examples already. Much depends on the way of use of manure, fertilizers, means for soil and crops protection, crops that are produced, level of irrigation and last but not least from the level of marketing. Different forms of agro-tourism are developing on both side of the border line, on the Hungarian part this sphere is nowadays a little bit more developed.

### ***1.3.4 Infrastructure***

The infrastructure network is more dense and more developed in the Western areas than in the Eastern part of the both sides of this border region. A highway was developed until now only on the Hungarian side (M1). In spite of its development in the last period - the number of cross-border check points is still insufficient. The cross-border road transport is hampered by relatively long waiting times at the borders.

### ***1.3.5 Environment***

For the whole Southern part of Slovakia the lowlands, as it was mentioned already, are typical with young tertiary and quaternary sediments. The Danube lowland as well as the Eastern Slovakian lowland are the largest ones with a strategic importance for the agriculture in Slovakia. The lowest point of Slovakia (98 m above the sea level) is located in the SE border area (where the Bedroll River is entering the Hungarian territory). From three climatic zones of Slovakia the lowlands belong to the warmest zone which has more than 50 days a year of at least 25<sup>0</sup> C. Of course, most parts of this border regions are very sensitive for environmental pollution. Much of their sources are originated at their own sources (level of agricultural production, use of means for protection of soil and its crops) but also from the neighboring regions and countries (mainly from polluted rivers). In generally it is possible to state that the environmental situation was improved because of the closure of a lot of highly polluted industrial plants on both side of the border line.

## **1.4 Degree of cross-border co-operation**

Cross-border co-operation exists on various levels and forms: the important supporting factor is that for most inhabitants of the immediate cross-border space the language barrier does not exist. The greatest minority in Slovakia – the Hungarian one (according the last census in 1990 together 610 thousands of inhabitants, which is 10.5% of the whole population in Slovakia) is living in the South border region of Slovakia. The CBC in this region has its tradition: a lot of family and friend relationships from the earlier periods are developed here. But because of the political and economic situation during the 40 years of totalitarian regime, the activities related to cross-border co-operation were limited to some, mainly cultural and sporting events and tourism. Twin city agreements and other bilateral co-operation agreements between local/regional governments are quite popular. In spite of the fact the real CBC has gradually developed since the early 1990's, the activities connected with the creating of CBC structures, mainly at the level of euroregions are fully developing only after parliamentary election in 1998, because of new orientation of foreign policy towards EU

countries and to CBC generally. Until this time its size was much below the region's potential and needs.

### 1.5 Barriers to cross-border co-operation

Big rivers, as mainly the Danube River is on the 125 km section of common Slovak-Hungarian border line and partially the smaller Ipe¾ River, are represent a natural barrier to cross-border co-operation and communication because an opening of cross-border check point is connected with the construction of new bridges which require specially in case of the Danube to implement an very expensive project. Other natural barriers on the border line practically do not exist. However the insufficient number of border crossing points and the roads to them, as the concrete result of insufficient infrastructure, creates an another type of barriers on further sections of this border line. Also the frequently appeared long waiting/queuing time at the customs is not a stimulate factor for cross-border co-operation.

The general lack of financial resources for cross-border projects including difficulties in meeting the minimum required own contribution as well as various competencies and level of independence in making decisions in both countries make cross-border co-operation – mainly in economic/entrepreneur's sphere – even more difficult.

Insufficient social and technical infrastructure at regional/local level is a barrier to more intensive social and cultural relationships among the people and the existing legislative norms did not allow for communes and towns to develop CBC, as it was mentioned already, in economic sphere. The latter barrier would be possible in the near future after new legislation would come into force to eliminate.

## **2 Structures**

### 2.1 Cross-border structures

Some cross-border structures that exist are:

- Cross-border agreements between various local authorities which have been formed as a result of the need in practical co-operation of the municipalities
- Cross-border agreements between various local authorities, which have been formed as a result of requirements of EU programmes to facilitate future projects (e.g. Phare CBC)
- Special committees or working groups (e.g. Joint Co-operation Committees - JCC) established to tackle common problems such as waste management, drink water supply, air pollution, transport and tourism and
- Cross-border structures within the AEBR Euregio and/or their ambitious to be incorporated to the AEBR Euregio in future.

The **Carpathian Euroregion (CE)** established in February 14, 1993, encompasses the Eastern part of the SK-H border. It is a multinational organisation, involving also border regions from Poland, Ukraine and Romania. The total territory exceeds 150 thousand sq. km (SK – 15,746; H - ) and the population exceeds 15 million (SK – 1.55 million, H - ).

The CE has a network of national offices; the Hungarian office as well as the Central CE Secretariat (at present in Hungary) is located in , while the Slovak office is from the end of 1999 organised in the regional capital – Prešov, after relocation from the original seat in Bardejov. Due to the political situation mentioned in the above paragraph, the Slovak regions had for the first 6 years an Associate Member status only; this was changed in November 25,

1999 when they have applied for and were granted the full right membership in the CE. The CE structures are composed of the Council (15 members; 3 representatives per country), National Offices, Central Secretariat and 5 thematic working commissions. The offices have normally from 1 to 3 employees; every National Party contributes an equivalent of 35,000 USD a year to the CE budget. At this moment the Hungarian border regions deliver the Secretary General and the Polish regions the Chairman of the CE.

Strategic Framework for the CE was processed by the Flemish Government and the Euregion Meuse-Rhine in collaboration with the Carpathian Euroregion in April 1999. It creates a strategic guidance for future activities of the CE and a basis to attract the attention for the CE from the international community. One of the most important task is to prepare the CE and its inhabitants for their future role as the external EU border region. The document describe historical, administrative, geographical and international context of CE. Important is also analyses of regional development, infrastructure, environment, tourism, socio-cultural and educational affairs. There is SWOT analysis, a number of strategic as well as operational objectives and proposals for priority actions, too.

The **Euroregion of the Rivers Váh-Danube-Ipe<sup>3/4</sup>** (was founded in July 3, 1999 at Nészmély, Hungary). Their contemporary representatives are the state administrative Regional Office in Nitra (Slovakia) and the Regional Authorities (“zhupas”) in Komarom-Esztergom and Pest (Hungary). The residences of the Euroregion are Nitra (Slovakia) and Tatabanya (Hungary). After introducing of the new self-governmental regional system in Slovakia, the management of this Euroregion would be even more efficient. Some activities have been implemented already, e.g. internationa conference on “Pedestrian zones 1999”, analyses and proposals of mutual coordination of infrastructe development, preparation of a common participation on the Expotour 2000 – tourism fair in Žilina (Slovakia).

The mutual contacts would be much easier after implementation of the Agreement between the Slovak and the Hungarian Governments on renewal of the River Danube Maria Valeria Bridge between Štúrovo (Slovakia) and the former Hungarian capital Esztergom during the first years of 21<sup>st</sup> century, which was signed in September 1999. This decision will bring for the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border co-operation a far greater effect as the required improvement of the transport infrastructure of the CBC in the Štúrovo-Esztergom micro-region would bring. The increase of the level of trade exchange, tourism and more dynamic development of the capital investment activities are the main spheres, which by this decision will be positively influenced. The Štúrovo Commerce Society for the South Region is very active in this sphere. The bride was originally constructed in 1895 and before the end of the WW II – in 1944 was destroyed. This fact from this time is acting as a limited factor for significantly more intensive CBC more than 55 years already.

The **Ipe<sup>3/4</sup> Euroregion** (founded in September 20, 1999) was created on both side of the border Ipe<sup>3/4</sup> River border area. Its centres are Šahy (on the Slovak side) and Balassagyarmat (on the Hungarian side). Its geographical scope is quite large; from Slovakian side Levice District and parts of Nové Zámky, Rimavská Sobota, Krupina, Lučenec, Ve<sup>3/4</sup>aký Krtíš and Banská Štiavnica districts – together 232 communes and towns with 210 000 inhabitants. From Hungarian side the Statistical Districts (or their parts) of Balassagyarmat, Rétság, Salgótarján, Szécsény, Szob and Vác – together 105 communes and towns and 232 000 of inhabitants. The common Declaration has together 20 different goals mainly concerning the economic development (SME’s activities) and environmental protection.

The **Novogradiensis Euroregion**: Declaration on creation of the Euroregion was signed by the representatives of local and regional state administration and self-governmental bodies and associations of interpreters in September 29, 1999 in Lučenec, Slovakia. Its area is created by territory of the historical Novograd zhupa, i.e. three districts in Slovakia (Lučenec, Poltár and Veľký Krtíš) and the Nógrád zhupa in Hungary. There is a possibility of extension this area in future. Approx. 400 thousands of inhabitants live in this territory (60% of them in Hungary, 40% in Slovakia). Among the nearest task of the Euroregion management is to process a new common general structural plan of the whole territory with the significant priority to strengthening of its economic basis.

The **Euroregion of the Slaná and the Rimava (Rivers) Union** was recently founded, too. From the Slovak side three districts – Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava and Revúca are included to this Euroregion; a relatively strong region Borsód-Abaúj-Zemplén zhupas; the cities of Ózd, Kazinczbarcika, Salgótarján, Putnok, Tiszaujváros Support of socio-economic development which nowadays suffers by a deep economic recession is the topical task of this Euroregion.

## 2.2 Other structures/authorities/social partners engaged in CBC

Other actors involved are: municipalities, especially those involved in twin-town relationships (typical examples are twin-cities Komárno, Slovakia – Komárom, Hungary, Štúrovo-Esztergom, etc.), regional development agencies, chamber of commerce (very active e.g. in Novogradiensis Euroregion), several schools, cultural establishments. It is necessary to mention special importance of NGOs. In the last few years, mainly the charity church organisation started to spread, e.g. the Maltese Charity Organisation, Dorcas. Some NGOs are concerning with improvement of life of the Roma's population, several are oriented on environmental issues.

Another very positive example are the activities of the **Club of Entrepreneurs of the River Bodrog Area**: this Club was created in Kráľovský Chlmec (Slovakia) between entrepreneurs of Kráľovský Chlmec in Slovakia, Sátoralújhely in Hungary and Satu Mare in Romania in September 1999. The goal of this cross-border co-operation is improvement of the entrepreneur's environment in these remote peripheral areas (e.g. the unemployment rate in the Kráľovský Chlmec micro-region reached already 35-40%). The main reserves are mainly in the insufficient social infrastructure, services, agriculture and rural tourism. However, it is necessary to co-operate also with regional structures, e.g. with the Regional Advisory and Information Centre in district capital Trebišov (Slovakia) and with the state administrative and self-governmental bodies in all three countries.

## 2.3 Activities/services

There are many excellent examples for the successful co-operation. E.g. the Carpathian Euroregion has published Newsletters providing information on the considering events. A more intensive involvement of media is one of the development aims of this Euroregion. For this purpose tenders were created for the Phare CBC and CREDO Programme. Several seminars and workshops have been organised so far. Education, culture, economy, physical/regional planning, tourism, environment are the main topics of these events.

## 2.4 Awareness of cross-border co-operation issues/knowledge of CBC programmes

Despite the fact that the cross-border relations has in the studied border region already a tradition, there is a lack of practical information and knowledge about the possibilities for

cross-border co-operation and programmes; therefore a goal-oriented implementation of the public awareness programmes in this sphere are very important. Many have good ideas for project development, but they are not enough aware of exact requirements of these programmes. On both sides of the border there are several co-ordination offices assisting in the understanding of CBC programmes; these offices have to be more active. The awareness of mechanism of such programmes is still relatively very low, there is a lack of practical skills and information about preparations of concrete programmes and projects, proposals for Phare CBC and other projects potentially supported by various funds, there is a lack of information about the possibilities to get this support, about conditions for it, etc. It is necessary to spread the information about EU programmes. A special attention should be paid to explain the aim of common long-term planning, programming and strategy building aspects. Taking into account the expertise gathered by the euroregions, they can be used as “antennas” in getting through with information and advice to regional/local communities. They can play an active role within the implementation of the Phare-CBC programmes.

### **3. Programme related activities**

#### **3.1 Strategy development**

The development strategies of local and regional governments are only partly completed; especially in Slovakia it would be the priority of these governments after implementation of the prepared reform of public administration with more competencies to regional/local self-governments. Normally the CBC is an important part of such a strategy.

Only one euroregion, **the Carpathian Euroregion** has prepared, as it was mentioned already, with expert support of the Flemish Government and Euregio Maas-Rijn a Framework Development Concept. Due to the vast territory of this euroregion the planned next steps include elaboration of cross-border action programmes on bilateral basis between respective national parts of the CE.

A new project on revitalization of **the Vienna-Gyor-Bratislava “Gold” Triangle** is under preparation. To this activity series of workshops, seminars and conferences on different development themes are under preparation. Also the processed **Strategy Framework for Cross Border Co-operation in the Trilateral Region Slovakia-Austria-Hungary** (under Phare Programme, 12/1999) can contribute very effectively to the development of cross-border co-operation, hopefully, also in the form of creation of a socio-economic relatively strong Euroregion like structure. In this Strategy Framework the sets of measures and their submeasures were formulated with respect to the following criteria: (i) consistency with national and regional development needs and priorities; (ii) consistency with priorities for cross-border co-operation; (iii) development of integration character of actions: the future individual projects being mutually supporting; (iv) exhibit synergy with projects carried out under other national and/or international development programmes, especially within the Slovak Republic’s and Hungary’s Phare-CBC Programme; (v) offer of the prospects of long-term sustainability; (vi) build on the successes of previous CBC programmes; and (vii) be accompanied by funding as well as administrative/institutional structures, appropriate for implementation. Within the Joint Spatial Development Strategy for Hungarian and Slovak part presented on the Workshop (Mosonmagyaróvár, June 16, 1999) within the SWOT analyses the main strength – geographical location-connection (transport corridors) – EU border, mixed economic structure: industry, service, agriculture & low unemployment, foreign capital; % of investments, export orientation, environmental quality & resources, and human resources (education/qualification), and the main weaknesses – physical infrastructure

(internal connections, basic utilities, etc.), lack of skills – to support development (dynamic areas; modern industries; new sectors), lack of linkages – foreign & indigenous sectors, and internal disparities (population, infrastructure, access, new sectors) were mentioned.

Within the context of accession strategies and the implementation of SPP programmes, some of the border administrations are assisting in the preparation of various SWOT and regional analyses studies on behalf and under the leading of the central government. These strategies have to be taken into account, too.

### 3.2 Programming, especially PHARE CBC related

The concept (expert draft) of the Joint Phare CBC Programming Document Hungary-Slovakia for 2000-2006 was prepared in April 28, 2000. The main goal of the development strategy of this border region is the support of sustainable socio-economic development with mobilization of local sources by using the framework of the Slovak-Hungarian cross-border co-operation. Two stages are defined: pre-accession and after entering into EU. Improvement of accessibility (cross-border transport a tele-communication infrastructures, logistics), human sources (increasing of living standard and migration stop, development of the networks, development of integrated rescue system), development of entrepreneur's environment (development and support of business centres and infrastructure in border regions, co-operation in the field of SMEs), regional development and rural development (support of common development strategies and programmes, rural development), and protection and creation of environment (environmental capital investments, environmental planning and monitoring, co-operation in the field of nature protection) are the main priorities of this Joint Programming Document.

### 3.3 Management of programme implementation

#### **3.3.1 *Small Project Funds***

Small Project Fund (SPF) creates an integral part of the Phare CBC programmes. The specific goal of SPF is to initiate these small projects which are leading to the improvement of co-operation among inhabitants living on both side of the state border. The Coordination Offices are responsible for the tendering and promoting of the SPFs. Important are pre- and post-monitoring as well as implementation of selected projects. This means the necessity of direct co-operation between agents on both sides of the border. Nevertheless, a joint secretariat should be established (on cross-border level) which would enable the promotion of more joint projects.

On the basis of Memorandum of Understanding of the Phare CBC Hungarian-Slovak Programme abilateral Hungarian-Slovak Joint Co-operation Committee (JCC) as a main common body of the CBC organizational structure was established. JCC can approve small projects. For Slovak-Hungarian cross-border co-operation, the EU has located 4 million EUR (2 mil. for each side). For 1999 two projects was approved, both concerning environmental protection, upgrading of the waste water treatment plants in one Slovak and one Hungarian town. One Euroregion – the Carpathian Euroregion – was sponsored from the SPFs resources in 1999. The CE has decided to lower the maximum Phare contribution to a project to 8,000 EUR. The Euroregion itself was responsible for launching calls for proposals, adjusting some requirements to its specific situation, establishment of Steering Committee, choosing the projects, signing contracts with beneficiaries, supervising the implementation of the projects, providing financial management and oversight.

#### **3.3.2 *Other aspects of programme management***

The administration of Phare CBC includes the whole range of management tasks, incl. day-to-day contacts with the applicants, providing them with information and advice and then the contacts with the selected beneficiaries, providing them with advice and support in implementation and financial reporting of the projects.

CE has been also involved in the CREDO Programme in 1998. Compared to the SPFs the CREDO Programme was limited to providing technical support for the programme's implementation, preparing the work of the Regional Border Committee (RBC); launching call proposals, gathering the proposals, performing formal conformity check and submitting projects to programme's PMU for further evaluation. The RBCs were presenting to the European Commission via PMU their recommendations. In CREDO the euroregions were neither involved in final selection process nor participated in supervising implementation of approved projects.

### 3.4 Project development and implementation

Several of local authorities together with business organisations and NGOs have received funding from Phare programmes and some are engaged in cross-border projects. Most have concrete ideas for future projects but are finding it difficult to develop the project proposals and secure funding from the appropriate funding authority or programme. Coordination of the programmes financed from various sources, incl. the EU sources, is missing.

The Phare CBC SPF model, being genuinely decentralised has proved to be much more efficient than the highly centralised CREDO system, which was built on a principle of equally centralised approach to all eligible borders, regardless of the fact, whether they had had relevant experiences/structures (like euroregions) or not.

## 4. Specific/Sectoral Action

### 4.1 Economic Development

More business forums, fairs, exhibitions and trade missions ought to be organised. Actions on support by revitalisation within the common project on agriculture and industry. Studies on potential of economic CBC and of preservation of traditional crafts have to be carried out more frequently. Development of the basis of the "**Silicate Economic Zone**" in Luèenec, etc.

### 4.2 Tourism

Actions for different forms of tourism (agro-, eco-tourism) development. Maps, promotional activities, publications, web-pages, coordination of tourist's information systems, concepts of for cross-border tourist trails, bike routes (pilot or sample projects) – to attract more tourists.

### 4.3 Training, Education and Labour Markets

Seminars and different forms of educational/training activities for improvement/enhancement of qualification of inhabitants in economic active age and for different target groups. School exchange, different forms of mutual co-operation.

### 4.4 Environment

Cross-border co-operation in the area of environmental protection, common protection of the landscape protection areas, educational programmes for environment and its individual elements and factors. Co-operation by fulfillment of international conventions and agreements in the environmental sphere

#### 4.5 Socio-cultural Aspects

To continue in organizing of a lot of cultural events, incl. presentations of the traditional habits, folklore activities and euregional crafts and trades. Continuation of organising of cultural events oriented to CBC (Neighbours – Friends, Theatre without borders, folk culture events, sport competitions, bridges of European youth friendship, Euroregional Christmas carols' concerts and theatre festivals). Under implementation is also one an extraordinary idea – creation of the EUROPE PLACE in Komárno (Slovakia). Elements of different European architecture is used together with forgotten local tradition in such manner that they would create a colourful unity – Komárno the “Town of Revival” by thinking not only locally but also internationally and globally.

#### 4.6 Transport

Improvement of transport infrastructure, incl. the navigation (use of the Danube (and the low parts of its tributaries) as the important European water route Rhine-Main-Danube.