

BOOK REVIEW

Constantin Vasile Țoca, Anatoliy Kruglashov and Zsolt Radics (editors). 2015 *Border Cities in Europe. Eurolimes. Journal of the Institute for Euroregional Studies "Jean Monnet" European Centre of Excellence, University of Oradea, University of Debrecen, volume 19, spring, Oradea University Press, 261p, ISSN 2247/8450*

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Eurolimes spring volume starts with an introductory note written by Constantin Țoca, who is focusing on the role of the European border cities in the process of the cross-border cooperation. The author considers that, in spite of the divergent interests, two cities that lie very close to the border between the two countries can develop common projects and strategies in order to play a more important role at national and regional level. Thus, by cooperating and harmonizing their goals, border cities can create development regions.

The first section, **Border Cities**, offers a broad understanding of the challenges and issues confronting three border cities like Nicosia, Bratislava and Kaliningrad. In their paper, Petros Papapolyviou and Giorgos Kentas present the historical evolution of Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, passing from the British rule to the Turkish invasion, in order to explain the origins and the development of the dividing lines that exist within the city. The authors also explain the changes and challenges that the divided European capital is facing in the present, also focusing on the disputes between the Turkish and the Greek communities. Petros Papapolyviou and Giorgos Kentas conclude that only the people living in the capital and the citizens of Cyprus can have the last word about the future of the city.

The paper of Ana-Teodora Kurkina brings a perspective on borderland identities of the Slovak capital, Bratislava, marked in the second half of the 19th century by the identity disputes between the Slovaks, Germans and Hungarians. The author looks over the strategies of the three ethnic groups to ensure the influence on the architectural and cultural area of Bratislava and considers that, in this context, the Slovak capital is an eloquent example for

real mental borderland, mentioning, in the same time, the role of the state in the city's identity.

In their article, Gennady Mikhailovich Fedorov, Anna Valerievna Belova and Lidia Gennadjevna Osmolovskaya bring a perspective on the future role of the Kaliningrad region as an international development corridor. The three experts explain that the region is very active in international projects financed by the European Union. Furthermore, they think that the tourism development and promotion activities have a significant role in the cross-border cooperation between Poland and Kaliningrad oblast.

The second section is focused on **Cities in the Border regions**. Corina Turşie presents in her article the importance of reinventing the relation between the centre and periphery by analysing the case of border cities Marseille-Provence, from France, and Pecs, from Hungary, which won in 2013 and 2012 the title of the European cultural capital. The author considers that the geographic position represented an important point in choosing the two cities for the European cultural capital, as, at the time of the entry into the competition, Marseille-Provence and Pecs were border cities of the European Union. In addition, they were located in the most challenging EU borders: South and East. Corina Truşie concludes that, by winning the title of European cultural capital, the two cities have strengthened their European identity, trying to pass from the peripheral in the central position.

In their paper, Constantin Vasile Țoca and Bogdan Mihai Pocola explore the history, the demography, the development strategies, the conceptual and institutional limitations and the framework of the cross-border cooperation, which plays an important role in defining Oradea as a border city. The authors note that small cities from the Centre and Eastern Europe are experiencing difficulties in creating a niche segment for their economies, hoping that they will become sustainable and profitable, in spite of restrictions. They consider also that borders could be an answer for the neighbouring regions, with similar characteristics and common objectives of development, so they can benefit from cross-border cooperation, in order to accelerate their development.

István Suli-Zakar and Tibor Kecskes look in their study at the effect of the borders on the cultural life and cultural economy of Debrecen and examine the development potential appeared with the accession to the European Union. In this context, the authors insist on the development of the relations between Debrecen and Oradea. They also present the role of the border with Romania in the development of tourism in Debrecen and the effects on the city's

economy, considering that cross-border cooperation can strengthen the city's position.

The third section offers reflections on past and present of four **Cities border**: Sarajevo, Chernivtsi, Izmir and Tiraspol. In his paper, Miruna Troncotă presents a perspective over the city of Sarajevo and outlines that the capital of Bosnia is caught between the multicultural past, the Bosnian war and the European future. From this perspective, the author considers that the territorial borders created by the Dayton agreement have built also symbolic borders that divided the city and transformed Sarajevo into a hostage of the conflict from the past.

In his paper, Anatoliy Gruglashov offers reflections on Chernivtsi, described as a city with a mysterious flavour of tolerance. The author focuses on the interethnic communication between the key local ethnic groups from the city, on the relations and the coexistence between them. The paper also outlines the importance of the influence border position of the city from the history until present. The author notes that the multicultural and ethnic diversity of the city situated on the Bukovina region, at the Romanian - Ukrainian border, is no longer visible in the present, when the population from Chernivtsi is formed in majority by Ukrainians, Romanians and Moldovans.

In their article, Sedef Eylemer and Dilek Memisoglu offer a broad understanding of the borderland city of Turkey, Izmir, from the past to the present days. The authors make a macro evaluation on historical and cultural past of Izmir and also on the evolution as an international port, essential aspects of the identity as a borderland city. From the author's point of view, the actual urban identity of Izmir was deeply influenced by its historical heritage and the multicultural past. The authors notice also that Izmir has been long time a point of new interaction between East and West and represents a boundary between civilizations, ethnicities, and between religions, in the process of evolution from Smyrna to Izmir.

In their contribution, Vasile Cucerescu and Simion Roşca focus on the Moldovan city border Tiraspol, the capital of so-called breakaway region of Transnistria. The authors consider that Tiraspol is part of the Eastern extremity of Latinity, by the legal status, by the name, by the geographic location, by the history, by the population, by the demography and by the ethnic structure. The city is also presented through the Transnistrian conflict, one of the frozen conflicts in the former Soviet space, affecting socio-economic development of the Republic of Moldova and the security in this region.

In the fourth section, Ana Maria Costea and Ioan Horga offer reflections on the role and importance of the border / frontier cities, to outline the differences between them and analyse how the frontier / border affects their development. The authors emphasise the importance of globalization to overcome borders around the world. In the same time, they draw attention to the emergence of invisible borders that could cause deeper fragmentation within society.

Academically written, the papers published in this issue of *EuroTimes* focus on European cities that have to deal with the internal conflicts, diversity and international vulnerabilities. On the one hand, the studies analyse cities which often present internal frontiers that separate the city, and on the other hand they conduct and evaluation on border cities which have external frontiers that separate not only them from other cities, but separate two, independent, sovereign states.

The points of view expressed by the authors have an impressive broad coverage with two concepts - border and cities -, in order to explain the history and the evolution of ones of the most tumultuous cities from around Europe. The two concepts are presented both internally and externally and they are used for analysing how borders can create division that affects the social, economic and political development of a city or a state. The studies from this volume outline that, even along the history, some cities struggled with lines of division, and currently they are trying to develop interactions and opportunities of trade and to transform the geographical delimitation into an opportunity of cross-border cooperation.