PRELIMINARY STUDY REGARDING THE MODELS OF VALORISATION AND PROMOTION OF GEOSITES, GEOPARKS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AT THE EU EXTERNAL BORDER. CASE STUDY- BORDER ROMANIA-UKRAINE, ROMANIA-HUNAGARY

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Abstract. The elements of the natural heritage along with the cultural and individual ones or all intermingled render specificity to the territorial subsystems found on one side and the other of the border. A geographic study involves a correct identification, assessment, quantification and mapping of its composing elements in order to determine the present stage of the bordering subsystems in the transborder/geopark etc and protected element regime, with the aim of defining the types and the passing of the interventions in their individual and integrated dynamics. We focus the discussion in this paper on the analyze of the forms of transboundary cooperation, case study within the Romanian-Ukrainian and Romanian-Hungarian sectors, regarding issues concerning the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage at a transborder level.

Rezumat. Studiu preliminar privind modelele de valorizare și promovare a geositurilor, geoparcurilor și patrimoniului cultural la frontieră externă a Uniunii Europene. Studiu de caz – frontieră România – Ucraina, România – Ungaria. Elementele patrimoniului natural împreună cu cele ale patrimoniului cultural, individuale sau asociate între ele, dau specificitate subsistemelor teritoriale aflate de o parte și de alta a frontierei. Un studiu geografic impune o corectă identificare, evaluare, cuantificare si cartografie a elementelor componente, în scopul determinării stadiului actual al subsistemelor frontaliere, a regimului elementelor protejate geoparcuri/parcuri transfrontaliere etc pentru definirea tipurilor de interventii necesare pentru individualizarea si integrarea lor dinamica. Lucrarea se axeaza pe analiza formelor de cooperare transfrontaliere cu studii de caz din sectoarele romano-ucrainian si respectiv romano-maghiar, cu privire speciala asupra conservarii patrimoniului natural si cultural in aceste areale transfrontaliere

Key words: natural and cultural heritage, border, transborder parks
Cuvinte cheie: patrimoniu natural si cultural, frontiere, parcuri transfrontaliere

The elements of the natural heritage along with the cultural and individual ones or all intermingled render specificity to the territorial subsystems found on one side and the other of the border. Law protected natural areas and the cultural heritage areas situated at borderlands start from the premise that some territorial assemblies are divided by political frontiers, irrespective of their organic connection A state border should not be the limit of a park especially if its purpose is to protect natural areas and preserve natural landscapes,
man-made or intermingled because the ground rules for the functionality of natural systems are different from those governing the administrative-political structures.

We focus the discussion on the analyze of the forms of transborder cooperation within the Romanian-Ukrainian and Romanian-Hungarian sectors regarding issues of preservation of the natural and man-made heritage under the form of natural parks (geoparks proposal or trasborder park) extended and administered at a transborder level.

It is important to have a holistic vision about the processes and phenomena, an in-depth analysis of all the elements and their interconnectedness, the use of rapid and efficient tools in investigations, the computerized state of the art technique in order to collect, analyze and interpret the database from the field surveys or other reference used, the interpretation of some representative cartographic models.

It is thus necessary to turn to good account the geosites (synonyms: geotop, Earth science sites, geoscience sites) which are parts of the geosphere which display a particular importance for the understanding of the Earth’s history (according to GOUDIE A.S., Ed. – Encyclopedia of Geomorphology. Vol. 1 and 2, Routledge) and possible set-ups of geoparks which can be termed as a “well-defined territory with a large enough surface which includes geological archaeological and cultural sites...A geopark ensures protection and preservation of the sites as well as a sustainable economic development meant to help to the inhabitants’ improvement of the economic and social well-being (According to UNESCO) which along with the well managed human settlements included to constitute development models for the communities in line with the natural setting.

Which stand as essential witnesses of the earth’s history and meanwhile the creation of employment and the promotion of the economic regional development. In this context it is necessary to adopt new concepts in terms of sustainable development, able to form a system in which the dynamics of the natural and man-made processes can coexist, as well as the history – the archaeological witnesses – architectural – the relief’s shapes – economic aspects – health and environmental quality.

Methodology it is adjusted to the study of the natural and cultural heritage. The principles and analyses methods are focused on a detailed knowledge of the territorial realities, through field trips, interdisciplinary, applied to the particularities derived from its very diversified components.

Spatiality principles, causality and integration will define the central axes of the study, which at their turn, are sustained by observation, analyses and synthesis, the description, hierarchy, explanation and modulation (descriptive model, mathematic model and cartographic model), reflected by a logical interdependency, hierarchically and horizontally, by progressive increase of the complexity from one stage to another. The analyses of the organization pattern of the cross bordering subsystems represent the key of the proposed integrated research, whose knowledge facilitates subsequently building the optimal models of functioning at present and prospective.

In diagnosis of the present organization pattern of bordering subsystems the subsequent phases are to be followed (Ianos I., 2000): The territorial delimitation of the bordering subsystems included in the area to be studied; Individualization of geosites/geopark/transnational park etc and area type subsystems, with the cultural heritage elements, according to their specificity and particularities; Integration of bordering subsystems in a higher level cross bordering assemblies.
As regards the transborder cooperation characterized by the five steps suggested by C. Ricq (Branea D., 2001), only two of them have been accomplished: the stage of information exchange and that of their centralization. The third stage, that of cooperation, although existing at a euregional level, is not doubled by a real functionality, but by a declarative and written one, whereas important factors such as local and regional authorities on both sides of the border refuse to take upon themselves the recommendations of the border consulting structures by real implementation of the principle of partnership. In order to carry out an operation focused on transborder cooperation, it is important to get beyond the last stages, that of harmonization of relations (dominantly exploratory and seldom mutual action) and in the end that of a real integration identified in a territory via a functional system by taking into account two aspects: political-administrative and social-cultural.

From a functional point of view, a transborder natural park /geopark may include in its area both categories, the elements on which it can be constituted being determinative as well as the involvement of the administrative and institutional structures on both sides of the border based on the principle of real partnership.

The Romanian-Ukrainian sector is extremely diverse in this sense, being characterized by a large morphological diversity as well as in the case of hydrographic basins, all these natural units can superpose within their limits, totally and partially, natural parks protected and administered in transborder system.

The northern sector of the Romanian-Ukrainian border can be characterized from geographical aspect as being one of the most complex border sectors (that follows to a great extent the line of the high peaks in this mountainous unit) that sectorially limits and defines the Romanian political space. The northern limit of the Park, an aspect which confirms that real transboundary cooperation characterized by functionality is only at its pioneering stage. Still, as mentioned before, under such circumstances, creating the NPMM (National Park Maramures Mountains) is only the first step of a project that takes into account the creation of an extended transboundary park of the Maramures Mountains.

National Park in the Maramures Mountains (NPMM, fig.2), constituted in border area and determined by the limits of the homonymic mountainous natural unit is relevant in this sense. Officially, this came into being in 2004 as a result of HG 2151 regarding the constitution of protected area policy for new areas. The purpose of creating such a park was “to maintain the harmonious interaction between man and nature by protecting the diversity of habitats and landscape, by promoting the preservation of traditional usage of land, to encourage and consolidate the activities, the customs and the traditional culture of the locals. It also gives the public the chance for entertainment and tourism and the scientifically activities are encouraged” (Info bulletin no. 1, 2005).

Discontinuities of demographic-structural nature (ethnic, confessional etc). The ethnic component can be determinative in constituting structures of transboundary cooperation, e.g. there are 220,000 Romanians part of the Ukrainian border administrative-territorial units whereas there are approximately 50,000 Ukrainians in the similar Romanian units. Un important cultural heritage element is the “The historical bridge” over Tisa River, built at the transition of the two millennia to bind the Romanian border area to the Ukrainian one in the historical space of Maramures on route Sighetu-Marmatiei – Slatina/Solotvino (fig.3).
The Carpathians Biosphere Reservation, located in the Ukrainian mountainous area, is part of the same category as NPMM (National Park Maramures Mountains) as regards the suggested aim and objectives. In order to reach the second stage, that of creating a transboundary park, it is important to continue the measures taken as of February 2007 when the first meeting between the representatives of the two structures took place.

In the Romanian-Hungarian borderland, the National Park Apuseni (Romania) -Koros-Maros National Park (Hungary) is presently unfolding the PHARE project “Romanian Hungarian corridor for the biodiversity conservation” AMS/451Lot n06, FRIPTU 1PHARE-RO-DPAQ/CBC (funds 2,600,000Euro). Some of the main objectives of this project aim to the preservation of the biodiversity, development of ecotourism and educational programs (fig. 4).

In this corridor for the biodiversity preservation in the Low Plain of Dévaványai-Ecsedi (Hungary) the relief has changed considerably after the regulation works done to the Berettyó River (Barcau), an area of low plain Dévaványai-Ecsedi is overwhelmingly included within the National Park. The protected area comprises some 13,085 hectares, of which some 2,659 hectares are under strict protection. We mention that the holm area of the Hortobágy-Berettyó (Barcau) River has a specific wildlife; as far as the cultural heritage is concerned the historical vestiges were discovered (Cuman culture) at Bokroshalom, at present exhibited at the Hungarian National Museum. Furthermore remnants of the Ördögárok fortress can be seen; the Réhely Visitor Centre successfully contribute to the nature protection activities carried out in this area.

Parchul Natural Apuseni (Romania) covering a surface of 76,064 ha represent the western branch of the Romanian Carpathians, an area which belongs at its turn to the Bihor-Hajdu Bihar Euroregion; the medium heights reach 800 m, the highest peak is located in the Bihor Mountains (Bihorul Peak) with an altitude of 1874 m. The relief of the Apuseni Mountains is characterized by fragmentation and energy of large relief and steep slope. The steep slopes are to be found in such sectors as the quays of the valleys, or they define the contact between volcanic formations and the depository ones. Natural attractions -among the most spectacular natural tourist resources which can be visited we mention: the Scarisoara Glacier, Groapă Ruginoasă/The Rusty Pit (fig.5) – a huge gully dug to the ridge of the peak by Valea Seacă Valley, 100 m deep and with a diameter of over 600 m. Aspects regarding the cultural heritage in “Tara Motilor”/Moti Land, we refer to the most representative: i.e. the old wood church of Sihăstria Lupşa, (1421). The tourist villages of “Tara Motilor”/Moti Land which through its specificity, authenticity and cultural/historical value, the ambiance of the natural setting constitutes an authentic tourist product (also for the proponents of rural tourism). An evidence of this folk civilization and culture is still preserved in the traditional wood houses stand out through their tall and tapering roof, made of shingle and thatched roof.

Measures with transboundary impact on the creation of proposed geoparks or transboundary parks. The transboundary cooperation is functioning still slowly and with some difficulties also after 19 years after communism fall down; the projects focused on natural and anthropic heritage protection under the form of geoparks/transboundary parks are still in a pioneed stage. There still exist many burocratic difficulties in the management of some transboundary structures, the most favorable situation would be that in which a transboundary project starts based on a common transboundary plan, “mirroring”
projects before initiating a sustainable common transboundary plan. In the Romanian-Ukrainian and Romanian-Hungarian sectors the two steps are: to implement the projects so as to a national level (separately in Romania and Ukraine, Hungary) and to interconnect two or more border structures constituted on similar principles and intentions.

CONCLUSIONS

Furthermore, not even one administrative-political system, at least up to now, based on ongoing experiments understood the necessity to „decode” the mechanisms that ensure the functionality of determinant natural systems, of the degrees of subordination and interaction of those situated on both sides of the border, so that they can create in their turn anthropic systems (administrative-territorial) with a high level of functionality and with the possibility of rapid and efficient intervention when it comes to manage emergency situations (hazards) or to capitalize in common elements of heritage (transboundary parks/geoparks).

It is necessary to adopt new concepts in terms of sustainable development, able to form a system in which the dynamics of the natural and cultural processes coexist as well as its history – the archeological-architectural – shapes of the relief- economic aspects – health and environmental quality.

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*Fig. 1 The Romanian-Ukrainian border, Maramureș Mountains
Frontiera româno-ucrainiană, Munții Maramureșului
(foto M. Ilies, 2001)*
Fig. 2 Natural Park of Maramureș Mountains (Romania) and Carpathian Biosphere Reservation (Ukraine) possible Transboundary Natural Park

Parcul Natural Muntii Maramuresului (Romania) și Rezervatia Carpathica a Biosferei (Ucraina) posibil parc transfrontalier

Fig. 3 Cultural heritage element border Romania-Ukraine

“The historical bridge” over Tisa River

Element al patrimoniului cultural in arealul transfroneral romano-ucrainian:

Podul istoric peste Raul Tisa
Preliminary Study Regarding the Models of Valorization and Promotion of Geosites

Fig. 4 The Romanian Hungarian corridor for the biodiversity preservation
Coridorul romano-maghiar de conservare a biodiversității
(Source: http://kmnp.nemzetpark.gov.hu/_user/downloads/terkep/devavanya.jpg
with authors modifications)

Fig. 5 The Rusty Pit (Apuseni Mountains, Romania)
Groapa ruginoasa (Munții Apuseni, România)