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CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION BETWEEN TURKEY
AND ITS EU NEIGHBOURS: INSTITUTIONAL AND
CULTURAL-HISTORICAL FACTORS

Master of Arts

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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ÖZET

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Sınır-ötesi işbirliđi, gerek ekonomik ve siyasal boyutu ile gerekse de genel olarak birbirlerine güven duymayan komşu toplumların psikojilerine yaptıđı önemli etkiyle hem hassas bir konu oluşturmakta hem de karmaşık bir yapı içermektedir. Avrupa Birliđi'nin (AB) dış sınırlarında uygulanmaya konan sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin temel amacı AB ve dışında kalan ülkelerin sınır bölgeleri arasındaki sosyo-ekonomik farklılıkları azaltmaktır. Etkili bir sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin geliştirilebilmesi için gereken etmenler, bu işbirliđini etkileyen nedenlere bakarak incelenebilir. Bu tez çalışması, başarılı bir sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin arkasında yatan sadece iki önemli etmeni incelemektedir: kurumsal ve tarihi-kültürel etmenler. Bu iki yaklaşım, sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin farklı boyutlarına değinmektedir. Kurumsal perspektif, uygulanan politikalara, yönetsel yapılara ve kurumlara odaklanırken; tarihi-kültürel yaklaşım ise sınırlar arasındaki dilsel, kültürel ve tarihi faktörlere dikkat çekmektedir. Bu tez, Türkiye-Bulgaristan ve Türkiye-Yunanistan arasındaki iki sınır-ötesi işbirliđini karşılaştırmalı bir yaklaşımla incelemektedir. Bu iki vakanın karşılaştırılması iki önemli sonucu ortaya koymaktadır: Birincil olarak, sınır-ötesi işbirliđi yerel ve bölgesel yönetimlerin daha fazla finansal yetki ve siyasal özerkliğe sahip olduđu durumlarda daha başarılı olmaktadır. Halbuki, incelediğimiz iki örnekte de yerel yönetimlerin zayıf yapısı, başarılı bir sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin önündeki en önemli engeli oluşturmaktadır. Bu da göstermektedir ki, çok-katmanlı yönetim anlayışı,yani yerel yönetimlerin de güçlü olması sınır-ötesi işbirliđinde etkin bir rol oynamaktadır. İkincil olarak, kurumsal faktörlerin tarihi-kültürel faktörlerden daha etkin olduđu iddia edilebilir. Tarihi-kültürel etmenler sınır-ötesi işbirliđinin kolaylaştırılmasında rol oynamakta ancak kurumlar ve AB politikaları kadar sınır-ötesi işbirliđini etkilememektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sınır-ötesi işbirliđi, Avrupa Birliđi, Bulgaristan, Yunanistan, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

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Cross-border cooperation is a very complex and sensitive issue given that it touches not only economic and political concerns of the country but also the psychology of the border population that is often characterized by mistrust in regard to the neighboring population. Aim of the cross-border cooperation at the external border of the European Union (EU) is reducing the disparities in the socio-economic field between the border regions of the EU and non-EU countries. Many factors for the development of efficient cross-border cooperation can be proposed by elaborating the elements that influence the cross-border relations. This thesis has studied the processes behind successful cross-border cooperation by analyzing two dimensions of cross border cooperation: institutional and historical-cultural factors. These two approaches concentrate on different aspects of cross-border cooperation: institutional perspective emphasize the role of policies, administrative structures and institutions, while historical- cultural perspective the role of linguistic, cultural and historical factors in the borderland. In this thesis, analysis involves comparison of two cases of cross-border cooperation in the Turkish-Bulgarian and Turkish-Greek borderland. Comparison of these two case studies allows for two main conclusions. First, cross-border cooperation is more successful where local/regional level has more financial capacity and political autonomy. However, in our cases extremely weak sub national authorities are big obstacles behind the development of successful cross-border cooperation. Multi-level governance plays an important role in cross-border cooperation. Second, institutional factors are more significant for successful cross-border cooperation than historical-cultural factors. It can be concluded that historical-cultural factors have facilitating effect but they do not shape the development of cross-border cooperation as the institutions and EU policies.

Keywords: Cross-border cooperation, European Union, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey

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1. INTRODUCTION

*“Border regions could thus become new growth areas with positive economic spread-effects on both sides of the border.” **

**European Commission, 2000, “Community Action for Border Regions”*

Cross-border cooperation is a very complex and sensitive issue given that it touches not only economic and political concerns of the country but also the psychology of the border population that is often characterized by mistrust in regard to the neighboring population. It is clear from the above statement of the Commission that state border do not represent anymore only a handicap, but also benefit for the local people when cooperation in different fields such as social, economic, cultural and political on both sides of the border is achieved.

However, it is evident that neighbor countries with different economic and social level are facing cooperation in border regions. Especially along the EU’s border with the candidate countries, economic gap is apparent. Differences in economic level and political systems of the countries across the EU external border are the main concern of the EU. Aim of the cross-border cooperation at the external border of the European Union (EU) is reducing the disparities in the socio-economic field between the border regions of the EU and non-EU countries.

Actually, cross-border cooperation within the EU exists since very long years¹ however many developments in the institutionalization of cross-border cooperation occurred since that time. Especially, conditionality of EU was one of the main forces behind the institutional restructuring of cross-border cooperation in the candidate countries.

¹ The first ‘official’ cross-border region was established in 1958 on the Dutch-German border

Many factors for the development of efficient cross-border cooperation can be proposed by elaborating the elements that influence the cross-border relations. This thesis has studied the processes behind successful cross-border cooperation by analyzing two dimensions of cross border cooperation: institutional and historical-cultural factors.

These two approaches concentrate on different aspects of cross-border cooperation: institutional perspective emphasize the role of policies, administrative structures and institutions, while historical- cultural perspective the role of linguistic, cultural and historical factors in the borderland. Cross-border cooperation is shaped by institutions promoted by the actors of the cross-border cooperation and by the existence of historical-cultural ties across the border. In this thesis, analysis involves comparison of two cases of cross-border cooperation in the Turkish-Bulgarian and Turkish-Greek borderland.

These three countries and more specifically bilateral relations between Turkey with its EU neighbors would be analyzed from institutional, historical, cultural, economic and ethnic point of view in order to understand problems in these borderlands. In order to give a clear answer to the question if deep-rooted fears arising from the history and distrust among these nations is a barrier for cooperation and if EU initiatives and Turkey's domestic politics features would help to develop growth and integration of the region, this thesis aims to analyze cross-border cooperation form historical-cultural and institutional perspective.

Major reasons behind taking into account these three countries are as follows:

Turkey is one of the most discussed candidate country with very important geostrategic position between Europe and Asia and highly centralized administrative structure, at the external border of EU.

Bulgaria is a former communist country which from 1 January 2007 is a newest member of EU and now internal border of EU.

Greece is old member of the EU that is situated at the crossroads between East and West and until last enlargement the only country in the Balkans.

In light of the above considerations, historical, cultural, economic and political differences among these countries and their effect on the cross-border cooperation would be evaluated. Given the fact that decentralization of political power and giving more power to the local/regional authorities is important tool for successful cross-border cooperation, Greece is chosen in order to show to what extent EU membership of the country has changed the political balance between central and regional authorities. This would be a mirror for the new member Bulgaria and candidate country Turkey.

Comparison of these two case studies allows for two main conclusions. First, cross-border cooperation is more successful where local/regional level has more financial capacity and political autonomy. In our cases extremely weak sub national authorities are big obstacles behind the development of successful cross-border cooperation. Multi-level governance plays an important role in cross-border cooperation. Second, institutional factors are more significant for successful cross-border cooperation than historical-cultural factors. It can be concluded that historical-cultural factors have facilitating effect but they do not shape the development of cross-border cooperation as the institutions and EU policies.

Turkey and its two EU neighbors are has been examined to support the hypothesis because EU's conditionality is one of the major drives behind the cross-border cooperation. Since Turkey is still not a full member of the EU, cross-border cooperation with this country is considered as in the external border of the Union. Since 'crossing' means 'going to the other side' and borders between the EU member states are removed, thus cross-border cooperation is more evident between EU and non-EU countries, as in the case of this thesis.

Following this introduction, the rest of the thesis is organized as follows: In the first chapter on theoretical background, firstly multi-level governance and cross-border

cooperation is explained in order to give clear answer how our research on cross-border cooperation relates to the multi-level governance approach. In the same chapter, secondly the role of historical-cultural factors is explained in order to explore the impact of history and culture on the cross-border cooperation. By looking at the theoretical background, aim is to explore the processes behind successful cross-border cooperation.

The second chapter includes cross-border cooperation on the Turkish-Bulgarian border. Firstly political and administrative structures in the countries are analyzed in order to answer the question if Turkey's and Bulgaria's traditional state centered politics does fit to the EU's multi-level governance model. Then institutional initiatives for CBC at EU, state and local/regional level are explained in order to evaluate EU policies and legal competences of the local authorities. After this, historical events and current interstate relations between the two countries are pointed out in order to show the role of historical-cultural factors on the successful cross-border cooperation.

The third chapter has the same order as the previous one but the difference is that this time Turkish-Greek borderland is analyzed. As pointed above, main emphasis would be on the impact of EU membership on the decentralization in traditionally highly centralized Greek state and as a result of its impact on the cross-border cooperation.

Finally, conclusion provides a comparison of the situation of cross-border cooperation between Turkey and its EU neighbors. Extent and nature of the EU's impact on the cross border cooperation is discussed in order to give clear answer to the correlation between the existence of EU-level CBC policies and the success of cross-border cooperation.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

As pointed out above this thesis aims to study the processes for efficient cross-border cooperation. The two major factors behind the development of successful cross-border cooperation are assumed to be institutional and historical-cultural factors. The argument put forward is that institutional factors are produced by the cross-border cooperation actors and institutions, while historical-cultural factors are based on historical, cultural and ethnic links across the border. Framework of multi-level governance is used in order to explain institutional factors shaping cross-border cooperation. This theoretical model does not only provide general context for analyzing cross-border cooperation, but also make distinction among the multiple cross-border institutions and actors in every level of governance. In view of the fact that coordination of multiple actors in the border regions plays a significant role, cross-border cooperation is best analyzed as multi-level cross-border governance.

2.1 Institutional Factors

2.1.1 Multi-level governance and cross-border cooperation

In essence multi-level governance is not the most used concept of the European politics. In fact, state-centric and neo-functionalist models dominate the debate on European integration (Hooghe 1996, p.19). However it is the best way to study cross-border cooperation because it emphasizes opportunities given to the sub national actors and their role in the decision-making process. This approach argues that sub national level of governance is as important as the national and European levels of governance in the cross-border concept.

Multi-level governance approach is suitable to study cross-border cooperation because of its sub national dimension given the fact that cross-border cooperation requires complex governance mechanism with certain degree of sub national autonomy. In other words, multi-level governance described very well the context, in which cross-border cooperation occurs. Quality of the national state border is

increased as a result of decreasing power of the nation state, while increasing number of sub-national administrative units as well as supranational bodies (Venesaar, et al 2007, p.25).

Main difference between the state-centric and multi-level governance is their emphasis on the state's role in the EU decision making. Multi-level governance model suggests that competences are shared at different levels of government. This approach claims that not only the state, but also sub-national actors and non-state actors have influence on EU policy-making. Building partnership beyond the national borders became common approach. There are new alternatives to the power that previously has been dominated by national states. On the other hand, state-centric model claims that sub national mobilization should remain weak and that state sovereignty should continue to be very strong (Hooghe 1996, p.20).

In order to clarify the meaning of governance in the EU, it is significant to point out that it is about 'the structured ways and means in which the divergent preferences of interdependent actors are translated into policy choices ..., so that the plurality of interests is transformed into co-ordinate action and the compliance of actors is achieved' (Eising & Kohler-Koch 1999, p.5). In the European Charter of Border and Cross-border Regions, it is pointed out that cross-border cooperation takes place in different levels and that cross-border structures can be not only national but also regional or local.

European governance is mostly described as multi-level process that starts at symbolically perceived 'Brussels' and ends at the very low level of every member state (Pagoulatos 1999, p.189). Role given to the sub-national authorities by Commission to plan and manage EU- funded development programs is clear. However the question is if these sub-national units play the role expected from them. Most of the time the answer is no and the Commission is aware of that. For example in the case of Italy, in order to overcome this situation and to prepare sub-national

units better to their roles, regional officials were given a formal role, along with the representatives of the Commission in preparing regional development plans and moreover Commission also paid for private consultants to assist regions in the technical aspects of the program management (Piattoni & Smyrl 2003, p.137).

Two supranational bodies, the Council of Europe² and the EU had important impact on improving conditions for non-central governments (NCGs) to co-operate across borders, however in different ways. Commission of the EU provides financial support for CBC initiatives, whereas the Council of Europe improved the legal situation (Perkmann 2002, p.3). Put differently, compared with the Council of Europe, EU activities related to CBC are mainly financial, because the Council of Europe was focused more on legalistic approach and introduced CBRs as formal politico-administrative entities. However in time, CBR became more economically oriented within the context of EU regional policy.

Europeanization of regional policy is very much related to the changes of EU power relations between the state, regions and the EU (Ertugal 2005, p.2). For the implementations of *acquis* on regional policy and the distribution of Structural Funds, efficient system of public administration at regional and local levels is very significant. On the other hand, multi-level governance system became very common concept in EU, because candidate countries that want to join the Union have to fulfill some regulations and practices. That is to say that decision makers on the national level have to give their decisions related to regionalization and sub-national governance based on these regulations. In this respect, conditionality plays decisive role.

Although some authors claim that European cross-border model is based on supranational integration logic and fostering the sense of common European identity

² The Council of Europe is a European intergovernmental organisation founded in 1949, headquartered in Strasbourg. It was the first supranational organisation to provide an arena for local and regional authorities

(Clarke 2002, p.4), role played by the EU in the establishment of governance structures at the national and local levels is evident. Process of administrative restructuring was encouraged. By giving more power to regional and local levels, EU promotes the notion of partnership. Division of responsibilities between central and regional/local government is determined at national level in accordance with the traditions and constitutions of the states. It is even claimed that political arenas are occupied by autonomous actors and state actors have lost their 'pivotal place above society (Eising & Kohler-Koch 1999, p.4).

Promotion of cross-border cooperation exemplifies how the role of nation state from 'gate keeper' is being changed with the changing understanding of national borders. Before national borders were acting as barriers to development, while nowadays there are seen as important vehicle for achieving sustainable development. Regional policy has big impact on borders because its aim is to promote socio-economic development in border regions through strengthening cross-border interactions. Closer contact with the neighbors is seen as an important tool behind the improvement of economic situation in the EU periphery. European policymakers put emphasis on 'the networking and development of sub-regional partnerships' to be 'a vital condition for the formulation of territorial development strategies' (EU 2001, p.58). Significantly, this approach states that sub national empowerment is not replacing national states and that 'Europe is not becoming a Europe of the Regions' (Hooghe 1996, p.18).

Since the introduction of Interreg programs in 1990, EU has developed progressively multi-level institutionalization. Vertical and horizontal coordination of actors at different levels of governance take important part in the cross-border cooperation. 'Vertical network' take account of European, state, local and regional levels; and horizontal network includes actors at local/regional level such as public authorities, business, NGO's and universities (Berg & Boman 2005, p. 44). Interreg structure enforces vertical relationship involving all levels of territorial government and the principle of partnership which introduce horizontal links. On the other hand, it is also widely discussed that state is 'vertically and horizontally segmented' (Eising

&Kohler-Koch 1999, p.5) and governing the EU brings together state and societal actors in close interaction. It can be said that multi-level governance approach has the role of facilitating the horizontal and vertical coordination at different levels of governance.

In light of the above considerations, it is important to clarify the role played at regional level in both horizontal and vertical network. In a horizontal perspective, in order to activate regional resources and act better, conflicts and division between public and private actors has to be overcome. Vertically, regional actors have to formulate specific regional interests, discuss them in the intergovernmental arena vis-à-vis other levels of government, lobby them at the European level. Requirement for the first dimension is the 'logic of membership', so to say broad participation of all relevant regional actors; in contrast second dimension requires 'logic of influence', so to say autonomy of regional representative (Benz & Eberlein 1998, p.5-6).

Actually all local/regional authorities in border areas are somehow involved in cross-border cooperation initiatives. Many municipalities and regional authorities cooperate with their counterparts across the border. It is important to mention that for local and regional authorities, engaging in CBC has the meaning of entering a field long reserved for central state actors (Perkmann 2002, p.3). It is evident that EU-level policies have a significant impact in the creation of opportunity structures for cross-border cooperation actors at the local and regional level. Given the fact that CBC depends largely on the financial support from the EU initiatives, its role is crucial in development of successful projects. Furthermore, the awareness of the people living on the border areas that regional problems are different from state problems and that their solution can be better achieved at regional level plays a decisive role for the cross-border cooperation.

Diversity inside Europe led to different laws, structures, competences and systems in all member and non-member states. However harmonization of all different structures is very difficult task and EU is not able to solve that problem. It is evident that

cooperation across the border provides opportunity for acting as ‘equalizing level’ between the different structures however on the other hand no state would modify its structures only because of the border regions (Gabbe 2005, p.3). On the other hand, multiplicity of actors at the border regions is closely linked with the efficiency of cross-border cooperation. Local authorities are much more involved in governance because the complexity of national administration structures. Institutionalization of regional administrations is important in order to strength the lobbying power of local/regional authorities in the EU. Cross-border cooperation is in the scope of the European domestic policy rather than national foreign policy because it only works if administrative levels with different competences co-operate across the borders (Gabbe 2005, p.2).

Besides its many positive sides that fit to the cross-border cooperation, multi-level governance has also its limits. Due to the high number of participants and different arenas of policy-making, danger of deadlock exists. It is widely discussed that extension of the number of actors and inclusion of the regional representatives in the European decision-making will make the negotiations impossible. Furthermore, party competition between the regional actors can also create tension. For example, if regional level have place in the negotiation table, this tension will increase by the problem of how to bring broad regional interests together into the narrow channel of executive bargaining between member states governments (Benz & Eberlein 1998, p.6).

Interestingly, same authors argue that above mentioned deadlocks in a multi-level framework can be successfully prevented by ‘differentiation of decision-making structures’ and ‘balanced mixture of different modes of governance’ such as cooperative networks, hierarchy and competition. First argument is that coordination between operating arenas of negotiation and the exchange of information and informal contacts can give better chance to overcome the deadlock. Second argument is that if upper-level decisions play a binding role for lower-level decision making, by

leaving space for autonomous decision-making on the lower levels, deadlock can be prevented.

2.1.2 Regional and Local Authorities Partnerships for the Multi-level Governance

Subsidiarity principle that is introduced in the Maastricht Treaty³ and further developed in the Treaty of Amsterdam, favors the decision-making at the lowest possible level in the EU multi-level system of governance. Now states have to share their competences and power downwards with decentralized authorities according to that principle and upwards with multilateral institutions (Cugusi & Stocchiero 2006, p.4). Moreover, subsidiarity principle is seen as an element of contacts among the different levels of government (Carrozza & Martinico 2006, p.21).

Besides this principle, there is one another concept that makes emphasis on the activities of the local authorities in their transnational relations. It is called paradiplomacy.⁴ This concept refers to the active role of the local authorities, more particularly regions, in external relations such as cross-border contacts that is legitimized with the decentralization (Criekemans 2006, pp.18-20). It is evident that role played by the non-state actors in order to promote their own interests is more influential in the international arena.

Moreover, one another principle linked to the subsidiarity is partnership principle. European Commission paid big attention to it and states that:

³ Article 5

⁴ Ivo Duchacek further developed the concept firstly used in 1980's

'partnership can contribute to the effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and transparency of Structural Funds operations, and to the commitment to, and ownership of, programme outputs ... Where it is well implemented, partnership has also generated further benefits such as the improvement of institutional capacities at different levels, better inter-institutional coordination and communication at the national level, or a better involvement of civil society' (EC,DG Regio 2005).

As the subsidiarity principle, this principle also gives participation right to the regions in the multi-level governance of the EU. Participation in the programming and management of Structural Funds is clear sign about the more active role of the regions in the European policy. It is clear that EU encourages cooperation and that legal arrangement such as Madrid Convention also support regions activities, however it is significant to point out that only changes in national law and administrative structure of the country can permit regions to function internationally. Constitutional and institutional systems in different countries provide different opportunities for regional/local participation.

It is important to notice that balance between the factors for cross-border initiatives such as access of funding; cost-benefit sharing; promotion of local assets; lobbying; positioning in international competition and intergovernmental relations; policy exchange and sharing of best-practices depend on capacities of networking between regions (Gualini 2003, p.44).

Power transformation occurred as a result of European institutionalization as well as trends of decentralization. The 1988 reform of the EU structural funds, which aims reduction of regional and social disparities, emphasize partnership between European Commission, national authorities and sub national authorities and stress that all of them have to collaborate closely in the design and implementation of EU-funded programs (Hooghe 1996, p.2). Inclusion of local and regional authorities, which are best aware on particular local problems, in the European arena created the notion of partnership. It can be said that traditional role of national government between domestic and European politics has altered with the empowerment of the sub national authorities. However, the scope and scale of sub national-national-European

partnership varies strongly from country to country because of their domestic practice in regional development.

One another important characteristic of the reform is that all projects supported by the EU have to be co-financed by national or regional governments. Put differently, EU regional policy can be characterized as system of 'joint finance', because it links budgetary policies of different levels of government (Benz & Eberlein 1998, p.9). New rules introduced with the 1988 reform changed the participants from 'bilateral interchange' between Commission and national administrations to a 'multilateral interplay' taking place at multiple level (Hooghe 1996, p.12). Especially the role played by the regional administrations increased because with their inclusion into the decision-making process, broader support for policy goals and comprehensive information on development was gained. In this line, it can be concluded that this reform clearly introduced multi-level policy making.

Next reform introduced in 1993 widened partnership. Add to the sub-national authorities, economic and social partners such as trade unions, trade and industry associations, environment groups, etc. were included (Ertugal 2005, p.6).

Although fostering of the regional level differs from country to country, some common factors behind this rise of regions can be explained as follows: economic development, the need for planning, state modernization and political pluralism and democratization (Keating 2006).

It is widely discussed that development of localization and more specifically regions is supported by the globalization (Yılmaz 2005, p.137). Not only globalization but also Europeanization changed the role played by the sub-national actors. Furthermore, globalization and Europeanization are seen as constraints from above for the changing role of the states and their governance (Bukowski et al 2003, pp.2-

3). This can be explained in the way that member states and candidate countries' political systems are transformed to the system of European governance. Otherwise said, decision-making ability of the states in many areas is constrained and the role of the regional/local actors is increased since they have to adopt and implement EU laws and practices. In this transformation, role of the many key actors such as supranational forces, national states and regions have changed.

2.1.3 The Local authorities partnerships in the decision making process of cross-border cooperation

This part of the thesis clarifies the actors of partnership and role played by regional and local authorities in the decision-making process for cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation at the regional/local level was described as the most successful form of CBC, because it guarantee four basic elements of successful cooperation such as : citizens' participation; involvement of politicians at different levels; partnership inwards and outwards; and finally cross-border structure of own funds (Gabbe 2005, p. 4).

It is clear fact that new structures such as IPA and the new Third Objective of the Cohesion Policy drive forward regions and local authorities for cross-border cooperation. Significantly, this depends on the active participation of the regions and local authorities in order to create effective partnership and determine the role they have in decision-making.

Partnership principle is based on dialogue and do not favors superiority of one of the partners. One another important characteristic of that principle is that by creation of the Committees for Coordination which implements European programs and supervises the activities of administrations, despotism is reduced (Carrozza & Martinico 2006, p.23).

It is evident that EU funding is linking people to institutions of politics in different ways since EU funded programs for regional development plays role in the

governance of cross-border cooperation. It is even discussed that different levels of governance form partnership only in order to get accession to the European funds, that is to say that such kind of partnerships are sometimes imposed (Smallbone & Xheneti 2007, p.129).

It is important to stress that empowerment of sub-national actors by the EU Regional Policy is more problematic in the border regions. In these regions security concerns of the national authorities are mostly in clash with the demand of local authorities for more open and economy-boosting border regimes and in this case national priorities succeed over local ones (Berg&Ehin 2006,pp.58-59). Given the fact that control over borders is traditionally important for nation-states because they are seen as sign of independence and sovereignty of the state, Europeanization of the border policies can question it.

2.1.4 Cross-border cooperation

Borders are regarded in terms of ‘socially (re)produced phenomena’ and thus they have different meanings that is changing from context to context (Houtum & Strüver 2002, p.142). Even cross-border cooperation (CBC) is defined differently by different authors and institutions. From the definition provided by the AEBR for CBC :’ Co-operation of neighbor regions along a border, covering all actors in all areas of the daily life’(Gabbe 2005, pp.3-4), it is clear that CBC requires neighborly cooperation involving all actors at all levels. Similar definition is provided by Perkmann according to whom cross-border cooperation is ‘more or less institutionalized collaboration between contiguous sub national authorities across national borders’. However he does not find this definition specific enough and conceptualizes four criteria for CBC. First of them is existence of public authority, second one is collaboration between sub national authorities, third one is practical-problem solving capacity and fourth one is stabilization of cross-border contacts by institution building [(b)2003, p.156).

One another definition is proposed by Madrid Convention. As very important international legal framework for CBC, its definition is ‘trans-frontier co-operation’ as ‘any concerted neighborly relations between territorial communities and authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting parties and the conclusion of any agreement necessary for this purpose’. Some authors even make distinction between ‘macro-level’ and ‘micro-level’ cross-border cooperation. CBC at the macro-level refers to the connection between political and local authorities, while at the micro-level refers to the network of entrepreneurs and firms which cooperate across borders (Venesaar et al 2007, p.21).

In the new EU regulations on ‘Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion’, cross-border regions were described among the regions that particular attention shall be paid.⁵ Significantly, there are differences between acting as a border and as cross-border region. As defined by the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), a border region co-operates in individual cases and mostly when co-operation is required, on the other hand cross-border region actions are based on long-term joint strategies pursued by the regions and including analysis of the strengths and weaknesses (Gabbe 2005, p.4).

European Charter of Border and Cross-Border Regions emphasize three developments that affected the European border and cross-border regions. First of them is the abolition of the internal borders within the EU that led to the change of the external borders of the EU because the function of the internal borders has shifted. Second one is the effort of the EU to establish intellectual, political, cultural and economic contacts with the third countries on the external border. Last one is the democratization process in the Central and Eastern Europe and their admission to the Council of Europe (1995, p.3) and later to the EU. Before accession of the states from

⁵ European Constitution Treaty, Article III-220& Treaty on European Union(Lisbon Treaty),Article 174 [158]

Central and Eastern Europe, EU dealt with them as part of its external relations policy. Moreover, it is evident that enlargement of the EU moved the external border. For example with the last enlargement of 2007, Bulgaria is no more at the external border of EU but inside it.

It is evident that the meaning of borders is changing and that border regions are in transition period. Firstly they were identified 'as the gatekeepers of the state sovereignty and of its social, economic and political institutions' (Gualini 2003, p.43), however nowadays they are more perceived as 'economic integration zones' rather than physical borders. For example, before the collapse of the Soviet Union, some of the borders separated not only different socio-economic but also political systems. During that period communities on each side of the border were isolated from one another, even more interesting is that in some cases some communities on the eastern side were also isolated from the rest of their own country (Meinhof et al 2002, p.1). Following the last point, most of the time borders act as barrier between homogenous cultural groups sharing common ethnic, linguistic and historical features because political barriers were created with nationalistic aspirations (Erkut & Ozgen 2006, p.3).

In latter times, there are some novelties of cross-border governance. Borders had symbolic meanings for the politics of national sovereignty, nowadays cross-border governance is seen as 'policy alternative aimed at the reduction of core-periphery disparities' through improvement of the financial situation of peripheral regions (Gualini 2003, pp.43-44). In the first place, it is important to notice that, cross-border governance is new space for regional initiatives. In order to understand the opportunities and constraints of the cross-border cooperation, it is first necessary to analyze the factors behind it. As analyzed in the previous part of the thesis, approaches to regionalization and territorial governance emphasize the need of multi-level governance within the nation-state structure. Cross-border cooperation does represent European rather than a national priority (Gabbe 2005, p.3). That is the

reason behind the need for support from the EU. By encouraging cooperation on the border regions, EU aims to decrease regional disparities and create economic dynamism.

Looking at all these developments is raising the question about the forces behind the cross-border cooperation. With this respect, two integration situations are distinguished by Perkmann. First of them is 'market-driven integration' that is based on the rapid growth of social and economic relationships. Second one is 'policy-driven integration' that is based on building of co-operative relations between public and other bodies that share certain common interests. It is discussed that these kind of integration emerge as a response to the failure of central state authorities that are not able to respond to the expectations of local and regional actors created by regionalization and globalization (2005, p.5). The author also emphasize that cross-border integration is more policy-driven rather than market-driven.

It is evident that role played by cross-border cooperation in the European unification is seen as crucial, because of three elements. Firstly, it helps to diminish the disadvantages created by the borders, secondly it assist the countries to overcome the peripherality suffered by border regions within their country and finally it improve the living standards of the people living there (LACE 1998, p.3). Especially, isolation of the external border can be prevented only by establishing better connections with rest of the EU. External borders are considered now as the 'borders of united Europe' (Romeos 1994), because since the abolition of the internal border their significance increased.⁶

Disparities in the economic development are obvious in the border regions. Partnership is set up between regional, national and European level in order to remove these economic imbalances gradually. Imbalance of economy between central and border region is the consequence of the peripheral location of border regions. It is

⁶ Treaty on EU-TEU, Article 2: "creation of an area without internal frontiers"

important to underline that people living in the border regions are mostly affected by the developments of cross-border cooperation because by living there they have everyday experience. They face the problems in border regions and suffer from the consequences of living there. That can be a good reason behind the willingness of the citizens and regional authorities to co-operate. It is the reality that people living on the borderline are mostly involved in the opportunities and threats created by the cross-border cooperation, however not the border peoples themselves can control these borders. Rules, laws and decision makers in different political systems have the right to establish these formations.

2.1.4.1 Obstacles to cross-border cooperation in border regions

This part of thesis would identify obstacles to cross-border cooperation in the border regions in general context.

As emphasized in the European Charter of Border and Cross-border Regions, border regions and companies in border areas suffer from infrastructure for transportation, lack of alternative and high-quality jobs, non-transparent job market, lack of sufficient knowledge about marketing opportunities on the other side of the border. All these problems are at different levels in the individual border regions and the degree to solve these problems also differs from case to case.

Research made by Council of Europe & I.S.I.G (Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia) points out that the main obstacles to cross-border cooperation stem from three elements. First of them is 'economic imbalances'. Second one is 'cultural distance' between the populations on both sides of the border and last one is 'institutional shortcomings'. Taking into consideration that this thesis analyses two major factors behind the development of successful cross-border cooperation: institutional and historical-cultural factors, it is important to look at their findings about these factors in details. Cultural distance can be described as linguistic barriers, national and regional negative labels and mistrust to the people on the other side of

the border. Institutional shortcomings on the other hand are dependence of local administrations to the central one, inadequate financial resources and weak response of the actors involved to proposals of cross-border cooperation.

Moreover, regions bordering countries outside the EU, face biggest obstacles given the fact the peripheral position of the non-EU countries not only within their country but also with respect to the EU (Venesaar, et al 2007, p. 30), as in the case of the countries evaluated in this thesis. Greece and Bulgaria are bordering Turkey that is outside the EU and it has peripheral position not only within its country but also with respect to the EU.

Besides this specific problem of the candidate countries, there is a general problem that faces both members and non-members of the EU. Not only national borders but also geographical conditions such as rivers, lakes and mountains divide the border regions. Most of time cross-border areas involve mountains, isolated islands, rivers that cannot create efficient condition for cooperation.

Finally, differences in the administrative levels, laws, transport policies and currencies are other problems for successful CBC.

Below, existing obstacles to cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey would be analyzed since the scope of this thesis is concerned these three countries.

2.2 Historical-Cultural Factors

‘Borderlands cannot be studied in isolation from that which they separate, both spatially and culturally’ (Wilson & Donnan 2005, p.7). Following from the last point, one another important factor behind the development of successful cross-border cooperation is historical-cultural one. Not only political institutions of EU can help for formation of cooperation, but also removing of the borders in the mind of the people living in border areas. That is to say, collective memories and histories of relations plays significant role in implementation of border practices. It is evident that

mental border created as a result of historical-cultural factors can support or prevent integration in cross-border areas.

On one hand boundaries are seen as dividing lines between insiders and outsiders who belong to one place, on the other hand as point of mediation of contacts. This points out the 'dual role of the boundaries' (Paasi 2000, p.7). Put differently, borders are imaginations and this imagination has the potential not only to divide people but also unite them and if these socially constructed imaginations are defeated then border would be also (Houtum & Strüver 2002, p.142).

By some authors (Paasi) boundaries are not regarded as 'fixed lines' or 'passive dividers' between social entities, but communities use them to create inclusions and exclusions from others (2000, p.6). Thus creation of neighborly relations and removal of prejudices can lead to the strong cooperation. As mentioned above, partnership is important in order to get funds from the EU and necessary for political and economic development. Furthermore, facilitating of the partnership process is possible by confidence building, so to say knowing the people and institutions on the other side of the borderline.

From one point of view, it is discussed that weaker borders, understanding between different cultures and cooperation are result of globalization and market integration, however from another point of view globalization and Europeanization have created multiplication of borders and rise of 'social boundaries and cultural frontiers associated with new geopolitical formations'(Anderson et al 2003, p.14).

In cross-border cooperation regions people are 'spatially close' to each other, but on the other hand they are 'socially remote' because of their feelings that they belong to another nation (Houtum & Strüver 2002, p.142).

As mentioned above, multi-level governance approach makes distinction among the multiple cross-border institutions and actors in every level of governance and

emphasize the role played by the lowest level of governance. Following from the last point, it means that active participation of all socio-political groups and citizens in every type of cross-border cooperation and in every area of life is decisive. It is clear that this is only possible by knowing the whole cross-border region and its geographical, structural, economic, sociocultural and historical conditions. That is to say, familiarity of both the similarities in and the distinctions between cultures, societies, traditions and different ways of life can lead foster the cooperation. Similar values and mentalities can easily influence building of relationship between the people on both sides of the border. Moreover, if people do not perceive state border as barriers, they can develop better relationships (Van Houtum 1998, p.6).

Furthermore, development of mutual trust and policies is very important element for cooperation between regions on the border. Cross-border cooperation in cultural matters can be another significant precondition for trust building given the fact that once trust is achieved this is followed by economic investment. It is important to mention that trust has two dimensions. First of them is called 'expected dependability' that occurs at the beginning of the relationship and define the expectation of reaction of other side. Second one occurs during the interaction stage and in this process the expectation about the behavior of other side is confirmed or denied (Houtum 1998, p.9). After all these, if neighbor countries develop trust and feel closer to each other, the possibility to form cooperation is bigger. Same author concluded that trust is 'both a condition for and a result of interaction, as well as a precondition for the success of the relationship' (1998, p.10).

As discussed by some authors, some political structures exist only in border regions because borders constitute specific opportunities and threats for the local people living there since they are historically constructed (Anderson et al 2003, p.23).

Since the confidence-building is decisive for the cross-border cooperation, knowledge of the cultural and social life of the neighbors is kind of precondition for successful cooperation. However confidence-building is possible by breaking down the

prejudice and mistrust between both nations on both sides of the border. It is clear that socio-cultural cooperation drive forward the cooperation in other areas such as economic, environmental etc. Some authors argue that ‘mental distance’ that can be defined as ‘individual perception of differences’ between regions is much more important than road distance or travel time and that people living in closer regions can have greater mental distance than who lives more far away (Van Houtum 1998, p.5). Otherwise said, if people in one region perceive great difference in making cooperation with neighboring country, mental distance is greater.

If cross-border cooperation is considered as ‘system of interacting variables’, at the beginning of the cooperation cultural, economic and local civil society variables are important; later followed by institutional structures with high investment (CoE & I.S.I.G 2003, p.151). Contrary, once cross-border cooperation is achieved, it can lead to the raise awareness of common aspects and differences of culture and society that will later stimulate the economy of the border region (LACE 1998, p.1).

As mentioned above, cross-border cooperation is very much influenced by the culture and people living in that region. It is also called regional identity and described as ‘common space and culture, creating in individuals a sense of belonging’ (Labrianidis et al 2007, p.75), that is to say this culture of people living in that border region shapes the region. Regional identity is related to the trust building for the development of cooperation. By some authors it is discussed that forms of trust are not static within cross-border cooperation. For example they make distinction between personal trusts that plays important role in case of lack of the regional identity and institutional trust that is significant in case of cross-border cooperation involving institutions (Welter et al 2007, p.122).

In order to understand the differences between the culture on border regions Van Houtum has a perfect description that ‘Foreign cultures begin where national borders end’ (1998, p. 6). In light of the above consideration, it is evident that factors such as common language, culture and religion can build up the feeling of regional identity. It

is evident that sharing a common language on both sides of the border can foster cross-border cooperation. However border areas with presence of only one language are not very common. Good example can be our case study of Turkish-Bulgarian and Turkish-Greek borderland where different languages are spoken on both sides.

Normally common history and similar cultures are seen as strong basis for development of cross-border cooperation. For example in the Romanian-Moldovan border region where both sides perceived each other as one nation, with the same culture, history and language, incentive for cross-border cooperation is stronger (Berg & Roman 2005, p.79). However, looking from another point of view, although Canadian-US political cultures have many similarities and a shared continental history, it is not seen as enough for the formation of a cross-border shared identity, because Canadian see the border as line that emphasizes the differences in social values (Clarke 2002, p.3).

With the enlargement of the Union meaning of the borders is changing. More borders crossing reproduced different linguistic, cultural, symbolic dimensions (Gualini 2003, p.43). It is significant to stress that cultural diversity in Europe is seen mostly not as a obstacle for cooperation but as another value if mutual respect and tolerance exist between the societies. For example in the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* published by UNESCO in 2005, it is stated that 'cultural diversity, flourishing within a framework of democracy, tolerance, social justice and mutual respect between peoples and cultures, is indispensable for peace and security at the local, national and international levels'.

Exchange of officials and students; organizing seminars and meetings on regional cross-border topics can play a significant role in strengthening the ties between citizens on both side of the border. Formation of regional cross-border radio and TV programs that inform people about the neighbor and the advantages of cooperation is significant step towards stable cross-border cooperation. Since border divides

nationalities, cross-border cooperation brings the people together by enforcing cultural activities on both sides of the border to share common identities.

3. THE EU REGIONAL POLICY

Regional policy has many impacts on borders because it seeks to reduce the disparities and promote socio-economic development in border regions. Closer interaction with the EU's neighbors is seen as significant step, because external border of the Union remains very diverse. In order to avoid income differentials and social fragmentation for the future enlargement, external border of the EU must be extended through common policy areas and association agreements with non-EU countries that would make them feel part of it (Vaughan-Whitehead 2000, p.60). It is clear that these countries differ in terms of their domestic structure, intensity of ties with the EU and their journey towards membership. However, it is evident that the perspective for future membership is strong incentive for these countries to adopt EU standards and transform themselves.

As in the case of Turkey, the journey towards the full membership to the EU is very difficult and long, but EU's close engagement with the country throughout this process give incentive for further development. It is widely discussed that the reduction in regional disparities is the most characteristic feature for the political integration made by EU (Nanetti 1996, p.59).

Looking at the European Regional Policy from historical perspective is important in order to evaluate the developments and changes from past to nowadays; and to place the cross-border cooperation within these developments.

In the 1950s and 1960s, regional development policies were controlled by central governments and were centralized in administration (Ertugal 2005, p.4). Although macro-regional integration of the early initiatives emerged in 1950s and 1960s was driven through the CoE and European Communities they did not received financial support from supranational authorities (Perkmann 2003, p.166).

Actually, EU commitment to reduce the differences existing between the various regions goes back to the Treaty of Rome, however the most substantial progress

towards the development of European regional policy was made in 1972 after the accession of countries such as UK and Ireland which widened existing regional disparities (Wishlade 1996, p.29). This led to the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975 which finances INTERREG programs that are designed to encourage cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation by creating partnership across the border (Regional Policy Inforegio). It is discussed that since the establishment of the ERDF, process of integration at the European level and regionalization within the member states was linked to each other (Nikolova 2007, p.1).

It is important to stress that in the mid-1980s, main problem of the ERDF was that it was not the only Community policy operating in the regional development but other institutions such as European Social Fund (ESF) and European Investment Bank (EIB) also existed that prevent coherent approach to Community regional development policy (Wishlade 1996, p.33).

First major reform of regional policy in EU was introduced in 1988.⁷ As mentioned in the first chapter, with this reform for the first time, the role of the sub-national authorities to allocate resources was recognized. More importantly, partnership principle gave the sub-national authorities formal involvement in the formulation and implementation of regional development plans. As a result, that is a big challenge for the hierarchical relationships within member states. With the establishment of the Committee of Regions, arising from the Maastricht Treaty, partnership and relations between regions upgarded. Because from the 1990s onwards 'regional institutional capacity' was described by the Commission as important requirement (Ertugal 2005, p.2).

⁷ Council Regulation EEC No 2052/88 of 24.03.88

Moreover, differentials in socio-economic conditions in Europe led the Community to formulation of Single European Act (1986)⁸ and Maastricht Treaty (1992).⁹

Although these developments, cross-border cooperation was not considered as a priority by the EC or later the EU until the 1990's. Historically, EU-sponsored cross-border cooperation programs were first introduced in 1990 with the creation of the Interreg Community Initiative.¹⁰ This initiative launched by the European Commission was reconfirmed as Interreg II in 1994 and as Interreg III in 1999. Interreg III is made up of 3 strands: A,B,C with different focus points. Interreg IIIA is for cross-border cooperation, Interreg IIIB is for transnational cooperation and Interreg IIIC for interregional cooperation. As pointed out above, the program relevant to the Cross-border regions was Interreg IIIA for the period of 2000-2006. It specifies that all local areas located on external (borders with non-EU member) and internal land borders, as well as some maritime areas¹¹, are eligible for project support. Commission exerts more control over the Community initiative programs rather than National Initiatives designed by the Member states (Perkmann(b) 2003, p.155).

Actually, cross-border cooperation in many European countries is based on the "Madrid Convention".¹² This Convention serves as the basis for interstate treaties governing cross-border cooperation between local/regional authorities. It guarantees

⁸ (Article 130a-e) Goal of economic and social cohesion was formulated

⁹ The Treaty of the Union instituted as one of the objectives of the Union the search of social and economic cohesion among the diverse regions and countries of the community

¹⁰ Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation

¹¹ Regions along the Member States-Potential/Candidate Countries borders separated by max 150km.

¹² The *Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities* opens for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe and for accession by European States which are not member States on 21 May 1980 in Madrid and enters into force on 22 December 1981

the freedom of the territorial authorities to engage in cross-border cooperation and established some limits: the authorities must act within their sphere of competence as defined in domestic law (Art.2.1), their decisions shall be subject to the usual administrative control (Art. 3.4), and in their action they must respect the international obligations of the state (Art. 3.4). As a first step towards cross-border cooperation structure, the Convention has been signed by 20 countries and was recently updated with two Additional Protocols.¹³ The Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation entered into force in Turkey on 12.10.2001, in Bulgaria on 08.08.1999. Greece did not sign it. None of three countries that are studied in this thesis did sign the Additional Protocols. On the other hand, with the exception of Turkey, both Bulgaria and Greece have signed and ratified the Framework for the Protection of National Minorities.

Regional policy started to interact, cooperate and implement more at European level rather than domestic one. This does not mean that the role of the nation states in shaping the policy agenda is abolished. On the contrary it shows that states formed voluntarily cooperation on the European level with many Community Institutions, especially the Commission, in order to establish a framework for realization of this cooperation. It is widely discussed that 'cross-border governance has turned in the last decade into a key expression of regionalism and dynamics of change of territorial relations in Europe' (Gualini 2003, p.43).

On the other hand, it is problematic for the EU Regional policy to empower the sub-national actors in the border regions, because most of the time in these regions security concerns of national authorities conflict with local demands for more open border regimes (Berg&Ehin 2006, p.58).

Given the fact that cross-border regions have an important bridging function and offer good opportunities for further development, national and European institutions have

¹³ 1995 and 1998

to give more support and assistance to these areas. In fact, the Commission and the Member states are 'catalysts' who can encourage the cross-border cooperation, however key participants are small and medium-sized enterprises, business and voluntary organizations, local and regional authorities (EC 1994, p.24). Institutionalization of the cross-border regions has turned in the last decade into one of the important objectives of EU cohesion policy.

Furthermore, enlargement of the EU is connected with strengthening the EU's external borders and determining the conditions for crossing them (Berg&Ehin 2006, pp.53-61).

It is a fact that most depressed areas in South-eastern Europe are border regions due to the poor infrastructure, undeveloped economic activities, and high share of employment in the agricultural sector (Erkut & Ozgen 2003, p.3). In order to overcome the inequalities and promote good neighbor relations, cross-border cooperation is seen as necessary tool in that region. Especially, that South-Eastern Europe is mentioned, since Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria are part of that region.

Until IPA, different community initiatives originated in various institutional settings such as Interreg in DG Regional Policy, Phare CBC in DG Enlargement and Tacis in DG External Relations (Berg&Ehin 2006, p.58). As Interreg funds can only be allocated within the territory of the Union, other different instruments were created by the European Commission in order to support CBC in the Eastern Europe. For Central and Eastern European Countries (CEEC), program called Phare CBC was introduced to implement the EU's 'pre-accession strategy'. Newly independent states such as Russia were eligible for the Tacis program. Different community initiatives originated in various institutional settings led to the 'internal contradictions' and 'lack of coherence' (Berg&Ehin 2006, p.54).

New financial instrument brought many novelties in this sense.

IPA-An overview with a focus on cross-border cooperation component

3.1 INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE- IPA¹⁴

IPA is the Community's new financial instrument for the period 2007-2013 that offers assistance to countries that have an aspiration to join the EU. Only candidate countries under accession process¹⁵ and potential candidate countries under the stabilization and association process¹⁶ can benefit from IPA. It is important to mention that IPA's assistance depends on the progress made by the beneficiary countries. Commission's evaluations and annual strategy papers are basis that shows the needs of these countries. Primary aim of the IPA is to prepare the beneficiary countries for accession. However on the other hand pre-accession aid is designed to prepare countries for the period after accession. It is clear that EU external border with candidate and potential candidate countries are temporary and their actual perspective is to 'become internal EU borders where Cross-border Cooperation is governed by the Structural Funds rules' (Ballette 2006, p.2). Otherwise said, under the External Aid rules, beneficiary countries will have the opportunity to practice the the Community cohesion policies before accession.

IPA is based on the 'strategic multi annual planning' that are established for each beneficiary country and show the main intervention areas for that country. Multi-annual Indicative Financial Framework (MIFF) is included in the Commission's enlargement package and presents its intention for the allocation of funds for the three forthcoming years. This financial framework is formulated on the basis of the

¹⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006 of 17 July 2006 establishing an Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)

¹⁵ Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

¹⁶ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia including Kosovo as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

needs and administrative/management and absorption capacity; and respect of the Copenhagen criteria of the country concerned and depend also on the component. Otherwise said, MIFF allocates funds per beneficiary and per component. Furthermore, MIFF constitutes the reference framework for the 'multi-annual indicative planning documents' that is adopted by the Commission and is a strategic document for IPA. As mentioned above it is established for three years period, with annual reviews.

From 1 January 2007, IPA replaced the programs for the period 2000-2006.¹⁷ By replacing all these instruments, for the first time IPA brings together assistance to candidate countries and potential candidate countries into a single framework. This change provides easier and better management of the assistance programs for the candidate and potential candidate countries.

In sum, IPA is new approach for cross-border cooperation at EU border since it brought many novelties such as single legal base, single budget and single management structures. That is to say, IPA CBC is applicable to both sides of the border with funding coming from ERDF and IPA, to be spent for common benefit under one set of rules. More importantly, authorities of both sides of the border, on Member States and on potential/candidate countries, are represented in the single management structure.

IPA includes five components, two of which concerns all beneficiary countries and the rest three only candidate countries.

¹⁷ The programs for candidate countries, namely Phare , SAPARD and ISPA , Phare Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) and Coordination, pre-accession financial assistance for Turkey; the programs for potential candidate countries, namely CARDS

Two components aimed at all the beneficiary countries are:

- i. IPA-I: the "support for transition and institution-building" component
- ii. IPA-II: the "cross-border cooperation" component

The other three components concern only the candidate countries are:

- i. IPA-III: the "regional development" component
- ii. IPA-IV: the "human resources development" component
- iii. IPA-V: the "rural development" component

As a candidate country, Turkey is eligible for all five of these components however only the cross-border cooperation component will be evaluated in detail because all the others are outside the scope of this thesis.

3.1.1 IPA Turkey

Given the fact that this thesis analyzes the IPA Cross-border cooperation between Turkey and its EU neighbors, Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document (MIPD)¹⁸ 2007-2009 for Turkey is taken into consideration.

First of all, in this document it is underlined that funds available under IPA for Turkey are not sufficient for the direct macro-economic development of the country. Before IPA, Turkey received assistance from MEDA¹⁹ program between the years of 1996-2001 and the Turkey pre-accession instrument between the years of 2002-2006. As a candidate country Turkey received over EUR 1 Billion in 2004-2006 from the EU. This pre-accession financial instrument was designed to assist the country in its pre-accession strategy. EUR 30 million of that amount was allocated for cross-border cooperation with Bulgaria and Greece (EC,IP/04/179, 09.02.2004).

¹⁸ Strategic planning document which covers all relevant IPA components, prepared for 3 years

¹⁹ MEDA is a European Union financial instrument which targets to help the partnerships between the Mediterranean countries and the EU member states

During that period of 10 years, these assistances covered most area relevant for Institution Building. However due to the deep divisions within the public administration that did not fully support aims of the EU assistance, effectiveness was limited. One another area which needs to be reinforced is ‘Decentralized Implementation’.

IPA cross-border cooperation component aims to strength ties with its EU neighbor countries.

As stated in the above document, IPA for Turkey has three main objectives such as ‘progress towards fully meeting the Copenhagen political criteria, adoption and implementation of the *acquis communautaire*, and promotion of an EU-Turkey Civil Society Dialogue’. Given the fact that resources are limited, they have to concentrate on the sectors and areas that will have bigger impact on the achievement of these objectives.

For the first four year of IPA (2007-2010), it is foreseen to give over EUR 2 billion to Turkey (DECT 2007).

3.1.2 Institutional set up and coordination of IPA in Turkey

Authorities responsible for the coordination, management and implementation of IPA activities in Turkey are:

- i. IPA Co-ordinator (NIPAC)
- ii. Co-ordinating Authority (CA)
- iii. Managing Authorities
- iv. Implementing Agencies

NIPAC is designed particularly in coordinating of IPA component I and Managing Authorities are designed for component III, IV and V which are beyond the scope of this thesis. More specifically, Coordination Authority and Implementing agencies are

related to the IPA component II of cross-border cooperation. Coordination Authority in Turkey is the State Planning Organization (SPO). Moreover, Central Finance and Contracts Units is one of the Implementing Agencies that is responsible for cross-border cooperation.

On the other hand, in case of Turkish-Bulgarian cross-border cooperation, Single Managing Authority role is given to the Directorate General Programming of Regional Development at Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Management, Monitoring, Control and Implementation Structures of the cross-border cooperation between Turkey-Bulgaria and Turkey-Greece are given in the annex since they are technical details.

3.2 IPA-Cross-border Cooperation

Since one third of the EU's area is constituted from the border regions that are mainly rural regions (AEBR 2008, p.1), cross-border cooperation between the EU countries at the internal border and non-EU countries at the external border plays decisive role.

The objective of the IPA-II, Cross-border Cooperation Component is "promoting good neighborly relations, fostering stability, security and prosperity in the mutual interest of all countries concerned, and encouraging their harmonious, balanced and sustainable development" (Regulation (EC) No 1085/2006, Article 9(2)).

It is also important to stress that cross-border cooperation component of IPA does not only target the countries eligible for the IPA but also the cooperation with the EU member states.

List of regions and areas eligible for financing under the Cross-border Cooperation Component of the IPA for the purpose of cross-border cooperation between member states and beneficiary countries for the period 2007-2013 was published in 14 November 2007 (Decision 2007/766/EC). With this respect, it can be concluded that

cross-border cooperation programs covers two types: first of them are programs between IPA Beneficiary Countries and second one are programs between EU member states and IPA countries. Taking into consideration that this thesis analyzes cross-border cooperation between IPA country such as Turkey and EU member countries such as Greece and Bulgaria, it is significant to emphasize that IPA regulations applies on both sides of the EU and non-EU border.

Implementation of cross-border cooperation between beneficiary countries is based on the rules of external aid, while implementation rules for the cooperation with EU member states is made according to the 'shared management mechanism'.

As mentioned above IPA is designed to prepare the beneficiary countries for the period after the accession to EU. IPA Cross-border cooperation rules have the same role given the fact that Structural Funds system for internal border was used when drafting the rules with only minor adaptations to the external borders. That is clear sign that after getting used to the Structural Funds rules, it will be easier for them to apply current internal border rules upon accession.

There are totally 12 IPA cross-border cooperation programs between member states and candidate/potential candidate countries. One of them is multilateral, while the rest 11 are bilateral. IPA cross-border co-operations between Turkey-Bulgaria and Turkey-Greece are only two of the 11 bilateral programs. Focus of this thesis is the cross-border cooperation at land and maritime borders with member states, that is to say EU external borders since one of the partner countries, in our case Turkey, is a candidate country.

IPA CBC will operate on both sides of the border on the basis of 'one set' of rules which means that both member states and potential candidate/candidate countries will have equal opportunity for programming and decision-making. One of the most important features of this new program is that it enhances cooperation, economic integration and coherence between the EU and non-EU countries. Partnership principle gives equal role to the potential candidate/candidate countries since they can

actively participate in the different programming phases of IPA such as multi-annual framework.

3.2.1 IPA Cross-border Cooperation-Turkey²⁰

As pointed out in the MIPD Turkey 2007-2009, main priorities of the IPA II for Turkey are as follows:

- reinforcing cross-border social and cultural links
- technical assistance for joint spatial, economic or environmental planning
- small infrastructure for the improvement of the economic potential of the border regions

In order to achieve these priorities, cooperation between the institutions of the partner countries has to be encouraged; environment problems have to be addressed; people to people contacts and cooperation networks has to be established; cultural resources have to be protected.

It is significant to underline that selection of the projects should be made through competitive joint call for proposals agreed between participating countries.

3.2.2 Funding of IPA Cross-border Cooperation

For funding of the IPA CBC, two sources of funding are eligible that are spending according to a single set of rules. ERDF funds and IPA/ENPI²¹ funds reflects the dual nature of the cross-border cooperation at the external borders of the EU. Otherwise

²⁰ See Annex, Table 1 For Indicative Allocation of the main areas of intervention by components

²¹ The **European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)**: to support action in eastern Europe and the Mediterranean

said, IPA CBC is jointly financed by external relations funds and cohesion funds from the new 'European Territorial Cooperation' objective.²²

However it is important to be clear about the spending of these funds. There is no obligation to spend IPA/ENPI funds outside the EU and ERDF funds inside the EU, so to say no geographical limitation exists (Ballette 2006, p.12). 'Common benefit approach'²³ is the idea behind this. Actually this is a big change in this new program, because before EC assistance was used for the sole benefit of member states or exclusive benefit of the candidate countries. With the introduction of this approach it is aimed that cross-border activities to include beneficiaries from at least one Member state and one from the potential/candidate countries.

European Territorial Cooperation objective receives 7.5 Billion Euro from the ERDF and approximately 12percent of this amount is allocated to the IPA/ENPI for cross-border cooperation and matched by the same amount of IPA/ENPI funds. So to say, both instruments have a cross-border element for which complementary funding comes from the new European Territorial Cooperation Objective. A main criterion for the allocation of the budget is the size of the population in that region.

As mentioned above, the needs and the absorption capacity of each individual country have been considered in the allocation process of the funds. However allocation is provided not only by country but also by component. Taking into account the size and the absorption capacity of Turkey, gradual increase in assistance over the period 2007-2013 is foreseen, especially for the cross-border cooperation component. Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework for 2008-2010²⁴ provides detailed funding list.

²² It replaced the INTERREG Community Initiative from 2007

²³ Article 95, EC No 1085/2006

²⁴ See Annex, Table NO: 2

4. CROSS BORDER COOPERATION ON THE TURKISH – BILGARIAN BORDER



Figure 1

Source: http://www.tepav.org.tr/eng/admin/dosyabul/upload/BgTr_Conference_Presentation_EN_final.pdf

Description of the cooperation area

4.1.1 Eligible Area

As illustrated on the map above, eligible districts on the Bulgarian side are Haskovo, Yambol and Bourgs. On the Turkish side, they are Edirne and Kirklareli.²⁵ Currently three border crossing points are operating on this area. According to the IPA rules only NUTS III regions or respective equivalents are eligible for cross-border cooperation programs. NUTS III administrative territorial units in both countries are analyzed above.

²⁵ For more detailed information about the cooperation area, see table No: 3 in Annex

4.1.2 Demography

The population structure on both sides of the border is different. 10.76 percent of the country's total population is part of the co-operation area on the Bulgarian side. On the other hand, only 1.07 percent of the total Turkish population is eligible for cross-border cooperation in Turkey. Biggest problems for both sides are out-migration of young and educated people and depopulation of the rural areas because of the better job opportunities in urban areas. One important difference between the people living in cooperation areas is that on the Turkish side there is a demographic stability with much younger population. On the other hand, population on the Bulgarian side of the border is ageing. Actually that is the reality not only for the border regions but it is general national trend for Bulgaria over the last years.

4.1.3 Economy

Both sides of the cooperation area have different economic structures. Economy on the Turkish side is mainly dominated by agriculture, service and industry sector. It is important to mention that 49.35 percent of the total Turkish side territory is shared by the agricultural land (Environment Status Report Kırklareli/Edirne 2005). Not only on the Turkish side, but also on the Bulgarian side, agriculture is developed. For example 58.57 percent of the total Bulgarian side territory is shared by the agricultural land (Bulgarian National Statistical Institute 2005). One another sector with upward trend in the structure of the economy in the cooperation area is service sector, more specifically the tourism. It is important to stress that tourism contributed a lot to economic growth and creation of employment in the cooperation area. Small and Medium Size enterprises (SMEs) dominate the enterprises in the cooperation area. There are also few big enterprises that have significant role of providing employment and business for many of the SMEs. On the Bulgarian side, over 98percent of the enterprises are SMEs, while on the Turkish side this percentage is about 96percent. Generally speaking, the positions of the SMEs are strong in the domestic market, but few of them also export abroad.

Moreover, the overall impact of the Customs Union on the Turkish economy was described as positive. For example between 1999-2003, 53 percent of the Turkey's export and 51percent of the imports was made with the EU members at that time and EFTA (Gültekin & Yılmaz 2005, p.68).

4.1.4 Education and Training

Network of the educational institutions, between Turkey and Bulgaria, at all levels such as primary, secondary and higher is well developed in the cooperation area. Moreover, vocational training centers, chambers and NGOs also provide vocational trainings. However despite these well developed education and training systems, there are other matters of concern. For example, labor force of the eligible area is specialized in a narrow professional field; it lacks inter-disciplinary and inter-professional knowledge; there is shortage of skilled labor in the field of new technologies and tourism; entrepreneurial skills are underdeveloped.

4.1.5 Culture

As mentioned above one of the most important tools that forms basis for the successful cross border cooperation is culture. In the IPA CBC document prepared by the Commission, culture on the cooperation area between Turkey and Bulgaria was described as 'rich, unique and diverse'. In the same document it is also mentioned that the institutional base for cooperation in the field of culture is very strong in the program area. For example, museums, libraries and cultural centers have long lasting presence and they are recognized by the local communities.

4.1.6 Strategic Objectives of the Cross-border Cooperation

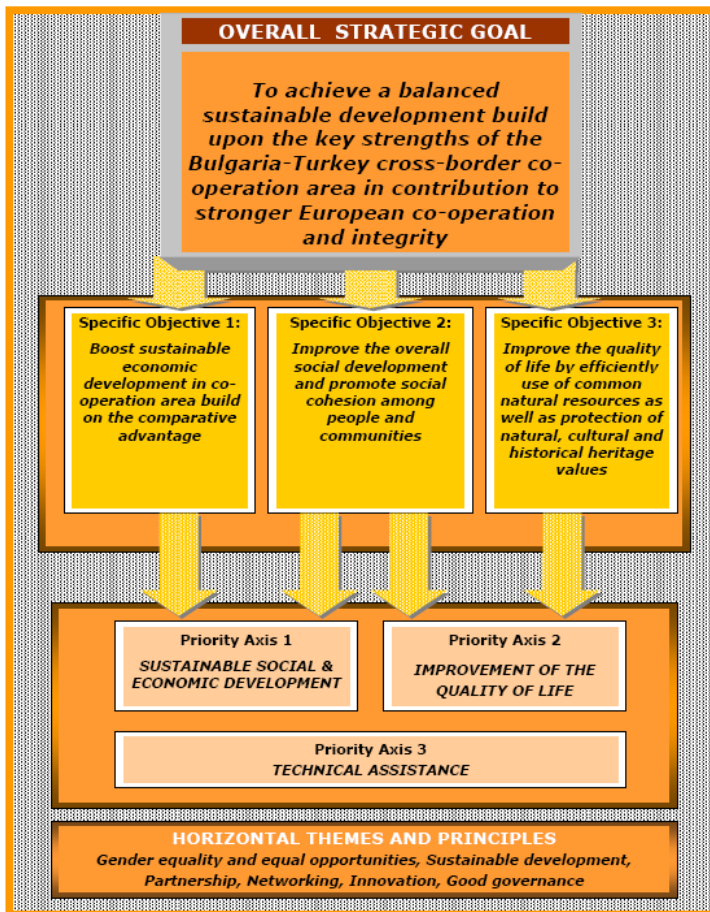


Figure No: 2

Source: EC, *IPA Cross-border Cooperation Program Bulgaria-Turkey, 12 June 2007*

As seen from the table above, besides the overall strategic goal, there are also other specific objectives that can be sum up as follows:

- i. Increase sustainable economic development
- ii. Improve the overall social development
- iii. Improve the quality of life by protection of the natural, cultural and historical values

As pointed out in the official document for IPA CBC Turkey-Bulgaria, each of these specific objectives are integral part of the term ‘sustainable development’ that is stated in the overall strategic objectives.

In light of the above considerations, partnership and networking principles play especially important role in the cross-border cooperation. Actually, the entire cross-border cooperation program promotes partnership principle by encouraging active involvement of all the relevant actors. As mentioned above, only joint projects made by both partners of the borderline can get funding. Furthermore, active involvement not only of the partners from both side of the border, but also involvement of civil society such as NGOs and chambers of commerce is decisive in order to promote the partnership principle. Strength of this principle in one country depends mainly on the administrative structure and the role given to the regional/local authorities. That is to say, partnership principle is part of multi-level governance that is included in the institutional factors that shape the cross-border cooperation.

On the other hand, target of the networking principle is coordination of joint actions, exchange of information and experience, involvement into cross-border events. It can be concluded that by implementation of this principle, awareness of the neighboring population would increase and trust building can be achieved. This is very important part of the cultural factors that have impact on cross-border cooperation.

4.2 Political and administrative structures in both countries

4.2.1 Bulgaria

It is clear that social and economic system in the countries that belonged to the east or west block are different from each other. In the ex Soviet bloc countries central authorities had dominant position over the local authorities, moreover civil society

was very weak or did not exist in these countries because they were against the development of 'participative governance regime' (Venesaar, et al 2007, p.20).

With his limited democratic experience, as most eastern European countries, Bulgaria had significant problems with the level of effectiveness of public administration. It was very difficult to achieve public administration reform in countries such as Bulgaria with communist background due to the fact that low level of public trust to the government, high level of corruption and not enough incentives of the bureaucrats to initiate reforms (Ellison 2007, p.227). However decision to be part of EU and NATO was important motivation for reforms since both organizations are concerned with the administrative capacities of their applicants and members. Reform of the administrative-territorial division is highly stimulated by the EU accession and funding.

First attempt to establish regional policy was the adoption of the Regional Development Act in 1999, which aimed to provide legislative framework for the conduct of EU funded cross-border initiatives(Nikolova 2007, pp.16-17). Furthermore , same author argues that more detailed legislation for planning of regional development was introduced in 2004, in view of closing negotiations on Chapter 21, however EU does not have big impact on the territorial reform in Bulgaria (2007, p.20). Although the introduction of six NUTS II regions as a requirement for EU membership, they did not grant self government.

Although high level of corruption in the south-east European societies, Bulgaria faces positive changes in this respect when looked at the control of corruption between the years from 1996 to 2005 which shows that corruption level was controlled with each year (Genov 2006, p. 54). Since the high level of corruption is seen as an obstacle to decentralization, this positive development may have positive impact on the regionalization of the country.

It is important to stress that Bulgaria made the worst transition to a market economy of capitalist style when compared to the other countries in the former Soviet bloc and is at the bottom of all statistics in Europe (Pisarev 2006, pp.36-37). In Bulgaria, as in the other former Soviet Union states, one of the most important factors behind the initiatives on regional cooperation was EU policies promoting regional cooperation. Regional cooperation among transition countries is part of 'new regionalism' where role played by the World Trade Organization (WTO) is important (Uvalic 2002, p.320).

Regional Development Law²⁶ governs the process of regional development policy-making in Bulgaria. Three main units of local self government are municipalities, districts and planning regions. Base for the separation of these units is their position with respect to state power and the level of their involvement.

NUTS III administrative territorial units in Bulgaria are called districts and established by the Law on the Administrative Territorial System.²⁷

4.2.2 Turkey

As pointed out in the introduction, in this part of the thesis Turkey's political system and traditional state centered politics is analyzed in order to see if it fits to the EU multi-level governance model that is very important for the successful cross-border cooperation. Turkish political system has three major characteristics that are constraints for multi-level governance model. These features are as follows: first of them is the crucial role of 'security' in Turkish polity, second one is historical tradition of a centralized state and the last one is patronage relations (Ertugal 2005, p.9).

²⁶ State Gazette No:14/20.02.2004, last amended 2006

²⁷ Republic of Bulgaria; State Gazette No 63/14.07.1995, last amendment SG No 46/03.06.2005

Looking in detail to these characteristics show how deeply all of them affected the formation of multi-level governance model. Related to the first characteristic, in Turkey military dominated the Turkish political life as the ‘guardian of the national interests’, of which national unity is the most important component (Aksin et al 2006, p.196). Islam and Kurdish separatism are seen as the main threats to the secularism and national unity. It is widely discussed in Turkey that unwillingness to delegate authority to sub-national level lies on the threats perceived above. There is a fear in the Turkish society that if they give more power to the sub-national entities this can threaten state’s unity and can lead to the separatism.

Historical tradition of a central state has its roots in the Ottoman and modern history of the country. Under these circumstances it is very difficult to transfer planning and implementation duties to the regional levels. Significantly, Turkey’s territorial governance does not include intermediate level between central and local level, but was constituted only from two levels with only exception of GAP²⁸ (Ertugal 2005, p.8). Public administration in the country has two levels, namely Central Administration and Local Administration. First one involves the Ministries and other public bodies depending on the central government, as well as their units and services deployed on territory, on the other hand the second level involves public corporations managed by officials elected by the citizens of the respective local community. As mentioned above, Turkey’s traditionally statism is seen as continuation from the Ottoman Empire. The phase ‘Government for the people, in spite of government of the people’ is explaining very well Turkey’s success in sustaining a representative democracy and unsuccessful in decentralization (Köker 1995, p.58).

²⁸ The Southeast Anatolia Project, with Regional Development Administration set up in 1989

Moreover, patronage politics also play important role for the failure of the transferring resources to the most needed regions. Most of the time, resources are distributed according to the need of specific voters rather than regional disparities. For example in Turkey, municipalities that are seen as extensions of the central government have the function to distribute state resources at the local level, however in case of control of the municipalities by opposition parties the withdrawal of the financial resources is possible outcome (Gültekin & Yılmaz 2005, p.73).

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that in order to achieve the regional development politics and politicians have to be separated from the economic decisions. The ‘populism’ in Turkey sacrifices both national and local resources of the country because politicians are using the state resources for their own interests (Dulupçu 2005, p.110). It is highly criticized that limited funds of the country are used to gain local popularity by the politicians. Most of the time, money is spent for unnecessary infrastructure as investment for future votes.

Article 127 of the Turkish Constitution²⁹, describes the relationship between central and local governments. First of all, this article states that ‘ The formation, duties and powers of the local administration shall be regulated by law in accordance with the principle of local administration’, however relations between central and local governments should depend on subsidiarity principle that aims providing of public services at the closest level to the citizens. One another provision from the same article is related to the financial resources given to the local authorities. According to that provision revenues to them will be provided ‘in proportion to their functions’. Actually, local governments granted legally very limited resources that make them dependent upon the central government which weakens the subsidiarity principle (Yılmaz 2005, p.139).

²⁹ As amended on July 23,1995

Lack of sufficient financial resources by the local governments leads to the more involvement of the central government into the local services. Following the last point, it can be concluded that there is very limited local self-government in Turkey because of the intensive role of the central administration over local governments. It is evident as the closest units to the citizens, local administration can defend best the public interests, however absence of the autonomous local governments make the subsidiarity principle meaningless in Turkey. This is result of the strong statism tradition in Turkey that maximizes the role of state in economic development and minimizes the participation of the regional actors in the local decision-making process (Dulupçu 2005, p.108). Same author also argues that ‘the government’ prevents the development of ‘the governance’ (2005, p.109). On the other hand, some developments that are good sign for the creation of regionalization in the country also occurred. Recently, chambers of commerce and universities are much more involved with the RDAs in regional policies.

Some of the preconditions of a contemporary regional policy can be defined as follows:

Experience on the regional policy; coherent economic and geographic areas; efficient public sector within market economy; governance and delivery capacities (Bilen 2006, p.1).

It is important to underline features of the existing regional structure in Turkey in order to better evaluate the regionalization process and state restructuring. In the developing countries such as Turkey, power is shifting mainly towards supranational institutions. Main driving force behind the regionalization of the country is future EU accession. Interestingly, power shifts towards supranational authorities such as EU is seen as easier because of ‘more coherent, predictable and manageable structures’ of such authorities, however upwards shift have to be done together with the downward shift in order to be effective (Dulupçu 2005, p.104). Given the fact the Turkey is traditionally highly centralized state dating back from the Ottoman Empire, this centralization have also impact on its administrative structure. However internal and

external pressures, such as harmonization with EU in preparation for accession, have created some important changes.

After decades of preparation, on October 3, 2005, EU opened accession negotiations with Turkey. First step of the country towards the membership was taken in Ankara Agreement with the EEC (European Economic Community) in 1963 which made Turkey an associate member. Following the Helsinki Summit, with the gaining of formal EU candidate status, Turkey faced many reforms of the state institutions.

It is claimed that on one hand, Turkey comes closer to the West and particularly to the EU but on the other hand both sides continue to protect differences in terms of 'cultural structure, mental structure and identity' (Parlak & Kilicarslan 2006, p.143). Interestingly, when talking about borders, division of Europe from Turkey is seen as border separating two different civilizations, moreover 'as fundamental cultural border' (Robins 2003, p.236). This claim has its ground from the past. Frontier that existed between Europe and the Ottoman Empire was also seen as divider between two different cultural worlds.

It is widely discussed that Turkey with its population over 70 Million that is rapidly growing and a territory that covers almost 800 square kilometers would bring out the existing imbalances within the EU between richer and poorer regions (Reeves 2005, p.4). In order to decrease the regional disparities between Turkey and EU, one third of the EU assistance is given to the projects in the areas of cross-border cooperation, regional development and SMEs under the socio-economic cohesion (Secretariat General for the EU Affairs in Turkey). Moreover, not only its population and size but the economic conditions and great differences in economic terms between the eastern and western part of Turkey have also impact on the country's path towards the EU. It is fact that one of the most developed regions in Turkey is Marmara region and western part of the country where it borders the EU member states. Approximately 40

percent of the total GDP is produced in the Marmara region (Gültekin & Yılmaz 2005, p.62).

Given the different economic structures between the western and eastern part of Turkey, local politics and politicians play different roles in both parts. It is discussed that based on its high per capita income and well-established industries, local problems and needs in western part are solved from a national-level perspective, while in the eastern regions with low-income and agriculture based economy, engagement by populations is greater (Dulupçu 2005, p.106). That is to say, in western part of the country that borders to the EU, politicians have to be closer to the center and to have good relations with Ankara in order to reach local political success. That brings confusions, since it is expected that more developed part of the country to be more aware that engagement of the local authorities of the politics would contribute better to the further development of the region.

There is no agency or ministry for regional policy at national level in Turkey. However, State Planning Organization (SPO)³⁰ has the responsibility for this area and is preparing 5 year development plans based largely on sectors. Since enhancing regional capacities is one of the most important conditionality for EU membership, current developments regarding this issue are within this framework. ‘The National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis’³¹ underlined the creation of the NUTS in Turkey. As a result of this in 2002, SPO defined NUTS³² level in Turkey. 26 regions

³⁰ Central administration responsible for national and regional planning and regional policy, <http://www.dpt.gov.tr/>

³¹ Official document prepared by the Turkish Republic and submitted to the EU which shows what had been achieved and what has to be done in the pre-accession period by Turkey

³² Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, which is a system based on the statistical classification of the regions in EU

were established at the NUTS II level. Establishment of 26 Regional Development Agencies (RDA) at NUTS II level aims ‘achieving regional development, mobilizing support and funding for regional development projects, while integrating the public and private sectors along with the NGOs into regional development’ (Kayasü 2006, p.6). That is to say, regions are forced to integrate their development efforts.

NUTS III administrative-territorial units in Turkey are called provinces and established by Decision of Council of Ministers No 2002/4720.³³ Existing administrative system in Turkey is provincial. There are 81 provinces. The terms province and regions are used interchangeably, however these provinces are not legally defined as regions (Dulupçu 2005, p.106). More interestingly, according to their topography and climatic conditions, Turkey is divided into seven geographic regions. As pointed out above only these two actors, center and province, have role in the territorial governance of the country. This structure has also impact on the participation of civil society that can be described as weak in the country.

There are many pro-EU actors from different sectors in Turkey. Civil societies are important tools behind the force of change in the country. Especially in Turkey, civil societies work through different formats and channels to articulate the European will of the Turkish public (Altınay 2005, p.114). One of the most important within the business community is TUSIAD (the Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association), TESEV (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation), other who also support liberal policies and economic and political reforms are the Economic Development Foundation (IKV) and pressure groups like Ari Movement (Aybet 2006, p.544). For example, these articulation by the civil societies are made through TUSIAD’ s demands for reform positions, IKV’s institutional coalitions, TESEV’s public opinion surveys. All these shows that civic society is highly engaged in the

³³ Republic of Turkey, Official gazette No 24884, 22 September 2002

accession process of the country and have many pro-European ambitions, however it is questioned if they really have direct impact on the politicians.

Moreover, since its coming to power in 2002, despite its religious roots, the AKP government's position can be described as standing on 'pro-EU platform' (Aybet 2006, p.545). Many political and legal reforms have been introduced and implemented on the way to EU.

It is clear that during the process of Europeanization, many domestic reforms have to be achieved. Some *acquis* are very important and have big pressure on the candidate countries to adopt them, while others are left to the national actors for justification. Chapter 21/22 of the *acquis communautaire* is 'Regional Policy and Co-ordination of Structural Instruments'. Significantly, this chapter does not require transposition into national legislation, because it constitutes mostly of framework and implementing regulations (EC, CH.22). Given the fact that this chapter is not perceived as a formal conditionality for the candidate countries as the other chapters of the *acquis*, does not make the regional policy priority in the negotiation for accession to the EU and as a result this chapter was one of the last to be closed by the candidates (Kayasü 2006, pp.2-3). Since there is no *acquis* with regard to institution-building at the sub-national level and only limited principles in regional policy, EU's influence on this area can be described as passive (Nikolova 2007, p.2). On the other hand, adaptation of the reforms on regional issues and more interactions with the European regions as in the case of cross-border cooperation, regional development and involvement has increased. For Turkey, the path to EU by the conditionality principle and finally eventual membership is seen as a vehicle for reforms and changes. However, it is discussed that without active policy intervention, only in economic terms it is not very likely that new external border of the EU would benefit from the enlargement (Venesaar et al 2007, p.2).

From another point of view, in the recent years Turkey faces the 'internationalization of policy regime' on the way to EU and this privileged role of the internationalization

is sign for the weakness of the regional/local level (Dulupçu 2005, p.108). On the other hand, it is fact that many changes and reforms occurred in Turkey towards the adoption of the criteria for full membership. In this line, it can be easily concluded that international issues such as being part of the EU are biggest priority in the foreign policy of the country that leads also to the transformation of the domestic policies. That is to say, supranational forces have influence not only on the external but also on internal policies of the country.

4.2.2.1 Local Administration Reform in Turkey³⁴

In order to strength the administrative capacities for future EU membership and to bring it into line with EU standards, program aimed at the reform and modernization of Local Administration was introduced in the country. Local administration Reform Program was launched in 2004-2005. Biggest aim of this reform was to enable Local authorities to provide better public services and enhance their capacity for more active engagement of policy making with national authorities. Moreover, efficient management of the financial resources of the local authorities and creation a partnership with other local authorities in EU member countries were other purposes of the reform.

4.3 Historical events and current interstate relations between Turkey and Bulgaria

4.3.1 Ethno-Historical Background of Turkish-Bulgarian Relations

³⁴ Program implemented by the Ministry of Interior (General Directorate for Local Authorities - GDLA) with technical assistance and training provided by UNDP - Turkey and funded by EC-MEDA. The main beneficiary is the Ministry of Interior (GDLA, Education De p., Governorships etc). Other beneficiaries include local authorities and their Associations.

From the period of 1389 until the 1877-1878 Russian-Turkish war, Bulgaria was under Ottoman rule. After the Berlin Conference, 13 June 1878, small state of Bulgaria was established but it remained under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In 1908 Bulgaria gained its independence. During the First Balkan War, Bulgarian army reached Edirne in the western part of Turkey. In 1913 Second Balkan War broke out between Bulgaria and all the other Balkan states, including Turkey. As a result of this war, peace treaty was signed in Istanbul and Turkey regained possession of Edirne. The border between two countries moved towards the Maritsa River.

Until the Bulgarian Communist Party came into power and introduced the new border regime, before 1950's, people living on both sides of the border had close daily contacts and exchanges, however during the communist period relations slowed down (Tuglaci, 1984, p.135). Interestingly, contacts between the two countries developed after 1960's. This was due to the cultural (festivals and concerts) and economic (transportation and trade between the East Block and Middle East) initiatives (Eminov 1997, p.49).

Turkish-Bulgarian border has experienced seven migrations of Turkish and Bulgarian minorities since the independence of Bulgaria. After the independence nearly 2.500.000 Turkish and Muslim and around 50.000-60.000 Bulgarian forced migrants crossed the border (Baklacioglu, 2004, p.204). Between 1923 and 1996, Turkey received 790.793 migrants from Bulgaria according to the official statistics presented by the Minister of Interior at that time Meral Akşener (1997, pp.11-12).³⁵

During the Cold War both countries belonged to the different blocks that prevented potential cooperation between them because relations were mainly based on insecurity and distrust at that time. Since the end of Second World War, Turkey regarded Soviet Union as its enemy and fear of communism led Turkish leaders to

³⁵ For more detailed information about the Turkish and Muslim Migration From Bulgaria by year from 1877 to 2000, see Annex, Table No:

join NATO³⁶ in 1952. By joining NATO, Turkey became a part of the West during the Cold War. Both countries were in opposing camps since Bulgaria was a communist country under Soviet Union. At that time border between Turkey and Bulgaria was the Iron Curtain and Turkey was seen more European than communist Bulgaria, however after the fact that Bulgaria joined the EU on 1 January 2007 and Turkey is still a candidate country with long way ahead, can open the discussion again (Engelberg 2006, p.8).

However not only belonging to the different blocks shaped the relations during Cold War. One another reason that had big negative impact on the relations between the both countries was the Bulgaria's campaign of forcibly assimilating its Turkish minority. Between 1985 and 1989 about 900,000 Turkish people that were approximately 10 percent of the country's total population left Bulgaria (<http://countrystudies.us/turkey/87.htm>). However half of the 350.000 Bulgarian Turks, who left the country in summer of 1989, came back to Bulgaria after the transition to democracy (Pisarev 2007, p.30). The core of that assimilation campaign was based on change the Turkish and Muslim names to Bulgarian and Christian ones, end all Islamic teaching and practices, and stop speaking Turkish in public (Lütem 1999, p pp. 73-75). Same author also claims that 'especially after the Second World War, the core of Turkish-Bulgarian relations was the status of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria' (1999, p.64). However it is significant to stress that inter-ethnic tension between Turks and Bulgarians did not occurred in the country. Reason was 'the sensitivity of all political forces' because no party wanted to use this for gaining political power (Genov 2006, p.50).

It is evident that from 1990's, more specifically after the change of the regime in Bulgaria in November 1989 different types of cooperation started to develop. Especially, after the introduction of Schengen regime in 2001, movement across the

³⁶ The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation- United State-European collective defense agreement

Turkish border gained more commercial and economic character (Baklacioglu 2004, p.214). Although, these two countries have different experiences with the international and regional unions, such as EU and NATO, final goal of both countries is the same. As pointed out above, Turkey is member of NATO since 1952 and has close cooperation with the other members of the pact, while at that time Bulgaria belonged to one another bloc but became a member of NATO recently in 2004.

4.3.2 Current interstate relations between Turkey and Bulgaria

Recently, the development that shapes and is going to shape the relations between the two countries is Bulgaria's EU membership since 2007. As mentioned above with the inclusion of Bulgaria to the Union, external border of the Union changed. Before Bulgaria was on the external border, now Turkey is. Reasons behind the accession of Bulgaria to the EU were widely discussed. Some of the reasons according to Pisarev can be summed up as follows: first of all, in order to complete the European process in the Balkans, Bulgaria has to be in the EU, second reason was that its accession ended centuries long division of Europe since Bulgaria is first Slavic Eastern Orthodox and former communist country and finally it is one of the oldest European states (2006, pp.35-36). However the question is if all these reasons cover the fact that country is between the poorest and most underdeveloped countries. All these reasons clarify that major reasons behind accession of Bulgaria are its historical, cultural and European identity. Whatever the reason is, role played by the EU funds to foster cross-border cooperation between the two countries is evident, especially now after the accession of Bulgaria.

Moreover, migrant associations established in both sides play important role in further development of the bilateral relations. The most famous one in Turkey that is concerned with the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria is BAL-GOC : Balkan Immigrants' Cultural and Solidarity Association (www.balgoc.org.tr). However it is

also discussed that migrant communities that are seen mostly as a bridge for economic, cultural and political exchange are criticized from time to time that they are not doing their best for compensation of the social rights of the migrants (Baklacioglu 2004, p.221). Especially, the right for retirement of the Turkish migrants from Bulgaria is the most important topic on the agenda. On the other hand, regular meetings of the association members is sign not only for close relations between the countries but also by sharing experience and information it is motivation for further development of cross-border cooperation.

Kapikule (Turkey)-Kapitan Andreevo (Bulgaria) is the most important border point between both countries. One important step to improve the cross-border cooperation is knowing the other side better which is possible by sharing of information. In this light, computer system by using Information Technology (IT) in order to exchange better information was established in this border point (Undersecretariat of Customs 2004, p.3).

As mentioned above, in order to build trust between the two nations formation of regional cross-border radio and TV programs that inform people about the neighbor and the advantages of cooperation is significant step towards stable cross-border cooperation. One such kind of initiative was Turkish-Bulgarian media meeting in Edirne (www.government.bg/priorities/regionaldevelopment).

Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), ethnic party of the Bulgarian Turks added much to the ethnic peace in the country, due to the fact that despite it is ethnic Turkish party it include also Bulgarians and became a party of all ethnic formations (Pisarev 2006, p.41). The power of the party is increasing with every next election in Bulgaria. For example, in the last general elections in 2005, it gained 13.7 percent of the votes and is now in the coalition government in Bulgaria (www.dps.bg). Moreover, in 2007 European Parliament Elections won the right to send 4 MEPs out of 18 to the European Parliament.

Besides all these positive developments, one another recent issue that can have impact on the relations between the two countries is Bulgaria's Burgas recognition of Armenian Genocide. The Burgas city council that is mainly dominated by members of extreme right Ataka Party recognized the genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915-1922 and declared April 24 Day of Remembrance (novinite.com, 10.03.2008). Same publication noted that regarding this decision Edirne District Governor states: 'This decision is offensive and we denounce it. Until it is canceled we will discontinue all social, cultural, and economic contracts with your district.' Since Burgas district on the Bulgarian side and Edirne province on the Turkish side are among the eligible areas for cross-border funding by EU, they have many joint projects and partners from other side of the border. Such kind of declaration can have important negative effects on the cross-border cooperation between the two countries.

It is evident that visa requirement for the Turkish citizens is important obstacle that prevents closer cooperation. Study held by the chambers of Commerce in Yambol, Edirne and Kırklareli shows that about 55 percent of the population of the Yambol region and about 85 percent of the population of the Edirne and Kırklareli has never visited their neighbors (2006). These data is clear sign that Bulgarian citizens that do not need visa to enter Turkey have better opportunities to discover their neighbors than the Turkish citizens.

Many meetings were organized by UNESCO in order to encourage and support cooperation between neighboring countries. For example, in 2005 tri-lateral workshop with the representatives from Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece was established to discuss and further promoting cross-border cooperation among these three countries which could bring to the establishment of a Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve along the Meric Delta area (Unesco).

In this workshop, type and form of cooperation were identified, priorities of the three countries were determined and guideline for further trans-boundary was implemented.

Furthermore, Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece are among the eleven founding members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (www.bsec-organization.org) that aimed at fostering the interaction, peace, stability and good neighborly relations in the Black Sea Region. Bulgaria and Turkey have a coastline on the Black Sea that is clear sign about the commonalities between both countries. It is significant to emphasize that this organization has its own Project Development Fund that aims high regional cooperation.

In 2003, 'Cross-Border Cooperation Network of Border Governorships of Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey' was set up with aim to work together for further development of tourism and EU funds (Governorship of Edirne, 11.09.2006).

4.4 Cross-border activities on the Turkish-Bulgarian border

4.4.1 Previous cross-border activities on the Turkish-Bulgarian borderland³⁷

EU is supporting financially cross-border cooperation activities between Turkey and Bulgaria since 2003. Cross-border cooperation component was included in the pre-accession program same year. In the following year, Turkey-Bulgaria CBC/ Phare CBC was adopted as multi-annual program for 2004-2006.

Moreover, the JSPF for 2003 was started as pilot action to introduce the 2004-2006 CBC programs between the two countries. EU contribution to the 2004-2006 period of the program was 15 Million Euros for the Turkish side and same amount for Phare CBC on the Bulgarian side.

³⁷ Report from the Commission of 23 December 2005 entitled "2004 Report on Phare, pre-accession and transition instruments" [COM(2005) 701 final]

Turkish-Bulgarian CBC Programme aims to help the border region between Turkey and Bulgaria to overcome development problems resulting from its relative isolation. Furthermore, one another objective is to support the development of co-operative networks on both sides of the border. In general, key objectives of the cross-border cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria are to help the border region to overcome specific development problems resulting from their relative isolation within the national economies and to remove existing disparities within the cross-border region. As a result the gradual economic and social development on the border regions is aimed.

Bulgaria-Turkey Joint Small Project Fund can be regarded as the first official initiative to establish cross-border cooperation between local institutions (Ekut & Ozgen 2006, p.14). It was established in 2004-2006 with the contribution of Pre-Accession Financial Assistance from the EU, aiming to improve cross-border infrastructure, environmental protection, tourism investment, cultural interaction, improving institutional capacities.

During 2004-2006 both Turkey and Bulgaria were candidate countries, however at the beginning of the programming period 2007-2013, Bulgaria joined the EU and the border between these two countries became external border of the EU.

4.4.2 Turkey-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation: Joint Small Project Fund³⁸

This fund is developed by Turkey and Bulgaria, with the support of the European Commission in order to strength cross-border cooperation in border regions. Furthermore, economic and social developments of the two sides of the border are also supported with this fund. All the developed projects need to have cross-border impact. Expansion of cooperative networks across the border and creation of links

³⁸ CFCU (Central Finance and Contract Units)/TR 0602.17; Budget line item 22.020401 for the General Budget of the EC

between wider European Union networks is another area that is supported. Generally, JSPF supports the key objectives of the CBC between Turkey and Bulgaria that are evaluated in details above.

It is important to point out that projects have to be selected in competitive conditions and to involve the local authorities, the NGOs and all relevant local initiatives. Another significant point is that applicant has to be a Turkish legal entity and have at least one action partner from the Bulgarian side. That is to say, joint projects only are supported by this fund. During this thesis it is widely evaluated that partnership principle plays very important role in the formation of successful cross-border cooperation. This fund also emphasizes the partnership statement. As pointed out above, eligible areas for the cross-border cooperation on the Turkish side are Edirne and Kırklareli, while on the Bulgarian side Bourgas, Yambol and Haskovo. Some provinces from Turkey and some districts from Bulgaria are eligible for the Joint Small Project Fund.

Organizations that can apply for this fund are briefly as follows:

- i. Non-profit making organizations
- ii. Non-governmental organizations
- iii. Local authorities such as municipalities and special provincial administrations
- iv. Chambers of industry, commerce, agriculture; and trade union associations
- v. Universities, research institutions, schools and colleges

More specifically, projects focusing on economic development, tourism, cultural exchanges and institutional capacity building at local and regional level can get funding under this fund.

Since the scope of this thesis is limited only with the cultural and institutional factors that have impact on the cross-border cooperation, only these two kinds of projects are mentioned here in detail.

Cultural exchange projects are mainly about student exchange programs, cultural exchanges and activities between universities; folklore, artistic and sports events. Such kind of projects are focusing on the importance of the cultural heritage and enhancing the cultural exchanges.

Projects that are designed to improve institutional capacity building at local and regional level focus mainly on the relevant training courses in order to improve institutional capacities of the local authorities, chambers, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. Mutual visits and exchange of know-how visits are seen also as very important part of these projects.

Eligible areas and eligible organizations are mentioned in the previous paragraphs. On the other hand, the target groups of Joint Small Project Fund Program are local people, students, academic staffs, small-scale enterprises and youth.³⁹ For example ‘Cross-border Summer school for Europe’ was one of the projects that was implemented with the partnership of Haskovo and Krklareli in 2006.

After Call for Proposals, there were 71 days for the development of projects and completion of the applications. This year the deadline for the applications was 14 April 2008.

Budget of the fund will not be explained in detail here; however it is important to mention that the fund can not cover the total cost of the project. At least 10 percent of the project budget has to be financed from the applicant’s own resources.

One of the most discussed weaknesses of the cross-border cooperation that prevents its successful is lack of information and lack of experience for the preparation of projects. However, following the call for proposals, information days and training courses were given to the future applicants of this fund in order to guide them how to formulate project and make the proper applications. Moreover, cross-border cooperation bureaus in Edirne and Kirklareli provided general information about the

³⁹ See Annex, Table 6 for the details of the Projects implemented during 2006

Joint Small Project Fund Program. They are assisting the beneficiaries in the effective implementation of the project and monitoring the use of funds awarded.

4.5 SWOT –Analysis of the Co-operation Area

In this part of the thesis, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the cross-border cooperation area that are specially connected to the institutional and cultural-historical factors have been identified. This part is kind of sum up of the cross-border cooperation between Turkey and Bulgaria. Since there are many topics and many factors that influence cross-border cooperation, only the most relevant to the topic of this thesis would be taken into account. Especially weaknesses and threats are analyzed in order to respond to the challenges faced in co-operation area and show the limitations, while strengths and opportunities make clear the factors for development of successful cooperation. Although most of the elements of SWOT were mentioned before in this thesis, it is useful to discuss them here under a separate heading in order to better understand reasons for successful and unsuccessful cross-border cooperation.

4.5.1 Strengths:

One of the most important strengths in the cross-border area is the good relations among the people of the two neighboring countries. Both sides are aware that cross-border cooperation is of mutual interest. Moreover, the cooperation area has rich historical and cultural heritage. Another strength that is also relevant to the potential of people living on the border regions is the education system. As pointed out above, they have access to all levels of education. Furthermore, adults can also be educated due to the trainings organized by many local agencies, NGOs and chambers. Well developed educational system is very important element for successful cross-border cooperation due to the fact that it does not only increase the awareness of the people

about the advantages of the cooperation but also has impact on the employment and economy on both sides of the border.

Another point for development successful cross-border cooperation is local and regional developments in both countries. Actually limited administrative capacity, especially at the local level is seen as one of the weaknesses. On the other hand, there is on-going decentralization process both in Turkey and Bulgaria. Local administration is expected to gain more autonomy in economic and political terms. Moreover, experience in cross-border cooperation between two countries is one another strength. They are implementing joint projects and common programs since many years.

Moreover, both countries have many common characteristics in general that can contribute to the development of successful cross-border cooperation by enhancing the feeling of similarities. Both countries have Republic form of government, both are members of NATO, although the differences in the accession time; both are pro-EU, while Bulgaria is a new member and Turkey is a candidate country with future accession possibility, both have free economic initiatives and participation of the civil society is motivated in order to shape more democratic form of government. As mentioned above, in order to strengthened the regional cooperation on the Black Sea, both countries are member of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

4.5.2 Weaknesses:

One of the most important weaknesses of the border regions for both countries is their distance to the administrative centers. As mentioned before, border regions are located on the periphery of the countries.

Well educated people are important strength for the cooperation on cross-border regions; however on the other because of the peripheral location of the border regions, they are migrating to more developed urban areas. Moreover, unemployment rate are also very high among the people who decided to stay due to the differences

between existing professional qualifications of the labor force and the expectations of the labor market. Vocational education is not oriented to the demand of the labor market.

As evaluated in the previous part, limited administrative capacity at local level is very important weakness for the successful cross-border cooperation. Moreover, Turkish citizens need visa in order to go to Bulgaria. Especially for the staffs of the organizations that have to find partner from other side of the border, this is a big problem. Public staff demands facilitation of the visa application process from the governorships. On the other hand, Bulgarian citizens do not need visa to enter Turkey. From this point of view, it can be explained that Bulgarian citizens have more advantages to come and find partner from the Turkish side, while Turkish citizens are much more depended on the lists of the Bulgarian institutions that can be partner published by the Edirne and Kırklareli bureaus.

4.5.3 Opportunities:

The biggest opportunity for successful cross-border cooperation on the borderland between Turkey and Bulgaria is EU. Bulgaria, as one of the newest member countries of the EU and Turkey, as a candidate country, have desire to integrate closer to the EU. Especially, the will to be part of the EU by meeting the required standards, on the Turkish side is another big opportunity.

Funds given to the development of cross-border cooperation are evaluated before in this thesis. It is evident that support of the EU both in economic and political terms plays significant role not only for the present but also for the future of the cooperation. It is fact that funding by the EU is significant for the development of the local economies on the border area.

On the other hand, one of the eligible areas for cross-border cooperation funding is Bourgas region which is one of the most developed in Bulgaria and a free trade zone at the same time. This is big opportunity, since this city can attract more foreign

investment that would also improve the cooperation with the partners from the other side of the border.

Moreover, there are opportunities for cooperation between educational and training institutions. Given the close bilateral relations and common historical and cultural past of the countries, variety of joint cultural activities can be organized. That is big opportunity due to the fact that by knowing better each other, people living on the border regions can build trust and confidence that could lead to the more successful cross-border cooperation.

On the other hand, by developing partnership between the public administration and civil societies on both sides of the border, good practices can be shared. That is also big opportunity for local and regional development.

4.5.4 Threats:

Peripheral and isolated location of the border regions is the main threat behind the underdevelopment and obstacle for successful cross-border cooperation. Other threats can be defined as follows: aging of the population at the Bulgarian side; migration to the other regions or countries; poor employment opportunities.

More significantly, due to the different national laws, regulations, competences of the local authorities in Turkey and Bulgaria, absorption for the EU funds given for cross-border cooperation is low. Given the fact that local authorities do not have much power to make decisions, they cannot manage cross-border planning by themselves.

Otherwise said, local authorities are not very able to develop co-operation projects.

It is important to mention that differences in the religion beliefs of the population in both sides of the border are considered as threat for successful cross-border cooperation. Edirne and Kırklareli are predominated with mosques since people living there follow the Islam religion. On the other side, cities are predominated with Christian churches.

5. CROSS- BORDER COOPERATION ON THE TURKISH- GREEK BORDER

5.1 Description of the Cooperation Area between Turkey and Greece⁴⁰



Figure 3

Source: <http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/uztez/ohtamise.pdf>

5.1.1 Eligible Area

⁴⁰ Information from the INTERREG III/A Turkey-Greece, 2000-2006, [Commission decision C\(2003\) 5325/22-12-2003](#).

The entire land and maritime neighboring areas of Turkey and Greece are eligible for the cross-border funding by EU. As seen from the map above, eligible areas for Greece are Eastern Macedonia & Thrace – Evros; North Aegean – Samos, Lesbos, Chios; South Aegean – Dodecanese. On the other hand, for Turkey Thrace – Edirne, Canakkale; North Aegean –Balikesir, Izmir; South Aegean – Aydin, Mugla. Most importantly, this region is characterized by the existence of mountains, long coastal line and many islands. Especially, islands face many problems due to the fact that they are remote areas not only from the urban areas but also from the mainland. Because of their isolation location, islands are separated from mainland culture and politics (Bacas 2005, p.55).

This area is situated in essential position within the Balkans and the Eastern borders of the Europe. Cross-border cooperation area amounts about 17 percent of the Greek territory and about 8percent of the Turkish one. All together 8 million inhabitants have access to the cross-border cooperation funding which is about 10 percent of the whole population of both countries.

5.1.2 Economy

First of all, interconnection of economies is very weak in all sectors. Tourism sector has mainly a seasonal character, however due to the low prices competitiveness is high, especially, in the Southern island concentration of the Greek side and in the corresponding region of Turkey.

5.1.3 Infrastructure

The railway line is important for the communication between regions and transport between regions. In this respect, important interventions have been financed by the EU, particularly in the Greek side. However, the railway network requires further improvement in order to become more reliable and competitive. Interventions improving the telecommunications network between Greece and Turkey are important, and this network has to be modernised and extended.

5.2 Political and administrative structure of Greece:

Greece had little experience with regional policy before its entrance to the EU. Reasons behind the political and institutional centralization of the Greece can be found in the Greek political tradition, culture and structure of the political system. Many historical, economical, political and cultural factors can explain the centralized nature of Greece. More specifically, some of the reasons are as follows: slow process of unification after gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire which led to the perception of decentralization as threat to the territorial integrity of Greece; clientilist nature of Greek politics that pushed the public to seek strong ties with central authority; westernization of the country implied as imitation of the highly centralized French model of government (Ioakimidis 1996, pp.343-344).

Role played by the state and involvement of local/regional authorities is linked by some authors to the structure of the state. Distinction is made between the unitary and federal states and regional development policies in these countries. In a unitary state such as Greece, central government has a dominant role in implementing and negotiating regional development policy, while in the federal countries such as Germany or Spain, both central and regional governments have been involved in that process (Smallbone & Xheneti 2007, p.128).

Regional government and regionalization was promoted a little bit after the collapse of the military regime in the country in 1974, however it was not enough to foster the decentralization and as a result Greece entered the Community in 1981 as a highly centralized state (Ioakimidis 1996, p. 345).

Given the fact that EU policies and more specifically, EU cohesion policy has big impact on the public policy of Greece, reforms taken in that sphere also affected the country. The 1988 reform of the Cohesion Policy empowered sub national authorities, especially in countries such as Greece in which sub-national authorities were weak (Hooghe 1996, p.5). However, before this two major regional reforms were undertaken in Greece in 1982 and 1986.

In 1992, Greece was classified as 'non-regionalized state', law of 1986 provides division of the country in 13 regions however their jurisdiction was limited only to economic programming and regional work (Mouradian 1992, p.19).

5.3 Historical events and current interstate relations between Turkey and Greece

5.3.1 Ethno-Historical Background of Turkish-Greek Relations

Common history of the both countries from the past has important effect on the threat perception between them. Dominance relationship coming from the Ottoman period is the reason behind the disputes between the neighboring countries. Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830, however their struggle in Anatolia ended in 1922 and as a result of this the Anatolian Muslims took their national identity as 'Turks' (Sönmezoglu & Ayman 2003, p.37). Since that period, number of conflicts was always higher than number of co operations.

Actually, both of them are NATO allies since 1952, both are associated in several regional cooperation initiatives and being part of EU is from strategic importance for both of them. However, these commonalities were not enough to prevent conflicts between the countries until the end of 1990s.

Negotiations outcomes of the Greek and Turkish side with the EC were very different although both countries applied in the same year. Firstly Greece applied in June 1959; two months later Turkey submitted its application on August 3rd (Ege 2003, p.162). It was expected that parallel timing for the negotiations would be given to both countries, however the Council decided to start official negotiations with Greece in March 1960 while Turkey was not included in that process at that time.

Actually, at that time both countries had many similarities. Both were important partners of NATO, both were natural barriers against possible Soviet expansion with their geo-strategic location during the Cold war, both wanted to reduce their over-dependence on the United States (Onis 2001, p.4). Membership to the European Community was seen as the best possible way to achieve their goals. Both countries became associate members of the EC during the early 1960s: Greece in 1961, Turkey in 1963, following the signing of the Ankara Agreement.

Both countries applied for a customs union in the form of association agreement, however with different transition periods and motives behind it. Greek side was predominated mainly by economic motives. Its main concern was securing its market for the export of Greek agricultural products. At that time France and Italy had similar agricultural products as Greece which would make difficult for country to place its products on the market and would damage its position (Ceylanoglu 2000 p.4). Contrary to Greece, Turkey's concern was mainly political. First of all, Turkey's application could be seen as imitation of the Greek step because of the existing rivalry in the Greek-Turkish relations during the second half of the 1950s and second motive behind Turkish application was the desire to join organization dominated by Western Europe (Ceylanoglu 2000, pp.6-7).

Despite all these common aspirations and same path, many struggles occurred between the countries with different outcomes for them. 1974 is very significant year given the fact that many things happened in Greek-Turkish bilateral relations and their relations with the EC. Turkey's intervention to Cyprus that was legitimized by Turkey with the need to protect the rights of the Turkish-Cypriot minority, followed by the collapse of military regime and the return to democracy in Greece resulted in country's full membership in the EC in 1981. Turkey's intervention in Cyprus was also one of the driving forces behind the application of Greece to EC since closer ties with the Community was seen as a source of security against the Turkish threat (Onis 2001, p. 6).

During the Cold War, Greece was perceived as one of the biggest threats for Turkey. It was removed from the National Security Policy documents in the following years which is clear sign that Greece is no more in the top of the list of threat perception for Turkey (Aybet 2006, p.541).

However, another significant date when Turkish-Greek relations deteriorated was 1995. This year accession negotiations with Southern Cyprus to the Union started which had the meaning of ignoring the rights of the Turkish Cypriots in the north. Other important events that have negative impact on the relations between the two countries are as follows: the Imia-Kardak Crisis in 1996 that almost brought the two countries to the war in the Aegean and support provided by Greece to Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish separatist movement PKK (Liargovas 2003, p.135).

Despite the membership of both countries to the NATO which means that they belonged to the same security community, both countries had different attitudes to the same issues. For example, in the first half of the 1990s Balkan politics of Turkey was multilateral, pro-Western and cooperative, while Greece's was unilateral, anti-Western and nationalistic (Oguzlu 2004, p. 346).

Ties of both countries with EU, although independent from each other, have big impact on the bilateral relations of Turkey and Greece. It is fact that for Turkey in order to become a member, it has to solve the problems with Greece. Following the last point, EU platform is important to solve the problems between two countries since Turkey's accession process and Greece's efforts to further integration depend on this issue. As pointed out above, many problems such as Cyprus dispute and Aegean issues exist between the two countries that can be solved only with the acceptance of EU norms by them.

On the other hand, both Turkey and Greece have taken this step only to fulfill the EU's requirement, actually neither of them, especially Turkey, considered the resolution of the Aegean Sea and Cyprus disputes as a legitimate step (Oguzlu 2004,

p.338). Moreover, Turkey is aware that its membership is not dependent only on the resolution of the disputes with Greece. Many other factors and other member states of the EU are obstacles behind Turkey's full membership. On the other hand, Greece is supporting the membership of Turkey because it sees this process as an opportunity for Greece to defend its sovereignty and improve bilateral relations since before accession Turkey has to accept *acquis* (Papanicolaou 2005, p.152). Greece is aware that with the opening of the negotiations with Turkey, stability in the region can be achieved and relations between the both countries can be strengthened.

Actually, it is clear that the only way to settle the existing territorial disputes is through further Europeanization of Turkey, since pro-Greek solution is possible only in that way.

Greece hoped and Turks feared that EU would have pro-Greek stance in the settlement over the disputes since Greece is EU member and Turkey is a candidate country, however EU is expected to participate in domestic changes and reforms in both sides of the Aegean Sea (Keridis 1999, p. 29).

Looking to the relations of both countries from historical perspective and given the fact the EU is model for both countries, future relations are expected to be more cooperative. Countries such as France and Germany that were old enemies, transformed their relationship into close partnership after the post-war era, Greece and Turkey with similar past experience and improving relationships after 1999 are expected to follow the same path (Ege 2003, p.127).

5.3.2 Current interstate relations between Turkey and Greece

Recent improvements of the Greek-Turkish relations following the Helsinki summit are analyzed in order to understand the extent of which these issues influenced cross-border cooperation. Since its full membership to the EU in 1981, Greece always vetoed the accession of Turkey and finally in 1999, in hope to improve its bilateral

relations with this neighbor country Greece did not veto the candidature of Turkey (Papanicolaou 2005, p.151).

Turkish-Greek relations are in the 'détente' phase since the second half of 1999 (Keridis 1999, p.6). Following the earthquakes in both countries, tension in Aegean Sea decreased, talks between the leaders of the Greek and Turkish-Cypriot community in Cyprus started, the way to the Turkish candidacy to the EU was opened and cooperation in low politics was promoted. Moreover, besides the politicians, civil societies, economic interests groups and media institutions are developing ground for mutual trust between the two countries (Aksu 2003, p.107). Since success of cross-border cooperation partly depends on mutual trust and common interest, these developments are decisive.

'Disaster Diplomacy' created after the earthquakes in Turkey and Greece has its biggest impact on the ordinary citizens of both countries since it put previous fears and past prejudices aside (Ker-Lindsay 2000, p.229). Now people wish to understand better each other and the feeling of humanity lead the governments of both side to deepen and to strength their relationships.

One another success of the this period was Greece's commitment and openness to discuss issues which were taboo before such as improvement of the living conditions for Greece's Muslim minority, most of whom are Turkish (Cumhuriyet Newspaper, 4 February 2002).

From all these points, it is evident that past-1999 period has contributed a lot not only to develop bilateral relations between both countries, but also to the cross-border cooperation by putting aside past prejudices, discussing issue that were taboo before. All these developments brought the people of both countries closer to each other.

As mentioned above building of trust is very important issue that can lead to the successful cross-border cooperation. This depends mainly on the knowing of each other among neighboring countries. Nobody can deny that friend and enemy

perception of one country about another is designed by the education of people. Especially, history books shape a lot for this. For example both in Turkish and Greek history books many negative references can be found against each other. Greeks were educated to ignore the multi-ethnic background of their country and to neglect the country's Ottoman past (Keridis 1999, p.43). However many collaborative efforts are undertaken in order to remove these negative references from the content of schoolbooks. One of these projects was 'Improvement of the Balkan History Textbooks Project' with the common efforts of the historians from Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Romania and Croatia (Rumelili 2005, p.5). Adjustment of the educational system could lead to identify similarities between these countries rather than their differences. Especially establishing of educational programs, training new experts in Turkish affairs and make more research on Turkey can help to enhance Greek's knowledge towards its neighbor and build confidence.

Another issue widely discussed between the neighboring countries is the visa requirement for Turkish citizens. It is clear that partners from Turkish side face great difficulties in the picking up of visas to Greece and more simplified visa regime could better benefit to the bilateral relations between both countries. Greek consulates exist only in three cities in Turkey; they are Istanbul, Izmir and Edirne. Together with the embassy in Ankara, there are only 4 points in whole Turkey where Turkish citizens can apply for visa. Since Greece is one of the Schengen countries, its citizens do not visa to enter Turkey.

Moreover, in order to have efficient and effective cross-border cooperation in the tourism sector, both countries agreed to establish a Joint Tourism Committee in 2000 and many meetings were held on both sides of the border with well-prepared reports by the experts of each side (Tosun et al 2005 p.20).

Actually, leaders are aware that cooperation achieved firstly in areas of low politics such as economic and cultural cooperation is better choice than resolving of hard security issues in the short run (Oguzlu 2004, p.341). This can be explained since

after formation of cooperation in areas such as economy, tourism, infrastructure, education etc., countries became more depended on each other and more aware that arising of security conflicts can disturb the relations and gains. Successful cross-border cooperation between Turkey and Greece can also better contribute to the resolution of the existing conflict in security area. Given the fact that cross-border cooperation touches not only one area of cooperation but various areas such as culture, education, infrastructure, environment, by formulating joint projects dependency among the two countries would increase.

5.4 Cross-border activities on the Turkish-Greek border

5.4.1 Previous Cross-border activities on the Turkish-Greek borderland

EU approach to cross-border governance can be better understood when historical background of the previous cross-border cooperation is analyzed. It is fact that current Community programs has developed on the basis of previous experiences. In the historical development of the cross-border cooperation from 1980's until nowadays, EU initiatives played an important role.

One of these initiatives is Interreg III/A. The purpose of the Interreg III/A Greece-Turkey Program is to improve economic and social cooperation in order to tackle common problems of neighboring regions, in the priority areas of (1) infrastructure, (2) economic development, and (3) quality of life, environment and culture. Biggest amount of funding by the Community contributions was given to the first priority that aims improvement of the border crossing.

For the period 2004-2006, cross-border cooperation between Greece and Turkey was supported with EUR 35 million by the INTERREG program. Main objectives for that period were promotion of sustainable development of the cross-border region and economic cooperation. From that amount, Turkey received EUR 15 million under the

pre-accession instrument from the EU and contributed with EUR 4.4 million national co-financing. On the other hand Greece national co-financing was EUR 11.6 Million.

Projects on the Greek side were financed through ERDF. With respect to the Turkish side, projects under the INTERREG IIIA Greece-Turkey program were financed through the Pre-Accession Financial Assistance for Turkey. However, different financing instruments created difficulties in the implementation and monitoring of the program, mainly due to the differences in the legal framework of the two funding sources, which had impact on the eligibility criteria, project duration and size, exchange of information, etc.

Under the Turkey-Greece Interreg III/A programme, a Joint Programming Document and Programme Complement were adopted in 2004 and as a result a Joint Monitoring and Steering Committee has been established.

The State Planning Organization (SPO) is the competent Managing Authority for the Turkish side of the program. The SPO is responsible for managing the program and coordinates the Regional/Local Technical Secretariats to this end. The SPO is also responsible for technical monitoring at program and project level.

For the Turkish side, responsible for the financial monitoring of the program is the Central Financing and Control Unit (CFCU). The Central Financing and Control Unit is totally responsible for the entire budget in the context of EU-funded programs in Turkey. Moreover, the CFCU ensures compliance with the EU rules, regulations and procedures concerning the procurement of services, supplies, projects and grants and the operation of an adequate reporting system.

During 2004, the program showed very limited progress due to the high level of bureaucracy, very complex project reporting process and using of two different funding sources. Significantly, projects have to be designed by both sides, to be

implemented on both sides of the border and to benefit to the population of both sides of the border. Furthermore, project can come to into effect until 31 December 2008.

Regional development aid of the EU contributed to redistribute Europe's wealth from more developed to less prosperous Member States and regions. It is important to mention that Greece has enjoyed real growth in excess of the European average since 1996 since its per capita income (gross domestic product-GDP) came closer to the EU average (Directorate-General for Regional Policy 2003, p.9).

5.5 SWOT –Analysis of the Co-operation Area

5.5.1 Strengths:

Most important strong point on the Turkish-Greek borderland is Greece long membership in the EU and EMU, since Greece joined the euro zone on 1 January 2001. Moreover, Turkey's potential membership is also further step. On the other hand, region that is concerned to the cross-border cooperation fund is the second most developed region of Turkey. There are many urban centers on both sides of the border; especially Izmir is one of the most important cities with large economic activity in Turkey. Furthermore, demography is consisted of very young and highly educated skilled population because of the good quality of schools especially on the Turkish side. Many research institutions also exist that contribute to the development of the cooperation area. Business interest and enthusiasm among NGOs in both countries can be important driving force for successful cross-border cooperation.

Détente phase of the relations between Turkey and Greece after 1999, has build a trust and goodwill not only between the governments but also between people. Friendship survived since that period, although their political differences remain and disputes are not totally resolved. Significantly, after the fostering of the relations

between the two countries, issues that were taboo before were discussed with openness. This is very important step that can lead to successful cross-border cooperation since openness offers trust and confidence building.

5.5.2 Weaknesses:

Visa requirement between the two countries is big obstacle behind the cooperation of the two countries. As discussed throughout the thesis tensions between Turkey and Greece although big improvement in the relations in last years are challenging the cooperation. Strong historical memories and the disputes over Cyprus and Aegean Sea created mistrust and hostility between the two countries.

Moreover, created by these tensions, until recently both countries did not have many areas of cooperation. So to say, lack of experience is another important weakness. In order to establish successful cross-border partnership, actors involved in the cooperation have to come together to solve the common problems and to learn about each other.

5.5.3 Opportunities:

Cross-border cooperation area provides good opportunities for the development of tourist sector between the two countries. Great variety of holiday places; nice environment and low cost transportation have positive impact on the cooperation of tourism. Especially, existence of geo-thermal energy in the Turkish side is important for the tourism sector. Moreover, many projects were developed to protect the sea pollution in both sides. Joint system was established to prevent natural disasters and protect natural environment. Existence of many universities and research institutions is good sign for development of cooperation in the training sector.

5.5.4 Threats:

As in the Turkish-Bulgarian border, migration of the active population to the large urban cities is big risk in the cooperation area. Given the fact that cooperation area includes many isolated islands, mountains areas and countryside, all these are facing this kind of depopulation problems. Because of their location islands are separated from the mainland culture and politics. Another threat is low level of the economic integration of the local economies in the regional level. Moreover, fires in the summer season are big threat that destroys forest resources.

Ongoing EU funded projects about CBC in Turkey

Delegation of the European Commission to Turkey published a list that shows all the ongoing EU funded projects in Turkey for 2007. This list outlined more than 200 projects in different sectors that are financed by EU with the aim to prepare Turkey for the membership. Ongoing projects that are related to the topic of this thesis, so to say about cross-border cooperation between Turkey-Bulgaria and Turkey-Greece, are as follows:

	Project Title	Beneficiary	Budget
Economic and Social Cohesion			
1	2005 Joint Small Projects Fund (2004-2006 Cross-Border Co-operation (CBC) Programme between Turkey and Bulgaria)	State Planning Organisation	500.000,00
2	CBC with Bulgaria-Joint Small Project Fund	State Planning Organisation	500.000,00
3	CBC with Bulgaria-Restoration of the Ekmekçizade Caravanserai in Edirne	State Planning Organisation	2.500.000,00
4	Joint Small Project Fund(CBC with Bulgaria)	State Planning Organisation	500.000,00
5	CBC with Greece	State Planning Organisation	2.056.000,00
6	Joint Small Projects Fund	Secretariat General for EU Affairs	700.000,00
7	Capacity Improvement for	General Directorate of State Hydraulic	3.255.000,00

	Flood Forecasting and Control in the TR-BG CBC Region	Works	
8	Upgrading of Kırklareli-Dereköy – Aziziye Turkish Bulgarian Border State Road Project	Directorate General of Highways	4.000.000,00
9	Interreg III/A Greece-Turkey Programme	State Planning Organisation	3.509.000,00

Table NO: 1

Source: Delegation of the European Commission to Turkey, Ongoing Projects in 2007, Available at: www.avupa.info.tr

EU supports projects in various sectors⁴¹, such as Economic and Social Cohesion; Social Policy; Internal Market, Customs Union and Agriculture; Administrative capacity and NGOs; Justice, Freedom and Security; Infrastructure, Telecommunications, Transport and Environment. Projects that support cross-border cooperation are under the Economic and Social Cohesion sector. Totally 34 projects, which is 21.8 percent of all the total funding are financed by EU for Economic and Social Cohesion.

Existing obstacles to cross-border cooperation between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey

In 2004, “Seminar on transfrontier co-operation between Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey” was held in Bulgaria. Some general conclusions about the existing obstacles for the cooperation and proposals for eliminating them were addressed (Zardi 2004). First of all, importance of an effective legal framework was mentioned. As in most of the countries in Central and Southern Europe, local authorities in Turkey, Bulgaria and Greece are empowered with specific functions and responsibilities listed in the law and other functions are reserved to the state. In other words, concluding agreements with neighboring authorities and taking initiatives in the interest of their population is not allowed in these countries.

⁴¹ See Annex, Table 4 for details of the share of each sector

One another big obstacle is the difference between the respective competences of neighboring communities. For example, when the municipality in one side can take action, say, in training, while the municipality in other side of the border cannot, make the cooperation less effective or even impossible.

Proposition to the solution of that problem was to grant same competences to the all municipalities in Europe. On the other hand, this is not easy to make it happened since each country has its own tradition and has the freedom to organize its internal organization of competences. Another more acceptable solution can be making an interstate agreement between the countries concerned that would allow them to conclude agreements in number of fields.

Another obstacle on the borderland between these three countries is lack of funds. Besides the EU funds, municipalities also have to finance cross-border projects. However, municipal budgets are not enough for all the projects since not only cross-border cooperation but also other projects are waiting for financial support. Prioritization of CBC project is only possible if result is expected to be very positive and if strong political support exist.

Furthermore, lack of experience, training and information of the local/regional authorities is another obstacle. Many of the municipal staffs are not trained to develop cross-border initiatives. Reasons behind this can be lack of training opportunities or not knowing of the language of the neighboring partner. EU funds many projects that aim training and information sharing between the NGOs and chambers of commerce, education and industry. This obstacle is almost overcome by these funds and awareness of the local/regional authorities of the advantages of the cooperation.

Another factor that prevents cooperation on the border areas is change of the political leadership at municipal level that can lead to the change of importance of the projects. Project that is considered very important by one of the political parties can be abandoned by another one. However, decision to cancel cross-border cooperation project can affect the partner on the other side of the border that take it still as

important. Such kinds of projects have impact not only on the regional level of one country but also on more authorities in different countries. Therefore, it is very important to understand medium-long term implications of the projects and take into account the interests of the partner.

On the other hand removal of the obstacles such as lack or existence of border-crossing facilities, visa requirements, border-crossing points and the lengthy of the traffic on the border are not depended on the local authorities but on the central state. Decision of the central state is required to solve all these problems.

Significantly, conclusion given in the seminar was that ‘cross-border cooperation... rests on the obvious assumption that there are differences and inequalities between the two sides of the border and intelligent exploitation of these differences can be beneficial to both sides. The full suppression of the differences would also remove the interest for co-operation across the border’ (Zardi 2004, p.7).

6. CONCLUSION

As mentioned in the introduction, through the thesis extent and nature of the EU's impact on the cross border cooperation is discussed in order to give clear answer to the correlation between the existence of EU-level CBC policies and the success of cross-border cooperation. However, it can be concluded that cross-border cooperation with the use of the EU supporting funds is recent development. In the case of Turkey-Bulgaria and Turkey-Greece, EU is supporting cross-border cooperation since very recently, so to say role of the EU funded projects on the development of the border regions will be clearer in future. It is evident that EU's impact on the cross-border cooperation is big not only by providing funds but also by the conditionality principle that impose reforms on the administrative structures of the countries which is very important tool behind successful cross-border cooperation.

Cross-border projects depend not only on the support of the central government but also on the political support of the local and regional governments. It is very important to empower the local-level, so that CBC mechanism to develop towards the multi-level governance model. In the case of cross-border cooperation between Turkey and its EU neighbors, administrative structure of the countries plays significant role. In all these three countries, local and regional authorities have limited decision-making and implementation power. For example, customs union regulations and border-crossing regime are developed by the central authority. As evaluated throughout the thesis, improving administrative capacities in the CBC institutions can lead to the further development of the cooperation. As the only candidate country

within the scope of this thesis, Turkey spends the biggest amount of EU funds for the improvement of administrative capacity.

Given the candidacy status of Turkey, there are many lessons for the country to learn from the member states in order to speed up the accession to the EU by fulfilling all the necessary standards. Closest EU member countries to Turkey, that can be example, are Bulgaria and Greece; however their success in the adoption of the required reforms is also questionable, especially in the administrative level.

To sum up, in our cases success of cross-border cooperation depends mainly on the decentralization of the states and increasing the authority of the regional/local levels. All the three countries, although with different aspects, have traditionally very centralized structures. However, in order to boost cooperation on the border region, interactions among the various actors have to be increased. It is evident that policy makers adopt more initiatives for regional development with the pressure from supranational actors such as EU. Many reforms in this term are undertaken on the way to the EU membership by three countries but still improvement is needed.

In general, main elements that prevent successful cross-border cooperation are political relations between the countries; customs barriers and problem of border-crossing, so to say visa requirements; difference in legal and administrative competences between neighboring countries; lack of experience in the cross-border initiatives.

In order to develop successful cross-border projects, positive political climate between the two states involved plays a crucial role. Political tensions between Greece and Turkey and conflicts in the 1980s between Turkey and Bulgaria prevented cooperation, however conditionality and funds provided by EU have positive impact on the cooperation. Moreover, recent interstate relations of Turkey with its EU neighbors are cooperative rather than conflictual.

It has to be mentioned that people living on the Turkish side have more negative perception of the border because of the difficulties of border-crossing and the visa regime. In the eyes of the Turkish citizens border is still perceived as barrier although they have many partners from the Bulgarian and Greek side of the border. Turkish citizens are restricted to travel freely both to Bulgaria and Greece. That is because of the Schengen system in case of Greece. This is very important obstacle that prevents better cross-border cooperation since activities of Turkish exporters, businessmen and tourists are restricted with the visa requirement. It is a fact that in cases, Turkey-Greece and Turkey-Bulgaria, more flexible visa regime or abolition of the visa requirement for Turkish citizens will serve to the interest of all the partners. However, since Greece and Bulgaria are EU members and Turkey is still a candidate country, Turkey is external border of EU that makes these changes very complex.

In light of the above considerations, it is clear that implementing of EU norms is not the same along the entire border but mainly depends on the historical, political and institutional context of the border regions. Countries differ greatly in terms of their domestic structures. On the other side, foreign policy orientations and the ties with the EU of each country play a significant role on the border regime. It is important to be clear that despite EU attempts to increase uniformity in the border regime, produced outcomes are different because of the different implementation and specific national arrangements. Building tolerance and equality despite different partners with different social, cultural and economic background plays decisive role for the success of the cooperation on the border areas.

Due to the fact that cross-border funding by the EU is recent phenomenon, beneficiaries involved are most of the time unfamiliar with the project planning. Many of the projects that are proposed do not produce the desired effects across the border due to the lack of the experience of the actors. That is why special attention has to be paid to educating them about the program procedures. Representatives from the regions have to engage in discussions about past and ongoing experiences in cross-border cooperation in order to voice their concerns. In order to ensure the full

participation of both partners and minimizes any geographical, political, legal and administrative problems efficient coordination and cooperation has to be provided by the countries involved.

Different cultures, languages, and ethnics meet at the border regions. It is clear that there is close interrelation between culture, society, politics and cross-border cooperation. Especially, role of EU in linking institutional building, culture and economic development in cross-border cooperation is evident. Actually border peoples have strong ties to their counterpart border people and regions.

Mental distance of the people that they belong to another nation makes difficult to connect people, even in the case that they live very close to each other as in the border regions. Removal of barriers within the social sector, education, language, development of trust and promotion of cultural understanding is very important for CBC. Only economic and infrastructure co-operation are not enough for successful cross-border cooperation. For intensive co-operation to solve the problems of border regions, ideas developed at local and regional level have to be actively promoted at national and European level. It is a fact that Greece and Turkey lived in integrated society for centuries in the past and as a result of this they share not only common history, but also common mentality, food, culture. In the case of Bulgaria and Turkey, existence of many Turkish minority in Bulgaria and many migrants from Bulgaria in Turkey foster the relationships, that lead to the trust building and better cross-border cooperation.

Active cross-border cooperation can be achieved if the necessary preconditions are created. Cultural and linguistic barriers are important problem of cross-border regions. It is significant to emphasize that linguistic barrier slow down the process of cooperation. Both on the Turkish-Bulgarian and Turkish-Greek borderland, one of the most important obstacles is different languages. Teaching the neighbor's language in the border areas has to be taken seriously in order to facilitate the access of one side to the culture of the other side.

As pointed out in the introduction, cross-border cooperation is very complex and multi-faceted since it concerns many issues such as economy, politics, and culture. Different histories, laws, administrative structures, taxation and social systems have interaction along borders. Despite uniform rules of the EU, there are great differences in the way of implementation in every country. This is due to the different political systems, diverse territorial relations of the bordering countries, and different political traditions, as in our cases with extremely weak sub national authorities.

To sum up, throughout the thesis facilitating factors for CBC, the role of EU regional policy as well as the role of nation-specific institutions was evaluated by emphasizing Turkey and its EU neighbors.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

INDICATIVE ALLOCATIONS TO MAIN AREAS OF INTERVENTION	
Turkey	
Component I (Transition Assistance and Institution Building)	
Political Criteria	20-30%
Acquis Implementation	40-60%
Civil Society Dialogue	15-25%
Component II (Cross-Border Co-operation)	
Turkey – Bulgaria	20%
Turkey – Greece	34%
Turkey – Cyprus	3%
ENPI Black Sea multilateral Sea Basin prog.	9-11%
other ENPI and ERDF programmes	32-34%
Component III (Regional Development)	
Environment: 35	40%
Transport: 30	35%
Regional Competitiveness: 25	35%
Component IV (Human Resources Development)	
Employment	40-50%
Education	30-40%
Social Inclusion	20-25%
Component V (Rural Development)	
Adaptation of the agricultural sector and implementing Community standards	50-80%
Preparatory actions for agri-environmental measures and LEADER	<i>not foreseen under present MIPD</i>
Development of rural economy	20-50%

APPENDIX 2

Table 2: The Turkey Multi-Annual Indicative Financial Framework*

Component	2007	2008	2009	Total
I – Institution Building	252.2	250.2	233.2	735.6**
II – Cross-border cooperation	6.6	8.8	9.4	24.8
III – Regional Development	167.5	173.8	182.7	524
IV – Human Resources Development	50.2	52.9	55.6	158.7
V – Rural Development	20.7	53.0	85.5	159.2
Total	497.2	538.7	566.4	1602.3

* Figures are in current prices, million €

** includes allocations towards the Multi-Beneficiary Nuclear Safety programme, described in the Multi-Beneficiary MIPD

APPENDIX 3

Table1: List of the eligible NUTS III units in the co-operation area

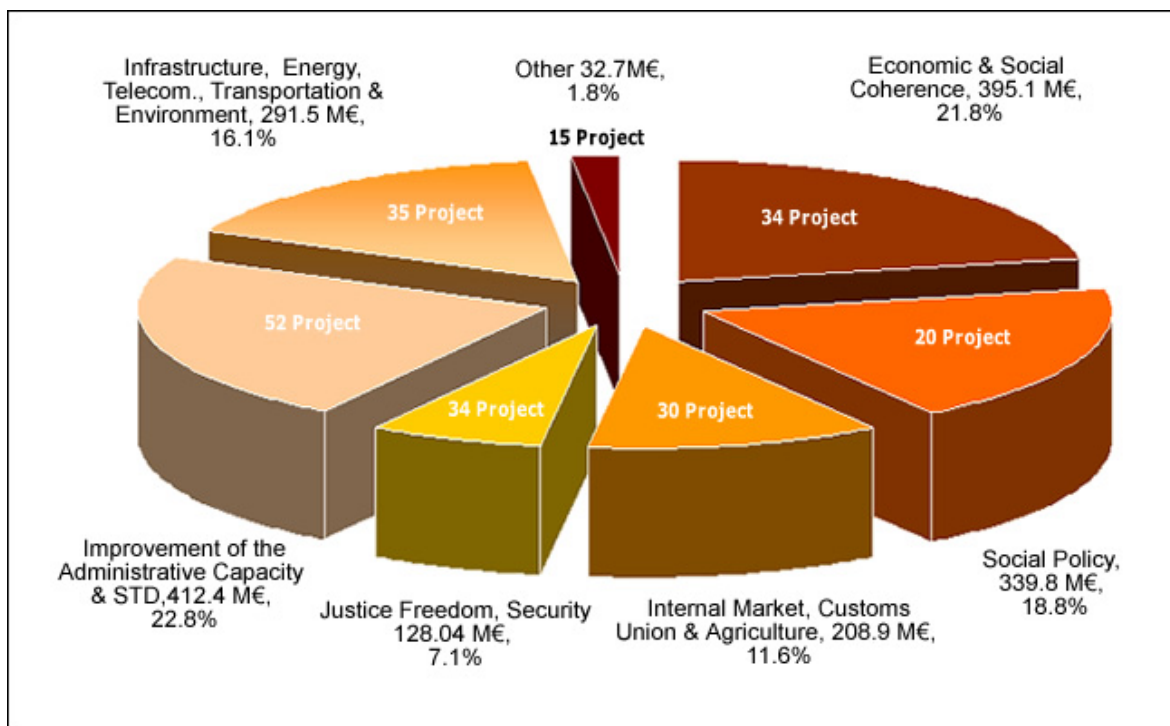
NUTS III area	Area in square km	% of the country's territory
District Burgas	7 748.1	6.98 %
District Yambol	3 355.5	3.02 %
District Haskovo	5 533.3	4.98 %
Bulgaria CBC	16 636.9	14.99 %
Province Edirne	6 097	0.80 %
Province Kirklareli	6 299	0.78 %
Turkey CBC	12 396	1.58 %
TOTAL CBC	29 032.9	BG territory – 57,3 % TR territory – 42,7 %

Source of Information: Bulgaria: National Cadastre Institute Ltd; 2005

Turkey: Turkish Statistical Institute, 2005, Regional Statistics; <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr>

APPENDIX 4

The EU supports reforms and development in key sectors:



Source: www.abinfo.com

APPENDIX 5

The IPA funds to be allocated to CBC programmes are as follow:

<i>CBC programmes</i>	<i>IPA funds 2007</i>	<i>IPA funds 2008</i>	<i>IPA funds 2009</i>
Turkey – Bulgaria	1.099	1.878	2.048
Turkey – Greece	1.836	3.135	3.420
Turkey – Cyprus	0.183	0.312	0.340

(million €, current prices)

GRANT CONTRACTS AWARDED DURING NOVEMBER 2006

FINANCING SOURCE: BL 22 02 04 01

Grants awarded under Call for Proposals TR 0405.04 published on 03/04/2006

JOINT SMALL PROJECTS FUND FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION:

BULGARIA-TURKEY

Action title	Action location	Action duration (Months)	Grant amount (EUR)	Percentage of total eligible action costs (percent)
Learn-See-Do Project	BURGAS KIRKLARELI	8	37005,69	89,99
Vocational And Entrepreneurship Training Program For Tourism Sector In The Border Region	BURGAS EDİRNE YAMBOL	7	42328,99	83,53
Modern Fruit Growing Project	BURGAS KIRKLARELI	6	30558,41	89,99
Initiative For Border Regions Development	BURGAS KIRKLARELI	9	47670,15	89,87
Promotion of Organic Agriculture In Cross-Border Provinces Project	KIRKLARELI YAMBOL	8	31721,22	90,00
Cross-Border Summer School For Europe	HASKOVO KIRKLARELI	7	45490,58	88,00
Turkish-Bulgarian Cultural Heritage Network(Culturnet)	BURGAS KIRKLARELI	12	33929,22	82,62

Incentive Of The Tradesmen And Craftsmen In The Border Region	BURGAS EDİRNE	7	27427,25	89,74
Turkey-Bulgaria Cross-Border Craftsmen Cooperation Platform Project	YAMBOL KIRKLARELİ	12	26318,79	90,00
Cross Border Cooperation Through Romanian Folk Music	EDİRNE HASKOVO KIRKLARELİ	10	37896,20	89,00
When The Wheel Of Life Turns	EDİRNE YAMBOL	12	40670,38	89,99
Kirklareli-Bourgas Mutual Aid Network (Man) Trade Caravan Project	BURGAS KIRKLARELİ	11	46349,95	90,00
Brotherhood Of Serhad	EDİRNE YAMBOL	8	15279,28	89,99