

# Regional policy of the European Communities and cross-border cooperation within the South Bohemia Region

## *Regionální politika Evropské unie a přeshraniční spolupráce v Jihočeském kraji*

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**Abstract:** The paper is focused on the problems of the cross-border cooperation and the regional policy of the European Communities and the implementation of theoretical issues in the South Bohemia Region. The main aim of this paper is to compare the cross-border cooperation and its influence on the regional development of the South Bohemia Region between the 2004–2006 programming period (after the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Communities) and the 2007–2013 programming period. The paper also provides the typology of the realised cross-border projects from the perspectives of the number of projects and also their financial allocation. The results document the increasing importance of the cross-border cooperation and its highly positive impact on the social and economic development of the South Bohemia Region.

**Key words:** cross-border cooperation, regional policy, the South Bohemia Region

**Abstrakt:** Článek je zaměřen na problematiku přeshraniční spolupráce a regionální politiky Evropské unie, přičemž teoretické poznatky aplikuje na Jihočeský kraj. Hlavním cílem článku je porovnat přeshraniční spolupráci a její dopady na regionální rozvoj Jihočeského kraje mezi programovacím obdobím 2004–2006 (po vstupu české republiky do Evropské unie) a programovacím obdobím 2007–2013. Článek se také zaměřuje na typologii realizovaných projektů přeshraniční spolupráce, a to nejen z pohledu počtu projektů, ale také z hlediska získaných finančních prostředků na jednotlivé typy projektů. Výsledky dokumentují rostoucí význam přeshraniční spolupráce a její vysoce pozitivní vliv na sociální a ekonomický rozvoj Jihočeského kraje.

**Klíčová slova:** přeshraniční spolupráce, regionální politika, Jihočeský kraj

Problems of regional development are still more important, mainly in the context of globalisation which goes together with the strengthening of decision-making, not only at the supranational level, but also at the local and regional levels. Besides the process of globalisation, the integration tendencies within the European Communities are also very important. These facts are fundamental in increasing the role of the peripheral border regions which were often marginalised in the former times. These regions have become a point of interest in the context of

the globalisation process and integration tendencies, despite their peripheral location within the national states. Special features of border regions – as a result of their historical development and natural conditions – are also reflected within the specific approach to their development. The cross-border and interregional cooperation is one of the most important presumptions of regional development of border regions. Cross-border cooperation is also instrumental in the reduction of the negative effects of the peripheral location of border regions within the

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Supported by the Internal Grant Agency of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague (Grant No. 11190-1312-3134).

national states. This is the reason for the increasing importance of cross-border cooperation within the regional policy of the European Communities. The cross-border and interregional cooperation have also become more significant for the Czech Republic, especially after the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, and the significance of cross-border cooperation has increased, particularly in the 2007–2013 programming period.

## OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

The paper is focused on the problems of the cross-border cooperation and the regional policy of the European Communities and the implementation of theoretical issues to the particular border region within the Czech Republic. The South Bohemia Region was selected for this research. The reason for this selection is mainly its location and also the fact that the South Bohemia Region has been highly influenced by the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Communities.

The main aim of this paper is to compare the cross-border cooperation and its influence on regional development of the South Bohemia Region between the 2004–2006 programming period (after the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Communities) and the 2007–2013 programming period. The comparison is based mainly on the analysis of the realised cross-border projects supported by the regional policy of the European Communities.

From the methodological point of view, mainly the document study of the theoretical approaches to the regional policy, regional development, border regions and Euroregions is used for the literature background. Secondary analysis of databases of the realised cross-border projects is used considering the empirical part of the paper. The first step of the secondary analysis is the creation of a typology of the realised cross-border projects and the applicants' typology (see below) in accordance with the priorities of the cross-border cooperation within both programming periods (2004–2006 and 2007–2013 programming period), and on the basis of the databases of the registered projects. The second step is the analysis of the realised cross-border projects from the perspectives of the number of the realised projects, their financial allocation and applicants for the projects (this analysis is made for both programming periods). The third step is a comparative analysis of the programming periods from the perspectives of the number of the realised projects and their financial allocation. A special attention is paid to the division of the realised

project to the "large" projects and projects supported by the Disposal Fund or the Fund of Small Projects. Due to the same length of both programming periods (ca. 2.5 years), not only the relative but also the absolute indicators of the realised projects are used. Also simple descriptive statistics (mean and median) are used for the comparison.

This paper is supported by the internal grant: "Local actors and their capability for implementation of new approaches in rural development" No. 11190-1312-3134 of the Internal Grant Agency of the Faculty of Economics and Management of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague.

## LITERATURE BACKGROUND

### Border regions

There exist historically developed regions on both sides of the borders, which can be defined as marginal, economically underdeveloped, barely accessible by different means of transport and also sparsely populated. These border regions are usually characterised by the different legal, administrative, economic, social and cultural conditions. On the other hand, these regions are also characterised by a common history and often similar culture as a result of their historical development. The first set of characteristics could make the cooperation between these regions more difficult, but the second set of characteristics could make the cooperation easier. Common planning, realisation and financing of the development programmes and projects by the regions on both sides of the borders are considered as an optimal solution to the problems of these regions (Mates et al. 2001).

One of the most important features of border regions is the idea of national borders. Anderson and O'Dowd (1999) claim, regarding the idea of borders, that borders have not only a material but also a symbolic connotation. The drawing of any given state border represents an arbitration and simplification of the complex geopolitical, political and social struggles. Borders often appear inherently contradictory, problematic and multifaceted. They are at once the gateways and the barriers to the "outside world", protective and imprisoning, areas of opportunity or insecurity, zones of contact or conflict, of cooperation or competition, of ambivalent identities or the aggressive assertion of difference. These apparent dichotomies may alternate with time and place, but – more interestingly – they can co-exist simultaneously in the same people, some of whom regularly have to deal not with one state, but two. Borders are filters with highly variable degrees of

permeability or porosity, which significantly influence the character of the border regions.

It is very important, but sometimes difficult and ambiguous, to delimitate the border regions. As a key factor, the own identity of border regions is considered. Identity could be regarded as individual or corporate. While considering a particular border region, the local and regional identity can also be regarded. The local and regional identity can be defined, according to Patočka and Heřmanová (2008), as an “internal feeling of belonging to the particular territorial community and also to the region itself”. Besides the factors mentioned above, it is possible to define other attributes of border regions: continuity to the borderline, relations across the borders with the neighbouring state, the possibility of daily cross-border work commutation, the supply of special services for the inhabitants from the other side of borders and the identification of local people with the border territory itself. There exist a lot of different “objective” ways in which to delimitate the border regions. First of all, there is the historical delimitation based on the historical development of a particular border region. Cultural, ethnical and physiological delimitation should also be regarded. But the most common is the administrative delimitation of border regions. The administrative delimitation is useful mainly from the information availability point of view. There are usually used border districts (LAU 1) for the delimitation of border regions in the Czech Republic (Jeřábek et al. 2004). But the regions at the level NUTS III are considered for the delimitation of border regions for the purpose of the regional policy of the European Communities within the 2007–2013 programming period (the aim of the European Territorial Cooperation). These are the main reasons for understanding the South Bohemia Region (NUTS III) as an object of research within this paper, but also the specifics of border districts (LAU 1) are regarded.

### **Euroregions**

Thus the specific problems of border regions require specific institutions. Weyand (1997) claims that the cooperation between regions belonging to different national states takes place all over Europe in a variety of legal and institutional frameworks and geographical settings. In general terms, cooperation between regions belonging to national states is motivated by the identification of common problems and interests and the conviction that a joint action, or at least a coordinated approach, is required to address these problems and to articulate the common interests. According to Keating (1998), it is possible

to find many different types of cross-border initiatives with different legal bases, aims and geographical settings, but all these initiatives have some common features. Typically, cross-border initiatives have a functional basis, focused on the common problems and opportunities, notably in the economic development, promotion, infrastructure, environment and sometimes culture, but they also have a strong political component, founded on the desire of regional politicians to project themselves on a wider stage, or to escape the restrictions of national politics. Their success or failure depends on the appropriateness of the functional linkages established, as well as on the political dynamics, including the attitude of the national and local governments. But Perkmann (1999) claims that the cross-border cooperation has to be seen as an aggregate outcome of various relatively decentralised processes of institution building with a strong involvement of the non-local actors. Cross-border initiatives cannot be assumed to have single and coherent objectives. Rather, a multiplicity of actors operates in an institutional context of opportunities and constraints that is not predominantly of their own making. As a consequence of their actions, the institutional setting itself undergoes continuous changes, resulting in irreversible and historically specific trajectories.

From this perspective, it is possible to identify at least three dimensions or criteria to classify cross-border initiatives. First of all, there is the geographical scope where it is necessary to distinguish small-scale initiatives like Euroregions from large-scale initiatives represented by Working Communities. The second and most important dimension is the cooperation intensity referring to the strategic capacity gained by the cross-border body and its degree of autonomy. The third dimension is represented by the actors involved, the fact, whether local or regional actors are dominant (Perkmann 2003). From this point of view, it is possible to distinguish integrated initiatives with high cooperation intensity and emerging initiatives with low cooperation intensity, considering the small scale initiatives which are usual within the contiguous territories at the national borders. But this classification is insufficient for the purpose of cross-border structures within Central and Eastern Europe (and also for the Czech Republic). Due to the different history and the later creation of cross-border structures within these states, it is necessary to modify the Perkmann's classification. Thus the cross-border structures within these states can be classified as integrated initiatives with the strongest cooperation intensity, emerging initiatives, special-purpose initiatives and ad-hoc initiatives with the

lowest cooperation intensity considering the small scale initiatives (Dočkal 2005).

One of the most widespread and the oldest cross-border initiatives within the European Communities are Euroregions. The first Euroregion (called EUROREGIO) was established in 1958 at the Dutch-German border. Since that time, more than 70 Euroregions have been established within Europe. In particular, there are 13 Euroregions existing within the Czech Republic and 2 Euroregions within the South Bohemia Region (the Euroregion Bayrischer Wald – Sumava – Mühlviertel on the borders with Germany and Austria, and the Euroregion Silva Nortica on the borders with Austria). The typical Euroregion is created by separate legal institutions on both sides of the borders. Each of the national legal institutions is established according to the national system of law and the Euroregion is based on an international treaty. This means that Euroregions do not have their own legal personality at their disposal and this is their main restriction. So, in order to overcome the obstacles of the cross-border cooperation and to establish more efficient cross-border cooperation, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union have adopted the Regulation No. 1082/2006 on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The main qualitative difference between the EGTCs and Euroregions is that the EGTCs have their own legal personality at their disposal. The EGTCs have their own statutes, Assembly, Director, budget and registered office in one of the member states to whose laws at least one of the members is subject. The necessity of having a registered office in one of the member states could be seen as a possible problem in the creation of the EGTCs, because it creates a disproportionality between the subjects from different member states. To date, no EGTC has been established within the Czech Republic.

### **Regional policy of the European Communities and the cross-border cooperation**

The regional policy of the European Communities has a long-term history, corresponding to the existence of the European Communities. With regard to the cross-border cooperation, the first initiatives started to appear within the 1986–1993 programming period. The importance of the cross-border cooperation as a part of the regional policy at the supranational level is still increasing. But utilization of the financial measures of the regional policy is not a sufficient guarantee of the positive impact on the regional development. Hrabánková and Boháčková (2009) accent also the real effect of the projects at the regional level with regard to the real possibilities of

regions in the sense of their development, the application of financial means in the areas where there is a high rate of probability that they can bring a positive shift in the development of the region – again the individual approach, the relation of the activity to the regional entrepreneurial subjects and environmental impacts of structural measures. By the other words, regional policy should have an impact on the quality of life at the local and regional level. Hudečková and Pitterling (2009) depict the main aspects of the quality of life at the local and regional level (which are also accented within the empirical part of the paper and the typology of the realised cross-border projects): “One of the most important aspects of the quality of life is the participation of citizens in public life. This is significantly linked with the local identity. Another important aspect of the quality of life is to ensure a standard level of the technical infrastructure and civic amenities in the place of residence.” The participation of citizens in the local and regional development and building social capital are crucial factors of the successful implementation of the measures of the regional policy with regard also to the economic and environmental dimensions (Falk and Kilpatrick 2000; Shucksmith 2000). And from this perspective, the LEADER approach could inspire applicants for cross-border projects and the implementation of the patterns of endogenous development within the border regions. This approach emphasizes not only the “hard” factors but also the “soft” dimensions of regional development – particularly the emotional well-being, happiness and satisfaction with life within the community (Pospěch et al. 2009).

Because of the aim of this paper, only the 2000–2006 programming period (respectively 2004–2006, after the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Communities) and the 2007–2013 programming period are under consideration. There existed three priority objectives within the 2000–2006 programming period. The first objective was focused on the support of development within the less prosperous areas, the second objective was focused on the revitalisation of areas facing structural difficulties, and the third objective was focused on the support of the adaptation and modernisation of education, training and employment policies and systems. Besides these priority objectives, the minority Community initiatives also exist – INTERREG III, URBAN II, LEADER+ and EQUAL. INTERREG III was focused on strengthening the economic and social cohesion within the European Communities through cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. INTERREG IIIA CR – Bavaria and CR – Austria was realised, with regard to the cross-border cooperation

within the South Bohemia Region. It is necessary to characterise the priorities of both initiatives for the analysis of the realised projects and their typology. The cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Bavaria was focused on the development of the territory and environment, economic development, infrastructure, human resources and networks. The cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Austria was focused on the cross-border economic cooperation, accessibility, cross-border structures and networks, human resources, sustainable development and the environment.

Considering the 2007–2013 programming period, there exist also three, but modified, priority objectives and one of them is focused on the cross-border cooperation as a result of its increasing importance. The first objective is Convergence, and this objective is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF). The second objective is Regional Competitiveness and Employment, which is financed by the ERDF and ESF. The third objective – European Territorial Cooperation – is based on the experience drawn from the INTERREG Community initiative and is financed by the ERDF. This objective is focused on the cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and, with regard to the cross-border cooperation, mainly joint local and regional initiatives are considered. The Operational Programme CR – Bavaria and the Operational Programme CR – Austria are implemented, with regard to the cross-border cooperation within the South Bohemia Region. It is also necessary to characterise the priorities of both Operational Programmes for the analysis of the realised projects and their typology. The cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Bavaria is focused on economic development, human resources and networks, development of the territory and environment. The cross-border cooperation between the Czech Republic and Austria is focused on social and economic development, the tourism industry and the transfer of know-how, regional accessibility and sustainable development. These priorities and priorities from the previous programming period form the basis for the common typology of the realised projects.

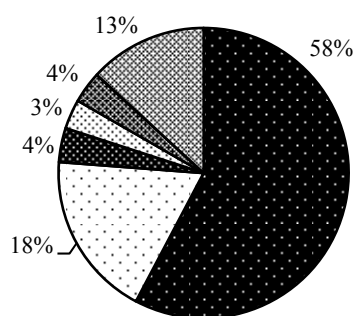
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 2004–2006 Programming period

The typology of the realised cross-border projects was created in accordance with the priorities of the cross-border cooperation within both programming

periods, and on the basis of the database of the registered projects. Projects were classified as cultural and social, supporting the cultural and social development of the Region, including the creation of social capital and the cross-border social networks. The other types are projects which encourage the tourism industry, development of infrastructure, protection of the environment and promotion of the sustainable development and which encourage the educational systems within the Region. A typology according to the the applicants was also created. Due to the restrictions of possible applicants (private entrepreneurs were excluded), the applicants were classified as local administration (subjects), regional administration (subjects), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities and other research institutions. To simplify the comparative analysis, both typologies are common for both programming periods.

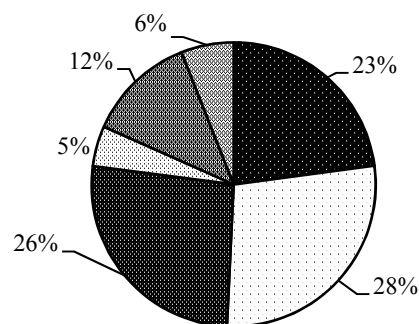
395 cross-border projects were realised during the 2004–2006 programming period (ca. 2.5 years) within the South Bohemia Region and the total financial support of the European Communities was 204.8 million CZK. It is also possible to identify the significant dominance of the projects realised at the borders with Austria. From the perspective of the number of the realised projects according to the typology mentioned above, cultural and social projects dominate with the 58% share (Figure 1). Cultural and social projects are followed by the projects focused on the tourism industry with the 18% share. With regard to the financial allocation for the different type of projects, the share of cultural and social projects and projects focused on the tourism industry and infrastructure is approximately the same at the level of 25% (Figure 2). This disproportion can be explained by the existence of the Disposal Fund, which is intended for small “soft” projects. Usually small cultural and social projects, which are not financially demanding, are promoted by the Disposal Fund. On the other hand, among the “large” projects, financially demanding infrastructural projects are also promoted. Concerning the particular cross-border projects are infrastructural projects, focused mainly on the road network and border crossings. Projects of the tourism industry are focused mainly on winter tourism and the construction of cycle tracks. Cultural and social projects are focused on understanding between the neighbouring nationalities, cross-border meetings of citizens, natives or members of various associations, the organisation of various festivals and the revitalisation of local traditions. The significance of the “small” cultural projects consists in the creation of cross-border social networks and the cross-border social capital, which is important for



■ cultural and social   ■ tourism industry   ■ infrastructure  
 ■ environment   ■ education   ■ others

Figure 1. Typology of projects within the 2004–2006 programming period (number of projects)

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing



■ cultural and social   ■ tourism industry   ■ infrastructure  
 ■ environment   ■ education   ■ others

Figure 2. Typology of projects within the 2004–2006 programming period (financial allocation)

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

Table 1. Applicants' typology (2004–2006 programming period)

Applicant	Number of projects (absolute)	Number of projects % (relative)	Financial allocation	
			CZK (absolute)	% (relative)
Local subjects	188	47	50 509 913	25
Regional subjects	51	13	76 884 013	37
NGOs	125	32	48 581 730	24
Universities and other research institutions	10	3	23 850 259	12
Others	21	5	4 977 938	2
Total	395	100	204 803 852	100

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

the ability and goodwill of cooperation within the "larger" projects.

Regarding the applicants' typology, local subjects (47%) and NGOs (32%) are the most frequent applicants but, from the perspective of financial allocation, regional subjects are the most successful, with 37% share of the total financial allocation. This disproportion can also be explained by the existence of the Disposal Fund and shows the significance of the patterns of endogenous development when considering the number of cross-border projects (Table 1).

### 2007–2013 Programming period

In total, 229 cross-border projects were realised during the 2007–2013 programming period (ca. 2.5 years up to June 18, 2009) within the South Bohemia Region and the total financial support of the European Communities was 487.5 million CZK. It is necessary to

state that, between the previous and current programming periods, the minimal compulsory co-financing from the national sources decreased by about 10% to the current level of 15% and the total amount allocated to cross-border projects differs less than the subsidies from the European Communities. It is also possible to identify the significant dominance of projects realised at the borders with Austria. From the perspective of the number of the realised projects according to the created typology mentioned above, cultural and social projects dominate with 56% share (Figure 3). Cultural and social projects are followed by the projects focused on the tourism industry with 19% share and educational projects with 9% share. Considering the financial allocation for the different type of projects within the 2007–2013 programming period, infrastructural projects dominate with 41% share, followed by cultural and social projects (24%) and projects focused on the tourism industry with 21% share (Figure 4). It is possible to identify a significant

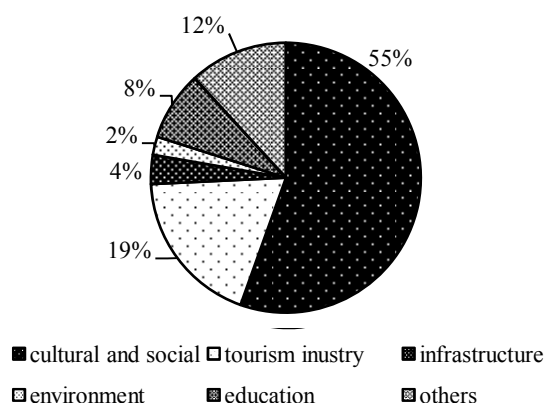


Figure 3. Typology of projects within the 2007–2013\* programming period (number of projects)

\*Up to 18 June 2009

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

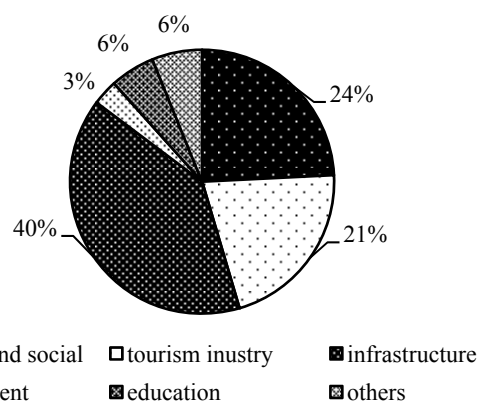


Figure 4. Typology of projects within the 2007–2013\* programming period (financial allocation)

\*Up to 18 June 2009

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

disproportion between the 3% share of infrastructural projects from the point of view of the number of projects and the 41% share from the financial allocation point of view. This disproportion is considerably higher than in the previous programming period and it could be regarded as a consequence of a few “large” infrastructural projects realised within this programming period. The disproportion can also be explained by the existence of the Disposal Fund and the Fund of Small Projects, which are intended for small “soft” projects. Usually small cultural and social projects, which are not financially demanding, are promoted by the Disposal Fund and the Fund of Small Projects. Concerning the particular cross-border projects, the aims of the majority of projects are similar to those of the previous programming period, but it is possible to identify a significant movement from separate projects to integrated projects. The integrated and complex projects can be found within the projects focused on the tourism industry, within cultural and

social projects and partly also within infrastructural projects. Besides this qualitative movement, some of the projects (mainly cultural and social, focused on the cross-border meetings of citizens and the organisation of various festivals) have become a “new” tradition. These projects are held every year and often continue from the previous programming period.

With regard to the applicants’ typology, local subjects (49%) and NGOs (28%) are the most frequent applicants but, from the perspective of financial allocation, regional subjects are the most successful with 58% share of the total financial allocation. Local subjects have only 14% share of the total financial allocation and seem to be less active than the applicants for “large” projects (Table 2). This disproportion can also be explained by the existence of the Disposal Fund and the Fund of Small Projects in which local subjects are more active. This disproportion results from the integrated and complex character of the realised projects in which regional subjects are more

Table 2. Applicants’ typology (2007–2013\* programming period)

Applicant	Number of projects (absolute)	Number of projects % (relative)	Financial allocation	
			CZK (absolute)	% (relative)
Regional subjects	31	14	283 443 543	58
NGOs	64	28	93 687 929	19
Universities and other research institutions	10	4	34 523 913	7
Others	12	5	8 710 589	2
Total	229	100	487 454 744	100

\*Up to 18 June 2009

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

efficient as applicants. The comparison of both programming periods acknowledges the statement about the suitability of a mixture of endogenous and exogenous development within the cross-border regions – particularly the South Bohemia Region.

### Comparison of programming periods

Due to the same length of both programming periods (ca. 2.5 years), it is possible to compare not only the relative but also the absolute indicators of the realised projects. The development of cross-border cooperation and the movement from the INTERREG Community initiative to the European Territorial Cooperation priority objective (see above) is reflected in the total financial allocation of the cross-border projects within the South Bohemia Region. 624 cross-border projects were realised during both programming periods within the South Bohemia Region (Table 3). The majority of projects were “small” projects financed by the Disposal Fund or the Fund of Small Projects. Mainly within the “small” projects, it is possible to observe a

decrease in the number of the realised projects. This fact could be explained by a later start of drawing financial support within the 2007–2013 programming period and also by drawing the rest of the financial allocation for the previous programming period during the year 2006. Despite the decrease in the number of the realised projects, the progression of financial subsidies is the reverse. Financial subsidies increased from 204.8 million CZK in the 2004–2006 programming period to 487.5 million CZK in the 2007–2013 programming period (Table 4). The highest increase can be observed with regard to the “large” projects. The total financial support for “small” projects is stagnant, while the average and median values increase, although to a lesser extent compared to the “large” projects. The increase of importance of the cross-border cooperation within the South Bohemia Region could be documented by an increase in the average and median values of financial support of all cross-border projects. The average financial support increased approximately four times and the median value of the financial support increased approximately two times. At the same time, the total financial support of the regional policy of the European Communities allocated for the Czech Republic increased the times, but the different speed of drawing the financial support at the end of the programming period and at the beginning of the programming period should be considered. From this perspective, it is possible to state that the importance of the cross-border cooperation within the South Bohemia Region is still increasing and the changes between the programming periods are leading to the integrated and complex realised projects. This may be documented not only by the total and average financial support, but also by the particular realised projects.

Table 3. Comparison of number of cross-border projects

	2004–2006	2007–2013*	Total
“large” projects	69	61	130
Disposal Fund and Fund of Small Projects	326	168	494
Total	395	229	624

\*Up to 18 June 2009

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing

Table 4. Comparison of subsidies for cross-border projects (CZK)

		2004–2006	2007–2013*	Total
“large” projects	total	182 467 126	465 209 554	647 676 680
	average	2 644 451	7 626 383	4 982 128
	median	1 473 234	4 060 065	2 294 976
Disposal Fund and Fund of Small Projects	total	22 336 726	22 245 190	44 581 916
	average	68 518	132 412	90 247
	median	61 006	101 120	75 748
Total	total	204 803 852	487 454 744	692 258 596
	average	518 491	2 128 623	1 109 389
	median	68 423	135 750	83 965

\*Up to 18 June 2009

Source: internal documents of Euroregions and other regional institutions, own processing



## CONCLUSIONS

The subject of the analysis of the realised cross-border projects were the projects pertaining to the 2004–2006 and 2007–2013 programming periods realised within the South Bohemia Region. The increasing importance of cross-border cooperation within the South Bohemia Region is evident from this analysis. The average financial support of projects realised within the South Bohemia Region increased approximately four times and the median value of financial support increased approximately two times. From the perspective of the typology of the realised projects, mainly cultural and social projects are supported. With regard to the financial allocation, mainly infrastructural projects are supported, but the relative significance of cultural and social projects within the 2007–2013 programming period is still increasing. At the same time, local actors dominate as the applicants for cross-border projects but, from the perspective of financial allocation, the most successful are the regional actors. These facts empirically acknowledge the suitability and applicability of a mixture of endogenous (including the support of the cross-border social networks) and exogenous (including the support of infrastructure for the cross-border development axes) approaches to regional development within the South Bohemia Region. With regard to the particular realised cross-border projects, mainly cultural and infrastructural projects focused on the creation of the cross-border social and infrastructural networks are supported. This is the result of the location of the cross-border projects to the peripheral districts of the South Bohemia Region with a lower population density and insufficient infrastructure. Projects focused on the tourism industry are also being promoted, consistent with the development potential of the South Bohemia Region. The cross-border cooperation has a highly positive impact on the social and economic development of the South Bohemia Region and the realised cross-border projects are consistent with the development potential of the South Bohemia Region.

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Arrived on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2010

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