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Prospective directions for the development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine

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The article examines the notion of cross-border cooperation as one of the primary issues of developing border areas in the context of European integration. Various aspects of this cooperation, such as economic development, cultural exchange, jointly combating cross-border challenges, contribute to strengthening ties between Ukraine and the European Union, promoting the implementation of European standards and fostering cross-cultural communication with the neighboring states. The relevance of research is determined by the fact that despite possessing considerable prospects for developing cross-border cooperation, the existence of diverse difficulties interferes with further expansion of such cooperation. Therefore, the aim of the article is to determine the current state of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, analyze the perspective directions and forms of cross-border cooperation operating on the territory of Ukraine, to outline their status and prospects for future development. To ensure the integrity of studying the issue and determine trends in the development of cross-border cooperation in our country the authors applied a complex of general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization, induction, deduction) and special scientific (source studies, system-structural analyses, institutional, systemic, functional) methods.

The most perspective directions for the development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine including infrastructural development, regional development, environmental cooperation, cultural exchange, trade and investment, cross-border tourism are specified and characterized. It is established that one of the most promising forms of cross-border cooperation is the formation of cross-border clusters. The article defines the term "cross-border clusters" and outlines the general features of such form of cooperation. The current state of developing cross-border clusters in Ukraine is assessed, the advantages and disadvantages of their functioning are identified. The examples of operating cross-border clusters in different regions of Ukraine are presented. The prospects and conditions for favourable development of cross-border clusters on the territory of Ukraine are highlighted, emphasizing on ensuring the sustainable development of the country on the way to its European integration.

Key words: cross-border cooperation, cross-border cluster, border regions, neighboring states, Ukraine.

Introduction. In the context of globalization and integration processes, cross-border cooperation plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of Ukraine's border areas as the development of regions and communities is a priority for the state in the conditions of the European integration. Cross-border cooperation is a factor of political and economic stability, an additional tool for achieving understanding between peoples, fostering good-neighbourly relations between states, since it enables to eliminate the shortcomings of an economic and social nature, to solve common territorial problems with the border regions of neighboring states.

This cooperation covers various aspects, such as economic development, cultural exchange, jointly combating cross-border challenges such as crime, human trafficking and illegal migration, as well as the convergence of legislation and standards. One of the key aspects of cross-border cooperation is the development of deeper economic integration with neighboring countries. This includes joint infrastructure projects, trade and investment development, as well as cooperation in the areas of transportation, energy, and innovation. Such cooperation contributes to strengthening economic ties between Ukraine and the European Union, promoting the implementation of European standards and increasing the competitiveness of the Ukrain-

ian economy. In addition, cross-border cooperation is important for strengthening cultural and educational exchange between Ukraine and its neighbors. It promotes understanding and interaction between different cultures, and contributes to the development of tourism and intercultural education.

Ukraine possesses significant potential for the development of cross-border cooperation, but the existence of numerous problems hinders further expansion of such cooperation, thus, determining the importance of research in this area. The principal difficulties in the development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine remain the issues of participation in the implementation of cross-border cooperation projects and programs, high barriers at the legislative level to Ukraine's partnership in various forms of cross-border cooperation as well as insufficient powers of regional authorities and the underdevelopment of the institutions of this type of cooperation, the lack of an effective financial mechanism for implementing cross-border cooperation programs of neighbouring states. Therefore, the study of positive experiences and benefits from this type of cooperation, as well as problems and obstacles on its way, is particularly valuable nowadays.

The aim of the article is to highlight the current state of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, analyze

the perspective directions and forms of cross-border cooperation operating on the territory of Ukraine, to outline their status and prospects for further development.

Methods. To solve the objectives of the article, a complex of general scientific and special scientific methods was applied to ensure the integrity of studying the issue under discussion and determine trends in the development of cross-border cooperation in our country. In particular, general scientific (analysis, synthesis, generalization, induction, deduction), interdisciplinary (source studies and system-structural analyses) as well as political research methods (institutional, systemic, functional) were used.

Results. Cross-border cooperation is an important component of Ukraine's development, especially in the context of its European integration. In accordance with the Law of Ukraine "On Cross-Border Cooperation" cross-border cooperation is «joint actions aimed at establishing and deepening economic, social, scientific, technological, ecological, cultural and other relations between subjects and participants of such relations in Ukraine and relevant subjects and participants of such relations from neighboring states within the competence defined by their national legislation» [8].

The subjects of cross-border cooperation are "territorial communities, their representative bodies and their associations, local bodies of executive power of Ukraine interacting with territorial communities and relevant authorities of neighboring states within the limits of their competence established by the current legislation of Ukraine and agreements on cross-border cooperation" [8].

Among the most promising directions for the development of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine we can specify infrastructural development, regional development, environmental cooperation, cultural exchange, trade and investment, cross-border tourism.

Infrastructural development deals with the development of cross-border infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports and border crossing points that will help improve communication between Ukraine and its neighbors. In this way trade, tourism and other forms of cooperation will be enhanced.

Regional development relies on the fact that cross-border cooperation can contribute to the development of border regions, in particular through joint projects in the fields of energy, transport, tourism and culture. This will help reduce the level of economic inequality between different regions of Ukraine.

Environmental cross-border cooperation can be aimed at joint projects for the preservation of natural resources, the fight against pollution and the restoration of the ecological balance in border regions.

Strengthening cultural exchange between Ukraine and neighboring countries can promote mutual understanding and support between peoples. Joint

cultural events, festivals, exhibitions and exchange of artists tend to improve cooperation in this area.

Reinforcing cooperation in the field of trade and investment with neighboring countries promotes business development and creates new opportunities for companies. Expanding trade can contribute to an increase in exports and imports of goods and services.

The development of tourism in border regions can promote both the development of small businesses and to the increase of income from tourism. Joint tourist itineraries, promotions and advertising campaigns can attract more tourists to these regions.

In general, cross-border cooperation in Ukraine has a great potential for strengthening ties with neighboring states and promoting economic development and socio-cultural exchange. The Government of Ukraine and regional authorities should actively support and facilitate these initiatives to achieve common goals.

Fulfilling the requirements of the Association Agreement with the European Union enables Ukraine to become a full member of the EU in the future. It is precisely at this current stage of the expansion of European integration processes that the role of cross-border cooperation for the socio-economic, political and cultural development of the country is increasing. The geographical location of Ukraine, its economic and resource potential, geostrategic and transit advantages, the availability of labor resources and other factors of the cultural and educational potential of the nation are ideal components for the implementation of a pragmatic policy of regional development through the operational mechanism of cross-border cooperation.

Currently, one of the promising forms of cross-border cooperation is the formation of cross-border clusters. The analysis of the interpretations of the concept by scientists makes it possible to formulate the following definition: "a cross-border cluster is an organizational form of cross-border cooperation, the basis of which is the integration of independent companies and associated institutions geographically concentrated in the cross-border region, specializing in various fields, connected by common technologies and skills and complement each other" [4, p.9]. The main feature of this form is that cluster participants are located in different tax, customs, and legislative environments but can have joint enterprises, use common infrastructure, and operate on cross-border markets. However, the intensity of cooperation is limited by the presence of a border creating additional barriers for free movement of goods, labor, capital as well as differences in mentalities, traditions, language, etc., which can reduce the effectiveness of cooperation without clear mechanisms for avoiding or weakening the effects of these obstacles.

The classical features of cross-border clusters can be singled out as follows: concentration (spatial and/or sectorial) of companies; specialization in a specific area and use of common technologies and skills; interactivity in the areas of horizontal and vertical linkages; common trajectory of development in the field of vision, mission, goals and objectives; they are the voluntary associations; com-operation – both competition and co-operation [2]. Hence, the advantages of cross-border clusters include:

- Resource savings: Cross-border clusters allow companies and institutions to join forces to share resources. This may include pooling procurement, using common infrastructure or sharing knowledge and experience.

- Increasing competitiveness: Cross-border clusters help companies improve their competitiveness in the international market. They can combine their efforts to jointly develop new products and services that can compete on the global market.

- Creation of new markets: Cross-border clusters can create new markets for products and services that did not previously exist in a given region. This can be especially useful for small businesses that take advantage of new opportunities.

- Attracting investments: Cross-border clusters can be attractive for investors who aim to invest in the development of the region and cooperate with structures working in the same field.

- Increasing access to new technologies: Working together within clusters allows companies to share technological solutions and innovations, which can contribute to the development of more advanced industries.

- Development of professional skills: Cross-border clusters can contribute to the development of professional skills and upskilling of employees through knowledge exchange and training.

- Joint research and development: Clusters can finance joint research and development of new technologies, which can lead to the creation of innovative products and services.

Cross-border clusters are an effective tool for stimulating the development of border regions, expanding international cooperation, and strengthening economic and socio-cultural ties between countries. However, their success requires a clear strategy, joint work and support from government, business and the public. In addition, institutes and procedures as well as programs and projects of cross-border cooperation depend in practice on decisions that are still often made outside the closer context of direct bilateral or multilateral cooperation between countries [1, p. 60–62].

Nowadays clusters have not yet gained sufficient application and distribution in Ukraine. The country has a manufacturing, technological and scientific infrastructure but protracted political and economic

crises have led to the stagnation of the production base [6]. The high level of psychological readiness of cluster participants for cooperation should be noted as a positive trend. Since Ukraine chose the European vector of development, attention should be paid to the experience of EU countries in the processes of economic clustering.

The Government of Ukraine should consider the development and creation of similar structures on the territory of the country and the involvement of domestic enterprises in the processes of cross-border clustering, resulting in an increase in the level of competitiveness of the regions, the attraction of investment flows, the introduction of the latest technologies, innovations and information resources in the production enterprises of the regions in order to increase their competitive advantages, enhancing production capacity and improving product quality with minimal resource costs. Therefore, cross-border clustering is one of the ways for Ukraine's enterprises to overcome the protracted crisis, bring domestic producers to the world market and avoid mass emigration of Ukrainian citizens to EU member states. Ukrainian regions have considerable potential for creating cross-border clusters. Their significance for the national economy of Ukraine lies in the transition to the next stage of clustering, improvement of the investment climate and achievement of other benefits from clustering (gaining access to resources, aligning the interests of government, business, educational institutions, etc.). When forming them, the development of customs relations, the management of migration within the cross-border territory, the fight against organized transnational crime in this territory and the improvement of infrastructure facilities, environmental protection, etc. should be regarded.

It is worth noting that the activation of cluster structures functioning in the world especially increased in the 90s of the XX century in accordance with the growth in the scale of globalization, the development of competition and the complication of the situation on global markets. In particular, most of Ukraine's neighboring states have already begun to implement the cluster approach in the development of their regions, especially the border regions [3].

In Western Ukraine, an example of a cross-border cluster can be Karpaty cross-border cluster of contractors, which is located and has been operating since 2004 in the Uzhgorod and Berehiv districts of the Zakarpattia region of Ukraine and in the neighboring border territories of Hungary and Slovakia. The activities of this cross-border cluster are aimed at enhancing entrepreneurship in Trikorodnya, planned financing from EU sources, relevant national, regional and local budgets. The coordinator of such a cluster of contractors in Ukraine is the Transcarpathian Center for the Development of Entrepreneurship in the city of Uzhhorod.

In the Lviv region, the issue of the formation and operation of a cross-border tourist cluster is also being worked out. Thus, the joint strategy for the development of the Ukrainian-Polish cross-border region (Volyn, Lviv, Zakarpattia Oblasts and Lublin and Pidkarpattia Voivodeships) for the period up to 2015, which was developed in 2007-2008 as part of the project "A New Level of Good Neighborly Relations – Development of Polish-Ukrainian cross-border cooperation strategy" (INTERREG /TASIS CBC program 2004-2006), envisages the development of the tourism and recreation sphere as one of its main priorities.

In the Chernivtsi region, the possibility of forming a cross-border tourist cluster based on the network of winning regions of the All-Ukrainian contest "Seven Wonders of Ukraine" is being considered.

Nevertheless, the cluster form of organizing cross-border cooperation has not yet gained sufficient application and distribution in Ukraine. There are no perfect investment and innovation mechanisms for the formation and functioning of clusters, the financial mechanisms of state regulation of their activities are ineffective. This applies, in particular, to targeted financing, direct financial assistance, provision of subventions, subsidies, etc. [7] There are a number of conditions that can both facilitate and hinder the development of cross-border clusters in the country. The existence of technological and scientific infrastructure, psychological readiness of cluster participants for cooperation are considered to be positive conditions. The restraining factors for the development of cross-border clusters include the following: lack of real state support for the development of cluster systems in Ukraine; insufficient partnership skills among domestic business entities for balanced development and formation of joint action plans with foreign partners; low level of participants' awareness about the methodologies of cluster formation and the possibilities of intersectoral interaction at the level of the territorial community; low quality of business climate and business management in Ukraine; lack of orientation of many domestic enterprises to the international market; low level of development of associative and cooperative structures (chambers of commerce, industrial associations), which do not cope with the task of promoting the priorities and interests of regional business; insufficient level of planning decisions on territorial economic development.

For the development of cross-border clusters on the territory of Ukraine, the following actions must be taken: 1) adopt a national program for the development of cross-border clusters, which should provide for the advancement of regional programs taking into account the specifics of a certain border region of the state, the coordination of state and regional interests and the interests of adjacent territories

of neighboring states, as well as the determination of relevant priority areas; 2) adopt a special law on cross-border clusters and make appropriate amendments to the Law "On Cross-Border Cooperation", which should clearly regulate the concept of a cross-border cluster and the basic principles of its functioning on the territory of Ukraine; 3) to form a network of information and consultation structures that will provide support for the creation of cross-border clusters in border regions, create the opportunity to receive the necessary consultations on the functioning of such structures, as well as exchange experience with foreign partners. In this context, it is appropriate to note the possibilities of using the international European program EUREKA, of which Ukraine is an associate member, by Ukrainian participants for the development of cross-border cooperation. This program allows to unite for the implementation of projects that cannot be fulfilled independently in a separate country; 4) ensure the creation of a system of specialists' training focused on the formation and strengthening of new cross-border cluster systems that take into consideration the specifics, needs and development prospects of border regions; 5) to comprehensively and objectively study the world's leading experience in the formation of cluster structures, in particular in relation to the creation of new jobs, increase in labor productivity, implementation of effective forms of labor motivation, radical improvement of the social climate in border regions [5].

The specified directions of developing cross-border clusters on the territory of Ukraine should contribute to increasing the competitiveness of border regions both at the national and international levels, as well as improve their attractiveness for portfolio and direct foreign investments.

Therefore, in modern conditions of increased relevance of the development of cross-border cooperation of Ukraine and neighboring countries, cluster models can become one of the effective means of forming national competitive advantages of domestic entrepreneurship, increasing production efficiency due to the vertical and horizontal integration of individual industries and enterprises, the introduction of the latest technologies and on this basis –ensuring the sustainable development of the country's entire economy on the way to its full entry into the global economic space.

Conclusions. Thus, the development and prioritization of cross-border cooperation, implementation of projects and programs, establishment of economic ties with neighboring countries, and integration processes are leading to the country's accession to the European Union. Each of these directions and forms has certain advantages and disadvantages, but the prospects for their functioning are quite favourable for Ukraine and the development of its

regions and border areas. The state should keep its course towards the European Union, borrow the experience of cross-border cooperation, develop projects and maintain a high level of state regional development. The state authorities of Ukraine are promoting cooperation between Ukraine and the EU countries in the form of decisions and actions of an institutional, legal, organizational, financial, economic, and informational nature, aimed at implementing projects and programs of cross-border cooperation for the improvement of interstate relations, effective socio-economic development of border regions, enhancement of life quality of residents of border areas, implementation of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU.

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Перспективні напрямки розвитку транскордонного співробітництва в Україні

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У статті розглядається поняття транскордонного співробітництва як одного з першочергових питань розвитку прикордонних територій у контексті євроінтеграції. Різноманітні аспекти цієї співпраці, такі як економічний розвиток, культурний обмін, спільна боротьба з транскордонними викликами, сприяють зміцненню зв'язків між Україною та Європейським Союзом, впровадженню європейських стандартів та міжкультурній комунікації з сусідніми державами. Актуальність дослідження визначається тим, що, незважаючи на наявність значних перспектив розвитку транскордонного співробітництва, низка перешкод заважає подальшому розширенню такої співпраці. Таким чином, метою статті є визначити сучасний стан транскордонного співробітництва в Україні, проаналізувати перспективні напрями та форми транскордонного співробітництва, що діють на території України, окреслити їх стан та перспективи розвитку в майбутньому. Для забезпечення цілісності дослідження цієї проблеми та визначення тенденцій розвитку транскордонного співробітництва в нашій країні авторами використано комплекс загальнонаукових (аналіз, синтез, узагальнення, індукція, дедукція) та спеціально-наукових (джерелознавство, системознавство, структурний аналіз, інституційний, системний, функціональний) методи.

Визначено та охарактеризовано найбільш перспективні напрямки розвитку транскордонного співробітництва в Україні, зокрема розвиток інфраструктури, регіональний розвиток, екологічне співробітництво, культурний обмін, торгівлю та інвестиції, транскордонний туризм. Встановлено, що однією з найперспективніших форм транскордонного співробітництва є формування транскордонних кластерів. У статті подано визначення поняття «транскордонні кластери» та окреслено загальні ознаки такої форми співпраці. Оцінено сучасний стан розвитку транскордонних кластерів в Україні, з'ясовано переваги та недоліки їх функціонування. Наведено приклади функціонування транскордонних кластерів у різних регіонах України. Висвітлено перспективи та умови сприятливого розвитку транскордонних кластерів на території України, наголошено на забезпеченні сталого розвитку країни на шляху її євроінтеграції.

Ключові слова: транскордонне співробітництво, транскордонний кластер, прикордонні регіони, сусідні держави, Україна.