

INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CIS TRANS-BORDER COOPERATION

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Abstract

The importance of the trans-border cooperation institution formation as shown by the problem of the institutionalization in the field of the trans-border cooperation and the determination of the results of the institutionalization decisions made are analysed in this paper. The author claims that the institutional basis for trans-border cooperation among CIS countries consists of formal norms and rules, which are reflected in the legal and normative acts enforced at different levels of interaction among the Commonwealth countries. The organizational forms of trans-border cooperation information support at the level of the intergovernmental institutions and structural subdivisions of the CIS community, structural, central, regional and local (municipal) authorities, dealing with trans-border cooperation, in particular, a specific organizational form of the trans-border cooperation, borrowed from the EU experience, which can be defined as European region are investigated in the paper. The author concludes that information support for the institutionalization of CIS trans-border cooperation, on the one hand follows the EU experience, and on the other takes into consideration the traditions developed in the post-Soviet space.

Keywords: institutionalization, institute, institution, information support, cluster, norms, organization, the CIS, trans-border cooperation, Ukraine

Introduction

Research problem and its significance. According to the theoretical, practical and applied aspects, the research problem seems to be topical. Institutionalism has actually become one of the most widespread used research methodologies based on which different problems of the modern development are studied. It is a method applicable to not only internal political problems, but also the

international aspects of political development. Institutional approach helps to find out the main features of trans-border cooperation of the separate countries and regions, researching institutes, which guarantee their development.

A range of factors determine **the topicality** of the formation of the trans-border cooperation institute.

Firstly, the definition of institute helps to realize systematic view of the trans-border processes and to perform integral functions. N. Mikula claims that the institute of trans-border cooperation, maybe, is not the most important in the transformational processes, but “it is the closest to the separate citizen, to all the spheres of his life at the border and peripheral (provincial) region. On its basis all the new mechanisms and instruments of the social, economic, political, ecological, cultural, educational and spiritual life of the population can be tested and adopted...” (Mikula, 2004, p. 44).

Secondly, institutional transformations at the trans-border level have an impact on the system of the government cooperation in border territories, its stability and efficiency. Thus institutionalization of the border territories cooperation makes trans-border interaction more effective, helping to overcome the problems in the different forms of cooperation. Byelorussian researchers point out that a structural organization effectively influences the functioning of the European region. A unified approach to institutionalization among neighbouring territories simplifies trans-border cooperation development and helps to overcome barriers on the separate borders (Vardomsky, 2008).

Thirdly, institutional changes at the trans-border level influences the economy, policy and socio-cultural development, especially the information and communication support of trans-border region interaction.

Finally, the development of institutional cooperation within the Community of Independent States, today, is a factor that influences the relationship between our country and its foreign partners (members) of the Commonwealth.

All these factors define the necessity of analysis of institutionalisation in the field of the trans-border cooperation, thus finding the results of the institutional decisions.

Theoretical and methodological basis of the analysis

The literature used contains scientific research carried out by domestic and foreign researchers in the field of institutionalism, in particularly investigations dedicated to the institutional methodology analysis by T. Nort (North 1997) and S. Huntington (Huntington 2004). The works about trans-border cooperation of the European researchers from the Association of European Frontier Regions J. Gabbe, H. Martinez, K. Mankopf (AEBR 1999), Russian researchers –

A. Zykov (Zykov 2009) and L. Vardomskiy (Vardomsky 2008), Byelorussian – L. Davydenko and A. Lytvyniyk (Davydenko and Litvinyuk 2010)., Ukrainian – N. Mikula (Mikula 2004; Mikula and Tolkovanov 2011), P. Chernomaz (Chernomaz 2011) and others (Mikula, Borshchevskyi, Vasylytsiva (ed.), 2009) were used.

The important **methodological resource** for our investigation is the institutional approach. Due to its principles, we have got a possibility to investigate the regularity of rising, development, functioning and changes of the trans-border cooperation institute. All these factors determine its establishment and development. Institutional method gives such a possibility to treat trans-border cooperation as institute due to which the activity in the border countries is realized; uncertainty of the work is decreased, daily life is structured, relationships between people are organized and limited frames of their interaction are defined.

According to D. North, institution can be defined, as certain frames, where within their boundaries people interact with each other. It consists of the formal written rules and unwritten codes of the behaviour (North, 1997, p. 19). Thus “formal and informal institutional limitations lead to the rising of certain organizations, structuring interaction in the society. These organizations appear on the stimuli basis, which constitute the institutional system. That is why the results of their activities depend on the whole system” (North, 1997, p. 23). The combination of the institutes and organizations causes the rising of the appropriate institute. The process of its formation can be defined as institutionalization.

According to S. Huntington, “a simple political society has an ethnic, religious or occupation basis and doesn’t need highly developed political institutes”. It is characterized as a unity in the sense of Durkheim mechanical solidarity. The more complicated and the less homogeneous society is, the more progress and support of the political unity depend on the political institutes functioning (Huntington, 2004, p. 28–29).

In our opinion, S. Huntington’s idea about “in that way, how the societies became more numeral, more complicated in the structure and realize more and more varied activities, achievement and support of the high level of the unity greatly depends on political institutes”, can be referred to the trans-border interaction. Logically, his conclusion about the main features of political modernization can be spread to processes of international cooperation modernization within trans-bordering. It is necessary to form political institutes, which can attract great masses of population to these changes; they also should be independent and not to give in to populist and lobby pressure (Huntington, 2004, p. 30).

Each public state (trans-border cooperation state is not the exception) has to be institutionalized to become stable. It means that institutes have to be created, that is in S. Huntington’s opinion “stable, significant and repeated forms of behaviour” (Huntington, 2004, p. 32). Existence of such forms of behaviour is

impossible without organizational structures, which originate from their basis. Thus, the availability of the institutes (formal and informal rules) and their functioning in the society lead to the creation of the appropriate organizations. At the same time, combined institution and organization activity that is repeated and significant for society can lead to the creation of certain institutes. That is why we considered such terms as “institutions”, “organizations”, “institutes” to be separate, defining them as three different aspects of the trans-border development. Within trans-border relations, certain principles and interaction rules are formed on which basis different organizations begin to act and this helps to regulate these relations. As a result, institutionalization i.e. the formation of the trans-border cooperation institute occurs that has its own characteristic features.

We agree with N. Mikula that the institute formation in the society requires the combination of five main elements: legislation (we define as formal institutes, legislative basis), culture (in our opinion it contains informal institutions – norms and rules which are spread in the society), organization, government (control) and subjects. The researcher claims that “the formation of the trans-border cooperation institute expects the creation of the legislative environment, availability of the culture and traditions in the cooperation of the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries border territories, subjects, institutionalization cooperation support and also the coordination realization and control under this activity” (Mikula 2004, p. 41).

Such an approach can be applied to the understanding of the trans-border cooperation institutes, which exist on the different borders of Ukraine (with the European Union (EU) and Community of Independent States (CIS) countries). In these two cases we can speak on the trans-border cooperation institute formation, which has common structural features and different forms of manifestation. We shall pay attention to the specific features of trans-border cooperation institute within the SIC.

Institutional principles of the trans-border cooperation among CIS countries

Institutional principles of trans-border cooperation among CIS countries consist of formal norms and rules, which are reflected in the legal normative acts that function at different levels of interaction among Commonwealth countries. This problem has been analysed in detail earlier in the article. Due to this, we have made such conclusions: trans-border cooperation within CIS is based on the legal basis, developed by the EU and other European organizations; trans-border Ukrainian interaction is realized on the basis of intergovernmental legal documents of CIS countries, Ukrainian legislative acts, the decisions made by the regional authorities on the both sides of the Ukrainian, Russian and Byelorussian border and the decisions of the municipal authorities of separate territories (Tykhomyrova, 2013a).

The analysis of the information aspect of the legal and normative support of trans-border processes within CIS countries shows that special legal and normative acts, as to the regulation of the information on trans-border cooperation among CIS countries, are absent. That is why documents, which determine principles and peculiarities of the information and communication relations within the CIS countries, are considered to be an important factor of its successful realization (Tykhomyrova, 2013b).

Organizational principles of the trans-border cooperation institute formation

Not only formal frames of interaction but also the realization of considerable organizational work as well is needed at the beginning of the application of the trans-border cooperation institute within the CIS. It comprises several levels – a common one and the levels of the trans-border interaction for information support.

1. Intergovernmental institutes and structural subdivisions of the CIS community at the functional, territorial and branch levels. For instance, at the beginning the Council of the Leaders of the Border Regions of the Russian Federation and Ukraine (1994), then the Council of the Leaders of the Border Regions of Ukraine, Russia and Byelorussia (1996), the Council of the Interregional and Border Coordination of the CIS State-members (2008), Intergovernmental Committees of the CIS State-Members (it is a body of the CIS branch cooperation for the improvement and development of mutual interaction between public authority and municipal government). Association of the National Information Agencies of CIS State-members and Intergovernmental Television and Radio Broadcasting Company “Myr” relate to the information and communication aspects of the trans-border cooperation institute.

The Council of the Interregional and Border Cooperation is a body of the CIS branch cooperation for the improvement and development of the mechanisms of mutual interaction between public authority and municipal governments. The Council consists of office leaders, responsible for interregional and border coordination among Armenia, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Russia and Tadzhikistan. The observers are representatives of the Intergovernmental Assembly, the Councils of leaders of the Chambers of Commerce and state representatives – the CIS members, who are not members of the Council. The Council cooperates with the Council of CIS Economy, the Council of Constant, Invested with Full Power, Representatives of States – members of the Commonwealth, attached to the statute and other bodies of the Commonwealth, Economic Commission, attached to the Council of the CIS Economy, the

Legislative CIS Committee and other bodies of the Commonwealth. Its main functions are to define the priority directions, to examine the conceptual and practical questions regarding interregional and border cooperation on the Agreement among state-members; to prepare proposals concerning coordination of joint actions according to the main directions of the interregional and border cooperation. Also to draft proposals for further development of the interregional and border cooperation for consideration during the sessions of the Council of CIS State Leaders, the Council of CIS Government Leaders and the Bodies of CIS Branch Cooperation; to develop proposals on the legal and normative regulation of the relations concerning interregional and border cooperation issues (CIS 2013). During one of the last sessions of the Council (2013) issues regarding the state of interregional and border cooperation among CIS states, a project of the interregional and border cooperation Concept till 2020, a course of the Convention on the border cooperation of the Commonwealth states issues were examined.

Interdepartmental commission on the support of Ukrainian trans-border cooperation issues has the status of a constant active consultative body of the Cabinet of Ministry. Its main tasks are: to support the coordination of the bodies of executive power in the field of trans-border cooperation development and increase the effectiveness of functioning of the present European regions and new ones; to prepare proposals on state financial support for the implementation of trans-border cooperation projects within the state program of the trans-border cooperation development and projects according to international Ukrainian agreements concluded, to analyse the root causes of problems faced in the process of implementation of state policy regarding trans-border cooperation; to prepare proposals for public authorities and municipal governments regarding decisions making on trans-border cooperation and European regions development, to create the projects of the legal and normative acts on trans-border cooperation issues, to examine the proposals and recommendations regarding financial support for projects on trans-border cooperation etc. The activity of the given commission refers to EU projects, within Ukraine in cooperation with CIS countries.

2. Structural subdivisions of individual CIS state-member authorities. At the central authority level the Ministry of Economic Development and Commerce and the Ministry of Regional Development, Building, Housing and Communal Services are engaged in Ukrainian trans-border cooperation issues. In Byelorussia – it is the Interdepartmental Coordination Council on border cooperation with neighbouring countries. At the central and regional authority levels, separate structures related to trans-border cooperation are created, offering support for trans-border relations development (example, in the Ministry of Regional Development of the Russian Federation there is the Department of the International Relations and Border Cooperation Development, in the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation there is the Department of Interregional Relations). There is an Interdepartmental Commission for Support in Trans-border Cooperation issues in

Ukraine which is a consultative body of the Cabinet of the Ministers of Ukraine. It consists of the head, the deputy head, and representatives of the central authority, the Common Representative Body of employers at the national level and the Common Representative Body of the all-Ukrainian Trade Unions and its Associations.

The researchers claim that municipal governments of the CIS border regions usually don't have independent subdivisions, which supervise trans-border cooperation issues. However, in the case of their creation, they have more coordination than regulation functions (Vdovenco, 2009).

The EU practice affirms great attention to activities, directed at strengthening the institutional cooperation within European regions, where the creation of the stable institutional forms of trans-border cooperation is expected. Thus, in the Program of trans-border cooperation among Poland-Byelorussia-Ukraine (2007–2013) it was mentioned that the exchange of different information and experience, the creation of cooperation networks and Internet projects would be appreciated. Great attention was paid to cooperation among public institutions, especially municipal governments in the field of strategic and space planning. The aim to increase the level of integration on the Program territory foresees joint actions in the creation of the trans-border cooperation structures between non-governmental and non-profit organizations in different directions, such as culture and cultural heritage, ecological and natural heritage, youth policy, social security, public health and the development of the local community etc. (EU 2007).

3. European regions. Taking into account the EU experience, the practice of the creation of special trans-border cooperation organizations, such as European regions in Ukrainian and CIS countries is widespread. The institutional model of trans-border interaction consists of European regions, the main activity goals and tasks of which are defined by their statutes and agreements on border cooperation among municipal governments of border territories (Mikula and Tolkovanov, 2011, p. 22).

Ukrainian researchers consider European regions to become the special characteristic sign of neighbours in the whole system of European borders: "Europe established special rules, which have become generally recognized within the EU and on its external borders. The European network of the European regions is formed and it is the only platform of the border community communications with the same life support problems, which helps to recognize them at the European level. They show not only economic interest of business circles on the both sides of the border but also tolerance towards cultural and language issues. There is a different level of confidence towards borders, where similar institutes are created" (Euroregion "Dnepr" – the problem of the development and functioning 2004).

The trans-border interaction at the beginning stage of the CIS existence was realized with the help of interpersonal contacts of municipal government representatives, companies, institutions and organizations. Specialists affirm that the basis of the

acquired status of the “border” regions cooperation had been worked earlier under the relations within the united Soviet space. The first internal European regions that emerged within the CIS were “Dnipro” (Ukraine, Russia, Byelorussia) and “Slopoda” (Ukraine, Russia) created in 2003, then “Yaroslavyna” (Ukraine, Russia) created in 2007 and “Donbas” (Ukraine, Russia) created in 2010.

It is a necessary that optimal and effective bodies be created according to the legal norms of the sides and European region needs in order to realize the aim of European region development. The typical structural elements of the European regions in the EU are *the Councils*, which make decisions about strategic directions of trans-border cooperation and include the representatives of regional and central authorities; *the Presidium*s, which realize common (strategic) governance of the European region activity, representing the Council at the work level; *the Secretariats*, which realize organizational and technical matters and coordinate the work of labour groups; *the Labour groups*, which work on cooperation issues in separate fields of trans-border cooperation. The CIS European regions have a similar organizational structure. The European region Statutes mentions the Councils, the Secretariats and the Labour groups. The possibility of the similar structure changes is also foreseen in the case of the mutual agreement between the Sides.

The Statute of the European region “Yaroslavna” with regards to the Council stipulates: the election of the Council Speaker; the determination of the Council and Secretariat regulations; the realization of control over Secretariat activity and the ratification of annual accounts; decision-making regarding admission of new participants or terminating participation in the European region; decision-making regarding the financing of joint projects realized within the European region and ratification of their budgets. The Secretariat obligations are to prepare projects regarding decisions, to give them into the Council for consideration and to prepare other models concerning joint actions within border cooperation; to prepare the Council sessions; to coordinate labour group activities; to realize other functions connected with providing organizational support for Council activity and the realization of European region projects. The labour groups prepare proposals and materials to be submitted to the Secretariat for consideration and invite experts to work on problematic issues, connected with project realization (Euroregion "Jaroslavna", 2012).

Specialized structures of regional authorities work to provide information support for trans-border interaction at the European region level. As to the Agreement on cooperation in the information field of the European region “Dnipro” such structures are represented by the Committee for Print, Television, Radio Broadcasting and Mass Media of Bryansk region (Russia), by the Department of Press and Information Matters of Chernihiv Regional State Administration (Ukraine), by the main Department of Ideological Work of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee (Byelorussian Republic). These organizational structures have to support cooperation in terms of information

activity among the subjects, including electronic and printed mass communication media, polygraphy and book trade companies of Bryansk region (Russia), Chernihiv region (Ukraine) and Gomel region (Byelorussian Republic). They support and encourage mutually beneficial cooperation among mass media editorials of their own regions and also among responsible departments and organizations, which work in the field of mass media, especially among television and radio broadcasting companies, printed editions, information agencies and Internet editions. These structures provide for the exchange of information materials, newsletters, printed productions; exchange of specialist delegations in the field of mass media, journalists, book editors and book distributors; experience exchange in the field of training specialists, staff-decision making; participation in the international press exhibition and other polygraph productions. They support the exchange and dissemination of periodical printed and book productions in the territories of their regions and the realization of the joint actions organized by journalists of Ukrainian, Russian and Byelorussian border regions such as patriotic, social and moral competitions, aimed at the popularization of the good neighbouring relations between countries and strengthening of the interregional and municipal cooperation (Agreement 2010).

4. A trans-border infrastructure of civil society is beginning to develop at the borders of CIS countries. The representatives of the civil society take active part in CIS trans-border cooperation. It is joint activity of NGO, business institutions and authorities involved in project implementation supported by the foreign donor organizations as well as a separate form of the trans-border cooperation – NGO trans-border cooperation. Similar practice is actively applied in trans-border interaction within the EU and supports not only trans-border relation development but also the formation of the civil society in certain countries.

Beginning from 2009 two CIS countries – Ukraine, Moldova and Rumania that has already joined the EU began to implement a project “Increase the influence of the non-governmental organizations and mass media on transparency at the level of the authorities in the Ukrainian, Moldavian and Rumanian trans-border region” within the Program “East-East: Partnership without Limits”. At the beginning this project was aimed at the generalization and dissemination of NGO best practices in the European region “Verhniy Prut” on the development of interaction skills among NGOs, mass media and the authorities.

During the second stage of the project realization a NGO Trans-border Platform on interregional cooperation matters was created, which has to support the stable development of the regions and communities of East, Southeast and Central Europe of the clear purpose of furthering community participation in interregional trans-border cooperation and their possibilities. The members of the Platform have to take part in trans-border cooperation policymaking at the European, national and regional levels; delegate their representatives to trans-

border cooperation administration; increase organizational ability of their members in the field of model building and realization of trans-border cooperation programs and projects; develop partner relations among the Platform members for project activity in the field of interregional and trans-border cooperation; monitor the regulation and procedure of maintenance in order to effectively realize trans-border cooperation programs; cooperate with other platforms of civil society institutes for the development of trans-border cooperation. The Platform is open to community organizations, which do the same work, share the same principles, aims, tasks and activities (The European space 2011).

Such an experience, undoubtedly, should be applied in trans-border cooperation of the CIS countries, especially on the Ukrainian borders with Russia and Byelorussia. This direction of institutionalization of relations among neighbouring countries wasn't a widespread practice in CIS trans-border relations; however, we have already got the first results. The example of such an organization can be the Centre for Interregional Border Cooperation (2010), created by the National Experimental University "Belgorod State University" for the organization of the interregional and border cooperation, carrying out information and analytical activity, model building and realization of the projects and programs, the organization and management of conferences, seminars, theoretical and applied research in the field of interregional border cooperation.

The tasks of this non-governmental centre is to analyse relations between Russia and the main external political partners, to monitor the most vital problems and the directions of trans-border cooperation; to study the main principles and mechanisms regarding model building and governmental decision-making within the border region; to build the forms and models of border interaction, to study the possibilities and mechanisms of the decision-making process; to modulate the process of interregional cooperation governance, to make practical recommendations about the increase in effectiveness of subjects of border relations; to investigate inter-branch relations in the regions, to build the model of the social and economic border projects and programs of interregional cooperation, to study the main tendencies of Russian and Ukrainian relations, to make projects and programs related to Russian and Ukrainian cooperation; to make strategies and realize the programs for the European regions etc. (Center, 2010).

5. Trans-border clusters which include institutions and organizations situated in the border territories of the neighbouring states can be referred to as new forms of trans-border cooperation, which have the specific institutionalization character in conditions of the network society. The conception of the cluster development formulated by M. Porter at the beginning of the 90s, which was widely spread around the world (Porter, 2000), has been taken into account. Nowadays the cluster approach is being adapted to trans-border relations and cluster policy stimulates

trans-border cooperation in the form of establishment of territory networks among companies in the related fields.

Ukrainian scientists define trans-border clusters as a voluntary organization of the independent companies, associated institutions and other subjects of trans-border cooperation. They are geographically situated in the trans-border region (space); they cooperate and compete and specialize in the different fields connected with common technologies and skills and complement each other in providing joint products or services which as a result give the opportunity to get synergetic and networking effects, combining knowledge and skills (The concept of national strategy formation and development of trans-border clusters 2013).

Trans-border clusters unite a lot of interested sides, representatives of the business circles (customers, providers, financial institutions, organizations etc.), as well as non-business organizations (research institutions, organizations, which give professional training, state sector institutions), whose support is very important. There is great Ukrainian experience in the field of the trans-border cluster development. Thus in 2008 on the basis of the Kharkiv National Economical University, open-end company “Kharkiv Regional Fund of the Enterprise Support”, Belgorod State University and Belgorod Regional Fund of the Small-scale Enterprises, the trans-border tourist cluster was created. Its activity is spread along Zolochiv and Haivoron regions of Ukraine and Russian Federation. The main aim of the trans-border tourist cluster is the revival of rural tourism courses and historical monuments (Mikula and Tolkovanov, 2011).

In 2007, a building cluster, with the participation of Kharkiv State Technical University of Building and Architecture, Belgorod State Technological University named after V. Shuhov, Belgorod Regional Fund of the Small-scale Enterprises and open-end company “Kharkiv Regional Fund of the Enterprise Support” was created. The main aim of this cluster is cooperation in the field of designing and building between Ukrainian and Russian companies. There is a big scientific and industrial potential in Luhansk and Rostov regions, (“Donbas” European region), which can be effectively realized by way of the trans-border scientific cluster creation. Educational and scientific regional institutes are provided with unique scientific-research equipment, and its common usage can considerably expand a range of the scientific-research and experimental works. Today the most possible cluster creation is in fields such as: transport, machinery construction, agrarian cluster, medical cluster, and cluster of new-technologies (scientific cluster) (Mikula and Tolkovanov, 2011).

Conclusions

Institutional basis of trans-border cooperation of the CIS countries consists of formal norms and rules, which are shown in the legal and normative acts, which

act at different levels of interaction among Commonwealth countries. Organizational forms, in particular of trans-border cooperation information support at the level of intergovernmental institutions and structural subdivisions of the CIS community, structural, central, regional and local (municipal) authorities, (a specific organizational form of the trans-border cooperation, borrowed from the EU experience) can be defined as European regions. Institutionalization of CIS trans-border cooperation information support, on the one hand follows the EU experience, and on the other takes into the consideration the traditions developed in the post-Soviet space. There is a need for improvement, agreement and coordination of the information policy and for further research in this area.

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