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PARADIPLMACY AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

ПАРАДИПЛОМАТІЯ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ АКТИВІЗАЦІЇ МІЖРЕГІОНАЛЬНОГО СПІВРОБІТНИЦТВА У ЦЕНТРАЛЬНО-СХІДНІЙ ЄВРОПІ

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The features of the implementation of paradiplomacy in the context of the development of cooperation between the border regions of Central and Eastern Europe have been analyzed in this article. It has been established that the regional and cross-border cooperation that are the form of realization of paradiplomacy became the important element of interaction of Central and Eastern Europe countries at the turn of 80s-90s of the 20th century. Considerable attention was paid to the analysis of such form of paradiplomacy as euroregions which are created to stimulate the cultural and economic development of border regions. After analyzing the implementation of regional cooperation with the wide involvement of paradiplomacy tools, it has been proved that owing to their use there are additional incentives for socio-economic development of border areas and increase in the living standards of the local population. The article investigates the peculiarities of cooperation between the border regions of Central and Eastern Europe countries, members of the European Union. It has been determined that it is focused on economic and regional development, regional planning and tourism, environmental protection, transport infrastructure, culture, sports. Particular attention was paid to the practice of implementation of paradiplomacy by regional authorities and non-governmental actors (non-profit organizations, various social movements, clubs, interest associations) which have equal opportunities for this type of activity. To confirm this thesis, the article thoroughly analyzed the paradiplomacy practices of the Czech region of Znojmo, in the territory of which there is the large-scale cooperation of wine-making associations operating along the border between the Czech Republic and Austria. It was determined that the priority spheres of involvement of paradiplomacy tools in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are the economy, ecology, infrastructure, education, tourism, which are of significant interest for the development of cooperation between border regions.

Key words: paradiplomacy, Central and Eastern Europe, region, cross-border cooperation, euroregion, regionalization, subnational actor.

Проаналізовано особливості реалізації парадипломатії в контексті розвитку співробітництва прикордонних регіонів Центрально-Східної Європи. Було встановлено, що регіональне та транскордонне співробітництво, які є формою реалізації парадипломатії, стало важливим елементом взаємодії держав Центрально-Східної Європи на рубежі 80-90 років ХХ століття. Значна увага була приділена аналізу такої форми парадипломатії, як єврорегіони, які створюються з метою стимулювання культурного та економічного розвитку прикордонних районів. Після проведення аналізу реалізації співробітництва регіонів з широким залученням інструментів парадипломатії було доведено, що саме завдяки їх застосуванню виникають додаткові стимули для соціально-економічного розвитку прикордонних територій та підвищення рівня життя місцевого населення. У статті досліджено особливості співпраці прикордонних регіонів країн Центрально-Східної, членів Європейського Союзу. Було визначено, що вона сконцентрована на економічному та регіональному розвитку, регіональному плануванні та туризмі, охороні навколишнього середовища, транспортній інфраструктурі, культурі, спорті. Особлива увага була приділена практиці реалізації парадипломатії регіональною владою та неурядовими акторами (некомерційними організаціями, різними громадськими рухами, клубами, асоціацій за інтересами), які мають однакові можливості для такого виду діяльності. Для підтвердження цієї тези в статті було ґрунтовно проаналізовано парадипломатичну практику чеського регіону Знојмо, на території якого відбувається масштабна співпраця виноробних асоціацій, які функціонують вздовж кордону Чехії та Австрії. Визначено, що пріоритетними сферами залучення інструментів парадипломатії в країнах Центрально-Східної Європи є економіка, екологія, інфраструктура, освіта, туризм, які представляють значний інтерес для розвитку співробітництва саме між прикордонними регіонами.

Ключові слова: парадипломатія, Центрально-Східна Європа, регіон, транскордонне співробітництво, єврорегіон, регіоналізація, субнаціональний актор.

Introduction. The rapid development of international cooperation in both bilateral and multilateral formats create a demand for the introduction of fundamentally new instruments of communication between international actors. In turn, globalization and regionalization processes, to the impact of which the subjects of international relations are exposed, have contributed to the emergence of a fundamentally new tool to ensure cooperation in the international dimension, i.e. paradiplomacy which allows to implement effectively the cross-border cooperation and cooperation between regions, turning them into major players on the international arena. It is expedient to note that granting the right to regions to develop international cooperation, i.e. to carry out paradiplomatic activities, is conditioned by their historical development because in the past they have repeatedly proved their ability to play the role of independent players at the state and international levels. Obviously, the increasing independence and weight of regions is also due to integration processes, the transformation of the territorial and political structure of states and the development of national movements in the world.

The dynamic involvement of regions in international cooperation contributed to the introduction in the early 1990s of a typology of actors of paradiplomacy based on such criteria as the level of diplomatic relations: cross-border (trans-border) regional paradiplomacy; transregional (macrorregional; microrregional) paradiplomacy; global paradiplomacy. According to this typology, paradiplomacy can be implemented in various configurations, which is primarily due to regional specifics.

In a number of Central and Eastern European countries, paradiplomacy has occupied an important place in the arsenal of their foreign policy methods. At the turn of the 80-90s of the 20th century in the states of Central and Eastern Europe there were active transformation processes that led to radical political, social and ideological changes. During this period, according to Ukrainian researcher I. Butyrska, the countries of this region were characterized by such directions in foreign policy as striving to obtain membership in such influential organizations as the EU and NATO and the creation of a framework for close cooperation at the regional level [1, p. 213].

Paradiplomacy provided opportunities for the countries to realize in full the potential of interregional cooperation, despite the fact that the states differed greatly in the level of political and economic development. Regional and cross-border cooperation which is a form of paradiplomacy implementation became an important element of interstate cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, contributing to the solution of many problems inherited from the socialist system. It is implemented through the creation of euroregions in the border territories. Their main goal

is to stimulate the cultural and economic development of the border areas. Joint efforts to create appropriate conditions for the free movement of goods, people, development of tourism, environmental protection, spatial planning of territories, development of border infrastructure, intensification of cultural exchange, as well as applying the paradiplomacy tools provide an additional incentive for socio-economic development of border territories and improvement of living standards of local population. Local self-government bodies functioning within the same region are interested in mutual investment cooperation and implementation of joint programs to increase the level of employment among local residents, joint overcoming of the consequences of man-made factors, disasters, natural calamities. It should be noted that cooperation within the framework of euroregions is financed by the EU – European Regional Development Fund. The formation of interregional/cross-border relations according to European models, in the context of transformation of political models of East-European countries, which is now taking place thanks to the Eastern Partnership program, is also of great interest for countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as they actively develop cross-border cooperation with them.

The article presents the results of the research work which reflect current trends in regional policy development in an interdisciplinary way and illustrates them by the example of paradiplomatic activities in the selected region on the example of the European Union member states, namely Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania. This particular region is a national pioneer in the field of paradiplomatic activities for development both in the political and economic spheres, as well as in culture and tourism in the territory of the European Union. That is why the main question of this article is what potential the paradiplomacy has for the development of border regions which often face a lot of problems due to their remoteness from the capital, and whether the projects implemented in the context of paradiplomacy development can turn them into powerful regional cells in the territory of Central and Eastern Europe.

In this sense, we have identified the following main problems in the implementation of paradiplomacy as a tool for enhancing interregional cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe: *first*, to determine the basic conditions under which the implementation of paradiplomacy tools becomes possible and the state agrees to delegate some of its external powers to the regional level, *second*, to determine by analyzing the main successful projects of paradiplomacy which areas of cooperation of the regions of Central and Eastern Europe are the object of paradiplomatic practice.

Theoretical and conceptual principles of determining the paradiplomacy phenomenon. Paradiplomacy, that is the activity of subnational units as actors in international relations, can certainly be

referred to the phenomena of modern times. With the deepening processes of regionalization in Europe and in the world as a whole, paradiplomacy is playing an increasingly significant role, especially in the sphere of establishing contacts between regional power centers.

It is worth noting that paradiplomacy was primarily carried out as an external activity of subnational units. This phenomenon is relatively new, especially for the countries of modern Central and Eastern Europe, and is an integral part of regionalization; in recent decades it has spread far beyond the federal or decentralized Western European countries. At the subnational level, paradiplomacy has been implemented in the European countries since the 1960s, and in the twenty first century continues to be widely used in the process of securing the interests and needs of subnational actors, increasing its reach. Thus, paradiplomatic activity can be seen as a response to the growing role of cities and regions which manifests itself at economic or political, as well as at social and cultural levels [2, p. 54].

The first attempt to give a conceptual definition to such a phenomenon of public life as paradiplomacy was made by Ivo Duchacek and Panayotis Soldatos. They took the view that “paradiplomacy is a concept that refers to international activity by sub-national actors (federated units, regions, urban communities, cities). This concept supports, complements, corrects, duplicates, or challenges nation states.” [3, p. 11] Subsequently, the concept of paradiplomacy has been fleshed out and expanded. Thus, Professor Noé Cornago of the University of the Basque Country stated the facts of “the involvement of subnational governments in international relations, through the establishment of formal and informal contacts, either permanent or ad hoc, with foreign public or private entities, with the aim to promote socio-economic, cultural or political issues, as well as any other foreign dimension of their own constitutional competences” [4, p. 47].

It is advisable to dwell on more detail on the analysis of the concept of paradiplomacy proposed by I. Duchacek who is rightly considered the founder of the school of “comparativists”, and was one of the first to suggest using the term “paradiplomacy” to define the international activities of regions. In his opinion, paradiplomacy consists of “political contacts of different states, formed through contacts of subnational authorities not only with commercial, cultural or industrial actors of other countries, but also with foreign policy agents of national governments” [5]. Further he emphasized the following: “Paradiplomacy is a definition that can be used to analyze those initiatives and actions of subnational units that take place outside their nation-state and, to some extent, may have some separatist basis in economic, social and cultural contacts with foreign states” [6].

In his work “Perforated Sovereignties: Towards a Typology of New Actors in International Relations” he was the first to distinguish categories of paradiplomacy based on a geographical criterion. In particular, taking into account the geographical scale of paradiplomacy, I. Duchacek distinguished three categories of paradiplomacy. The first category is cross-border regional paradiplomacy which aims at cooperation of border regions, united by geographical proximity and, as a consequence, the community of problems and approaches to their solution.

The second category of paradiplomacy, classified by I. Duchacek, includes transregional (macroregional) paradiplomacy which he characterized as cooperation of regions with no common border, which at the same time are part of states that are united by the common border. This category of paradiplomatic practice is more formalized and should not contradict the requirements of interstate diplomatic protocol. At the present stage of development of international relations, it is the euroregions that serve as a model for the development of such cooperation.

Global paradiplomacy was defined by I. Duchacek as the third category within the designated typology, which he characterized as international cooperation of geographically distant states at the level of regions [7, p. 17].

It is worth noting that D. Derian used the concept of paradiplomacy while researching the transformation of classical diplomacy. As to D. Derian, unlike I. Duchacek, the component he relies on in his research is not the region as an actor, but the direct activity on the international arena. That is why he defines paradiplomacy as the international activity of any actor other than the state: a region, a transnational corporation, mass media, a non-profit organization and others [8].

This approach, however, did not find sufficient support among the other researchers because it gives ambiguity to the definition of “paradiplomacy”, since the international activity, according to D. Derian, can be called without loss of meaning the world politics, which differs from “international relations” concept in that it includes communication between other actors (regions, transnational corporations, political leaders, criminal gangs and others), not only between states. At the same time, the definition of “paradiplomacy” is most appropriate in relation to the foreign policy of a region, because the prefix “para” indicates the complementarity or parallel nature of a certain type of activity. As a harmonious complement to state diplomacy, it is the diplomacy of regions as political entities on the stage preceded by the state level.

When studying the practice of paradiplomacy in Central and Eastern Europe one can use the typology of Canadian researcher Panayotis Soldatos. According to P. Soldatos, paradiplomacy is an aspect of worldwide globalization and regionalization, through which sub-

national and non-state actors play an increasing role in world politics and the development of international relations [9]. Particular attention should be paid to the fact that the mentioned researcher also distinguishes two fundamental ways of the center's response to the participation of regions in international relations, which can be conventionally defined as constructive and deconstructive.

The deconstructive way of reaction is the center's attempt to find mechanisms to control the regions' direct foreign contacts through formal or informal bureaucratic schemes of decision-making by the regions in the field of international relations.

The central government's constructive approach to the paradiplomatic activities of subnational actors implies that the central government understands the international activity of its regions as a way of rationalizing the decision-making process in the foreign policy of the state. According to P. Soldatos, however, this is possible only when certain conditions are met. In particular, first, the paradiplomatic activities of subnational governments must coincide with the national interest. Second, both levels of government are willing to share the burden of responsibility for creating and operating a mechanism for harmonizing and coordinating mutual actions on the international arena [10, p. 126].

In addition, there is another extremely important thing to consider when examining the practice of modern paradiplomacy. The differentiation of government responses into constructive and deconstructive components is in no way a reflection of a positive or negative attitude towards the ways in which the state responds to paradiplomacy. On the contrary, the deconstructive way of response may in some cases be the only effective way for the central government to interact with regional authorities on the issue of the latter's participation in international relations.

The change of the world order in the 1980s–1990s caused a strengthening of regionalization processes which were accompanied by the expansion of the spheres of activity of existing intergovernmental organizations such as the EU, the creation of new international organizations such as the Association of European Border Regions and the Assembly of European Regions, as well as the search for new tools to implement contacts at the cross-border level. Nowadays, the activity of subnational units attracts the attention of representatives of constructivism theory, researchers of the North American and European schools of paradiplomacy, and later of neoliberals [11, p. 126]. A distinctive common feature of the representatives of these approaches is the perception of subnational actors as full-fledged, relatively independent participants in international cooperation.

In Europe, the institutionalization of paradiplomacy studies as a separate branch of political science took

place later than in North America. This process occurred in the mid-1990s and was characterized by certain specific vectors of development. In contrast to the United States, the European political school first devoted its studies to the problems of separatism and nationalism in European states rather than to the analysis of the problems of democratization of domestic politics and federalism. Representatives of this school paid special attention to the study of motives that gave a powerful impetus to the activation of international activity of regions, as well as to the influence of globalization on the cardinal change of the role of regions on the international arena.

An important event that had a positive impact on the intensification of paradiplomacy study in Europe was the research project-seminar (1997) in Bilbao (Spain) which brought together the foremost academics and theorists to examine the issues of participation of subnational actors in international relations [12, p. 79]. The result of the above-mentioned forum of scientists was the preparation and publication of the collection of scientific papers "Paradiplomacy in Action" which has been republished multiple times, which testifies the importance and relevance of the problems it dealt with. In particular, such an important aspect of paradiplomacy as the participation of subnational regions in international relations through the prism of the theory and practice of nationalism has been analyzed. It should be noted that previous academic works have not been characterized by a study of this aspect of the implementation of paradiplomacy.

In the context of the development of paradiplomacy studies, a comprehensive approach was formed to examine the participation of subnational actors (regions) in international relations. The broad application of the integrated approach has made it possible to create an integrative theoretical model of paradiplomacy, through which paradiplomacy can be interpreted both as a factor of internal structural changes of the state and as a result of the development of nationalism and the influence of globalization. An example of such a theoretical model is the concept of the Canadian researcher André Lecours.

In A. Lecours paper *Political Issues of Paradiplomacy: Lessons from the Developed World* it was proposed to conduct studies of paradiplomacy by seeking answers to questions that determined the factors of its genesis and implementation: what affects the activity of regions (subnational governments); how international activities of regions are carried out; what are the consequences for the state due to the international activity of regions [13].

When analyzing the answers to the raised questions, the researcher singles out both internal factors, such as decentralization of states, and external factors (globalization), which greatly intensify international activity of regions. It is useful to emphasize the fact that A. Lecours has thoroughly investigated the levels

of paradiplomatic activity, the strategy of regions, in particular, such aspect as the choice of partners for cooperation and methods of implementation of this cooperation. The Canadian researcher does not pass over the possible reaction of the state to the activity of regions on the international arena (paradiplomacy), as well as possible structural changes in the relations between the center and the regions, arising as a result of the mentioned activity [14].

So, despite the existence of several points of view on the phenomenon of paradiplomacy, representatives of all scientific directions and schools share the view that paradiplomacy is a phenomenon that involves the delegation of a certain part of the power by the state to the regions at all levels, both at the subnational level and at the meso-level, that is, such that arose as a result of cross-border cooperation. As for the mechanisms and tools for implementing paradiplomatic activities, it should be noted that these components have no fundamental specificity that would separate them from the tools of official diplomacy.

Paradiplomacy of Central and Eastern European countries – EU members. An inseparable part of the current research on the peculiarities of the implementation of paradiplomacy is the analysis of the paradiplomatic activities of the regions within the European Union where the activities of subnational structures at the international level have the established mechanisms and are supported at the supranational level. The representation of subnational structures in international cooperation has been viewed from different perspectives. It is, in particular, studying the potential of paradiplomacy of the so-called Europe of regions, where the regions play the part of the leading participant as opposed to the nation states, or the regions being seen as a “third layer” of Europe where they are considered a legitimate partner in negotiating while they still remain an integral constituent of the nation states.

Comprehensive study of current paradiplomacy also includes an analysis of the participation of nongovernmental actors. It should be noted that, at present, there are no fundamental differences between regions and nongovernmental actors on the international arena. The Czech region of Znojmo, specific feature of which is the equal opportunities and conditions for implementing paradiplomatic activities for regional authorities and non-governmental actors can be given as an example. First of all it concerns non-profit organizations, various social movements, clubs or interest associations. Confirmation of this thesis is the large-scale cooperation in this region of wine-making associations operating along the border between the Czech Republic and Austria. This cooperation clearly demonstrated a basic principle of the paradiplomacy concept: subnational units do not have such a strong negotiation position since the international relations field is still rather conservative.

Historically, the Znojmo region was for a long period an imaginary border between East and West in the Cold War period. During this period, Austria bordering on Znojmo as a capitalist state, could not act as an equal partner, negatively affecting the opportunities to develop mutually beneficial cooperation, which moreover had a long history. Full-fledged regional cooperation has been restored after 1989 making this region an object of paradiplomacy research.

The regional cooperation between the Czech Republic and Austria in Znojmo area has brought considerable success in employment policy, due to which unemployment has been reduced. This particular area can be seen as an example of successful paradiplomacy. In this context, it should be noted that it was the paradiplomacy tools that managed to stabilize the situation with seasonal unemployment, annually increasing in winter, since this region is an agricultural one. The cooperation at the level of local governments of both Czech and Austrian sides allowed to improve the conditions for employment by establishing institutions providing services to everyone who wants to change their profession and be retrained, taking into account the offers in the labour market.

These re-profiling institutions operate for the most part in the winter, because starting from March the number of vacancies increases, mainly in the agricultural sector, and the problem of seasonal unemployment is not so acute. The aforementioned initiatives are implemented under project called Columbus, considered to be a successful implementation of the paradiplomacy concept.

On the whole, the Columbus cross-border project was launched by representatives of the Czech Republic and Austria focusing on problems facing Znojmo region. It is primarily aimed at the reducing of local unemployment. As part of this initiative, city management of Znojmo in the Czech Republic and Retz City Hall in Austria are making joint efforts to solve this problem, using a wide range of paradiplomacy tools, such as: negotiations, implementation of joint initiatives, active attraction of foreign investments.

It is pertinent to note the fact that, in addition to local self-government bodies, non-state actors – local companies and the Chamber of Commerce are also active participants in the Columbus project. Thus, thanks to the use of paradiplomacy it became possible to develop a wide range of job proposals and obtain additional vocational education on both sides of the Czech-Austrian border. Undoubtedly, the Columbus project convincingly proves that the theoretical aspects of paradiplomacy can be put into practice, because it has demonstrated the possibilities of integrated cross-border region consolidated geographically, historically and politically.

Another example of the successful paradiplomatic practice in current conditions is the Moravian-Silesian

border region which is one of the 14 administrative regions of the Czech Republic. It is located in the north-eastern part of the historic region of Moravia and in the eastern part of the historic region of Silesia, which is currently divided between the Czech Republic and Poland, which owns about 85% of Silesia. The region borders the Olomouc Region to the west and the Zlín Region to the south. It also borders on two other countries – Poland to the north (Silesian and Opole Voivodeships) and Slovakia (Žilina Region) to the east. The total population of the region is 1,244,200 (48.83% male, 51.20% female), most of the population is urban, 62% live in towns with over 20,000 inhabitants [15].

The development priorities of the Moravian-Silesian region are formulated in several strategic documents. The Strategy for the Development of the Moravian-Silesian Region 2009-2020 was designed for a longer period, if compare with other similar documents. This document was substantially revised and supplemented in 2012. The development strategy for this region is based on 5 goals, only the fifth of which directly supports regional external activities, as it aims at strengthening cross-border ties and cooperation of the region with neighboring regions in the framework of the TRITIA European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

It is important that the program declaration of the 2016–2020 right-of-centre regional government describes Moravia-Silesia as a “region, which is not at the periphery, but on the contrary, is in the centre of a strong Central European region co-operating with and linked by transport to adjacent regions in Poland and Slovakia” [16].

The document likewise presupposes a closer cooperation, especially with its Slovakian and Polish partners, first, in the field of tourism, when it demands “a better use of the tourist potential of the region – the diversity of the countryside and the region’s favourable location at the border with Poland and Slovakia” [16]. Overall, the program identifies cooperation with neighboring countries, Poland and Slovakia, as a priority one, which fully fits into the context of paradiplomacy.

The President of the regional council supports the program statement’s goals arguing that it envisions international cooperation as an instrument subordinated to the aim of the region’s economic success. However, the excessive concentration of the region’s leadership in addressing economic issues and improving the environment and air quality significantly limits opportunities for the development of other aspects of cross-border cooperation in the Moravian-Silesian region.

At the present stage the Moravian-Silesian region has partnership agreements in force with 12 regions (in essence, these are cooperation agreements with EU regions and memoranda with regions from other

parts of the world). First of all, the Moravian-Silesian Region has signed cooperation agreements with neighbouring regions (the Silesian Voivodeship and the Žilina Autonomous Region) and with Lorraine.

The cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian region with its Polish (Silesian and Opole Voivodeships) and Slovak (Žilina region) neighbors, which was initially bilateral, later was transformed into multiple cross-border cooperation within the TRITIA European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation.

The leading motive force for cooperation of the Moravian-Silesian region with its neighbors is their geographical location, which makes them the closest neighbors linked by a common border. Partnerships with the Silesian Voivodeship and the Žilina region were established almost immediately after the creation of the region (in 2001 with the Polish partner, and in 2003 with the Slovakian one). The regions in question are united not only by a common border: they have similar problems, as they are all peripheral regions far from the megalopolises of their nation states. Since a number of towns and villages in the region actively cooperated with settlements in Slovakia and Poland, the establishment of cooperation at the regional level was a logical step. The cooperation agreement with Žilina region was focused on economic and regional development, regional planning and tourism, environmental protection, transport infrastructure, culture, sports and European integration (cooperation agreement with Žilina region, 2003) [17].

The agreement with the Polish region extends the above list with cooperation and knowledge exchange in the field of heavy industry restructuring (cooperation agreement with the Silesian Voivodeship, 2001) [18]. Another important source of motivation for cooperation was the possibility of obtaining financial resources from the European Union to support European regional cooperation and projects related to this area.

Cooperation in the implementation of paradiplomacy projects in the Moravian-Silesian region was rather active and effective, an important factor of which was the existence of various programs used by the region even before its admission to the European Union in 2004. Membership in this organization significantly increased the possibilities of financial cooperation within the Moravian-Silesian region, in particular, the funds invested in the reconstruction of roads significantly raised, which had a positive impact on the improvement of infrastructure in the region. The region joined the Czech-Polish INTERREG program, which made it possible to support multi-vector regional projects, which automatically turned it into a dominant point of cooperation between Moravia-Silesia and its neighbors. The broad opportunities provided by the European funds gave a strong impetus for the creation and activation of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, including in the region in question.

An essential element in the development of paradiplomacy practices for the Moravian-Silesian region was cooperation on laying the foundation for and implementing an effective system of crisis management at the regional level. In the context of realization of this important direction, two agreements that defined the guiding principles of cooperation under crisis conditions at the regional level were signed in 2008. The first agreement was signed between the Moravian-Silesian region and the Silesian Voivodeship, the second one was concluded with the Opole Voivodeship. It is important that these agreements serve as a guarantee for receiving assistance on mutually beneficial terms in the event of natural disasters and other force majeure situations [19, p. 60].

The aforementioned European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) is an instrument which should provide cross-border actors with possibilities to function as legal entities. The idea of transition of cross-border cooperation to a qualitatively new level was the basis for the EGTC creation. However, the practice has convincingly shown that even those regions that did not have the practice of long-term cross-border cooperation could successfully participate in its functioning and practical implementation of the paradiplomacy principles. The establishment of the EGTC TRITIA in 2009, when four partner regions, Moravian-Silesian (Czech Republic), Opole, Silesian (both in Poland) and Žilina (Slovakia) decided to deepen their cooperation by establishing the EGTC [20, p. 58], is a clear confirmation of the above mentioned thesis.

Partner regions, according to the official declaration, created the EGTC, deciding to deepen the existing cross-border cooperation. The successful implementation of this objective should have led to common formation and adoption of cross-border region development strategy in the identified key-areas. They included such areas as transport, economy, tourism, energy and environment. These were the areas with cornerstone problems, which can be solved by combining the efforts of the border regions. It is important that the improvement of the situation in these areas should take place only under condition of “smart implementation of projects and programs with financial support from the EU funds” [20, p. 58]. The main objective of local authorities was the introduction of effective management of the long-term INTERREG cross-border cooperation program for 2014–2020 period. Implemented projects proved that TRITIA contributed to the establishment of sustainable cross-border links and facilitated the implementation of significantly greater number of cross-border cooperation projects compared to previous years, that is the evidence of the effectiveness of this format of paradiplomacy.

Examining the practice of paradiplomatic activities in recent years, four phases of regional paradiplomacy

in Central and Eastern Europe can be identified: initiation, Europeanization, economization, and embryonic initiative of political emancipation. In the initial phase, following the establishment of the region, there is an active search for partnership to implement paradiplomacy programs with neighboring regions and regions with similar problems and resource base. In this context, it is worth noting that before 2004 period, i.e. before the greatest enlargement in the history of the EU, there was an unprecedented interest in reviving cooperation between the regions of Central and Eastern Europe and Western European regions. It was caused by a deep conviction that the establishment and development of foreign contacts would contribute to regional cooperation, since it allows not only to obtain financial assistance from the European Union, but also has a positive impact on the convergence of regions in cultural, humanitarian, educational areas. Furthermore, keeping-up with the times required the regions “to adapt to international trends”, which was acting as a powerful factor in enhancing regional cooperation. Undoubtedly, the above circumstances had a positive impact on the development of paradiplomacy of the Central-Eastern European regions [21, p. 44].

Thus, since the potential of involving the paradiplomacy for regional development in Central and Eastern Europe is somewhat limited in scholarly research, it should be emphasized that the approach to viewing subnational actors as entities with a range of political, economic, and social competencies is crucial for understanding paradiplomacy practices in the region in question. On the basis on the analysis of the paradiplomacy practices of several regions of Central and Eastern Europe, it was established that the leading direction for regional cooperation is the economic area. The paradiplomacy tools allow the regions to create a favorable climate for the exchange of experience in the economic area, to restructure the leading industries, to establish development agencies and territorial partnerships. It is important that the intensification of economic cooperation has a positive impact on the establishment of cooperation in areas of culture, implementation of projects aimed at the formation of historical memory and restoration of folk traditions of certain regions. The development of the economic component of paradiplomacy has always been in the focus of regional governments, because it is the regional economic cooperation that can become for private and state companies, as well as other economic entities a pass for receiving investments, and participation in various programs and projects which can improve the quality of life in the region. It is the regional government that can successfully play the role of an intermediary in the process of establishing and developing cooperation with foreign regions, facilitating the search for partners from almost all corners of our planet. Thus, the paradiplomacy

practices of Central and Eastern Europe countries fully correspond to the principles and foundations of these activities in the territory of the entire European continent and act as their harmonious component.

Conclusions. The active involvement of paradiplomacy tools in the development of interstate and regional cooperation convincingly proves that in modern conditions the state has lost its external cooperation monopoly status, having transferred a significant part of its powers to the regions. This contributed to the transition of the interaction between the state and civil society to a fundamentally new level and enabled to increase their interdependence in the global world. Having regard to the above, we can predict that the role of paradiplomacy will grow, since

its emergence and functioning has become a vivid illustration of how the state and the regions can achieve mutual understanding in the distribution of power.

A subject of special interest is the introduction and spread of paradiplomacy practices in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, whose transnational regions have successfully used the tools of paradiplomacy to solve a wide range of issues both during the stage of integration into the European community and after the enlargement of the European Union in 2004. The priority areas of paradiplomacy tools in Central and Eastern Europe are the economy, ecology, infrastructure, education, tourism which are of great interest for the development of cooperation between the border regions.

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