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Europeanization through Cross-Border cooperation:
The Case of Western Ukrainian Regions

Iryna Volkova

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Orientador:

Doutor Luís Nuno Rodrigues, Professor Catedrático
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Coorientadora:

Doutora Inês Marques Ribeiro, Assistente convidada
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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Abstract

Ukraine acquires many benefits from its proximity to the European Union (EU), such as the possibility to be included in many strategies and programmes, namely in the Cross-border Programmes. This type of cooperation, which is used as a mechanism of horizontal governance, creates opportunities to work in joint programmes and to increase the engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the peripheral regions of Ukraine. Also, the close engagement between partners of the European member states and Ukraine can be used as a tool for diffusion of Europeanization.

In this dissertation, we will use Cross-Border cooperation in the western regions of Ukraine as a case study to show the mechanisms of diffusion of Europeanization through the horizontal mode of governance. Cross-Border Cooperation in Ukraine and its contribution to Europeanization is examined on the basis of evaluation reports, which present the concluded objectives, implications, and surveys on the opinions of the beneficiaries involved in the Programmes. In essence, in this work we intended to complement the study of Cross-Border Cooperation of the EU with external countries, and to complement the study on Ukraine's relation with the EU, and its Europeanization. The research suggests that, even if the CBC is an instrument of Europeanization, its contribution is minimal and will only be seen in the long run, and it has almost no impact on legislation and institutions in Ukraine.

Keywords:

External Governance, Europeanization, European Union, Cross-Border Cooperation, Ukraine.

Resumo

A Ucrânia obtém muitos benefícios pela sua proximidade à União Europeia (UE), especialmente pela possibilidade de ser incluída em muitas estratégias e programas, nomeadamente nos programas transfronteiriços. Este tipo de cooperação é usado como mecanismo de governação horizontal, criando oportunidades para trabalhar em programas conjuntos e aumentar o envolvimento das Organizações da Sociedade Civil nas regiões periféricas da Ucrânia. Além disso, o estreito envolvimento entre parceiros dos Estados-membros da UE e a Ucrânia pode ser usado como ferramenta para difusão da Europeização.

Nesta dissertação, usaremos a Cooperação Transfronteiriça nas regiões ocidentais da Ucrânia como caso de estudo para mostrar os mecanismos de difusão de Europeização através do modo de governança horizontal. A cooperação transfronteiriça na Ucrânia e a sua contribuição para a Europeização são examinadas com base nos relatórios de avaliação, que apresentam os objetivos, implicações, e pesquisas concluídas sobre as opiniões dos beneficiários envolvidos nos programas. Em essência, neste trabalho pretende-se complementar o estudo da cooperação transfronteiriça da UE com países externos, e complementar o estudo da relação entre a Ucrânia e a UE, e a sua Europeização. A pesquisa sugere que, mesmo que a governação transfronteiriça seja um instrumento de Europeização, o seu contributo é mínimo e só será observado no longo prazo, e quase não tem impacto na legislação e nas instituições da Ucrânia.

Palavras-chave:

Governança externa, Europeização, União Europeia, Cooperação Transfronteiriça, Ucrânia.

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Glossary of Acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
ADE	Analysis for Economic Decisions
AP	Action Plan
BY	Belarus
CAWI/CATI	Computer Assisted Web Interviewing/Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CCP	Control Contact Points
CEE	Central Eastern European
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
EaP	Eastern Partnership
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
EUBAM	European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HU	Hungary
HU-SK-RO-UA	Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine
ICT	Information and communications technology
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JMA	Joint Managing Authority
JMC	Joint Monitoring Committee
JOP	Joint Operational Programme
JTS	Joint Technical Secretariat
JTS-IB	Joint Technical Secretariat – Intermediate Body
MA	Managing Authority

MD	Moldova
NA	National Authorities
NIP	National Indicative Programme
PBU 2007-2013	Poland-Belarus-Ukraine CBC Programme
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PL	Poland
PL-BL-UA	Poland-Belarus-Ukraine
PRAG	Procedures and practical guide
RO	Romania
RO-UA-MD	Romania-Ukraine-Moldova CBC Programme
RO-UA	Romania-Ukraine CBC Programme
RO-MD	Romania-Moldova CBC Programme
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SK	Slovakia
UA	Ukraine
V4	Visegrád Four Countries
WYG PSDB	WYG PSDB Limited Liability Company

INTRODUCTION

After the enlargement of 2004, the European Union (EU) started acting on the concern for new threats, which merged of the eastern post-communist countries (Popescu, 2008: 424; Scott, 2005: 440). These challenges were not new, but they gained major importance after this enlargement and also after 2007. The borders of the new EU members with the eastern countries gained more attention, and in their relationship became the concern of many economic, political and security areas, as the reviewed ENP's objectives "good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilisation; security; and migration and mobility" (European Commission, 2017: 11). These objectives aligned with Ukraine's many political, economic, geographical and security reasons to join the EU (Wolczuk, 2003: 5). By strengthening the relation with its new direct neighbours, the EU endorsed many programmes and agreements to promote stability, security, and prosperity in its neighbourhood. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is one of the good examples, through which the EU offered assistance, incentives and new reforms to improve the development and ensure democracy in the eastern countries.

Contrary to central European countries,¹ the agreements with the eastern European countries² were not as restricted and the EU did not fully use conditionality in all of its force (Börzel, 2011: 401; Schimmelfennig, 2012a; Celata and Coletti, 2015: 7). The EU worked with the eastern countries because they were not so dependent on the EU as CEE (central and eastern European) countries because of Russia, who remained a big player in many actions. As such, for the progress and adoption of rules, the EU depended on the capacity and will of the eastern countries as also on its bargaining power. According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier it is crucial that the EU has a great bargaining power in order to successfully promote change after the bargaining process - a process by which the actors "exchange information, threats and promises" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004: 671). All agreements followed similar practices as in CEE countries, imitating the enlargement process,

¹ Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, and Slovenia

² Countries under the ENP-EaP framework.

emphasizing a hierarchical mode of governance.³ Although we also can find more soft and cooperation-based governance within the ENP, with Ukraine, the ‘soft strategy’ of socialization was used to promote new values, rules, and norms (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 809.). Within this ‘soft strategy’ we can point the cross-border cooperation programme (CBC), which is “an integral component of the EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy” (European Commission, 2014: 4), and it is incorporated in the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which also finances the programmes in many states⁴ (European Commission, 2007).

CBC works to the benefit of the EU’s members and their neighbours, and has the goal to promote social and economic development, address common challenges in areas of environment, health and fight against crime, to promote “people-to-people contact” and to build secure and efficient borders (European Commission, 2014: 5-6). Accordingly, with this programme the EU can reach its objective (endorsed in the ENP) of a better relationship with its neighbours, while also promoting its practices, values and rules, and avoid the perception of exclusion that many countries felt because of the lack of the accession possibility into the EU and because of the fortified external borders. This type of cooperation, established to prevent "dividing lines" between the EU and the post-soviet countries, is one of the priorities of the EU (European Commission 2004: 3). But to many scholars and critics, the adopted strategies create an appearance of a “Fortress Europe” because of the security concerns and measures (Celata and Coletti, 2015; Scott, 2016b: 27). These perspectives have to be taken into account because the idea can be partly contradicted by aspects promoted by the CBC.

It should be noted that CBC is an important element of the EU’s policy (European Commission, 2017, October 24) towards its external borders in order to support development and homogenizing living standards by tackling common challenges with its neighbours (European Commission, 2007: 5; European Commission, 2017, October 24). It promotes “economic and social development, addresses common challenges of the neighbouring states

³ Also referred to as the “vertical mode of governance” (Radaelli, 2003).

⁴ In Ukraine it is not the only one, as CBC in Ukraine is financed by the ENPI and many EU members states - Denmark, Finland, Germany, and Sweden, in the Baltic, and the UK (European Commission, 2007).

in the areas of public health, environment and security, and promotes better conditions for goods, mobility and people to people contact” (European Commission, 2017, October 24). And it contributes to the development of the political and social integration, and the breakdown of borders (Scott, 2015: 28. See also Lina and Bedrule-Grigoruta, 2009) or even to a possible integration into the EU (Lina and Bedrule-Grigoruta, 2009). All of these objectives are meant to be performed by the civil society, local and regional actors in both sides of the borders in order to learn, develop their experience and improve the EU's relations with Ukraine on the grounds of shared values, opportunities, and benefits (*Ibid*: 9).

Cross-border cooperation through the years has developed great importance in Ukraine, and today the country is working in ten Euroregions, five of which are with EU member states (Borshch, 2014). It is clear the EU has great influence through this programme, and many developments should be emphasized, like the rising role of civil society in the regions, and transfer of practices, norms, values, and policies, thanks to the joint management of the projects.

Many developments have occurred thanks to cross-border cooperation – namely development of infrastructure in the border areas, in co-operation between public and private actors, in urban transportation, environment and quality of life (Hübner, 2006), but the question in this dissertation relies on the possibility of the mentioned developments and their contribution to the Europeanization of Ukraine. In this sense, the main research question in this dissertation is: *What is the role of Cross-border cooperation in Europeanization of Ukraine?* This question will be approached by examining the concept of external Europeanization concerning Ukraine. Firstly, we will begin with an overview of the literature on the on Europeanization, addressing the latter as a process instead of a concept or an outcome, specifically as a bottom-up and horizontal process (Howell, 2004b; Radaelli, 2003: 30; Scott, 2016). While our focus will mainly fall on the bottom-up approach, in order to better understand the Europeanization in the context of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, we will look at both approaches, where the civil society and network policies can contribute to the Europeanization process.

Also, for a better understanding of Europeanization, we will briefly consider the effects of Europeanization on accession countries. In the case of the most recent EU member,

they underwent a process of the Europeanization whose core was based on the *acquis communautaire* (Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 5); also, conditionality was fully used, and reforms were appropriated by the accession country governments, in a logic of ownership (Börzel, 2011: 399). However, in the process of Europeanization of the eastern neighbourhood countries, often dubbed “Neighbourhood Europeanization”, the difficulties to promote reforms and domestic change have been higher, because the states are weaker and the political elites promote demands that are in accordance with their preference (Gawrich et al., 2009; Wolczuk, 2006a: 2). According to Gawrich et al. (2009), Ukraine is undergoing this type of Europeanization, as it is a country that has long desired to join the EU; yet, it did not pursue all reforms and the EU could not give the aspired incentive that could make Ukraine undergo all the reforms.

Methodology

This dissertation embraces a perspective where cross-border cooperation is conceptualized under “network governance”. This kind of governance has resulted in “shared spaces of governance”, where the transfer of rules, norms and values occurs (Filtenborg, et al., 2002: 403). Complemented with the concepts embedded in bottom-up and horizontal Europeanization, we propose, as a hypothesis to be tested, that the existence of such type of governance and approach in the Cross-border cooperation programmes in the context of the process of Europeanization depends on the given opportunities and engagement of the EU, not only for the organization of the programmes but also of the actors in Ukraine.

The goal of this dissertation is the examination of the influence of CBC programmes on the Europeanization of Ukraine. The importance of network governance strategy that exists in the cross-border cooperation programme is emphasized, as it is a type of governance more based on cooperation, negotiation, and equality between the actors (Börzel, 2010: 194) which results in “shared spaces of governance in particular policy areas where the transfer of EU rules, norms and values takes place through voluntary adaptation by external partners” (Khasson, 2013: 329). In sum, we will pay special attention to the horizontal type of governance and less to the hierarchical, because of the nature of cross-border cooperation

programmes. The use of this governance strategy was successful in the past and, according to Filtenborg et al. (2002: 398), it can be used in order to avoid the geopolitical cut after the accession of new candidates in eastern Europe (Bertelsmann Foundation and Centre for Applied Policy Research, 2001: 38 *apud* Filtenborg, et al., 2002). Moreover, the regional forms of ENP and ENPI are seen as very similar to the Northern dimension by some actors (Scott, 2005: 444).

We will examine the cross-border cooperation programmes in the western region of Ukraine because the latter is a country that belongs to the eastern members of the ENP and is considered to be the most “promising case for the success of Neighbourhood Europeanization among the eastern European ENP members” (Gawrich et al., 2009: 1211), and one of the most active countries in the eastern European Neighbourhood (Freyburg, et al., 2011: 1032). Its aspiration to join the European Union was declared by its political elites following its independence, and today the ‘European choice’ resounds through the country (Reznik, 2017: 128; Wolczuk, 2003).

CBC has been promoted by the EU based on the idea that “national and local identities can be complemented and goals of co-development realized within a broader European vision of community” (Scott, 2016: 13). Furthermore, in many cases between other countries, CBC projects garnered importance and generated the engagement of the civil society (see Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010 for the cases of Moldova and Romania). Thus, taking into consideration the majors problems that Ukraine is facing in peripheral regions - including low GDP levels per capita, great dependence on agriculture, high levels out-migration, an ageing population, and high unemployment rates (EU, 2008b: 15-16; EU, 2008: 14; EU; 2008c; European Commission, 2007:10), as well as the importance of Ukraine as “gateway for transport and energy” (European Commission, 2007: 10), cross-border cooperation can be seen as a different approach to resolve many challenges in Ukraine.

In order to help us answer the main research question and to deepen our analysis of the CBC programme in Ukraine, we have identified a series of additional research questions: *What is promoted by the EU through CBC? What are the most prioritized aspects thereof? What kind of political changes does the EU attempt to influence in Ukraine? What is the role of the civil society in contributing to the Europeanization of Ukraine?* These questions are

essential not only to understand the impact of cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, but also the impact of the EU and the main developments promoted by the programme. One of the main developments that should be highlighted is the rising importance and existence of a civil society: as Ukraine is a post-communist country, the role and existence of a civil society is one of the EU's priorities to promote a good democracy. Furthermore, "civil society organizations have a valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of ENP Action Plans" (*Ibid.*: 11).

Civil society is understood as a political force in a community that promotes societal goals, values, and human rights are developed through different community networks and even through projects between different states, and even EU and Ukraine (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 424). In the context of cross-border cooperation in the external borders of the EU, civil society can be defined as: "groups that negotiate the EU's external borders daily and whose position on the "margins" of European Neighbourhood and national political power is highly relevant" (Scott, 2016b: 28). For these reasons, in this dissertation, in addition to the contribution of CBC to Europeanization, the role of the Ukrainian civil society in the context of cross-border cooperation will be mentioned. Many authors, like Şoitu and Şoitu (2010) and Scott and Liikanen (2010), have shown that the existence and participation of CSO are crucial for Europeanization, because Europeanization can also be defined as the "promotion of co-development and joint ownership of regional cooperation policies" (Şoitu, and Şoitu, 2010: 495), as civil society agents can promote Europeanization through a bottom-up approach in the regions covered by cross-border cooperation (*Ibid.*; Scott and Liikanen, 2010).

The structure of the dissertation is as follows: in the first chapter we will give an overview of the concepts of Europeanization and governance. We will explain the key terms necessary to understand the relationship between the EU and Ukraine and explain governance with special attention to the concept of "new" governance. Afterward, in the second chapter, we will focus on the Europeanization process of Ukraine, including an overview of the ENP EaP and regional cooperation. In the third chapter we will analyse the case study on cross-border cooperation in Ukraine, including its development, challenges, and contributions. The main target is to examine the cross-border cooperation programmes and define their success and effectiveness in the context of the Europeanization process, based on the reports of these

programmes: the final Ex-Post report⁵; Joint Operation Programme Reports, based on the planning of all countries involved to provide a framework for the activities in the CBC programme, in accordance with the objectives of the Action Plan, and the objectives set in the Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 for cross-border co-operation (EU, 2008.); and the ENI mid-term evaluation reports. The programmes concerned are the ones that include the EU's member states, in other words, the programmes concerned are: PL-BL-UA, HU-SK-RO-UA, and RO-UA-MD. The final evaluation reports also present many surveys of the participants on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the programmes; these will help to build a perception of the programmes and of the actors involved. After analysing the programmes, we will also examine the Euroregional cooperation with Ukraine's western neighbours. Finally, in the conclusion we will answer our main research question and convey our assessment of the contributions for Europeanization made by cross-border cooperation.

This study refers to the academic literature on the area of external Europeanization, concerning the cross-border cooperation programme and studies on civil society in Ukraine. The study was conducted by following a qualitative approach by means of document analysis. The case study is limited to the CBC programme in Ukraine, during the period ranging from 2007 to 2014. This time frame was chosen in order to follow the progress after the establishment of the first financing period 2007-2013 of ENPI CBC programme; however, an additional overview of the mid-term evaluation of the ENI will be carried out in order to assess the final contributions of the ENPI CBC after the Ukrainian crises, war in Donbass and annexation of Crimea.

The goal of this study is to understand the process of cross border cooperation and its impact on Ukraine, as well as the EU's influence therein and the process of external Europeanization. In this dissertation, the approach and definition of Europeanization is based on the academic literature on external countries; thus, the definition is more directed to the Europeanization of the neighbourhood and central-eastern countries. (Scott, 2016: 9). In other words, external Europeanization is understood as a process where civil servants, entrepreneurs, and even oligarchs can promote Europeanization. We also propose that cross-

⁵ Ex-Post Evaluation is the final evaluation report on the 2017-2013 ENPI-CBC (European Commission, 2018).

border cooperation not only can promote development through its programmes, but it can also induce Europeanization and further development thanks to the cross-border contacts and exchange of information and 'ways of doing things' (Radaelli, 2003: 30). As such, we argue that Europeanization is not only induced by the top-down approach through various agreements but also from the bottom-up, through diffusion and learning. Accordingly, we propose to test the following hypothesis: the cross-border cooperation programmes between Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia contribute to the Europeanization of Ukraine, i.e. it is an "element of Europeanization" and contributes to the process because it helps to diffuse the "self-image of a role model for intercultural dialogue and local/regional development" (Scott, 2016: 12), since CBC can create a unified community and have an impact on the life of the citizens in the regions through the successful realization of the corresponding projects.

This research contributes to the academic literature and understanding of the cross-border cooperation programme in Ukraine, and to the understanding of the concept of external Europeanization applied to the case of Ukraine. In addition, it shows how the projects launched by the EU's external policies may cause external Europeanization, as well as the developments and challenges that cross-border cooperation faces in Ukraine.

CHAPTER 1 - THE CONCEPT OF EUROPEANIZATION

Europeanization is a process that can be analysed through many approaches, and it has been the object of interest of many scholars of various disciplines, to the point that it has been described as “a fashionable but contested concept” (Olsen, 2002: 921). Examining many authors, the precise meaning is unclear, as it has multiple meanings (Wong and Hill, 2012: 1; Kovács and Leipnik, 2008). Furthermore, it is a concept that, in its definition, covers many phenomena and different mechanisms (Schneider, 2010: 126), and its impact can be uneven between countries and even locations (Featherstone et al., 2003: 4).

Europeanization is used in order to explain the changes that take place at the European level. Authors like Börzel (2003), refer to Europeanization as institutional adaptation, or, in other words, how the EU causes institutional misfit” on the domestic policies and rules of the member states. Thus, Europeanization can be perceived as an institution-building process at the European level (Risse, 2001: 3; Olsen, 2002: 929), or as an outcome of change in the domestic institutions of the member-states (Börzel, 2005; Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002), an aspect that distinguishes Europeanization from European Integration (Howell, 2004b).

Authors like Cowles et al. (2001) add that the process of Europeanization encompasses also the interconnectedness between the actors and policy networks to create EU-led impact on the member states: "The emergence and development at the European level of distinct structures of governance, that is, of political, legal and social institutions associated with political problem-solving that formalize interactions among the actors, and of policy networks specializing in the creation of authoritative European rules” (Risse et al., 2001: 3). According to Radaelli (2003: 29), this definition refers to the policy networks and horizontal Europeanization. Horizontal Europeanization is characterized as a process of state-to-state transfer which occurs independently of the EU, but EU institutions can induce such a learning process (Dühr et al., 2007). This type of conceptualization can be characterized, according to Howell (2004b: 5), “in terms of vertical policy transfer and cross-loading”, whereby cross-loading also involves horizontal policy transfer and transfer of shared beliefs (Radaelli, 2000: 4), which incorporates learning and assimilation of policies from other states without the EU’s involvement (Howell, 2004b). This conceptualization can help explain “learning effects

and policy transfer between regions involved in transnational territorial cooperation” (Dühr et al., 2007: 299).

Europeanization, according to and Wong and Hill (2012: 2) can also be defined by “the top-down adaptation of national structures” and “the bottom-up projection of national ideas, preferences, and models from the national to the supranational level”. Top-down Europeanization is the most predominant in the literature (Mccauley, 2011; Dühr, et al., 2007). It is defined by Featherstone (2003: 3) as a process of structural change that has attributes that can be identified with “Europe” and “involves a response to the policies of the EU”. Radaelli (2003) provides an even broader definition of Europeanization, based on the top-down approach that encompasses more than the process of structural change that involves only the EU member states:

Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things’, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies (*Ibid.*: 30).

In this definition, Radaelli mentions not only the structural dimension but also the normative side of Europeanization. Furthermore, the author adds that Europeanization cannot be defined, as it has no boundaries and it is a process of cultural and political change that encompasses the formation of European public policy and the effects of EU decisions on the member states and the rest of the world (*Ibid.*: 31). However, it has to be noted, as it happened in the case of Ukraine, that the top-down approach may not be fully successful in promoting domestic change, since, according to Melnykovska and Schweickert, “democratic governments may implement institutional reforms in a top-down way without wide domestic support of the population or the elite” (2008: 445).

Even though Ukraine may not be a fully democratic country, but more of a hybrid regime that has been getting lower scores in the democracy index since 2006 (The Economist, 2019, January 8), the EU has failed to offer a compensation for implementation or a strong

external incentive like it did with the Central European states during the accession-driven Europeanization (Melnikovska and Schweickert, 2008; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2017; Börzel, 2011; Gawrich et al., 2009; Schimmelfennig, 2010a; Wolczuk, 2006a; Schimmelfennig, 2012b; Kelley, 2004). As such, the process in Ukraine resulted in a proclaimed Europeanization by the political elites without a domestic change in the country (Wolczuk, 2003; al., 2009; Derhachov, 2007). However, authors like Melnikovska and Schweickert (2008: 446) argue that there is a way to emend the lack of strong incentives, which can be related to the bottom-up approach where institutional change can be promoted slowly by the population. This type of development, as defended by the authors, can be even accelerated if the EU can provide some external incentives for the population or elites.

The bottom-up approach has mostly been, dedicated to the examination of the European integration process and institutional development (Wach, 2015: 14) and it can be defined as “groups of interests and networks of connections which are an instrument through which preferences of individual bottom-up groups are considered on the level of the EU, influencing the development of its political structures” (Howell, 2004a: 21). In alternative, it can also be defined as “the reorientation of a (sub-) national actor’s champ d’activité towards supranational institutions, politics and/or policymaking” (Mccauley, 2011: 1020). This approach is mostly oriented towards the roles of the civil society or non-state actors in the processes of Europeanization and of European integration (Mccauley, 2011).

In sum, there are various ways by which Europeanization can have an impact, but most of the referred scholars identify that the process of Europeanization occurs when there is evidence of domestic adaptation. In order to examine the domestic impact and adaptation, authors such as Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002: 256) propose the use of variables such as “institutional compliance”, changes in “domestic opportunity structures”, and impact on discourse, beliefs, and expectations of the actors as a possible instrument to promote domestic change. By using these variables, one may examine the effects of Europeanization on the development of legal, political, and social institutions and their structures, and also their alterations and of the existing domestic provisions, arrangements, “rules of the game”, policy beliefs, and effects on the strategies and preferences of the actors in question (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002). Taking into account this approach, the role of Ukrainian regional and local

authorities is essential. In sum, Europeanization is seen as the promotion of change in institutions, processes, and values. A change that is conditioned not only by the mechanisms of Europeanization, but also by the actors that can influence this change.

1.1 External Europeanization and modes of governance

Europeanization is not only applied to the member states and its possible candidates, like the Central and eastern European countries, but it is also a process that extends eastwards beyond its borders in a form of "External Europeanization" (Ágh, 2016: 37; Ágh and Kovács, 2016). External Europeanization, according to Schimmelfennig, is a part of external governance and can become Europeanization if the rules of governance and the institutions can be transmitted in "institutional forms of coordinated action that aim at the production of collectively binding agreements" (Schimmelfennig, 2012a: 657). This transfer can occur through the top-down approach based on conditionality and the transfer of rules (Ágh, 2016: 41), or from the bottom-up. These two approaches are encompassed in many other modes of governance that are applied not only on the member states but to third countries as well.⁶

External governance can be characterized as “a rule transfer, a ‘selective extension of EU norms, rules and policies [to the neighbourhood] while precluding the opening of membership’” (Lavenex 2004: 694). Some scholars have a different approach to this type of governance, addressing it as a ‘spatial metaphor’, whereby the EU portrays its commitment to showing an image of ‘softer’ external borders, but at the same time, includes a mobile and selective bordering process with its neighbourhood (Celata and Coletti, 2015: 17). Some authors have applied the external governance concept to the neighbourhood countries - even though it is new and has only been applied in practice to the eastern enlargement (Lavenex, 2004: 682), and correlated it with the EU's intentions of creating a "security community", where the neighbours have a major role in the EU's security and stability (*Ibid.*: 681).

⁶ According to Lavenex et al., internal modes of governance are also used in external governance (Lavenex et al., 2009 *apud* Schimmelfennig 2012: 605-6).

It is important to note that governance is used to study the EU's relationship with external states (Lavenex 2004: 682), and that it can be defined as “institutionalized modes of co-ordination through which collectively binding decisions are adopted and implemented” (Börzel, 2010: 194). In addition, governance can be defined more precisely as "a high degree of institutionalization and the existence of a common system of rules beyond the borders of the EU and its formal, legal authority” (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 795). In other words, as defended by Lavenex, the external dimension of governance occurs when the *acquis communautaire*, or parts of it, is extended to the external states (Lavenex, 2004: 683). It can differ from the internal dimension of governance, as it has two main concerns: the first is the transfer and adoption of specific rules and system of governance and their effects on the policymaking, and the second is about which mode of governance can be most successful to fulfil the first concern (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004: 662). Furthermore, governance can be also applied to external states in form of “good governance”, which is a type of governance that refers to the “positive role of donors and to highlight openness, participation and effectiveness as the underpinning principles of the new and less-hierarchical form of governance” (Korosteleva, 2012: 42).

Ultimately, external governance varies across regions and it is part of the EU’s foreign policy towards external states, such as in the context of the eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy (the Eastern Partnership), where the EU’s normative power relies on specific policy transfer with the ultimate aim of achieving Europeanization (Celata and Coletti, 2016: 18). External governance is a process, such as Europeanization, that is related to the literature of European integration, but differs the approach by which the EU induces change,⁷ which can be EU driven or domestically driven by states (Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 6). That is, by using the direct mechanism, the EU can intentionally induce the domestic change, and by indirect mechanisms the external states adopt EU's process and rules on their own initiative (Schimmelfennig, 2012a: 607). The four mechanisms of external governance - direct mechanisms are conditionality and socialization, and indirect are externalization and imitation - are also divided by the ‘logic of consequences’ (associated with conditionality and

⁷ According to some authors, Europeanization is related to European Integration Studies and governance. See Schimmelfennig (2012b: 20); Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005: 7).

externalization), where EU uses a strategy of manipulation of motivation and cost-benefit procedure; and ‘logic of appropriateness’ (associated with socialization and imitation), where the EU, by using its proximity and the image of legitimacy and success, can influence non-member countries (Schimmelfennig, 2012a: 607; Schimmelfennig, 2010: 324).

Additionally, we also can find in the academic literature a distinction between vertical and horizontal mechanisms of Europeanization, which can also be related to modes of governance.⁸ Radaelli (2003: 41-43) identifies horizontal and vertical mechanisms of Europeanization, whereby the vertical mechanism can be found where policy is defined at the EU and domestic levels, and the horizontal mechanism can be found when there is no pressure from the EU on adaptation, as it is more based on patterns of socialization (*Ibid.*: 41). Horizontal Europeanization is used when the “change is triggered by the market and the choice of the consumer or by the diffusion of ideas and discourse about the notion of good policy and the best practices” (*Ibid.*). In other words, the vertical mechanism is the hierarchical model of Europeanization based on the pressure for adaptation created by the EU, and, in the horizontal mechanism, a ‘soft law’ combined with the use of social-learning and lesson-drawing models is used (*Ibid.*: 42-43). The soft mechanisms combined with social-learning and lesson-drawing models are types based on convergence of policy beyond balance of power and on Open Method of Coordination⁹. In other words, through the use of these mechanisms and models, the social life of a state is under the effect of Europeanization and, according to Heidenreich (2019), even the patterns of social relations and practices are transformed by cross-border interactions and relationships, as there is an increase awareness of the state affairs.

⁸ These mechanisms can also be found in the concepts of “new” and “old” governance. These latter types of governance will be explained later in the dissertation.

⁹ Radaelli defends that horizontal Europeanization has three soft mechanisms of Europeanization, that are framing policies from the EU in order to legitimize change and create solutions, the use of network governance and the Open Method of Coordination, which goes around the idea that EU can be used as “policy transfer platform” in order to spread practices to obtain convergence (Radaelli, 2003: 43-44).

1.2 “New” and “Old” governance

Taking in to account the academic literature and conceptualization of European governance, it is important to mention the emerging distinction between the “new” governance, a more horizontally based type of governance, and “old” governance, a more hierarchically based type (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2004: 674; Korosteleva, 2012: 45). These types of governance belong to the academic literature on European governance, and have been distinguished as such by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2004) whereby the “old” governance is defined as a hierarchical and vertical process based on asymmetrical relations, on authority and enforceable rules, and relates to the *acquis*, and the “new” as a more horizontal, based on negotiation and cooperation. As such, the EU relies on different modes of governance with the more predominant ones that can be found in the academic literature being based on hierarchy, market, and horizontal (Börzel et al., 2008; Korosteleva, 2012: 42; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009; Radaelli, 2004: 12).¹⁰ These three modes are also referred to as ‘institutional forms’ that provide opportunities and restraints on the EU’s action and can have consequences on the mechanisms of transformation (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 796-7).

In the case of these modes of governance applied to the external countries, the hierarchical mode is the most used, as it is based on a relation of dominance and involves the use of conditionality to promote an adaptation to the *acquis*, as also the market, it is based on the recognition and competition system between autonomous partners, and it is based on the principle of mutual recognition (Schimmelfennig, 2009). The horizontal mode is more characterized by the negotiation system, in which the expansion is marked by an equal relation between the actors in a more participatory type of method (Börzel, 2010: 194; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 796). The equality is only applied to the rights and mutual agreement, whereas no party can bind the other without their consent, but the power of asymmetry can still exist (Börzel, 2007: 64 *apud* Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 797-798). Thus, the main differentiation between the hierarchical and horizontal types is that the

¹⁰ Radaelli (2004: 12) identifies other types of models in the EU policy, which are bargaining, hierarchy, and facilitated coordination that can be correlated to the ones mentioned previously.

first is based on an authoritative, mainly asymmetrical relationship, and the horizontal is less constraining, and based on modes of negotiation and cooperation.

The horizontal mode of Europeanization is also referred to by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2009), but under the name of 'network governance'. This type of governance is also referred to in the work of Filtenborg et al. (2002), as the authors characterize the type which was used in the Northern Dimension Initiative by the EU to "strengthen its problem-solving capacity (...) and 'presence' in its interaction with non-member countries" (*Ibid.*: 393), and also to create an inclusive, but at the same time loosely constructed, policy with international organizations, in order to promote European values and norms through cross-border cooperation programmes (Filtenborg, et al., 2002). This experience was successful and brought the idea for a creation of an 'Eastern Dimension' in order to "to avoid geopolitical fault-lines as soon as the first wave of CEECs has become EU members" (Bertelsmann Foundation and Centre for Applied Policy Research, 2001: 38, *apud* Filtenborg, et al., 2002: 398). In this 'soft' type of governance, the political affiliation is not the main target, as the networks can be based on civil society actors and even other international organizations (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 798). But the EU can "establish communicative networks" between the actors, which can agree on common problems and goals, in order to harmonize their policies, obtain common values and benefits (Bauer, et al., 2007: 41).

Using this type of governance, the EU and its member states can impact on other states without fully relying on conditionality, as the participants are the ones learning the reforms. It is a type of governance that uses mechanisms based on "socialization, social learning and communication" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005, *apud* Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 798), which are combined with the "deliberative processes, co-ownership, and density of interaction" which improve the rules and contribute to their development (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 798.). However, external states only adopt if they are convinced of the authority and legitimacy of the EU, and this can happen if the states aspire to join the EU and are in an uncertain environment (Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 8).

Overall, the hierarchical mode is preferred by the EU, in order to enforce the adoption of decisions and policies, and the implementation by governmental actors by its authoritative

and legitimate status as an actor (Börzel, et al., 2008: 192). As for the network governance, it is gaining space and many authors argue in favour of this approach since, conversely to the hierarchical mode of governance, it is a more bottom-up and politically sensitive approach, since is a "'soft' strategy of socializing third countries to democratic and human rights norms without endangering the stability of political systems" (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 808-9). Some scholars agree that currently this type of governance is being more used thanks to the evolution of the networking in the inter and transnational process (Börzel et al., 2008: 209). And for some, this mode is preferable to apply to the external actors, and it even can be found in the relationship between the EU and Ukraine, as well as with the Mediterranean ENP countries (Young, 2009, *apud* Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 806; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 796; Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 22). This view, as defended by Schimmelfennig (2012b: 22), exists thanks to socialization, which can be more effective in the relations with the neighbourhood. Korosteleva (2012) also defends similarly positive views regarding the horizontal model, because of the participation, equality between participants, and reciprocity "(...) governance invariably requires partnership to ensure more participation and equivalence, as well as reciprocity especially in the circumstances of weak incentives and indeterminate outcomes" (*Ibid.*: 46). However, not all scholars agree that the use of governance is linear, as Borzel et al. (2008: 196-197) concludes that we find a combination of governance where all the ideal three types of governance are combined, referring to the latter as "governance mixes", and arguing that we can even find a showdown of hierarchy in the horizontal mode.

CHAPTER 2 - ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEANIZATION OF UKRAINE

2.1 The ENP and the EaP

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), also referred to as “wider Europe” (Welter, et al., 2007: 15), came into force in 2004 and it is one of the main foreign policies by which EU can spread its common values, rules, mode of governance, and chances to participate in various cooperation activities (European Commission, 2004b: 3). The ENP encompasses sixteen countries¹¹ and has the main aim of creating a ‘ring of prosperous, secure and well-governed partners’ (Demidov and Svensson, 2013: 25). It is inspired by the enlargement strategy (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012) and combines elements of a top-down approach with a bottom-up approach, in which “joint ownership” is highlighted, based on “trans-governmental networking and inter-administrative cooperation” (Freyburg, et al., 2015: 69 *apud* Zoete, 2016: 27). The key instrument of the ENP is the Action Plans (AP), which are used to project norms and practices (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012: 869) and contracting with the PCA, exposing a strategy more oriented on legal harmonization (Melnikovska, 2008: 27).

The ENP is an element of external governance through which the EU exercises its influence (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 429). It was created in order to promote Europeanization, tackle the main challenges that were created after the 2004 enlargement, to provide an alternative for membership to the new neighbours (Schneider, 2010: 130), to promote domestic reforms and to “prevent the emergence of new dividing lines” between the new members and the neighbourhood countries “through greater political, security, economic and cultural co-operation” (European Commission, 2004: 3). Additionally, the ENP promises “joint ownership” of the process, although this ownership is meant to be “based on the awareness of shared values and common interests” (European Commission, 2004: 8). In other words, the ENP was developed as an instrument of EU external policy in order to guarantee stability (political and economic, security and prosperity), whereas the security dimension and

¹¹ Algeria; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Egypt; Georgia; Israel; Jordan; Lebanon; Libya; Moldova; Morocco; Palestine; Syria; Tunisia; Ukraine

crisis management between the countries in the neighbourhood is defended by the ‘principle of good neighbourliness’ (Petrov, 2014: 300).

To complement the ENP and straighten the cooperation between the EU and its six eastern neighbours, the Eastern Partnership (EaP)¹² was established. The ENP needed to be adjusted for many reasons since it was a policy that was criticized for following a "one size fit all" approach, it was too loose (not specific and differentiated), and could not tackle the regional differences properly (Börzel, et al., 2008; Ágh, 2016), and because of the use of the normative approach of democracy promotion without a “grand” incentive (Ágh, 2016: 42).

The EaP is shaped by European Integration perspectives, with the main goal of “creat[ing] the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested partner countries” (Council of the EU, 2009: 6). In other words, it does not promise membership but gives support to the political and socio-economic reforms to the countries who are interested in further cooperation with EU. These are contained in the individual association agreements (AA), which depend on cooperation and commitment of the countries to address common problems (European Commission, 2004: 8). The Agreement also includes the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), which is a roadmap to join several sectors of European economies (Emerson, and Movchan, 2018). However, in the case of Ukraine it did not enter into force at the same time as in Georgia and Moldova, because of the Viktor Yanukovich’s preference for cooperation with Russia (*Ibid.*). With the DCFTA, Ukraine will be able to develop its structures, economy, increase the level of attractiveness for foreign and domestic investors and to have better and interconnected relations with EU economies, developments which will help Ukraine to stabilize its economy and fight against corruption (Vošta et al., 2016).

Like the ENP, the EaP also follows the aim of the creation of a "ring of friends" that follows good governance, to allow the EU to encircle itself with "well-governed countries" (Ágh, 2016: 41), and offer reforms and contribute to regional cooperation (Gänzle, 2009: 1721). But the process of regional cooperation in the neighbourhood entails much more than ‘well’ governed countries, as it also promotes the periphery zones and border areas

¹² The EaP encompasses Armenia; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Georgia; Moldova; and Ukraine.

(Browning, 2008 *apud* Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 424), and the EU offers cooperation policies between the participating states, that will equally collaborate and share the benefits (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 424). With the EaP, Ukrainian authorities became more involved in summits, ministerial conferences, and thematic panels for bureaucrats and working groups for civil society representatives, mainly through the multilateral institutions and bilateral cooperation with other countries (Solonenko, 2011: 127).

The ENP-EaP defines the goals and contents of Europeanization and possesses instruments that "easily translate into Europeanization's mechanisms" (Börzel, 2011: 402). It is based on the similar notion of Europeanization of accession countries (Schimmelfennig, 2010a: 329), as stated earlier, as it follows the same notion of the enlargement but without much use of conditionality and based on the mechanism of socialization. As the promise of membership was not available, the incentives were "liberalized access of goods and persons to the EU" (Schimmelfennig, 2012b:18). Furthermore, the eastern neighbourhood countries, in particular, Ukraine, are different from the central-eastern countries, as they have less economic autonomy, are lured by weaker incentives and do not have a significant level of dependence on the EU. The incentives and feeling of dependence are even not encouraged by the Europeanization mechanism, because socialization and imitation create a weaker or superficial interdependent influence (Schimmelfennig, 2010a: 335).

Additionally, to this negative aspect, there are authors who also criticize the lack of conditionality and the lack of proper incentives in ENP-EaP framework, and the inconsistency of the policies (Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 7). The lack of these aspects may hinder the successful implantation of the reforms, because, as stated by Schimmelfennig, to have a successful rule transfer, there is a need for economic necessity for the reform by the external actor and the EU needs to use accession conditionality in order to subdue different domestic interests (*Ibid.*: 21). Nonetheless, despite many problems¹³ and the financial and economic limitations that also contributed to the lack of progress in structural reforms (Derhachov, 2007), the ENP had shown some signs of success in Ukraine because of the provided

¹³ Such as corruption, financial and economic limitation, poor development of democratic institutions, political crises, lack of independence of the judiciary branch, and Russian influence (Derhachov, 2007; Wolczuk. 2006a; Vlasenko, 2015).

guidelines and focus of the EU on policymaking which, according to Wolczuk (2006a: 23), made a small difference in Ukrainian domestic policy and institutions.

However, not all scholars have the same positive perspective about the ENP and the EU's relation with Ukraine, as they believe that the European approach is 'Eurocentric' because of the non-negotiable common values that the eastern neighbours have to adopt, and because the European countries are seen as the "centre of attraction" surrounded by non-European countries (Celata and Coletti, 2016: 16-17). This perspective of Eurocentrism led Diez to conclude that the EU is distancing itself from other countries, producing, in a way, a "normative power paradox" (Diez, 2006 *apud* Celata and Coletti, 2016: 17). This duality in the perspective of ENP is the result of a relationship based on differentiation and appears, in a way, to justify the EU's relationship with the ENP countries. Moreover, it does not only seem to have a double meaning when the common values are discussed, but also relative to the duality between the priorities between cooperation and securitization, where securitization gains more importance (Celata and Coletti, 2015: 6). Thus, on one hand, we can agree with the argument that the ENP and the EU's external borders are an obstacle to obtain the freedom of movement within the EU (Beck and Grande, 2007: 176 *apud* Celata and Coletti, 2015: 8). These arguments led some researchers to believe that the ENP is "a bordering and not a cross-bordering policy" (Boedeltje and Van Houtum 2011: 124 *apud* Celata and Coletti, 2015: 9).

Despite the negative criticism about the ENP, there are researchers who argue that the ENP may have contradictory results because the means will hardly reach the aim of the strategy, but it can work as a set of opportunities that can create cooperation programmes (Derhachov, 2007: 3; Melnykovska and Schweickert, 2008). Thus, Scott's (2016: 11) the idea that EU's political identity lies on the idealism of "breaking down borders between societies" shows a more optimistic view of the EU's strategy towards Ukraine. And regarding Europeanization in the context of cross-border cooperation in a borderless European Space, the author adds that European policies aim at networking cities and regions and promoting transnational networking, thus creating a process of "de-bordering" through CBC (*Ibid.*:12-13).

2.2 Regional Cooperation and its contribution to the Europeanization of Ukraine

Regional cooperation is considered to be of major importance in Ukraine, having even been mentioned in the annual Presidential Address to the Verkhovna Rada Ukraine, where it was identified as a "vector of modernization of regional policy and regional development potential" (Petruk and Kovtun, 2015: 34). Furthermore, in the ENP, it was one of the most import aspects (Zajackowski, 2017: 138), but it was more oriented to the development of the bilateral relationship with the EU, which ended up generating many complications (*Ibid.*: 140). With the introduction of the ENP, the ENPI was also established, which guided and financed many intra-regional economic cooperation projects and cross-border programmes (*Ibid.*: 139).

Another part of the ENPI's assistance is directed at the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA),¹⁴ which is linked to democracy and governance components, namely administrative capacity building and regulatory alignment in the ENP (Wichmann, 2008: 22). The main priorities of JHA related to regional and cross-border cooperation programmes are to obtain support of the European neighbours and diminish risks that threaten the EU's security and stability (Melnykovska, 2008: 27). Furthermore, cooperation between the partners was also developed in order to promote the exchange of information and experience, and the adoption of common values (Euronest, 2016 *apud* Zajackowski, 2017: 141). However, as stated by Zajackowski (2017: 141), this mission was problematic because of many armed and frozen conflicts. Many of these conflicts are still present today (at the time of the writing of this dissertation), others, even if still frozen, remain a cause for insecurity. The resolution and containment of these conflicts are seen as crucial, and the EU has promoted many agendas and missions and enforced the 'good neighbourliness' principle on its closest neighbours (Zajackowski, 2017). Contrary to the EaP, this principle was not clearly delimited in the Action Plans under the ENP, as it was substituted by cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention (Petrov, 2014: 302).

¹⁴ Many cross-border and regional programs under the ENPI deal with JHA, and the main financial assistance of this dimension is focused on border management and governance issues (Wichmann, 2008: 22; Melnykovska, 2008: 27).

The two main contributions for regional cooperation are democracy promotion and civil society building (Hübner, 2006: 3), and the latter plays an important role in “youth work, science and education, culture and cross-border cooperation, the environment, the fight against corruption and the support of local democracy” (Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010: 495). Civil society, alongside NGOs, can serve as drivers for change, since they serve as pressure groups with the government and as “watchdogs” in order to provide information to the EU on the progress of reforms in Ukraine (Emerson and Movchan, 2018: 258). To sum up, civil society can be used as a soft power tool and can enhance the EU's influence, even though, in the case of Ukraine, it can be characterized as weak, which is a legacy from Ukraine's soviet past (Burlyuk, et al., 2017: 2); nonetheless, the EU has supported the development of a civil society in Ukraine for many years, and has created frameworks for cooperation between CSO through many platforms and forums, such as a Multilateral Civil Society Forum, a Bilateral Civil Society Platform, an Advisory Group for the DCFTA, and an Eastern Partnership Think Tank Forum (Emerson and Movchan, 2018: 258-261). Only after the Euromaidan revolution did the engagement of civil society rise, and new functions were even created, like the social capital building and democratic socialization (Burlyuk, et al., 2017: 6; Emerson and Movchan, 2018: 262).

With the launch of the EaP, the EU planned to become even more involved and intense in assistance, and Ukrainian authorities have been involved in various meetings with the participation of civil servants, border guards, and other specialized groups (Solonenko, 2011: 121). After the Maidan, Europeanization has been promoted by a “wide spectrum of formal and informal domestic agents in Ukraine” (Movchan, 2016: 202). Some NGOs have even become in charge of civic education, control over the government, and support of reforms (Emerson and Movchan, 2018: 262). The latter, however, was made difficult by the unwillingness of the state institutions to cooperate in think tanks, which are essential in order to promote reforms (Emerson and Movchan, 2018).

2.3 Europeanization without convergence?

According to Schimmelfennig (2012: 606), the common perception is that the EU makes non-members adopt EU rules, norms, and modes by using direct conditionality or indirect externalization, and if these mechanisms are not proper, the EU relies on socialization and imitation. As for the neighbourhood countries, conditionality and socialization mechanisms are used (Schimmelfennig, 2012a: 609; 2010a: 326). However, it has already been noted that conditionality does not work effectively in all countries, since many countries in the neighbourhood do not possess the most 'aspired prize' as accession countries. Yet, the case of Ukraine is different, because the aspiration of joining the EU have created a feeling of "self-conditionality" that imposes action on Ukrainian policy makers as it did with the accession countries (Schimmelfennig, 2010a: 30). As for socialization, which can be mostly described, according to Schimmelfennig, as a mechanism that "teaches" EU policies, norms, and values, persuades and motivates that these policies are suitable and must be adopted (Schimmelfennig, 2012b: 8), it can occur through social learning processes (Schimmelfennig, 2012a), a model which "matters" when the accession conditionality is not successfully used.¹⁵ Overall, in the case of Ukraine and most of the Neighbourhood countries, the effects of socialization on domestic change was not fully successful, which promotes an idea that Europeanization does not occur in Ukraine (Gawrich et al., 2009; Wolczuk, 2003) because, as stated by Radaelli (2004: 10), socialization must be followed by domestic change to contribute to Europeanization.

According to Langbein and Wolczuk (2012), in order to promote domestic change, there are many mechanisms, namely membership aspirations, elements of conditionality (e.g. rewards, conditions, and monitoring), and the assistance provided through programmes and trans governmental networks. All of these mechanisms exist in the relationship between the EU and Ukraine, but there is very little convergence (Solonenko, 2011; Langbein and Wolczuk 2012). In Ukraine, according to Langbein and Wolczuk (2012), there are many reasons for the limited domestic convergence, one the existence of small number of key executive bodies interested in the convergences, which even lack power comparing to other domestic actors, and second is the existence of a large number of non-state actors who possess

¹⁵ Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2017: 2) refer that both models of "social-learning and lesson-drawing mattered mostly in the absence of accession conditionality".

large amount of financial resources and are strongly represented in the parliament (e.g. producers of heavy machinery). These non-state actors support many other actors in Ukraine (like the State Committee for Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy) and help them avoid the threat of accountability for the lack of convergence to the European rules (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012).

Additionally, to the problem of these non-state actors, the power of oligarchs and business groups in the Ukrainian political elite who have more political power is also relevant¹⁶. They, in a way, “drive decision-making in Ukraine as the main party sponsors” (Solonenko, 2011: 124) and can enforce reform implementation and compliance with EU standards, as long as these standards and regulations do not interfere with the interest of the oligarchs in particular policy fields (Wolczuk, 2006a: 23; Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012: 865; Melnykovska, 2008: 26; Melnykovska and Schweickert, 2008: 447). For this reason, some scholars have defended that the bottom-up force in Ukraine has not been the civil society but the business elites, which are “the only domestic forces capable of building institutions in Ukraine” with the goal of meeting international standards and increasing their trade with the EU (Melnykovska and Schweickert, 2008: 447).

The reasons for the limited convergence in Ukraine, which occurred before the ENP, led some scholars to define Europeanization in Ukraine as “Declarative Europeanization” (Wolczuk, 2003; Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012) because, since the establishment of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which occurred in 1998 (ADE, 2010), and during Leonid Kuchma’s presidency, Ukraine did not undergo the full extent of Europeanization, but only a part of it, as there was only a political and diplomatic declaration which was not followed by the change in institutions and policies at the domestic level

¹⁶ The state and economic actors are very connected in Ukraine. These business groups not only control the economic sector, as also have influence in the electronic mass media and within political parties (Matuszak, 2012). In every election, "big business" reshaped their orientation and target of influence by developing new ties to the new people in power in political office, and this is evident even during the presidencies of Poroshenko, Yanukovich, and even Poroshenko (Melnykovska, 2015). This political system, ruled by the influence of oligarchs since the Kutchma presidency, which was made clear during the Orange revolution, has even been designated as "the Oligarchic Democracy", a democracy where "it is impossible to understand modern Ukraine without understanding several dependencies existing between the political and business elites" (Matuszak, 2012: 9).

(Wolczuk, 2003: 3; Derhachov, 2007:5). During Kuchma's presidency, re-joining Europe was one of the components of Ukrainian foreign policy, but without a big commitment to the integration and convergence of the institutions (Korosteleva, 2012: 84-5; Melnykovska, 2008: 26). Furthermore, the PCA provided a framework for cooperation in the areas of trade and energy (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012), but had only imposed a "soft conditionality" whose incentives were not enough to promote domestic change (*Ibid.*; Zoete, 2016: 34).

However, after the Orange Revolution and Maidan, Ukraine proved its revolt against the presidency, and has shown an increase in its democratization level and civil society engagement, which were driven by domestic democratic forces inspired by EU membership (Zoete, 2016; Movchan, 2016). Furthermore, thanks to the promotion of regional cooperation with eastern EU members, there is evidence of application of EU rules by non-state organizations, namely SMEs in Ukraine, but they are still too weak to ensure formal rule adoption on a large scale (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012: 876). It should be noted that the number of SMEs has an essential role in local economic development, especially in the peripheral areas, as they contribute to the promotion of entrepreneurship, infrastructures, and innovation practices (Isakova, et al., 2012). But some barriers can hinder their development, namely poor business development and infrastructure, a limited number of partnerships in the economic sector and a low level of investment (EU, 2008: 15). All of these aspects are being tackled in the selected regions under the cross-border cooperation programmes, and some are included in the tourism development (European Commission, 2018).

Another perspective on the type of Europeanization that relates to the case of Ukraine was made by Gawrich et al. (2009), as they define three streams of research on Europeanization with a clear distinction between the process of Europeanization depending on the selective group of countries, namely Membership Europeanization, Accession Europeanization, and Neighbourhood Europeanization. The latter deals with the Neighbourhood countries, it is based on the ENP and is a combination of the EU's influence with an internal positive support which is necessary to promote Europeanization (*Ibid.*: 1216). This positive support can be characterized by the number of agreements, financial support, action plans, and even facilitation of visa procedures (Welter, et al., 2007: 16). As for the conditionality in the ENP, it is still not the key mechanism, as it is sector-specific, instead, the

EU relies on incentive-based mechanisms (Langbein and Wolczuk, 2012: 869). It is also characterized as being "too limited to support domestic drivers of institutional reform" (Gawrich et al., 2009: 1210).

Moreover, the lack of membership conditionality and promise hinders domestic change in Ukraine, as for now it has been limited, since the elite will only accelerate Europeanization policies if they have "a clear signal that Ukraine is welcome in Europe" (Wolczuk, 2006a: 20). Overall, comparing the current situation to the years before the 2004 enlargement, the EU had scarcely been present in Ukraine's domestic reform process; but with the ENP, the EU has increased its involvement and, with the Action Plan, many domestic reforms have been implemented in various sectors (Solonenko, 2019). Furthermore, within the ENP, the EU provides more economic incentives for deeper economic integration, which increases the interest and engagement of the Ukrainian business groups, amplifying, thusly, their impact on state authorities (Melnykovska, 2008: 27).

2.4 Cross-Border Cooperation in Ukraine

Cross-border cooperation is embedded in the EU's cohesion policy (Scott, 2015a: 29), and it is included in the territorial cooperation policy process, with transnational cooperation and interregional cooperation (Medeiros, 2018: 469). As for the external states, it is an integral part of the ENP and it is built upon the experiences of the Tacis, Meda, Phare, and Interreg programmes (European Commission, 2007). It can be defined as a political project carried out by "private, state and, to an extent, third states actors with the express goal of extracting benefit from joining initiatives in various economic, social, environmental and political fields" (Scott, 2016: 12), or even as an "any type of concerted action between public/private institutions of the border regions of two or more states (...) with an objective of reinforcing the (good) neighbourhood relations" (Sousa, 2012: 5). It varies from one region to another (*Ibid.*: 2) and even in forms.¹⁷ This type of cooperation encompasses certain regions of a

¹⁷ There can be formal arrangements of CBC and informal forms, like small businesses based on contacts and the petty trading of households. And at the institutional level, forms like working groups,

country and only rarely the whole country can be included in the programmes.¹⁸ These regions are designated “cross-border regions”, which are characterized as territories with similar geographical and even social conditions, that exist in the border regions between bordering countries (Welter, et al., 2007: 2-3).

As the EU does not offer membership to Eastern European countries, cross-border cooperation can be used as an instrument for the EU to "break down barriers to deeper political and social integration as well as create new development opportunities through communication, ideas and synergies" (Scott, 2015a: 28). Thus, cross-border cooperation programmes can offer possibilities to enhance competitiveness for businesses, to promote regional development, and boost innovation of the border areas (Welter, et al., 2007; Medeiros 2018: 472). As one of the major strategies of the ENP (Popescu, 2008: 424), this instrument can guide participating countries into international integration, since it promotes the development of "border infrastructure, tourism, and recreation, ecology, and environmental protection, [and] cultural exchange" (Shcherba, 2013: 348). It also addresses domestic issues and contributes to the development of social, economic, and industrial infrastructures, people-to-people contacts, and the development of transport networks, local governments, conflict solutions, and the fight against illegal immigration (Shcherba, 2013: 351; Popescu, 2008: 427; Strizhakova, 2017: 332).

Before 1990, cross-border cooperation in Ukraine was almost non-existent, but it all changed in 1993, when Ukraine joined the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Welter, et al., 2007: 17; Kravtsov, 2016: 7). Afterward, only in 2004 the ‘Law of Ukraine Cross-border cooperation’ (Law of Ukraine. June 24, 2004), which defines the objectives, principles, financial sources, organizational forms, and forms of governmental support for the cross-border cooperation process, was adopted (Welter, et al., 2007). In it, it also defined that the local municipalities and regional authorities would be held responsible “for assisting enterprises to develop

Euroregions, and structures that were agreed or formed by protocols or non-binding agreements between regional or local authorities can be highlighted (Welter, et al., 2007: 3-5).

¹⁸ In the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova for 2007-2013, the whole country of Moldova was included.

external economic links, export potential, international cooperation, including the establishment of joint ventures” (*Ibid.*: 18). Another important document for the CBC in Ukraine is the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for 2007-2013, which was approved in 2007 (Strizhakova, 2017: 69). This document reflects the Ukrainian priorities and the main goals of EU-Ukraine cooperation, namely, to develop tight relations that go beyond the limits of past cooperation, a gradual economic integration, and deeper political cooperation, which includes internal and external security policy (Strizhakova, 2017).

As for the regional policy in the field of cross-border cooperation, the State Strategy for Regional Development Ukraine, which was set for the period until 2020, should be highlighted. This Strategy outlines the main goals for two strategic objectives in CBC and the state-owned tools for cross-border cooperation that involve the need to promote the development of the Euroregions, the elimination of barriers for cooperation in infrastructure and administration in border areas, the implementation of joint activities in the field small and medium-sized businesses, development of competitiveness and of production, and social infrastructure in the regions (Kravtsov, 2016; Puhachevska, 2012). The National Indicative Programme (NIP) for 2007-2013, which identifies the priorities in areas of democratic development, reforms of public administration and public financial management, rule of law, human rights, development of civil society, and local governance should also be mentioned (Strizhakova, 2017: 69).

Before the 2004 EU enlargement, Ukraine had enjoyed, since 1996, the benefits from the Tacis CBC programme¹⁹ (Brie, 2010). Even though the Tacis programme had limited impact,²⁰ it produced some positive results in the legal and regulatory framework in the governance of economic activities, developments in the energy sector, and fights against

¹⁹ A CBC sub-programme of Tacis, which focused on the areas of environment, support for local and regional cooperation, border crossings, border infrastructure, and support for economic cooperation and for private sector development (Brie, 2010; European Commission, 2007: 13).

²⁰ Regulation of social issues has been poorly addressed, there has been lack of consensus in structural reforms, lack in independence and fairness of Justice, the reforms concluded to make local governments less dependent on subsidies from the estate have had minimal impact beyond the implemented cities, the strengthening of the civil society project has been carried out without sustainability, and regional projects had little impact on environmental governance (ADE, 2010.)

illegal cross-border activities (ADE, 2010: 98). In addition, many cross-border participants have established contact;²¹ however, much still must be done not only to improve the poor border areas, as well as the whole situation in Ukraine.

In 2007, ENPI replaced Tacis and many thematic supports (Khasson, 2013: 328-9; EU, 2008b: 43), and required that EU assistance should be based on a cooperation partnership that involves national, regional and local authorities, and civil society, and seeks to strengthen non-state actors through the joint management and partnership in the implementation of EU programmes (Khasson, 2013: 329). But until 2014, the EU has mainly provided technical and financial assistance to state actors seeking to strengthen a more effective policymaking (Börzel, 2011: 406). As for ENPI effectiveness in Ukraine, it was under the objectives specified in the Action Plan and in the priorities laid out in the Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013 and NIP for 2007-2010 (EU, 2008b: 43). According the European Commission (2018a: 2), the ENPI CBC brought more development, cooperation with European members, and sustainability to Ukraine when compared to the Tacis CBC programme.

During the period ranging from 2007 to 2013 of ENPI-CBC, Ukraine was involved in several programmes with its western neighbours.²² One of the land cross-border cooperation programmes²³ in the western regions of Ukraine includes regions of Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine (PL-BY-UA). These work under the ENI Cross-border Cooperation Programme Poland-Belarus-Ukraine 2014-2020, and include 316.3 thousand square km of territorial units (EU 2017c: 7).

²¹ The programmes addressed are all continuations and deepening of Tacis and Phare (WYG PSDB, 2012).

²² Beside these programmes, Ukraine (mainly the four regions of the western part of Ukraine: Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Odessa) is also involved in the Danube Transnational Programme, which is an instrument that finances the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) programme, and provides a framework for implementing actions and alterations in policies (Kravtsov, 2016).

²³ Many western Ukrainian regions are also included in the Black Sea Basin ENPI CBC programme. In it, mainly four regions of the western part of Ukraine are included: Transcarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and Odessa. These regions are also involved in the Danube Transnational Programme, which is an instrument that finances the European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) programme and provides a framework for implementing actions and alterations in policies (Kravtsov, 2016).

Another programme is the RO-UA-MD programme.²⁴ Between 2007-2013, the latter programme was covered by the ENPI CBC, and includes the countries of Romania,²⁵ Ukraine,²⁶ and Moldavia²⁷ (EU, 2008b:4). The later programme, lasting from 2014 to 2020, was divided into two programmes, namely the RO-UA and RO-MD. The RO²⁸-UA²⁹ programme covers 176,6 square kms of territory (the Ukrainian area which is covered is much bigger than those included in Romania) (EU, 2017d: 5-9). The CBC programme for 2014-2020 plans to add value and not to involve funded elements, which would be more suitable for other ENI and EU Programmes (*Ibid.*: 6). Furthermore, the area is split into a north-west zone (Suceava, Botoşani, Satu-Mare, Maramureş [of Romania], and Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi oblast) and the south-east zone³⁰ (attributed to the Tulcea and Odessa regions) (*Ibid.*: 26). The third land CBC programme is Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine (HU-SK-RO-UA). The areas covered by the programme in the time frame of 2007-2013 are composed by the countries of Hungary,³¹ Slovakia,³² Romania,³³ and Ukraine³⁴ (EU, 2008a:10). In these, most of the population is elderly and lives in rural areas³⁵ (EU, 2008a).

²⁴ During the ENI CBC 2014-2020 this programme was divided into two separate programmes: Romania-Ukraine (RO-UA) and Romania-Moldova (RO-MD).

²⁵ Covers Botosani; Galati; Iasi; Suceava; Tulcea; Vaslui; and the adjacent region of Braila.

²⁶ Covers oblasts of Chernivetska, Odesska, and adjacent oblasts of Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinniyska, ten districts of Khmelnytsk, and twelve districts of Ternopilsk.

²⁷ In it was included the whole country of Moldova.

²⁸ Encompasses Suceava, Botoşani, Satu-Mare, Maramureş, and Tulcea.

²⁹ Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Odessa, Chernivtsi.

³⁰ This zone is mainly rural areas with low levels of population.

³¹ Covered regions are: Szabolcs; Szatmár; Bereg, and the adjacent regions of Borsod; Abaúj; Zemplén. All these regions also participate in NUTSIII and in the HU-SK-RO-UA ENI (EU, 2015).

³² Covered regions are Košice and Prešov. All these regions also participate in NUTSIII and in the HU-SK-RO-UA ENI (EU, 2015).

³³ Covered regions are Maramureş, Satu-Mare, and the adjacent region of Suceava. All these regions also participate in NUTSIII and in the HU-SK-RO-UA ENI (EU, 2015).

³⁴ Covered oblasts are Zakarpatsk, Ivano-Frankivsk, and the adjacent oblast of Chernivetska. All these regions also participate in NUTSIII and in the HU-SK-RO-UA ENI (EU, 2015).

³⁵ Average percentage of people living in rural areas is still 60% in Ukraine (EU, 2008a). Furthermore, in the JOP report made in 2015, the population of the Zakarpatska oblast (Ukraine) is characterized by having the “lowest proportion of active population,” and Chernivetska “53%, is below the average value” (EU, 2015: 15).

The high percentage and the low development of the peripheral areas in Ukraine represent obstacles to development (*Ibid.*).

The management body (referred to as the joint structure³⁶) of the programme is composed by a Joint Monitoring Committee, a Joint Managing Authority,³⁷ a Joint Technical Secretariat,³⁸ an Audit Authority, National authorities, and a Control Contact Point. The Joint Monitoring Committee has the responsibility to ensure proper “quality and efficiency of the implementation of the programme”, in other words, it is the core decision maker and its task is to supervise and monitor the implementation of the decisions and the programme as a whole (*Ibid.*: 84; EU, 2008c:37; EU, 2017c: 34). It includes³⁹ regional representatives (one per region), representatives of the central authorities (two per each country), and other appointed by each country (in general, the representatives per country are all appointed by the central institutions of each country: a chairperson, a secretary, as well as regional authorities, and civil society organizations with expertise and experience in the selected area) (EU, 2008a: 59-60; EU, 2008b: 84; EU, 2008c:37; EU, 2017c: 34). Furthermore, each participant country can also nominate external observers of the JMC, but without right to participate in the decision making (EU, 2008c). Under the ENI, the major change is the involvement of the Commission in the work of the programs (EU, 2015).

The Joint Managing Authority has the responsibility of managing and implementing the programme according to the European Commission’s regulations (EU, 2008a:59). Under the ENI’s time frame, the MA is appointed by the countries involved, and the Prime Minister’s Office in Hungary (EU, 2015:63; EU, 2008b: 84). The Joint Technical Secretariat

³⁶ The structures, as in other programmes, were established according to a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council, which had established general provisions, as well as to the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, and Commission Regulation, which reports the rules for implementing financed cross-border cooperation programmes (EU, 2008c: 37).

³⁷ JMA in the ENI is referred to as MA (Managing Authority).

³⁸ Under the ENI, the JTS is called Joint Technical Secretariat - Intermediate Body (JTS-IB). Under the ENI, the organization has the same functions as in the other programme, the only difference is that the staff of the organization has more experience that under the ENPI and they will have additional responsibilities according to the personal transfer plane under the 2014-20 programme (EU, 2017d: 88-89).

³⁹ It involves a different number of participants where each country has a vote (the number of representatives can vary from eight to ten, depending on the programme).

has the duty of coordination, implementation, and assisting the MA, JMC, and NA (EU, 2008b:84; EU, 2015; EU, 2017c: 42). The Audit Authority is responsible for the annual financial audits (EU, 2008b: 85). It is assisted by the Group of Auditors of every county involved (EU, 2017d: 79). It became a separate body created only under the ENI; under the ENPI, the tasks of internal audition were performed in a control programme implemented by the MA, as for external tasks, they were undertaken by independent auditors contracted by the MA (EU, 2008a:63; EU, 2015: 60). And for monitoring and assisting the already mentioned organizations, in the national level there are the National Authorities, a group composed of the representatives of each country and located in the same country it operates,⁴⁰ which are responsible for complementing the MA, coordinating the programming in their countries, and implementing the programme in their countries (EU, 2008c: 37; EU, 2015: 71). In addition, the Control Contact Points, which were added under the ENI, and are appointed by each country involved, are responsible for assisting MA, JTS-IB, Audit Authority, and the Group of Auditors to assist and carry out verifications at the national level (EU, 2015: 72; EU, 2017c: 33; EU, 2017d).

The impact of these programmes is limited because of their many implications, but the CBC framework is well established, and its many programmes have achieved some results in promoting economic development and have addressed many issues (European Commission, 2018a). Because of these limitations, the full successful impact on the regions in Ukraine is limited and the full prospect can only be seen in the long term. Moreover, the ex-post evaluation report that was produced in 2018 expresses doubt about the impact on the socio-economic development and CBC's contribution to reducing the differences in living standards in border areas (European Commission, 2018: 44). Even so, the programme is considered to have great importance in developing and maintaining contacts, dialogs, and promoting EU values, as it has created and maintained a platform for discussion and exchange between the administrations of the countries engaged (*Ibid.*: 45). CBC has also provided the opportunity to draw many lessons for future cooperation, namely in the context of the ENI (*Ibid.*: 54).

⁴⁰ Contrary to JMC and JMA, which are located dependently on the programme, where in HU-SK-RO-UA the JMC is located in Hungary, in PL-BY-UA in Poland, and in RO-UA-MD in Romania (EU, 2008a; EU, 2008b; EU, 2008c).

In general, the main priorities of all CBC programmes are meant to address the common challenges and opportunities (European Commission, 2007: 2). However, to be more precise, the general objective of the HU-SK-RO-UA programme was to ‘intensify the cooperation in an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable way’, through the promotion of economic and social development (this also includes the area of tourism), the improvement of the quality of the environment, promotion of border effectiveness, and support of a promotion of people-to-people contacts (European Commission, 2018c: 15; EU, 2008: 7). And, as the other programmes, it also encourages local NGOs, municipalities, and organizations to find new ways for cooperation and new partners to strengthen the territorial cohesion, awareness, understanding, and willingness for cooperation between people (EU, 2008). The PL-BY-UA programme intends ‘to support cross-border development processes’, by promoting competitiveness and promoting networking and people to people contacts, and improving quality of life (European Commission, 2018c: 18). As for the RO-UA-MD programme, it aims to promote a competitive border economy, the resolution of environmental issues and emergency preparedness, and the promotion of people-to-people contacts (European Commission, 2018c: 19). These aims are then broken down into several objectives and measures according to the needs in the regions in question.⁴¹

In sum, the close cooperation and harmonization of the living standards, development, policy, and intrastation is the end aim of the CBC (European Commission, 2007; European Commission, 2018; EU; 2008; EU, 2008b), because of the major differences between the EU member states and Ukraine, and between the national and regional authorities and civil society (EU, 2008). These differences have been pointed in all the reports, thus highlighting the importance of the CBC to boost development in many areas, which is essential for Ukraine, because in all the programmes under the ENPI CBC in its western borders there

⁴¹ It should be noted that the promotion of tourism is a major concern in the HU-SK-RO-UA and PL-BY-UA programmes, whereas in the RO-UA-MD programme, more attention is paid to the support for civil society and local and regional communities, as well as greater concern for educational, cultural, and social exchange (European Commission, 2018c: 19). It should be added that tourism is seen as a key element for promoting competitiveness and economic development in the area, as it can be a “a good starting point for development of the area as well as opportunities for co-operation between SMEs on either side of the borders” (EU, 2008b).

have been major complications that can be summarized to the differences in the levels of economic development and private entrepreneurship, poor quality of tourism infrastructure, and low development levels of border infrastructure compared to the EU's member states (WYG PSDB, 2012); Puhachevska, 2012). Other aspects that have been pointed out in the reports are the low levels of GDP per capita in Ukrainian regions, despite some areas possibly having good industry, but most of the GDP in the area is low, with low quality infrastructures,⁴² where the roads (as in many member states that are in the projects) are below the European level,⁴³ as well as the low percentage of economic development (EU, 2008b: 15-16), a high percentage of pollution⁴⁴ and a low number of SMEs⁴⁵ (EU, 2008, 2008b; WYG PSDB, 2012).

The issue of security and border management is a key objective in the ENPI CBC (EU, 2008b), and after the Ukrainian crises and tense relations with Russia, the EU has paid more attention to crisis management and security challenges in the eastern neighbourhood⁴⁶

⁴² It was pointed out that the whole area that is covered by the RO-UA-MD programme (including Romania) has low levels of GDP due to distance to the 'western' markets, high dependence on agriculture, low infrastructure development, and lack of investment and poor technological development in the wood industry, which not only hinders the economic development but also causes environmental degradation (EU, 2008b:15-16). As for the HU-SK-RO-UA programme, high rates of unemployment in Ukrainian regions were pointed out: an average, respectively, of 9.8% in Ivano-Frankivska and Chernivetska, and 7% in Zakarpatska (EU, 2008: 14, 2008c).

⁴³ It was mainly highlighted in the report on the HU-SK-RO-UA project that the road conditions on the Ukrainian side, namely in mountainous areas, were inadequate (EU, 2008: 16). Also, it is registered that in the villages near the border there are low levels of ICT technologies, low quality of telecommunications, lack of preservation of historical sites (including poor restoration and preservation), lack of skilled experts, and lack of common tourism destination management (EU, 2008c)

⁴⁴ In the HU-SK-RO-UA programme many troublesome areas were highlighted, including the lack of solution for waste management, the implementation of recycling system is far from complete, and there are many areas where air pollution is considered a relevant issue for tourism (EU, 2008: 18).

⁴⁵ In all the programmes, the low number of SMEs is registered in all of the areas (European Commission, 2018; EU, 2008: 15, 2008b;), and in some areas (i.e. Danube Region) many SMEs do not have growth potential because of the low interest of foreign investment, lack of entrepreneurial skills and information, and lack of support of local authorities (EU, 2008b).

⁴⁶ This included measures for illegal migration, 'good-neighbourhood' relations, terrorism, crime, corruption, prevention of radicalization, and compliance with the rule of law and respect for human rights (European Commission, 2017).

(European Commission, 2007b: 15). In this objective, the promotion of border trade, infrastructure, and movement of people are also included, but always under a concern for security (EU, 2008b; European Commission, 20018a). For these reasons, many scholars like Celata and Coletti (2015), have defended that ENPI-CBC programmes and regional cooperation are extending their instruments of European Cohesion Policy to external states in order to create a space that follows a logic of “concentric circles”, a space that is controlled and managed by the regional authorities and that “is seen to offer the possibility of envisaging a restructured Europe in which peripherality becomes a resource for action rather than a burden that confirms one to the margins” (Browning, 2003: 50 *apud* Celata and Coletti, 2015: 16).

This idea of a space that is a "resource for action" may be mostly directed at securitization, in the eyes of many authors, but one should bear in mind the other priorities and benefits, like the development of competitiveness in the regions, which has had positive results. In the case of the programme of Poland, Belarus, and Ukraine, as 34.19% of all implemented projects,⁴⁷ additional enterprises, several networks of entrepreneurs and initiatives were created, the number of public transport connections grew, tourism infrastructure improved and promoted an increase in the number of cross-border tourism joint events, services, and products, or information services (WYG PSDB, 2012: 25-26). In addition, under the priority that prompts to promote people-to-people cooperation, according to the PL-BY-UA programme evaluation report, 51 projects were implemented (which represent 43.59% of all projects), where new CBC contacts and more institutions were established, and the number of participants in cross-border joint local initiatives increased (*Ibid.*: 26-27). In the RO-UA-MD programme, under this priority, significant changes were also completed, in which civil society acquired great importance for dissemination of experiences and good practices, for supporting regional or local reforms, to build bridges in contacts between local and regional authorities, and professionals in the health, and trade unions (EU, 2008b: 65-66).

⁴⁷ In total, according to the evaluation report, 40 projects were accomplished under the priority of “increasing the competitiveness of border area” (WYG PSDB, 2012: 25-26)

Environmental cooperation is also a common priority between the member states and Ukraine, as it is one of the main common challenges that are dealt with by the CBC programmes (EU, 2008b; European Commission, 2018).⁴⁸ This is also merged under the objective of ‘improving the quality of life’ in some reports,⁴⁹ and if we consider the HU-SK-RO-UA programme, the environmental challenges have great importance because of the Carpathian Mountains and other forests that are included in the touristic zones. Furthermore, waste and water management have low quality in Ukraine, and in many other regions of the eastern member states, thus the priority also contributes to economic development and tourism boost (European Commission 2018; EU, 2008). Under this priority, the PL-BY-UA programme evaluation report concluded that 26 projects were implemented (an equivalent to 22.22% of all projects), which contributed to the improvement of borders, the increase in the number of people involved in educational operations for ecology, and the development of tactics to tackle issues related to environmental protection (WYG PSDB, 2012: 26-27).

In general, many projects were successfully implemented in the CBC ENPI 2007-2014 (WYG PSDB, 2012; European Commission, 2018a), even though Ukrainian authorities were less actively involved compared to Poland and Romania (Khasson, 2013). During the programme period of 2007-2013, Ukraine was a leader in 19% of the projects and involved as a partner in 77.14%, whereas Poland and Romania were leaders in 60-70% of projects and were involved in 100% of all projects (Kravtsov, 2016). The commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to participate in such a range of programmes has been referred to in the reports, and their participation and use of the resources to invest in the border areas has been characterized as "keen" (European commission, 2018: 40). However, this huge interest and participation had setbacks, because there was a high number of submissions to the programmes, making clear that the programme was too small, and the budget not enough because, according to the CAWI/CATI's interviews registered in the PL-BL-UA evaluation report, only one project in eight was provided with funds (WYG PSDB, 2012: 98).

⁴⁸ Environmental issues include environmental degradation, waste management, improvement of water resources, and plumbing infrastructure (EU, 2008, 2008b; European commission 2018a; WYG PSDB, 2012).

⁴⁹ Under the PL-BY-UA programme, the environmental, border security, and energy challenges are under the same priority "Improving quality of Life" (WYG PSDB, 2012).

Besides these problems, there is a need to consider the many obstacles to cross-border cooperation that are the main implications for the good functioning thereof, like, for example, the “institutional diversity and lack of financial autonomy” (Sousa, 2012: 17). It is important that the state also contributes with its own resources to the cross-border programmes because, according to Kravtsov, with a small share of its own funds, the state would attract external financial resources and get a significant socio-economic effect in the border region, and thus more common goals, tasks, and projects would be possible to realize (Kravtsov, 2016: 13). However, the Ukrainian cross-border projects and programmes depend fully on the EU’s funds. The problem of dependency on the EU’s financial assistance will produce a limited impact, causing the new territorial governance institutions to become mere symbols (Sousa, 2012:17; Liikanen and Virtanen, 2006). This problem can be noticed in the cross-border cooperation programmes in Ukraine, as it is reported the absence of a of Ukrainian financial contribution to the cross-border cooperation, which even compromised the development of a Slovak-Ukrainian CBC programme (Planeta, 2016: 17).

Other obstacles for the CBC were found which have hindered the cooperation, namely the inconsistency of legislation and changes in leadership of local authorities in the region that occurred due to the 2014 events,⁵⁰ the difficulties on behalf of Ukrainian authorities regarding rule compliance,⁵¹ the Ukrainian crises and geopolitical implications caused by Russia’s actions towards Ukraine,⁵² limited connections with national and regional policies,

⁵⁰ The Euromaidan, political instability, and the changes in the Ukrainian government have affected the whole country (WYG PSDB, 2012: 58; European Commission. 2018).

⁵¹ Under the PL-BL-UA programme, Ukrainian authorities had many difficulties to comply with specific rules and with PRAG, because they did not coincide with national regulations in Ukraine; thus, many procedures were too complex, therefore ineffective (WYG PSDB, 2012: 58).

⁵² Even though the crises - the Euromaidan, the annexation of Crimea, the inflation, change in the hryvnia’s exchange rates, and the conflict in Donbas - have strongly shaken the whole country and hindered the development in the projects (European Commission, 2018a; WYG PSDB Sp. Z O.O., 2012), in the ex-post evaluation report, the determination of Ukrainian stakeholders involved in the programmes to continue to cooperate and adapted themselves to the circumstances is mentioned (European Commission, 2018a). However, we must highlight the complications caused by these events regarding the implementation of activities. These complications were driven by the changes in governments, delays that involve state institutions from the restriction of some entities involved in the implementation, the economic crisis, which led some beneficiaries to not be able to access the money transferred by JMA (Joint Managing Authority) or lead partners, thus slowing down the project

weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation activities, insufficient integration with other ENP instruments (European Commission, 2018a), problems in long-term assessment and selection procedure (WYG PSDB, 2012: 97), the disproportionality of the parameters of foreign trade between regions of Ukraine and neighbouring EU states, low investment activity, and insufficient knowledge of interregional programmes and projects (Kravtsiv, 2016: 34). In addition, delays in the projects were highlighted because the funds were considered government-owned and were held by the state treasury, and not directed by the project partners.⁵³ This problem not only caused delays, but it also reduced the confidence of many trading partners and European projects, because in many cases the Ukrainian partners implemented projects without funds, and did not pay the suppliers for months at a time (WYG PSDB, 2012: 57). Another complication that might be considered a cause for concern is the lack of engagement on behalf of the Media. As it was reported in the PL-BL-UA report by the beneficiaries, it was difficult to get the interest of the Media, and it was only possible due to the initiatives of the Joint Technical Secretariat and the beneficiaries themselves (*Ibid.*: 127).

Even if many hinderances to the programmes were registered (many projects were incomplete and some poorly managed), in general, the programme was a success, and this was registered in the PL-BY-UA programme report.⁵⁴ According to the data retrieved from the respondents of the CAWI/CATI questionnaire used in the programme's evaluation report, 90.31% registered answers agreed that the programme attained the planned results, and only

because some partner postponed meetings and activities because of the conflict (European Commission, 2018a: 41-42).

⁵³ The Poland-Belarus-Ukraine programme report (as also in the final evaluation report on the ENPI CBC) found that the funds were considered by the Ukrainian authorities as government-owned, thus the Ukrainian State Treasury held the funds owed to public institutions, and these could only access them through a Treasury authorization, causing more delays, mostly in the Geo-Carpathians – creating a Polish-Ukrainian tourist route (WYG PSDB, 2012: 57; European Commission, 2018b). Many delays in the RO-UA-MD projects were also registered, as well as lack of interest and competence of Ukrainian central authorities in negotiating access to EU funding (EU, 2008b: 66)

⁵⁴ According to the results of the Polish-Ukrainian partnership, in regions L'viv, Transcarpathia, Volyn, Tarnopol, Rivne, and Ivano-Frankivsk (three adjacent regions), out of 117, 77 projects were implemented - this data is just between Ukraine and Poland. In addition, 17 projects were also implemented by the tripartite partnership and 29 by the Belarusian and Polish partnership (WYG PSDB, 2012: 13).

9.69% stated that the planned results were achieved partially (WYG PSDB, 2012: 31). One of the reasons is because of the broad formula of the programme that encompasses many projects that meet the needs of the region, as well as both soft and hard activities⁵⁵ (WYG PSDB Sp. Z o. o, 2012). These are very positive results, but if we consider all the programmes and the ENI mid-term report, there is still a lot to be done, because according to the review examined in the ENI-mid-term report, the “EU[’s] support to political reforms in neighbouring countries has met with limited results” (European Commission, 2017b: 2). In fact, on one hand, CBC had a great impact in the regions involved, but on the other, there were some setbacks because many joint objectives were not able to progress because the Ukrainian public administration’s capacity was not strengthened (European Commission, 2007a: 36), and they cannot contribute to the national level, nor can they affect the environmental related legislation (EU, 2008). However, the reports refer that the programmes had positive results and the effects will be felt in the long run, as the foundations, partnerships, contacts, and basic conditions in the area of institutionalized cooperation have been established, and the beneficiaries and the authorities involved in the programmes also believe the same.⁵⁶

Besides the ENPI CBC programmes, the importance of the EUBAM (EU Border Assistance Mission) and its success should also be recognized. EUBAM, according to Brusylovska (2019), can be considered the ‘best and the most efficient reform tool in the field of border management.’ It has been operating since 2001 between Ukraine and Moldova, and it has the main goal of settling the Transnistria conflict to ensure stability and security in its external borders (*Ibid.*). The main objective of EUBAM is to harmonize border management standards and procedures of Ukraine and Moldova, according to those existing in EU member states (EU, 2008b). According to the author, EUBAM is an example of successful multilateral cooperation under the EU flag, and it can be characterized as "international customs control

⁵⁵ According to the declarations of the beneficiaries in the evaluation on the PLU 200713 report, soft activities (exchange of experience and information, and establishment of contacts and joint events) were considered more enduring and will continue to exist even after the end of the programme and even without the EU funds (WYG PSDB, 2012: 76).

⁵⁶ This assumption is made based on the questionnaires produced in the reports (WYG PSDB, 2012; EU, 2008a).

on the separatists' segment of the state boundary line of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and assistance for an effective international mechanism of its monitoring" (*Ibid.*: 4). According to its objectives on border management, it also assists the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region and the Dniester Euroregion (EUBAM, 2013).⁵⁷

Ukraine's role in EUBAM is essential, not only because of its close proximity, but also because it plays a major role in the settlement of the conflict and, as a neutral participant, it can balance Russian influence as a buffer country (Brusylovska, 2019: 6).⁵⁸ Additionally, the importance of civil society should also be recognized, as EUBAM continues to work with the latter, but mostly with the academic community and students (EUBAM, 2013). The Mission habitates an annual joint study course and summer school called 'Borders of Europe' to teach students on European Union matters, values, and current EU developments (*Ibid.*). EUBAM is a clear example of external Europeanization, the only question is if it is successful on the transfer of European identity, norms, beliefs, and rules. This question was answered in the 2013 sixth EUBAM awareness surveys that included 828 people: in the resulting 2013 EUBAM report, the majority of respondents agreed that this mission benefitted both Moldova and Ukraine (*Ibid.*: 25).

2.5 Euroregions in the western border of Ukraine

Research on cross-border cooperation is linked to the project of region-building, since it has the mechanisms to deepen relations with non-member EU neighbours and it is imperative to both sides of the border to be prepared before the latter's removal (Scott, 2015a: 33). Thus, cross-border cooperation under region-building strategies is essential for the integration of Ukraine into the EU's structures, which not only require the development of the areas but also

⁵⁷ Besides controlling the conflict, the main objectives of the Mission are to support the border guards, improving infrastructure and knowledge of human resources, monitoring and ensuring the security of the region, and harmonizing the border and customs standards with those of EU members (Emerson and Movchan, 2018; EUBAM, 2013).

⁵⁸ Many scholars defend that Ukraine and other countries in the EaP are used as a buffer zone because they are considered to be an area of competition between the EU and Russia (see Agh and Kovács, 2016).

the implementation of new models of relations that would meet the principles of the EU's regional policy (Petruk and Kovtun, 2015: 33). To better understand cross-border cooperation, one should consider that it takes part in the institutional framework of regional cooperation, and it can be characterized by two forms - Euroregion and working communities - based on the original identity of cooperation and a decision-making structure (Tanaka, 2006). The overall purpose of Euroregions is to promote common interests through cross-border cooperation in order to promote the development of the local and regional cooperation structures, institutions, and policies, and also promote learning and cooperation between the two sides of the border (*Ibid.*; Scott, 2015a: 36).

The concept of Euroregion was developed by the Council of Europe in 1950 and, since then, it has provided many possibilities to address many issues in CBC within the EU, in order to improve living conditions, promoting cross-border contacts, and cooperation in areas of economy, education, and tourism in the border areas of the countries involved (European Commission, 2007: 13). It was only expanded to the EU's neighbours in the 1990s (European Commission, 2007). The Euroregions are an institutionalized form of cross-border cooperation, and they are the most common instrument for the development of border regions and CBC (Petruk and Kovtun, 2015: 33; Kravtsov, 2016: 9; Lina and Bedrule-Grigoruta, 2009). They are characterized as territorial units that include two or more states driven by a partnership "where spatial patterns of social life can be organized irrespective of state borders to the benefit of the civil society" (Popescu, 2008: 419). They are based on the interaction between the public and private sector bodies (Welter, et al., 2007: 19), and usually does not involve the participation of governmental or public authorities. If such is possible, it guarantees the political support from the national level and also the financial support from local, regional, or national authorities, thus granting the Euroregion a leading role in the development of regional strategies in the cross-border border area (EU, 2008b: 28).

The promoters of Euroregions present to the involved entities a micro-model of European Integration, bringing development to the people living in the areas; a Europe which is closer to its citizens (Sousa, 2012: 8). In other words, the Euroregions can be considered as a bottom-up approach to Europeanization and the EU itself, because many scholars believe that Euroregions can be used as a powerful tool to transport European values and objectives,

create a sense of transnational community contributing to wider European integration (Scott, 2012: 91), and can alleviate tensions between countries and regional economic inequalities (Scott, 2016: 13; Popescu, 2008: 419). Additionally, there is a possibility that euroregional cooperation and its opportunities can expand the range of participants and its cooperation mechanisms to adjacent territories (Kravtsiv, 2016: 34).

Like the programmes, the Euroregions bring many positive consequences to the spatial-social relationship in the selected regions, as local authorities become more involved in the process of governance and establish interpersonal networks of local elites, and also the CSOs become more developed and more engaged and shape interaction in the Euroregions (Popescu, 2008: 433). Euroregions usually do not have any direct political power, and their works are limited to the competencies of the local and regional authorities involved (Velychko, 2012: 132). Their main responsibility is ensuring ‘good neighbourhood’ relations between the communities separated by the border, improving their quality of life, and promoting cooperation (Velychko, 2012). Moreover, some authors defend that the Euroregion can be used as a ‘perfect tool for development’ (Brusylovska, 2019: 6), and can even be a possible way to integration, since Euroregions, according to Sousa, have been called by the European Commission as "laboratories of European Integration" (Sousa, 2012: 16). Nonetheless, the eastern Euroregions are different from the western European regions, because they have a “weak ‘umbrella’ of integration” that includes and supports lower levels of regional cooperation (Tanaka, 2006: 65). Also, it should be acknowledged that Euroregions do not guarantee for certain the resolution of regional and local development issues, and to be as effective as possible, the policies in the border regions should stimulate the private sector and civic initiatives (Strizhakova, 2017: 77), even though they are great tools for a bottom-up approach in order to create "bridges" between communities and countries, depending on the partnership and cooperation projects between authorities, like the CBC projects (Vasylova, 2012).

In Ukraine, Euroregions are seen as “gateways to European integration” (Popescu, 2008: 428). Until recent years, Ukraine tried to be involved as much as possible in many Euroregional cooperation with its neighbours. Already in 2012, Ukraine was involved in a

total of nine Euroregions with its neighbours,⁵⁹ five of them with EU member-states (Velychko, 2012). The western regions involved in the Euroregions are L'viv, Volyn,⁶⁰ Zakarpathian, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi,⁶¹ Vinnytsia,⁶² and Odessa.⁶³ Euroregional cooperation brings positive consequences; however, in general, there are many issues in the Euroregions in Ukraine, especially concerning the size of some Euroregions, different interests between partners,⁶⁴ the economic disparities between the members,⁶⁵ the lack of local government authority to contribute to the cooperation, poor legal base concerning customs and tax control, as well as an inconsistency in legislation, which hinders the resolution of many development issues, and many issues that imply a redistribution of powers between central and regional authorities (Velychko, 2012: 133; Artyomov and Dius, 2012; Tkachenko, 2014).

The engagement in the Euroregions and CBC as whole the western regions of Ukraine (Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, L'viv, Odesa, Chernivtsi, and Ternopil) has resulted in a reasonable number of agreements on cooperation with neighbouring territorial units and

⁵⁹ The Carpathian Euroregion was the first Euroregion that Ukraine entered, created in 1993 (it included the territory of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Romania only joined in 1997). In 1995 “Bug” was created (involving Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus). Later, in 1998, the “Lower Danube” was formed (involving Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania). In 2000, “Upper Prut” was established (with Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania). In 2003, “Slobozhanshchyna” was created (between Ukraine and Russia). In 2007, “Dnipro” was created (with Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus). In 2008, “Yaroslavna” (between Ukraine and Russia) and “Black Sea” (Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova) were formed. In 2010, “Donbass” was created (Ukraine and Russia) (Velychko, 2012; Tkachenko, 2014; Aculai, et al., 2005 *apud* Welter, et al., 2007; Welter et al., 2007; Borshch, 2014; Shcherba, 2013: 349).

⁶⁰ These two regions are involved in the Bug Euroregion.

⁶¹ These three regions and the L'viv region are involved in the Carpathian Euroregion.

⁶² This region is involved in the Upper Prutt Euroregion.

⁶³ This region is part of the Lower Danube Euroregion.

⁶⁴ The Carpathian Euroregion is the largest in Europe and has a partnership between many partners that have different levels of economic development (Tkachenko, 2014; Velychko, 2012). Plus, according to Velychko, the Carpathian Euroregion is more oriented to developing a relationship between Hungary and Romania; and Poland has its own interests with the L'viv region (Velychko, 2012: 134).

⁶⁵ Ukraine was strongly affected by the economic crisis of 2008 and with the inflation and critical events that started after the Euromaidan. But besides these aspects, one of the main challenges to the Euroregional cooperation, as also to CBC as a whole, is the lack of inter-regional relations with local regions and foreign counterparts (Velychko, 2012: 134).

with regional authorities of neighbouring countries (Petruk and Kovtun, 2015). This cooperation brings a number of benefits for Ukraine, which were noticeable since the establishment of the Carpathian Euroregion and contribution to Interreg, Tacis and Phare, as the development of the regions and the volume of EU trade operations with Ukrainian Euroregions saw an increase of approximately one third of investment from the Ukrainian counterparts (Welter, et al., 2007: 21).

The Carpathian Euroregion was the first one which was established after the fall of the Iron Curtain (Baur, 2015), and it was the first Euroregion that Ukraine was involved in. It is a multilateral type of cooperation that was created through a top-down initiative in 1993 (Durà et al., 2018: 220; Welter et al., 2007: 5; Velychko, 2012: 133) and contains regions of south-eastern Poland, north-eastern Hungary, north-eastern Romania, western Ukraine, and eastern Slovakia, which are the poorest areas in their home countries (Tanaka, 2006). It was designed to develop people-to-people contacts in the region, and help promote cooperation in the fields of education, culture, tourism, trade, and economy (Velychko, 2012:132). However, this Euroregion has many issues related to its development, according to a small survey of 15 participants to address the question of cooperation in the Carpathian Euroregion project study. This study concluded that many participants have doubts about the projects and their capability to solve common problems like unemployment in such a large territory (Baur, 2015: 28). Nonetheless, overall, the majority of respondents agreed that that the project fulfilled their expectations and it has been very beneficial for the areas involved, having “fulfilled its mission to encourage, facilitate and coordinate cross-border cooperation among people living in the Carpathian territory” (Baur, 2015: 29-30).

After this Euroregion was established, the Bug Euroregion was created, whose are not very different from the Carpathians, as it also strives to take advantage of the proximity of Ukraine to Poland and Belarus, and seeks to resolve common issues concerning the environment, support for social and economic development, as well as building agreement among the nations (Velychko, 2012: 132-133). Civil servants in this Euroregion manage Business Related Infrastructure Projects Fund, small Projects Fund, and Small Infrastructure Projects Fund to complement the Poland-Belarus-Ukraine cross-border programme (European Commission, 2008c). In the case of Poland, Euroregions and other organizations have the

experience needed for the implementation of EU cross-border projects, but in the case of Ukraine and Belarus, other organizations are preferably used, which have adequate experience for implementing cross-border projects (European Commission, 2008c).

As in other Euroregions, the main driving force of the strategy implementation has been the civil society, because in many cases the Ukrainian government has been almost inactive in terms of finance and compliance to the strategies and after the crisis has been even less (Studennikov, 2015: 64). Over the years, the civil society in the regions has been supported and strengthened by the International Renaissance Foundation, to stimulate the participation of the Ukrainian public in the development and implementation of the EU Strategy for the region (Studennikov, 2015: 64-65). This is mostly noticeable in the Upper Prutt and Lower Danube Euroregions.

The Upper Prutt Euroregion consists of almost 50% of Ukrainian territorial participation due to the joining of the Ivano-Frankivsk city in 2002 (Popescu, 2008), and was designed to promote trade, economy, tourism, and health, to eliminate the consequences of industrial accidents, and to help tackle environmental issues of the Danube, Prut, Siret, Dniester, and the Black Sea regions (Velychko, 2012:133).The lower Danube Euroregion has almost 60% of Ukrainian territorial participation because of the Odessa province (Popescu, 2008). In the beginning, it was difficult to establish a clear priority for cooperation, but the main recognized targets are to achieve a harmonious economic development; the resolution of issues related to the environment; the improvement of the quality of life, the development of infrastructures and resolution of issues and problems related to crime, environmental protection, and man-made disasters; ensuring an appropriate level of employment and social protection; and creating conditions for increasing the level and quality of life in the region (Velychko, 2012: 133). Hypothetically, in Ukraine, it is believed that the strategy is a tool for the region's development and acceleration of Ukraine's possibilities regarding European integration (Studennikov, 2015: 62).

In the lower Danube Euroregion, civil society is the main driver for the development of the strategy. The lack of engagement on the local, regional, and national government has been one of the reasons for the lack of development (Studennikov, 2015). Mainly for these reasons, the EU and other members have supported and helped to create, in 2014, the Danube

Civil Society Forum, involving independent regional development agencies, NGOs, representatives of the scientific community and human rights organizations. This forum plays an important role in the civil society's involvement and serves as a neutral platform for promoting dialogue between the latter and the government at the regional, national, and EU level (*Ibid.*: 65-66).

In all Euroregions, the engagement and support of the four members of the Visegrad⁶⁶ group (V4) have been essential, but its importance is not only limited to this cooperation. Overall, Ukraine's relations with the countries of the Visegrad Four have always been important (Artyomov and Dius, 2012), not only because Ukraine has a border with three of them, but also because they have become a success case of EU accession after 2004, and can support and teach Ukraine from experience, and they can also be transmitters of electricity and gas from Ukraine to western countries (*Ibid.*). Furthermore, their relationship became more significant after the events of 2014, which did not just affect Ukraine, but it also had an impact on the EU's strategies and relations,⁶⁷ and on relations with the V4. The latter changed because of the Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group and Ukraine released by the V4 in 2014, after which the group divided its assistance efforts towards Ukraine (Petruk and Kovtun, 2015: 34). Slovakia⁶⁸ started to support energy security and security sector reforms; the Czech Republic helped to build civil society, media and education; Poland⁶⁹ coordinated decentralization and public finance reform; and Hungary supported small and medium enterprises (Michnik, 2015, *apud* Petruk and Kovtun, 2015: 34).

⁶⁶ Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

⁶⁷ After the Annexation of Crimea and clear assessment on the war in Donbass, the EU emphasized its security dimension and changed many strategies and policies, like the EaP and the ENP, which have been overloaded with crisis management and regional security concerns (Agh and Kovács, 2016).

⁶⁸ Ukraine's relationship with Slovakia, under the perspective of cross-border cooperation, is questioned by Planeta (2016), taking into account the HU-SK-RO-UA programme and the Carpathian Euroregion. The least efficient cooperation, in the author's view, is between the Slovakian side of the borders, where one of the regions is reluctant towards local authorities, and the Ukrainian side, in addition to be missing support for the development of the cooperation (*Ibid.*).

⁶⁹ Ukraine's CBC with Poland is mainly aimed at the development of the business environment, and there is interest in the development of the civil society and in overcoming the negative stereotypes in the border areas (Shcherba, 2013: 349-350).

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this dissertation was to examine the influence of CBC programs on the Europeanization of the western regions of Ukraine. We sought to test the hypothesis that the CBC between Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia contributes to the Europeanization of Ukraine and enables the diffusion of an image of the EU and its member states as role models, enabling the creation of a unified community and having an impact on the life of the citizens in the regions. Additionally, the prioritized and accomplished objectives in the programs, the transmission of influence and perspective from the EU, and the essential role of the civil society in the programmes were examined.

As mentioned previously, Europeanization is more than mere policy convergence, it is a process of change that also changes perspectives, values, and social perspectives (Radaelli, 2003), and which defines rules and “practices that recast national spaces as integral elements of an international political community” (O'Dwyer, 2006, *apud* Scott, 2012: 88-89). Moreover, it is a process which contains many elements that can contribute to its expansion and better absorption of the process. One of the EU's tools is cross-border cooperation programmes, through which it has promoted an image of a role model (Scott, 2016: 12). Furthermore, CBC takes place under a European framework, and, according to some scholars, it is seen as a wider process of Europeanization, because the EU has financially supported many programmes throughout the years (Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010: 499). In addition, it is a key priority in the ENP context (Scott and Liikanen, 2010), and it is even considered as a “trademark” for Europeanization and integration (Scott, 2012: 85.). And if we consider that this process relates to the eastern neighbourhood, namely Ukraine, we can conceptualize it under the aegis of the academic literature on external governance and the ENP, in which cross-border cooperation plays an important role, because, through it, the EU has attempted to promote economic and institutional reforms in the eastern neighbourhood (Scott, 2016b: 35-36).

The process of Europeanization can be understood as a process of diffusion of practices, rules, norms, identity, democracy, and citizenship, and thusly it can be closely related to cross-border cooperation and internal and external governance. This process affects

spaces and communities, and it is driven by the objective of creating a process of "transcendence" of national orientations that will create a "coherent political, social and economic space within a clearly defined multinational community" (Scott, 2015a: 33-34). In order to create such space, cross-border cooperation can be used as a tool, not only because it can create an integrated and harmonized space between countries, where borders are seen as bridges, but also as a representation of "European Spaces" that promise development (Scott, 2012).

Moreover, some scholars defend that Europeanization can also be driven by local desires to be part of the EU (Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010: 499). As such, under cross-border cooperation, the civil society, the beneficiaries of the programme and local and regional key actors are used as tools to promote a bottom-up approach. Because all the responsibilities endorsed by the European Commission for the detailed programming and implementation of the programme partners are promoted through a bottom-up approach (European Commission, 2007: 17), whose ultimate goal is to create a regional profile and identity promoted by the communities at the border to work in order to gain common benefits for the partners on every side (EU, 2008b: 51). Additionally, within the ENP, by using different modes of governance (like horizontal), the EU can use CBC as a less constraining instrument to "either persuade, shame, or praise actors into changing their policies" (Kelley, 2004: 428, *apud* Khasson, 2013: 330) by using a mechanisms such as social learning, communication, and socialization (Khasson, 2013: 330).

In terms of structure, according to Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, the horizontal mode of governance within the CBC can be established by extending the EU's networks with lower political lever actors (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009: 798, *apud* Khasson, 2013: 330), and, at the interstate or regional levels, it can provide a foundation, a "networked Europe through symbolic representations of European space and its future development perspectives." (Scott, 2012: 89). And, according to Brusylovska (2019: 2), horizontal networks are important for cross-border cooperation, as they create the basis for the creation of new spatial forms of integration, like Euroregions. Furthermore, there are scholars who defend that the main diffusions mechanisms for the process of Europeanization are the cross-border networks and the civil society, as they deal with crucial local issues, democratic and

political issues, forms of political cooperation between actors, increased securitization of the borders, and represent the areas where interactions occur (Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010: 492). In this respect, civil society is not only the main agent of diffusion through the network governance, in which cross-border influences are spread, but it also contributes to a deeper European integration and is also seen as promoter of democracy, ideals, "ways of doing things", rule of law, free-market, and 'good governance' (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 428; Scott, 2016b: 35).

The academic literature defends that CSO influence is greatest when social values, norms, and 'good governance' are transmitted as projections of Europeanization through the processes of "socialization" and "policy learning" (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 430). And besides the institutions, the civil society also can affect decision making (Nielsen et al., 2009: 255 *apud* Scott and Liikanen, 2010), and it also plays a key role in the success of the reform process (European Commission, 2014) by becoming "agents of Europeanization" through a bottom-up approach, as they project social values, influence democracy, help spread EU policies and influence the economy (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 430-6). Thus, civil society has an important role to play in cross-border cooperation, as it has already been mentioned, as many authors have proven that cross-border cooperation between CSOs of different countries can contribute to Europeanization, democratization, and social development (Şoitu and Şoitu, 2010; Scott and Liikanen, 2010). This happens because CSOs transmit bottom-up interests to political decision-makers (EU Dimensions, 2009) and they increase cross-border interactions and create new forms of network interactions (Kravtsiv, 2016: 34). In addition, their network interaction can influence the identity of the regional actors and contribute to the Europeanization of the cross-border regions (Tanaka, 2006: 63).

However, CSOs can encounter many problems, like in the Eastern Partnership where they have found, in many countries, a lack of access to the regional political debates (Scott and Liikanen, 2010: 434). Furthermore, according to EU Dimensions' final report, the promotion of civil society in the eastern neighbourhood has not been successful, as "the EU is seen to have done little to positively affect CBC, to enhance people-to-people contacts or to bring neighbours closer to the EU in cognitive terms" (EU Dimensions, 2009, 7). The main reasons for this are related to the EU's institutional bodies, mainly Euroregions, as they are not adjusted and are unprepared for the local level needs or to deal with financial issues in

Ukraine, making many small CSOs deal with the difficulties⁷⁰ (EU Dimensions, 2009: 47-8). Thus, the major role is played by the regional and local administrators (Khasson, 2013).⁷¹ However, the CSOs' relations with these entities have been marked by differences, as the regional elites and local branches were perceived many times disinterested and even hostile to civil society entities in many occasions (EU Dimensions, 2009: 54).

It is evident that the Europeanization process reflects the domestic impact and the degree to which EU rules, norms, and practices are adopted in the national environment (Bureiko, 2016: 3). Although, as we only consider the contribution of CBC to the process of Europeanization, we cannot analyse the full-scale Europeanization process of Ukraine; thus, we are only considering the Europeanization of the regions involved in cross-border cooperation. To evaluate the contribution of CBC to Ukraine's Europeanization, we considered the variables proposed by Tanaka (2006), and Knill and Lehmkuhl (2002). Tanaka argued that, in order to access the Europeanization process, we must consider the bridges among countries, the developments of common public and economic spaces, institutions that produce bottom-up initiatives, and the relationships with the EU and its policies (Tanaka, 2006). The main variables that have been registered in the reports on the CBC programmes and Euroregions are the established network interactions and partnerships between the partners of the CBC programmes, and the close cooperation between "regional administrative units, economic enterprises and civil society organizations" across borders (Liikanen and Virtanen, 2006: 128) in joint programmes in a 'shared policy space'. The Euroregions - considered the EU's tools that include the operation of the civil society, NGOs, local and regional authorities that follow and realize the established programmes according to the strategies - are promoters of bottom-up Europeanization in the border regions. And finally, the role of the EU in supporting cross-border cooperation is essential, because it offers

⁷⁰ According to the EU Dimensions report on CSOs in Ukraine, the possibilities of the local CSOs to realize aims and priorities are limited because of the formal restrictions provided by the EU, plus small CSOs have had difficulties in operating in the region because of the rules and restrictions imposed by the EU, and they had to establish their own networks and funds to operate until the EU's institutions accepted their projects and reports and provided them with funds to operate (EU Dimensions, 2009).

⁷¹ There are many actors involved, the regional and local administrations, NGOs and civil society, business actors, and cultural/social/ academic actors. (Khasson, 2013).

resources and supports the priorities and strategies by offering assistance, monitoring, and guiding (EU Dimensions, 2009: 51).

The variables proposed by Knill and Lehmkuhl, and which will be used, are "institutional compliance" and impact on the discourse, beliefs, and expectations of the actors as a way to promote domestic change (Knill and Lehmkuhl, 2002: 256). By using these variables, one can agree that the prescription of institutional models to which a domestic arrangement has to be made, like single management programmes in cross-border cooperation programmes, or transmitting a number of policy recommendations and expertise for CBC planning and development, can also influence the debates (Leibenath, 2007: 152). And this is notorious in the CBC in Ukraine, as many different authorities work to solve common programmes, and guide their partners, and also the EU's influence, namely of the V4 countries next to Ukraine, spreads and influences the beliefs and "ways of doing things" of Ukrainian CSOs, local authorities, and even citizens. And this can be also proven by the rising participation of Ukrainian authorities in many CBC projects, and by the data presented from the questionnaires included in the evaluation report of PBU 2007-2013 programme, where the majority of the participants agreed that the project had produced considerable benefits for the beneficiaries, target groups, and local communities involved in the programme (WYG PSDB, 2012: 71). Moreover, it is also reported that, according to the surveys and questionnaires, changes in attitudes⁷² and mentalities of the local communities were noticed (*Ibid.*: 75). These are signs that Ukraine's cross-border cooperation with the European neighbouring countries it is very important, not only because it can offer prospects for entrance to the EU (Shcherba, 2013: 348), but also because of its main achievements.

Every project included training of journalists, media managers, civil society members, and even beneficiaries (WYG PSDB, 2012: 75; European Commission, 2018; EU, 2008). And thorough these trainings and joined management, the transfer of European values, and even of Europeanization is visible, as knowledge and experience are transmitted. This has great importance because Ukrainian regions, in comparison to the EU's members', have a high degree of asymmetry and disproportionality in the parameters of foreign investment

⁷² Such attitudes mainly reflect referred desires to continue cooperation to obtain more experience and knowledge (WYG PSDB, 2012: 75)

activity and the knowledge of interregional programmes and projects (Kravtsiv, 2016: 34). And through the training and programmes that tackle the low levels of social and economic development, not only can the development in regions be harmonized, but also principles, objectives, experience, and ideas can be transferred into the form of territorial governance in forms of Europeanization through horizontal diffusion (Leibenath, 2007: 165).

Furthermore, cross-border cooperation is important for socio-economic development and promotion of grassroots actors (Khasson, 2013), and is considered as possible way for the European integration of Ukraine and access to ‘western opportunities’ (Puhachevska, 2012; Sousa, 2012; Popescu, 2008; Studennikov, 2015; Puhachevska 2012: 282-289). This belief is one of the reasons that lead Ukrainian authorities to support CBC in Ukraine (Velychko, 2012: 13; Popescu, 2008). Many of the achievements were accomplished through the establishment of cooperation at the regional and local levels, as well as networks, leading to an increase in the transfer of knowledge and expertise, improved conditions for economic development, and improved promotion of marketing; and also to a lesser degree, an increase in cooperation between business and research, a change of stereotypes in CBC, and the development of cooperation between the Ukrainian government and businesses (WYG PSDB, 2012: 69-70). In total, many improvements were reported in the ENI report, specifically developments in the rule of law and governance areas, as well as in the areas of human rights, sub-regional cooperation, and management of the mobility of people (European Commission, 2017b: 81). However, the expected results and contribution to Europeanization of Ukraine will be felt in the long run, because as it stated in the reports, it was only established the foundations, partnerships, contacts, and basic conditions in the area of institutionalized cooperation (WYG PSDB, 2012; EU, 2008a).

The developments generated by Euroregional cooperation in Ukraine should also be highlighted. The Euroregions, according to Sotnikov and Kravchenko (2013), are one of the most well-known forms of CBC in Ukraine, among many. They do not have political power and are created for promoting social integration, community building (Vasylova, 2012.), deepening of ‘good-neighbourly’ relations between countries, and can be used as tools for the integration of countries into the European structures (Tkachenko, 2014: 63; Scott, 2012: 90). Their development and benefits can be characterized as small, compared to the European

Euroregions, particularly due to financial problems (*Ibid.*: 62), the lack of funds provided by the Ukrainian government (Planeta, 2016), also the lack of engagement of the regional government in the Ukrainian the CBC between Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine (mainly in the Danube region) is another major implication (Studennikov, 2015). This issue was registered in the Danube Euroregion, in which, as Studennikov argued, “the government has to recognize that its own resources, first of all, human, are insufficient for ensuring effective coordination of Ukraine's involvement in the Danube Strategy process” (*Ibid.*: 67-68). The lack of authority possessed by the civil society can be considered a major issue because the latter is one of the main supporters of the strategy (*Ibid.*).

It also should be considered that an intense cross-border cooperation and a belief of creating “an area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness between EU Member States and their neighbours” through CBC (EU, 2017d:5) may not lead to a successful cooperation, integration of the local population, and support of the business communities in both sides of the border; and it all can be considered utopia, since these are politically-led projects and, as such, do not guarantee an involvement, at the macro and micro level, of the integration process of the local citizens (Sousa, 2012). This negative perception was even reported by some member-states, where CBC was perceived as a burden, because it is a rule produced by the EU to engage in such activities and it is rarely seen as a means to solve the common issues and to deliver on promises.⁷³ As for the belief that the CBC contributes to the European Integration of Ukraine, is also believed to be a fallacy, as there are authors who consider that the objectives and measures are not enough for integration to occur (Shcherba, 2013: 350). Furthermore, there is also the belief that the measures undertaken in the CBC do not always bring positive solutions, because the CBC between Ukraine and the EU has a major objective that also can be seen as a major challenge, namely how security concerns influence CBC initiatives and how Ukrainian citizens are seen as ‘others’.

In other words, the idea of avoiding the creation of division and creating a shared space exists at the same time with the objectives of development of borders management and securitization of the EU (Celata and Coletti, 2015: 16). Thus, the idea that ENPI CBC is as

⁷³ This perception was identified in the research carried out at the Hungarian-Slovak internal EU border (Medve-Bálint and Svensson, 2012 *apud* Demidov and Svensson, 2013).

debordering strategy is seen by many as paradoxical, because it includes and excludes at the same time, and is characterized as symmetrical based in cooperation and joint ownership, but at the same time is asymmetrical⁷⁴ (Celata and Coletti, 2015; Khasson, 2013).

Overall, cross-border cooperation between member states is, without doubt, an instrument of Europeanization because the states involved adopt the principles of the EU's Cohesion Policy; however, in the European Neighbourhood, this tool is weaker because the policy framework is the ENP, and not all the principles and narratives are transmitted proportionately to the internal countries (Celata and Coletti, 2015: 108). Furthermore, we must consider that only 30% of the territory of Ukraine is engaged in cross-border cooperation (Dergacheva, 2010), and notwithstanding significant scenarios for Ukraine in the development of CBC, the activities developed under the programmes and Euroregions do not fully satisfy the needs of the regions (*Ibid.*)

We can conclude that CBC has a limited impact on the Europeanization of Ukraine because the programmes are more focused on the local quality of life, and not as much on integration, in addition to not being publicized, as the media is not interested (thus the knowledge of the programmes is not spread to the citizens). So, most contributions for the programmes will only be based on long term prospects, and the effects will not cover the national level, and will not address regional administrative changes - this is evident in many Euroregions where civil society is the main agent (see Studennikov, 2015), not only of the conclusion of the objectives, but also the main agent of the bottom-up approach through many collaborative events and processes (EU, 2008b).

⁷⁴ According to Celata and Coletti (2015), local Ukrainian authorities are often seen as partners, but also often as beneficiaries that need assistance.

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