

# ENVIRONMENTAL COHESION ACROSS THE HUNGARIAN-CROATIAN BORDER: DISCUSSIONS AND COOPERATION ON DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS

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Environmental cohesion (as a new EU paradigm for a place-based interpretation of environmental justice) has a clear connection to territorial cohesion. Based on this idea, advantages for people can include an equitable distribution of environmental protection and access to environmental services (Layard – Holder 2010). In non-EU countries regional environmental cohesion is used as an instrument to accelerate accession to the EU and it may be manifested as a declaration of environmental diplomacy (Mihajlov 2008). Partly deriving from the above, in my understanding, environmental cohesion across a border can be identified when two regions alongside the border started to cooperate in order to improve environmental conditions and to ensure equal access to natural resources/environmental services.

The surrounding area of Croatia-Hungary border was closed for a long time. It caused that developments avoided the area on one hand, and natural resources remained mainly untouched on the other. However, the approach of the area was different

from the two. Croatia tried to build another water power plant while Hungary tried to create Natural Park. The aim and discussion between the two countries were different until the accession process of Croatia. Finally the disagreement between the two was moderated, by 2015 a UNESCO Biosphere Reservoir was created alongside the border and the post-2010 is characterised by an increasing number of environmental-related cooperation. It seems that environmental cohesion was realised across the border. Is this the situation?

The paper concludes by arguing – based on media discourse analysis and expert interviews – that there are differences in environmental cohesion in territorial sense. There are intensive cooperation areas on local level, however it is led by different types of. Croatia is more decentralised in this sense. On state level we could find another picture, Hungary is more engaged to environmental cohesion.

**Key words:** environmental cohesion, cross-border cooperation, Hungary, Croatia