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A Historical Geographical Analysis of the Development of the Croatian-Hungarian Border

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the Croatian-Hungarian boundary and state border features and gives an overview of development stages of boundary/border through the history, including Croatian accession to the European Union (EU) in 2013. The aim of this work is to define if antecedent changes have had positive impact on the Croatian-Hungarian border area. I will examine the historical geographical background of the Mura-Drava boundary/border. Next to considering all relevant European and wider literature I will compare and if necessary confront Croatian and Hungarian scientific resources. Special focus will be on assessing the role and importance of the common border and its modifications in the past, with reflection on the current period when the Republic of Croatia is an EU Member State, aiming to join soon the Schengen Area.

Although the changes in Europe have been very intensive in the last twenty-five years, from the fall of the Berlin Wall to biggest ever EU enlargement process (2004-2007), the favourable historical circumstances have not been utilised in the Croatian-Hungarian border strip. This area is still suffering from large geographical handicap, presenting strong language and transport barriers. The border zone remained a strong periphery compared to the two capitals (Zagreb, Budapest) of significantly centralised states Croatia and Hungary.

Keywords: Croatian-Hungarian boundary, 900 years of joint history, old European border, geographical handicap, language and transport barriers, cross-border area, European Union.

INTRODUCTION

"Boundaries are conceived of as lines separating entities from each other. As such they create and refer to discontinuities. Such entities can be states or provinces, but also cultures, scientific fields, ways of thinking and other domains – there is no reason to limit this term to political field alone" (Leimgruber, 2005, p.239). Boundary is a dividing line between two areas and generally based on a

physical barrier. Besides its practical function, it can also have strong psychological meaning, as in the case of Croatian-Hungarian boundary. The boundary on Drava is often identified as one of the oldest and the most peaceful and most settled borders in Europe. On contrary of – boundary, the term border is an administratively set barrier between political entities or legal jurisdictions (states, federated units, provinces etc.) Borders can be open and permeable, but sometimes fully controlled and might have different functions: legal, fiscal, control, defence or even ideological. A frontier is the geographical area near or beyond a boundary; however this term will not be frequently used in this paper.

The Croatian-Hungarian border has a history of over 900 years, out of which 816 years within the various joint state forms. The paper starts with describing the historical background i.e. the origins and the genesis of the border. Despite the wide interest for the border topics, the Croatian-Hungarian border area has not gained specific and wide attention in the literature in the last twenty years (*Opačić, Crljenko, 2004).* Even in the second half of the 20th century, the amount of published geographical papers was modest irrespective of the tensions on the Yugoslavian-Hungarian border. The first reason is the absence of the open questions and unsolved problems on the Croatian-Hungarian border section. The second lies in the fact that because of geographical and language barrier, it has the least interaction of local citizens out of all Croatian land borders. Finally, the attention in Croatia has almost fully been concentrated on the border issues with Slovenia. As the Croatian-Slovenian large bilateral dispute even resulted in the blocking of the Croatian EU accession negotiations in 2009, it has been in the focus not only of political, but also of scientific circles in Croatia, including geographers. Literature on the Croatian-Hungarian border has almost been exclusively published by researchers at the Department of Geography on the Faculty of Science of the University of Zagreb[1] (*Pepeonik, Šterc, Crkvenčić, Klemenčić, Feletar and Opačić*).

The situation with geography in general is more favourable in Hungary. The main publishing centre of scientific papers in relation to Croatia and to the common border area is Pécs (University of Pécs, Faculty of Sciences/Institute of Geography *and* Centre for Economic and Regional Studies of Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The most comprehensive and valuable studies are undertaken by *Zoltán Hajdú*, scientific advisor at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Pécs. The Croatian-Hungarian border has been a field of research at the Institute of Geography in Pécs, specifically covering the topic of tourism co-operation in the Drava and Danube area (*Antal Aubert, János Csapó*)[2].

Several thematic articles on the Croatian-Hungarian cross-border co-operation have also been recently published (frequent authors *Viktor Varjú, Andrea Suvák, Lóránt Bali*) in the scope of projects financed within the Hungary-Croatia (IPA) CBC Programme or other EU funded Programmes. The topics of these articles relate to the border area, especially in the array of labour mobility (e.g. HUHR/0901/2.1.2/0001 Mobile Region, HUHR/1001/2.1.2/0002 Co-Op) and tourism (HUHR/0901/1.2.1/0002- RTPP HU-HR/ strategic Regional Tourism Product Plan).

[1] Geography is a major at only 2 universities in Croatia – Zagreb and Zadar. Currently 2 geographical scientific journals (*Hrvatski geografski glasnik*- Zagreb and *Geoadria- Zadar*) exist. Several articles have also been published during the last decade in the Scientific Multidisciplinary Research Journal *Podravina*, in Koprivnica.

[2] In: *Aubert A., Csapó J., Marton G., Szabó G. (2012) and Csapó J., Marton G. (2010)*

Historical development of the Croatian-Hungarian Border

The joint historical period of over 900 years can be divided into six phases according to *Gulyás, Bali (2013*). After further reviews, it is even possible in my opinion to distinguish *seven periods* during which the relations were specific:

- Croatian-Hungarian border area until 1102,
- Croatian-Hungarian border area after 1102 and creation of a unified country,
- Croatian-Hungarian border area after 1527 and joining to the Habsburg Monarchy,
- Border area after 1868 and the Croatian-Hungarian compromise,
- Border area after the Trianon Peace Treaty and the end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,
- Border area after 1945 and creation of SFRY,
- Border area after 1991 and Croatian independence, including the accession of both countries to the European Union.

For centuries Croatia has been in a political association with Hungary. The border between these two states lies on the rivers Drava and Mura and is actually one of the oldest in Middle Europe, although between 1102 and 1526 there was a common Croatian-Hungarian kingdom and between 1526 and 1918 they were part of the Habsburg Monarchy/Austria-Hungary (*Glamuzina, Feletar 2001*). The only section of the Hungarian national boundaries which has a long historical tradition is the 355-kilometre[3] long section between Hungary and Croatia. The 800 years of history of the Hungarian-Croatian commonwealth reflects a series of contests starting with the 11th century, anyhow the border kept the peaceful character. During these years the boundary between Hungary and Croatia retained largely administrative function (*Hajdú, 2004*).

The Drava River, with minor variations, has long ago been considered as the physical-geographical base of the boundary. It has been the most common boundary among the Croatian and Hungarian ethnic groups. It survived as the border with certain changes, until the present days, despite the long lasting Croatian and Hungarian relationships existing via various forms in a state unity. Still it is a complex border having diverse origins. There are several significant deviations from the present Drava river bed, as a consequence of its frequent alterations in the past. On the other hand, several border sections have also different historical background *(Klemenčić, 1991).* There are three parts on which the border does not follow the Drava river bed: *Međimurje, Baranja and Prekodravlje* sectors[4]. After rounds of disputes the border was internationally recognised by the Peace Treaty of Trianon in 1920 and confirmed by the Paris Peace Treaty in 1947.

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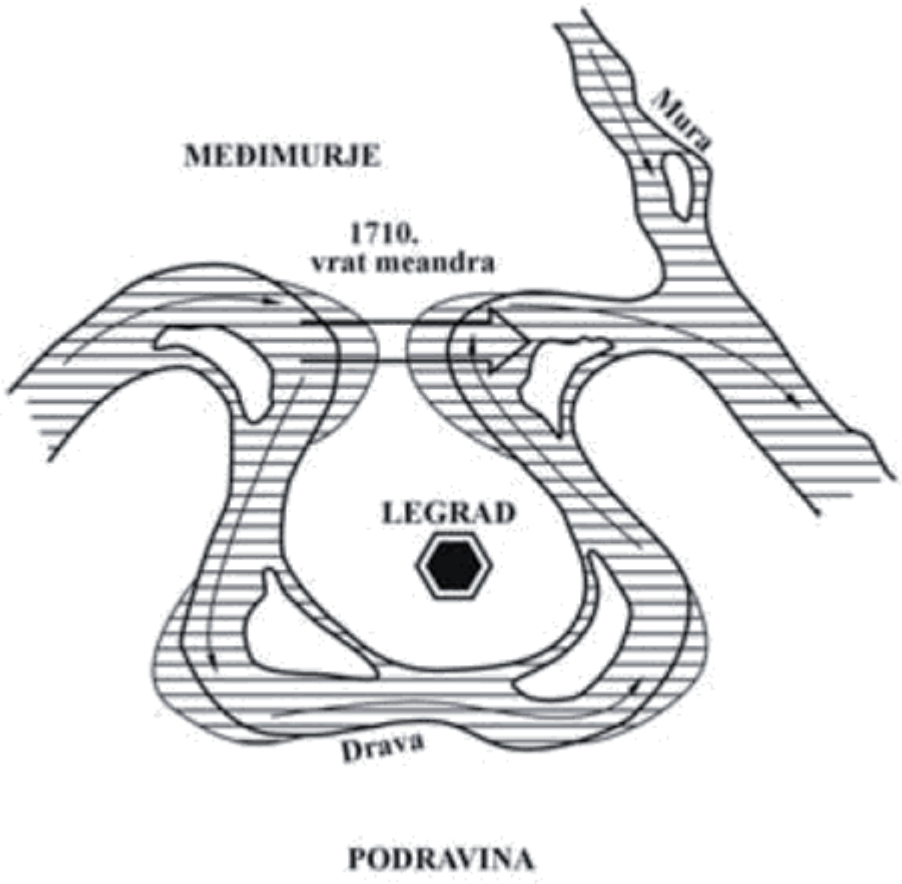
[3] *Sources:*
*a)*Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Croatia, 2013 (http://www.dzs.hr);
b) Official answer on inquiry of 25.2.2014 of the State Geodetic Administration in Croatia which indicates also 355 km with internal waters;
c) Hajdú (2004) also indicates the same figure (355 km)
d) The figure of 329 km is more frequently expressed in some atlases and documents (Atlas Hrvatske Leksikografskog zavoda "Miroslav Krleža", Programme document of Hungary-Croatia IPA CBC Programme), but 355 km as a more relevant figure will be kept in this paper.

[4] Terms are in Croatian. Hungarian the terms are *Muraköz (for Međimurje), Baranya* (for Baranja) and *Répás-kerület* (for Prekodravlje, according to Hajdú, 2006)

According to Glamuzina and Feletar (2001) the border changes between Croatia and Hungary can be analysed from two aspects: a) *microanalysis* by determining the border on the meandering rivers of Drava and Mura and b) *macroanalysis* by larger territory changes of the border between Croatia and Hungary. As of microanalysis it is important to emphasise that in this area Drava is already a typical lowland-river and in some Holocene sand and pebbles accumulation it meandered and significantly changed its river bed (*Figure 1*). It was necessary to determine the borderline, which will not change and depend on the river. *"Military land surveys conducted from 1781 to 1785 determined the borderline in the former Drava bed*[5] *which was later verified by Trianon Peace Treaty" (Glamuzina, Feletar 2001, p. 91).* The macroanalysis includes border changes between Croatia and Hungary where the most important are the borders in Međimurje, Prekodravlje and Baranja. Legally the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 had crucial importance, on which basis the demarcation of Hungary and the Kingdom of SHS[6] was carried out *(Klemenčić, 1991).*

Figure 1: The most known case of a Drava meander and change of its river bed / Legrad from town in Međimurje became town in Podravina in 1710;



Source: Feletar, Glamuzina (2001)

[5] Besides Glamuzina- Feletar (2001) Klemenčić (1991) specifies the 18th century Drava river bed as the same basis for defining the state border on Drava; furthermore edition "Geografija SR Hrvatske, knjiga 2" (1974) clearly indicates that Yugoslavian-Hungarian border passes through the old Drava river bed, following old meanders i.e. present oxbows.

[6] Kingdom of SHS/ Kraljevina SHS: Kingdom of Serbs, Croatians and Slovenes from 1.12.1918, later Kingdom of Yugoslavia

Croatian-Hungarian border area until 1102

Evolution of the boundary and the border can be followed from the beginning, from the time of the creation of the first Croatian and Hungarian states, but it is not clear where and how it was exactly formed. Croatian and Hungarian authors disagree under whose jurisdiction belonged the area located between Drava and Sava (medieval Slavonia) in the 10th and the 11th century (*Heka, 2008*). According to *Klemenčić (1991)* even at time in the 10th century, rivers Drava and Mura were undoubtedly making the border between the two countries.

"*The Croatian-Hungarian common border was forming from 896, after the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin. The border was at first a very wide zone type, (in Hungarian gyepű) and during three centuries it was narrowing to a border line. In the period of the Turkish occupation (1526–1686) the Croatian settlement area was expanding towards River Drava, so later Drava turned to be a border line between the two parts of Croatian-Hungarian Kingdom. After the Compromise between the two nations in 1868 the border turned to be administrative, political and constitutional. I also have to add that Croatia had very wide autonomy in the framework of historical Hungary*" (*Hajdú, 2006, p.18).

Croatian-Hungarian border area after 1102 and creation of a unified country

The joint Croatian-Hungarian history started to develop after the death of the last heir of *Trpimirović dynasty* (1090), followed by the fight for the Croatian crown and eventually with a short conflict. *Petar Svačić (in Hungarian: Svačić Péter)* was elected as the king in Croatia and Dalmatia, opposing Ladislas I *(in Croatian: Ladislav; in Hungarian: Szent László)* in Slavonia. It ended with the defeat and the death of Petar at Gvozd (Croatia) in 1097, which marked the end of the independent Croatian state *(Rajaković, Kljajić, 2013).*

The Croatian and Hungarian Union was founded after the coronation of the Hungarian Koloman (*in Hungarian: Könyves Kálmán)* as the Croatian-Dalmatian king in *Biograd na Moru* (*in Hungarian: Tengerfehérvár*) in 1102. The most common interpretation among Croatian historians is that the negotiated agreement (*lat. Pacta Conventa*)[7] was concluded in 1102 between the Hungarian king Koloman and Croatian nobility as the basis for forming a joint union. Anyhow, it has not been preserved in the original writing and the authenticity of the agreement was disputed[8], especially in Hungary. Hungarian legal historians prefer to support the idea that the relationship with Dalmatia and Croatia was similar to a personal union, i.e. with one joint king until 1526, whilst the status of Slavonia and its connection with Hungary was different. However, it is quite hard from historical resources to discover

[7] The geographical names were a bit different in the 11th century than today. Slavonia was a common name for the area between rivers Sava and Drava, while Croatia was the area embraced with Slavonia on the North and Dalmatia on the South. The Turkish invasion resulted with the gradual relocation of the population, including nobility and authorities to the Northwest part of nowadays Croatia, and it became the centre of political and administrative power. Instead of Slavonia, the area of Zagreb was already in the 16th century called Croatia and afterwards this name was used for the other parts of that region (Varaždin, Križevci etc.)

[8] The controversy lasts from the middle of the 19th century. Croatian historians tended to conclude that some kind of agreement had to exist due to a separate coronation of the joint king in Croatia, continued convening of Parliament (Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian) sessions and continuation of the viceroy (*in Croatian: ban*) service (Heka, 2007 and 2008).

more on the outlook of boundary/frontier/border in that period. The nowadays state border between Croatia and Hungary was definitively not peaceful and fixed and it was especially affected by the Mongol invasion in the middle of the 13th century.

Croatian-Hungarian border area after 1527 and joining to the Habsburg Monarchy

Significant changes affected the border area after 29 August 1526 and the Battle of Mohács, when Turks conquered majority of Hungary and Eastern Croatia. Habsburgs were elected in 1527 as the kings of Hungary and Croatia. Although Zagreb was never on contrary to Budapest occupied by Turks, they reached the outskirts of the town and both Hungarian and Croatian (*in Latin "Reliquiae reliquiarum olim inclyti regni Croatiae")* territories were shrunk to minimum. The threat of Turks and their invasion had negative direct and indirect impact for more than three centuries on the life in Hungary and Croatia. From the 16th century and still after 1699 and the Treaty of Karlowitz (*in Croatian: Mir u Srijemskim Karlovcima, in Hungarian: Karlócai béke*) the focus was on protecting from the possible Turkish invasion from the East. The Military Frontier (*Croatian: Vojna krajina; German: Militärgrenze)* was the strongest and the most important border formation.

It is not possible to define when and how the boundary on Drava became the border, due to scarce sources and disagreements among researchers. It received its constitutional character in 1868, but the process is not clear even in this period. The earlier quoted interpretation of Hajdú (2006) is closer to the real situation than that of Klemenčić (1991); however the time of forming of a border line is still questionable. The period of the Turkish occupation caused resettlements, but the Croatian territory was shrunk by the end of the 16th century to 16 800 km^2 only. Croatian settlement area expanding towards rivers Drava and Mura was limited and could mainly happen in the territories not occupied by the Turks, only up to the river strip close to Virovitica (*in Hungarian Verőce*) on the East. Drava and partly Mura were bordering rivers between that small unconquered area and the Hungarian territory invaded by the Turks from 1566 until the 80s of the 17th century.

The first real demarcation dates back to the second half of the 18th century, when the geodetic (the first official cadastre) and cartographic record was conducted, with creation of the first topographic maps (1763-87; in Croatian originally called*: Jozefinski premjer*). Land borders between Croatia and Hungary within the mapping have been marked on its largest part with the basis on, at that time Drava riverbed (*Blašković, 1976).* The status of Slavonia (Srijem, Virovitica and Požega counties) became questionable during the public-legal dispute between 1790 and 1848. Bilateral disagreements ended finally in 1848 by the only armed Croatian-Hungarian conflict in history[9]. It was the result on one hand of the growth of Hungarian national sentiment and desire to form a unified state that would include Croatia and on the other hand of the wish of Croatians to gather all South Slavs and to create their own state *(Heka, 2007).*

Border area after 1868 and the Croatian-Hungarian compromise

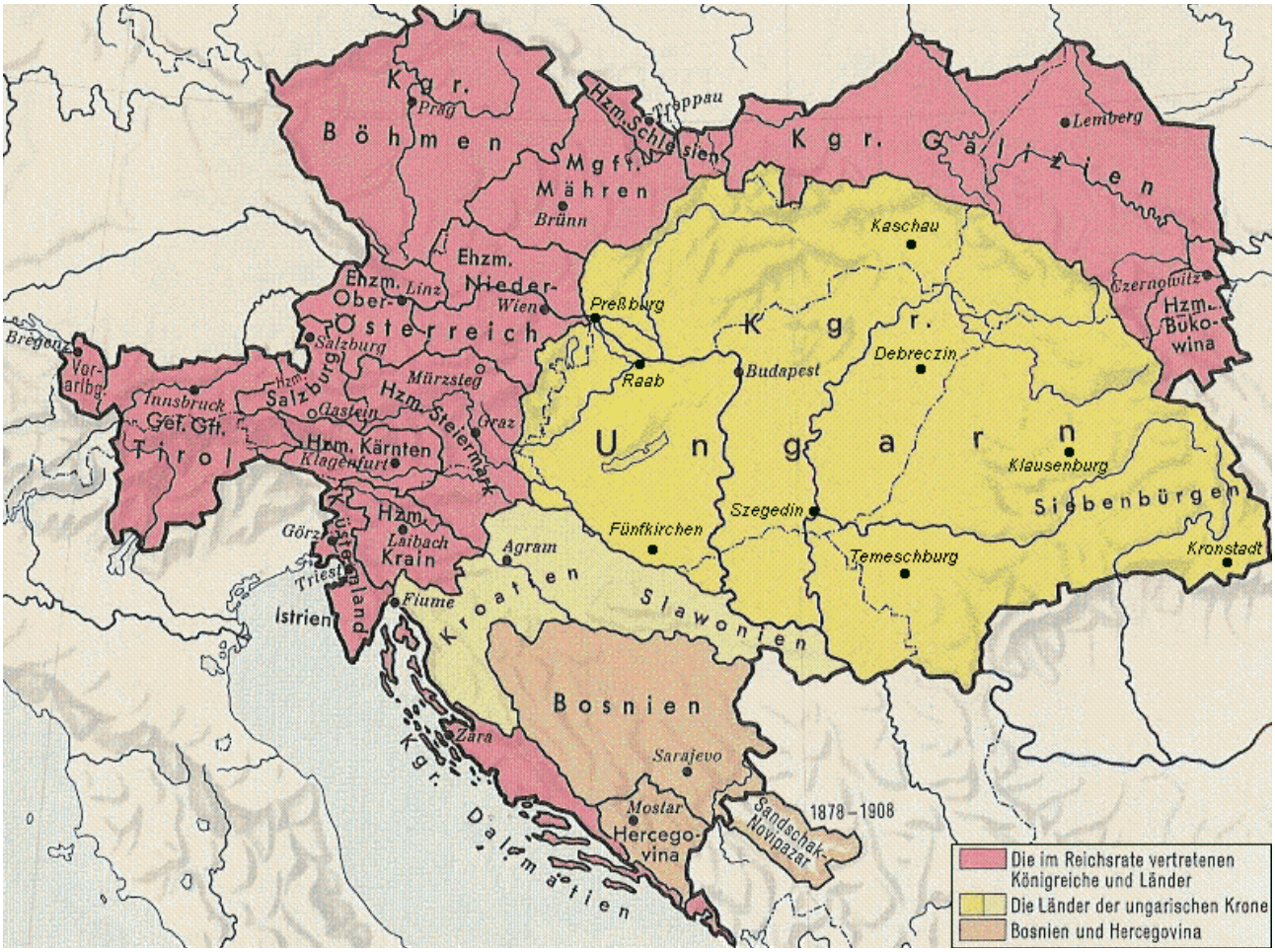
The 1848-1849 events proved that Croatians and Hungarians should conclude peace and try to negotiate since they were naturally oriented towards each other. Considering that almost a century

[9] If the battle at Gvozd (Croatia) in 1097 is excluded

has passed since the end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, an objective analysis of the Croatian-Hungarian relations, without political and emotional tones may be offered (*Heka, 2008*). In the Croatian-Hungarian Compromise (or Settlement) Hungarians recognised Croatia (Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia/Triune Kingdom) as the "associated part". The Sabor in Zagreb was officially labelled as the "Croatian parliament" instead of previous term "provincial assembly". Croatia was granted with a status of political nation with distinct territory and state borders, it got its own legislation together with complete autonomy in internal matters *(Heka, 2007).*

The Croatian-Hungarian Compromise was ratified (*Legal Article I of the Croatian Sabor and Legal Article XXX of the Hungarian Parliament*) just one year after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise in 1867. It was one of the most controversial legal articles in the history of Croatian and Hungarian joint state. Dalmatia was formally and legally a constituent part of the Hungarian and Croatian state union, but in reality it was a territory under Austrian control. The status of the city of *Rijeka*[10] remained unsolved. As two countries could not agree on the status of Rijeka, they left the problem to be solved by the Austro-Hungarian emperor. He decided that Rijeka would be a "temporary" special body affiliated to the Hungarian crown (*lat. Separatum sacrae regni coronae adnexum*) - *Figure 2*. Besides Rijeka - Baranya/Baranja and Međimurje were fully integrated in Hungary.

Figure 2: Map of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy



Source: „Atlas zur allgemeinen österreichischen Geschichte", Verlag Ed. Hölzl, Vienna 1966 (page 50)- http://members.a1.net/oswag/wago05.html

[10] In Hungarian the originally, Italian name *Fiume* has been used

River Drava was clear border line between Croatian and Hungarian entities and as a result of the Hungarian-Croatian compromise in 1868, Croatia kept its specific and distinctive[11] position. Both agreements (Compromises) brought a chance for further developments, industrialisation and urbanisation supported with building of the public roads and boom in the railway construction. The Drava River was a connecting link in that period and the Drava Valley functioned as a unique economic territory where the inhabitants of both sides of the river were in everyday contact (*Majdán J., 2013*). Railway network was developing fast, especially between 1867 and 1887. Still, investments in the railways were not always welcome in Croatia and were considered to be means of the Hungarian expansion, like the usage of Hungarian language for the names of train stations, rejected by Croatians.

The first ever railway on the nowadays Croatian territory was constructed in 1860 between Čakovec (*in Hungarian Csáktornya*) and Kotoriba (*in Hungarian Kottori/Kotor*). The first Drava railway bridge Kotoriba-Murakeresztúr dates back to the same time, as part of regional railway connection (Nagykanizsa-Pragersko/Slovenia) and was the first real transport connection in the border region. It was followed with the railway Pécs–Barcs–Nagykanizsa (1868). The Eastern part of the border area was covered by railway network from 1870: Villány–Magyarbóly–Osijek (*in Hungarian Eszék*). For Hungary access to the sea was of strategic importance, this motivated building of Kaposvár-Gyékényes–Zagreb–Rijeka railway, finished in 1873. Railway boom during those years was the largest ever in the border area – all later (re)constructions were minor comparing to that period. Some of the Drava train bridges and the lines established at the end of the 19th century (Barcs-Virovitica and Szentlőrinc-Sellye-Slatina) were even abolished later. The remaining ones miss significant improvement or they do not fulfil basic travel requirements.

Border area after the Trianon Peace Treaty and the end of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

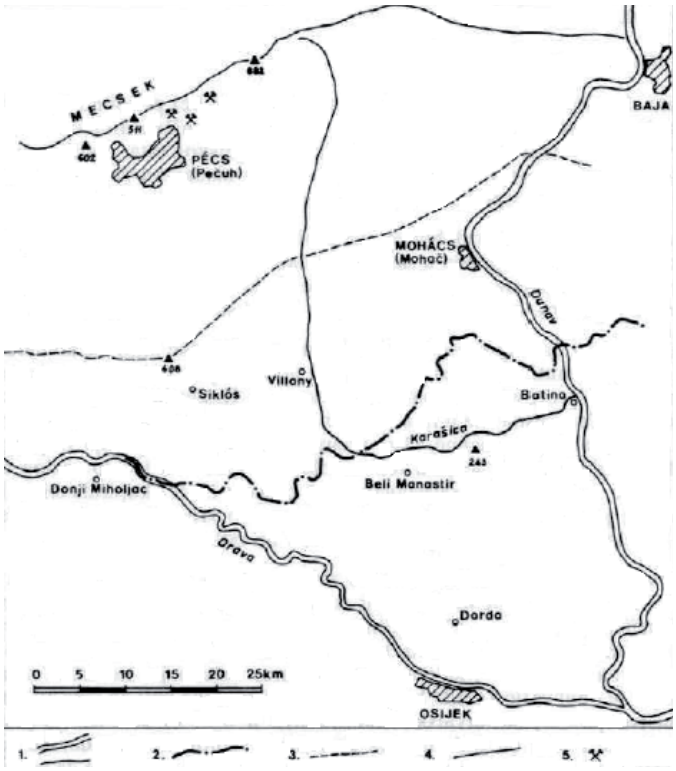
The next milestone in the historical development having the essential meaning for the nowadays Croatian-Hungarian border was the Paris Peace Conference held after World War I. At this marathon conference the fundamental principle of self-determination of the nation was at least verbally underlined. Croatia became a part of another multinational state union[12], whilst Hungary was established as a separate state. By signing the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920, the old Croatian-Hungarian border was mainly confirmed and became the border of the Kingdom of SHS and Hungary. The new border line was created (*see Figure 3*) in Baranja/Baranya – prior to the Trianon Treaty Baranja was always the Hungarian territory. Having a complex ethnic composition, besides Hungarians and Germans it has also been populated by Croatians and Serbs, a delimitation line was finally drawn in Baranja. Besides ethical, the border compromise was partly connected to economic reasons and the gravity area of Osijek *(Klemenčić, 1991).* The Southern part of the earlier Hungarian Baranya County was annexed by the Kingdom of Serbs, Croatians and Slovenes based on the Trianon Peace Treaty in 1920.

[11] An abstract (map) was taken from the Atlas of General Austrian History *(see Figure 2),* as in Hungarian or Croatian sources the status of Croatia within the dual Monarchy has not always been properly presented with colouring or border marking. Furthermore the tendency of questioning the Trianon Peace Treaty in Hungary in the last decade and expressing it by popular car stickers with the map of so-called "Big Hungary" has been especially problematic from the aspect of involvement of Croatia as a fully integrated part on the Hungarian side of Monarchy without any distinction with the other areas of the Hungarian part of the dual Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

[12] Kingdom of the Serbs, Croatians and Slovenes (*in Croatian Kraljevina SHS)*

Two more sectors of the border where it does not follow the Drava river bed were defined by the Trianon Peace Treaty: Međimurje and Prekodravlje. *Međimurje*, with the physical-geographical base on the Mura River, became a Croatian territory due to the ethnic composition and the will of the local population. The border in *Prekodravlje* slightly deviates from the river Drava. For centuries there were discussions about the border in Prekodravlje. According to Klemenčić (1991) the natural geographical base is the stream Ždalica. State Geodetic Administration in Zagreb[13] states that only Drava, Mura and Krka (*in Hungarian Kerka folyó*) are defined river borders and stream Ždalica has not been specified and defined as a physical basis for the state border. Edition *"Geography of the Socialist Republic of Croatia"*[14] mentions Ždalica as the old branch of Drava, which was formed after the river changed its flow to the South. Until 1870 and construction of the Gyékényes-Botovo railway bridge, Ždalica was supplied with the water, supporting the operation of several watermills. The railway cut the connection between Ždalica and Drava. The old river branch is nowadays dry during the most of the year, thus it does not present any geographical barrier. That small area close to town Koprivnica was populated by Croatians in the Middle Ages. In the 16th and the 17th century it was destroyed by Turks. At the beginning of the 19th century Prekodravlje was again populated almost fully by Croatian ethnicity, in two parishes (Gola and Ždala), which were founded by Zagreb bishopric (from 1854 archbishopric). Prekodravlje as Croatian territory was finally grounded in Trianon on the logic of respecting historical rights and ethnic reasons.

Figure 3: The border line in Baranya/Baranja drawn in 1990, shows current border line (marked with number 2), compared with larger territorial requests of Kingdom SHS (marked with numbers 3 and 4 on the map legend). Finally, border line agreed in Trianon was fully a compromise (so-called „Clemenceau line") and did not have any geographical basis.



Source: Klemenčić (1991).

[13] Official answer on inquiry of 25.2.2014 of Državna geodetska uprava/ State Geodetic Administration, Zagreb, Croatia: http://www.dgu.hr, (Class: 015-02/14-01/03, Number: 541-02-3/1-14-2)

[14] Institut za geografiju Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (1974): Geografija SR Hrvatske- knjiga 2, Zagreb, 1974

Border area after 1945 and creation of SFRY

The Trianon borders were altered at the beginning of World War II (WWII), when Hungary annexed Baranja and occupied Međimurje *(Klemenčić, 1991).* The Trianon borders were again de facto re-established immediately after WWII and legally confirmed by the Paris Peace Treaty of Yugoslavia and Hungary on the 10th of February 1947. Bilateral relations tended to increase in the post WWII period when Tito and Stalin co-operated between 1945 and 1948. Tito came in power and liberated Yugoslavia in the WWII with no debt to Soviets, but Stalin did not have the wish to treat him as his equal or allow, as Tito planned, to become the leader of a Communist Balkan federation *(Hornyák, 2010).* In the spring of 1948 Stalin unsuccessfully initiated a series of moves to purge the Yugoslavian leadership. In the ensuing war of words, economic boycotts and occasional armed provocations Yugoslavia was cut off from the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites and steadily became closer to the West. This affected relations between Budapest and Belgrade, creating tension in the border area. The Hungarian People's Army increased in size from two to fifteen divisions, but still nothing emerged to support the idea that the Soviet leadership at any time seriously thought about using military force against Yugoslavia. The only Soviet military measure known regarding Yugoslavia was a sabre-rattling manoeuvre on the Yugoslav border with Hungary *(Ritter, 2005).* Although concrete armed bilateral conflict did not happen, Hungary took special measures based on the request of Soviets.

That period downgraded the area – the border was closed, cutting the earlier connections. From twenty-six border crossings between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Hungary only seven "survived" in the socialist era. Based on the Soviet request borderland institution (originally in Hungarian: *határsáv intézmény*) was created in 1950, covering 9000 km^2, 300 settlements and 300 0000 citizens (*Bottoni, 2010*). Only with special permission it was allowed for people to stay in that border belt. Considered as the most endangered, 2446 people were relocated with their families from the parts closest to the border. Development of a Southern Defence System (*in Hungarian: Déli védelmi rendszer*) known also as Hungarian Maginot line (*Magyar Maginot-vonal*) with series of bunkers on the 623 km border section with SFRY started in 1951 and was completed in 1955.

After Stalin¢s death in 1953 relations between Hungary and Yugoslavia started to be less tense. In the Kádár era Yugoslavia was also observed as the country belonging more to the West. Although it was a communist county, it was not regarded as a Soviet satellite. The relief came to citizens living close to the border line with the 60s. Local (small) border traffic *(in Croatian: malogranični promet*[15]*, in Hungarian: kishatárforgalom)* became easier and was regulated by two bilateral agreements in 1965 and 1976 between SFRY and People's Republic of Hungary. A local border traffic band was set up in the width of twenty kilometres from the border line on both sides and crossing became easier to local citizens, without a visa and with special border crossing permit issued by the competent authorities. It rapidly increased the amount of travels over the border, which developed economic relations, mainly in the field of tourism to Yugoslavia in the 70s and travelling to Hungary for shopping. That period also saw cross-border bridge (re-)construction over Drava and Mura. E.g. border-bridge

[15] *„Sporazum između Vlade SFRJ i Vlade NR Mađarske o reguliranju malograničnog saobraćaja"*, bilateral agreement from 1976 between People's Republic of Hungary and SFRY was inherited by the Republic of Croatia and Hungary

Drávaszabolcs-Donji Miholjac originally built in 1908 and afterwards destroyed in the Second World War, was re-opened in 1974 after the three years of construction.

Border area after 1991 and Croatian independence, including the accession of both countries to the European Union

Croatia stepped out from SFRY and declared independence in 1991 (25 June/8 October), followed by the EEC/EU (and Hungarian) recognition on 15 January 1992. Croatia as the newly established country was recognised in its borders as the former Socialist Republic in the Yugoslavian federation. Former Yugoslavian-Hungarian border on its Croatian section automatically became the Croatian-Hungarian state border[16], without any later modifications. The legal basis for independency and EEC/EU official recognition was based on the conclusions of the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia (commonly known as the Badinter Arbitration Committee) in November 1991. It helped to end war conflict and to realise full integration of the country in 1995 and 1998 (Eastern Croatia). Border zone between Baranja and Baranya started to function in practice as the state border only from 1998. The consequences of the war on the Hungarian territory were not felt only indirectly by the large flow of the refugees and the negative impact on the spa tourism (e.g. Harkány), but by occasional military activities. Existence of unexploded ordnances (UXOs) and landmines on the Hungarian territory in Baranya, alongside the border line with Croatia was the outcome of such activities. Those contaminated sites were cleared from landmines and mainly from UXOs only at the end of 2013, within HUHR/1001/1.1.1/0006 *De-mine HUHR* project, financed in the framework of the Hungary-Croatia CBC Programme (http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/en/funded-project/46). The suspicion on some UXOs left in Baranya on the Hungarian territory still exists, but presents much less danger to the citizens than landmines previously (two incidents happened in the 90s).

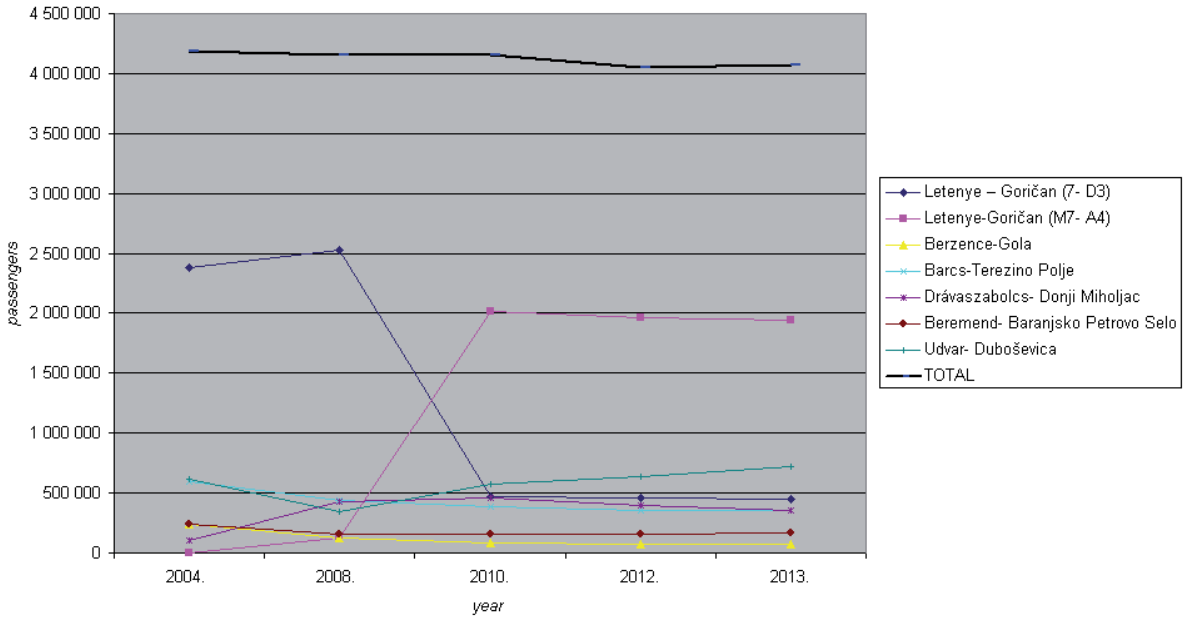
The fall of the „Iron Curtain", as well as the accession of both countries to the EU brought certain changes in the border area. The big boom of the road cross-border traffic started at the beginning of the 90s with the peak in 1996. The increased number of road passengers was a consequence first of much lower, especially food prices in Hungary, so daily shopping tourism became quite frequent and popular. As a second reason, Hungary hosted a lot of Croatian refugees during the war, which intensified cross-border activity in the first half of 90s. When the first malls were opened in Croatia in the year 2000, so later than in Hungary, interest for cross-border shopping fell down. After accession of Hungary to the European Union prices raised up, so there was no anymore reason to travel frequently over the border. As a consequence, a lot of small shops and businesses within Hungarian border settlements are abandoned, giving presently a quite depressive vision of the area (e.g. parts of Letenye or Berzence). The change of number of road passengers was much more turbulent between 1994 and 2003 than in the last ten years period, until 2013 *(see Figure 4*). The cross-border road traffic varied, up to maximum of 10,7 million passengers in 1996, followed by slight stagnating until year 2000, to

[16] As settled between SFRY and Hungary, border on its Croatian section remained until now. Even many of the bilateral agreements concluded between People's Republic of Hungary and SFRY have been inherited and remained in force until now, like the agreement from 1985 on the construction of cross-border infrastructure.

only 5,1 million passengers in 2003 (*Opačić, Crljenko, 2004),* whilst in the last years it is continuously around 4 million *(see Figure 4*).

Zagreb and Budapest and the Western part of the Croatian-Hungarian border area were connected via modern motorways (A4/M7) and the new bridge over the Mura River in October 2008. Common border became more open, especially after Croatia became EU Member State on the 1st of July 2013. With imminent accession to the Schengen Area, as the Croatian government plans to submit official application in summer 2015, it will be fully permeable. Still, cross-border area characterised with the geographical river handicap and strong language barrier[17], negative demographic trends[18], depopulation and low mobility presently suffers from large transport disconnection and periphery status in comparison to Budapest and Zagreb. Seven (7) road border crossings (*see Figure 4*) are not sufficient for proper road communication i.e. accessibility of the closest border-crossing by road is quite low[19] for the majority of settlements in the border area. There are growing cross-border contacts and partnerships, like Slatina and Szigetvár or small municipalities near Mura[20]. The lack of road border connections over the rivers disables possibility for establishing proper contacts *(Čelan, 2011)*.

Figure 4: Border road traffic data of the Croatian-Hungarian border section (2004-2013)



Source: Data provided by the Police Headquarters of Baranya, Somogy and Zala counties (Hungary)/Data are partly published at: http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/en/documents-draft-op- , in the draft Operational Programme (OP) and SWOT analysis for the new OP 2014-2020

[17] Two languages belong to very different families (Croatian to Indo-European and Hungarian to Uralic / Finno-Ugric). In other words bilingualism is definitively not a typical feature of the cross-border area. The number of the bilingual population, especially on the Croatian side is negligible. Without English proper communication is nowadays almost not possible.

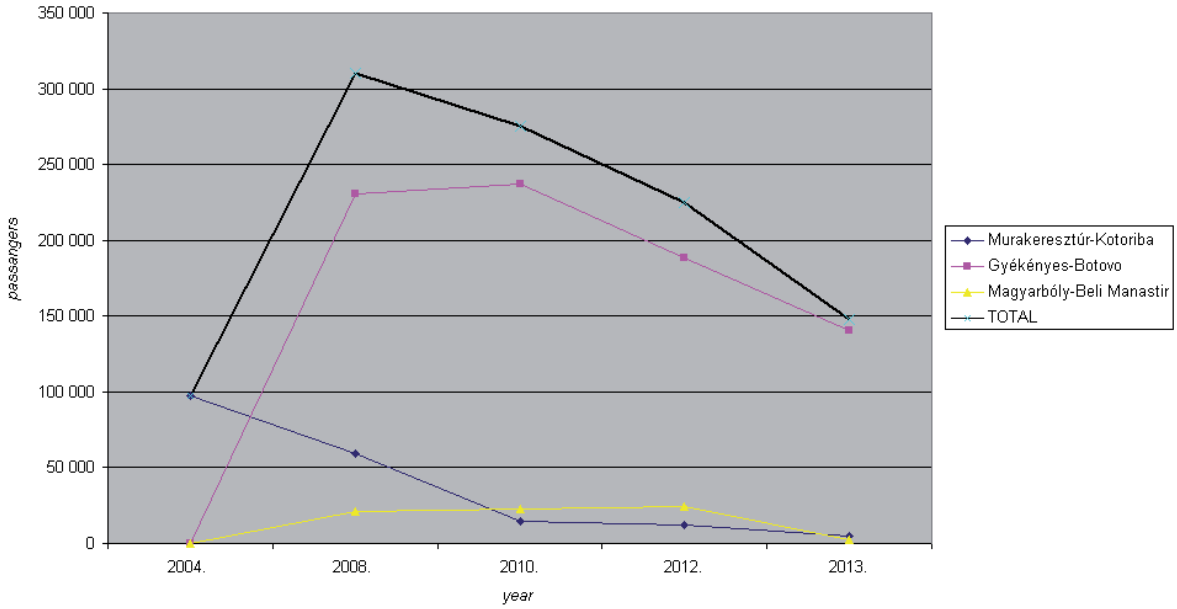
[18] *Sources: www.dzs.hr and www.ksh.hu (Censuses 2011 and 2001)*

[19] Source: http://www.ksh.hu/interaktiv/terkepek/mo/kozl_eng.html

[20] Mura Region EGTC (HUHR/1101/2.1.4/0004), project financed within the Third CfP of the HUHR CBC Programme with forming EGTC around the Mura River - http://www.hu-hr-ipa.com/en/funded-project/293

The tendency of road cross-border traffic in the last ten years was stagnating (*see Figure 4*) and with help of increasing tourism travels to Croatia since the end of 90s, it did not become more negative. Anyhow, border railway traffic (*see Figure 5*) is in much worse position in the last decade and the additional indicator of periphery position of the area. The international train from Zagreb to Budapest stopped operating in December 2008 via Murakeresztúr-Kotoriba border-crossing. Afterwards, only a local train was in function mainly for railway and customs clerks, connecting two cross-border stations twice a day, but it was finally also abolished. Besides that section on the West, there is no anymore cross-border railway traffic on the Eastern part as well (Magyarbóly-Beli Manastir crossing). At first, in December 2012 the international train from Budapest via Pécs and Osijek to Sarajevo was abolished. With the end of 2013 the local cross-border train stopped operating as well. Thus, currently the only Croatian-Hungarian railway border- crossing in function is Gyékényes-Botovo (Koprivnica). Abolishing two Inter-City (IC) lines between Budapest and Zagreb finally led at the end of 2012 to only one train per day operating via that border-crossing and between Croatia and Hungary. From December 2013 one IC train from Budapest to Zagreb was put back in function (now via Kaposvár), making the situation just slightly better. Due to frequent reconstructions and bus supplement usage on several small sections, travelling time between two capitals sometimes might last up to 10 hours.

Figure 5: Border railway traffic data of the Croatian-Hungarian border section (2004-2013)



Source: Data provided by the Police Headquarters of Baranya, Somogy and Zala counties (Hungary)

CONCLUSION

By examining relevant scientific sources in Hungary and Croatia, it is quite clear that there is full consent that the common border, colloquially often identified with the Drava River has retained its peaceful character through history. On its major parts it is one of the oldest European borders, despite relatively frequent Croatian-Hungarian disputes in the past. The time when Drava got the characteristics of the border has not been agreed. Croatian resources indicate the 10th century, while

Hungarian the 16th and the 17th century. In case of Hungary it is the only section of the country¢s boundaries with a long historical tradition. As of Croatia - it is the only fully settled state land border with the neighbouring countries. The Croatian-Hungarian boundary from geographical aspect is almost completely a dividing line between two areas, based on the strong physical basis. Determined by natural characteristics, boundary goes through the river areas of Drava (180 km), Mura (44,6 km) and small river Krka (1,8 km strip). The boundary defined by the rivers on its major part (64 % of the whole length) overlaps with the state border.

Historical pre-conditions as well as good bilateral relations re-established from 1990 were favourable for the developments in the joint border area, but have not been utilised properly. The most intensive modification of the role of the common border in the last century, with both Hungary and Croatia being the EU members, should have positive effect on mitigating the geographical river handicap and the negative psychological effect of the border. The transport and language barriers, furthermore the negative demographic trends, depopulation and low mobility in the Hungarian-Croatian border area need significant changes. There is an ongoing EU funded project in Hungary with the aim of defining new border crossings with all neighbouring countries, including Croatia. Preliminary results of the given project (*KÖZOP-3.5.0-09-11-2012-0003*) should be known in the first half of 2015. Sources of funding for possible new road infrastructure, including new bridges are questionable - such huge investments are rather expensive.

EU financed Hungarian-Croatian cross-border co-operation, existing from 2002 and functioning in a joint and integrated manner from 2007, might bring solutions on how to decrease negatively influencing factors. Growing connections between project partners and more funds available in the 2007-2013 period than earlier are positive changes, thus it is expected that the 2014-2020 CBC programme will be a step forward. Anyhow, desired cohesion of the area, furthermore forming of cross-border region has not happened (yet). Tendencies (transport, demographic, mobility) are quite negative and discouraging, but positively influencing factors might become more effective in the future.

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