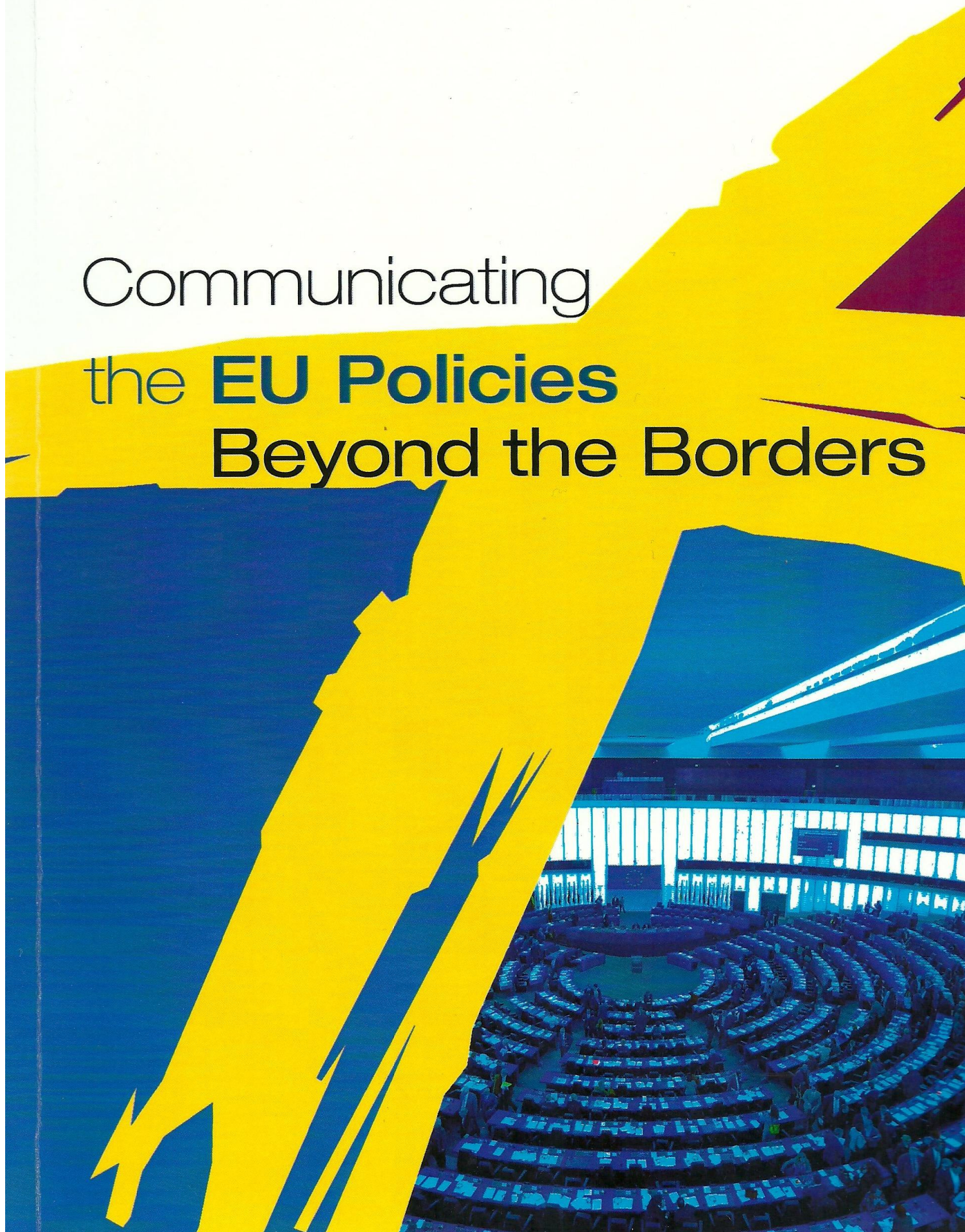


Ioan HORGHA

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Communicating
the **EU Policies**
Beyond the Borders



**COMMUNICATING THE EU POLICIES
BEYOND THE BORDERS**

**Proposals for Constructive Neighbour Relations and the
New EU's External Communication Strategy**

**Edited by
Ioan HORGA and Ariane LANDUYT**



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CONTENT

Ioan HORGA and Ariane LANDUYT ♦ Communicating the EU Policies beyond the/Its Borders.....	5
CHAPTER 1.....	23
Enhancing the EU External Relations: The Challenge of Identity Borders in Communication of EU Policies	23
Ioan HORGA ♦ Deepening / Widening EU Building versus Debordering / Rebordering of EU Frontiers	25
Alina MOGOŞ ♦ European Union Identity's Borders as Tools for Differentiating Inside-Outside EU's Policies.....	36
Adrian C. POP ♦ Media Misconceptions Concerning Identity Borders in Communication of EU Policies	52
Mircea BRIE, POLGÁR István ♦ Building a Common Memory as Fostering a Solid Image of the European Union beyond the Frontiers.....	63
CHAPTER II.....	75
The Prioritisation of EU's Enlargements. A Strategic Choice to Encourage Constructive Neighbour Relations	75
Ariane LANDUYT ♦ The Prioritisation of EU's Enlargements. A Strategic Choice to Encourage Constructive Neighbour Relations.....	77
Laura GRAZI ♦ EU Cohesion Policy: A Tool for Constructive Neighbourhood Relationships via Sub-national Actors. Lessons from the Eastward Enlargement.....	87
Silvia SASSANO, Elena SERGI ♦ The EU Communication Strategy on the Fifth Enlargement.....	106
Maria Manuela Tavares RIBEIRO, Isabel Maria Freitas VALENTE ♦ Portugal - Europe: Spaces Border and Cross-border Cooperation	123
CHAPTER III.....	133
New Approches in the Communication of EU's Border Governance	133
Carlos E. Pacheco AMARAL ♦ States, Frontiers and Power the Evolving Nature of Political Community and Governance.....	135
Alina STOICA ♦ Participative Democracy and the Fostering of EU's Neighbour Constructive Relations.....	140
Ana Maria GHIMIŞ ♦ Communicating the EU Political Priorities and the EU Member States' National Preferences as the New External Communication of the EU.....	156
Alina Sorina OROS ♦ Communicating EU Political Priorities to the EU member States and Third Countries.....	168

CHAPTER IV	183
The Security Dimension of the New EU's External Communication Strategy	183
Dorin I. DOLGHI ♦ Toward an EU Model of Security Governance within and beyond Its Borders.....	185
Alexis VAHLAS ♦ The Concept of Multilateralism as New Legal and Political Border of the European Union Foreign Policy	195
Edina Lilla MÉSZÁROS ♦ Security Dimension of New EU External Communication: the Duplicity of Borders as Surveillance and Access Points	209
Dorin I. DOLGHI ♦ New Security Challenges at the EU Eastern Borders.....	236
CHAPTER V	251
Communicating Socio-Economic Cohesion Landscapes in the EU	251
Jarosl�w KUNDERA, Mirela MĂRCUŢ ♦ Communicating the Socio-Economic Landscapes of the European Union	253
Mirela MĂRCUŢ ♦ Socio-Economic Cohesion within the European Union as a Trigger for More Constructive Neighbourhood Relations.....	258
Svetlana SUVEICA ♦ "Entering the EU through the Back Door"?! Debates on Romanian Citizenship for Moldovans	270
Szabolcs P�SZTOR, J�nos P�NZES ♦ Altering Periphery at the Border: Measuring the Border Effect in the Hungarian-Romanian and the Hungarian-Ukrainian Border Zones	283
George CONTOGEOGIS ♦ Dissemination on Borders	307
About the Authors	315

Portugal - Europe: Spaces Border and Cross-border Cooperation

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Abstract. *The border is an area of transition in time, but it becomes a relevant space of identities. Thus, the borders as spaces of confrontation and dialogue are both areas of consolidation and differences, whose multiplication generates its own identity and autonomy. As such, the Portuguese-Spanish border cooperation has proved to be of particular importance to the rigidity of blurring boundaries, to integrate territories to refocus peripheries. In this sense, were overcome mere local neighborhood relations and contacts were established increasingly close links between the two peoples and two states of the Iberian Peninsula. The consecration of territorial cooperation as one of the objectives of the nodal European cohesion policy was expressed in the regulations governing the Structural Funds - the REG (EC) 1083/2006 of 11 July (general provisions) and REG (EC) 1080/2006, 5 July (provisions on ERDF). The support there shaped devotes three strands of cooperation. Namely: Cross Border Corporation; transnational cooperation, interregional cooperation. And now is time to express another thought and emphasis on the aim of this work - analyse (albeit brief) theme Portugal - Europe: Spaces border, cross-border cooperation and to better clarify the issue above-mentioned study the Cooperation Programme Portugal-Spain border 2007-2013.*

Keywords: *Border, Community Regional Policy, Cross-border cooperation, Interregional cooperation: Portugal, Spain*

Border is a space of transition in time, but it becomes a space for significant affirmation of identities. Thus, borders as spaces of confrontation and dialogue are also spaces of consolidation or spaces of exploring the differences, the multiplication of which generates its own identification and autonomy. As such, the Portuguese-Spanish border cooperation has proved to be of special importance in diffusing the rigidity of the borders, integrating territories and refocusing on peripheries. To that end, mere local neighbourhood relationships were surpassed and increasingly close contacts were made between the two peoples and the two states of the Iberian Peninsula.

Reflections on the European borders

The majority of Europeans joined together voluntarily and not by force. For the first time, the unification was not the result of conquests but of the free choice of the peoples. In a continent so torn by conflicts and wars, this represented an unprecedented event. The challenges that the expanded Europe would need to face are, as we know, many and varied. Among them: which are the limits of Europe?

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If one accepts the idea that Europe is a concept and a state of spirit whilst being at the same time a geographical, historical space, a common market, then its limits can surely be expanded. I recall the words of Carl Hambrö, who in the '40s said that Europe did not exist, it never existed and it would never exist because it is the only continent where geography is not clearly identifiable.

For Robert Frank, the reality is exactly the opposite. That is, Europe is finally the only continent which is truly capable of building itself as an entity, precisely because its delimitation was never given by nature. Therefore, the fact that its identifying definition is open, because it is a product of history that did not reach its terms, represents an advantage. That uncertainty regarding the creation of a territorial dynamic is the basis for a dialectic relationship between those who are within and those who are outside. This is the dynamic that must overcome the obstacle that comes from the reflection between the constraints of expansion and the needs for a deeper consolidation. For the first time in history, this provided Europe with the opportunity to clearly define, at least for a certain period of time the geographic aspect of its political construction.

In this light we can raise some questions: shouldn't the problem of European borders be approached in relation with the factor of mobility, with the tendency to move the current borders, redefining within this relocation a new cartography of the spaces and the civic and identifying belongings? Or yet: what are the effects of European integration on the two Iberian countries in terms of identities, citizenship and borders? Are Portuguese and Spaniards "common Europeans"?

Where are Europe's borders? Which boundaries define Europe? The answer to the first question is a determination; the answer to the second implies accepting the problem of the European idea and its construction. And this is the perspective that Rui Cunha Martins adopts – that of the border as an organising mechanism of various European scales. The European debate continues to unequivocally signal the fact that the problem of borders is one of the greatest challenges of the European project. In the words of Fernando Catroga: "The border is a Proteus that can't be thought of under the sign of Narcissus."³

As we advance in the 21st century, in times of globalisation, it is imperative to critically question Europe, the old continent and today a new world that has to be rediscovered in its modernity – the effect of a historical convergence and a new geography that continues to be built, the interaction between the space, the political, the social, the cultural, the religious – a complex and multifaceted issues – today, and in the future, reactivated.

Portugal and Spain are among the oldest nation-states in Europe and each has a strong sense of national unity and mission.

After the revolution of April 1974, in Portugal, and the death of Franco in 1975, a democratic transition has taken place in the two Iberian countries. There was, then, their return to the international scene from which they had been relatively isolated during the dictatorship era.

Both Spain and Portugal were marginalised during the process of European integration for political reasons. In the '70s, the Portuguese and the Spanish democratic governments actively sought integration into the EU.

The Spanish and the Portuguese politicians hoped that joining the Union would help consolidate their democratic institutions, modernise their economic structures and normalise their relations with their European neighbours. They also saw the integration

³ Fernando Catroga, "Presentación," in Rui Cunha Martins, *El método de la frontera. Radiografía histórica de un dispositivo contemporáneo* [The method of the border. History radiograph of a contemporary device] (Salamanca : Ed. Universidad de Salamanca, 2007), 12.

into the EEC as a form of political maturation. It would also help align the politics of both countries with their European counterparts and accelerate the Europeanisation and democratisation of their archaic political structures.

Joining the Union set in motion a process of complex and multifaceted adjustments. The integration into Europe has had, and will continue to have in the foreseeable future, a profound effect on the Spanish and Portuguese societies. A significant fact is the impact on issues such as national identity and sustainability of the state's systems, of the social security institutions and on the adjustment of the political and economic structures.

The European integration also helped bring Spain and Portugal closer together. The improvement of the relations between the two countries has yielded significant results. For centuries, the Iberian countries shared the peninsula, but had few others in common. However, they played an important role in the process of European integration.

From a cultural point of view, the effects of their integration are also significant. In this way, they launched new processes of self-discovery. They have, in this way, reflected upon their own identities, culture, nationality, citizenship, ethnicity and politics. Their accession represented, without doubt, the victory of the principle of reality.

And if the process of integration into Europe strongly influenced these developments, could we say the same regarding the new European citizenship?

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Portuguese and Spaniards are in the process of becoming "common Europeans" and that many of the cultural differences that separated these two countries from their European counterparts have lessened as a consequence of their integration process.

The economic success can improve the political bonds and the relationship between Portugal and Spain. That is what happened starting with '80s, fact which can be reflected in more cultural exchanges and a greater political harmony.

In short, Portugal and Spain's accession to the EU was a decisive step but the issue of the Iberian and/or European citizenship and its impact on Portuguese and Spaniards remains open.

The words of Rui Cunha Martins illustrate this as well: "...In the beginning of the 21st century [Portugal] is better suited and more willing to reflect at other levels. At scales more directly implicated in its economic situation and deemed as more convenient...Regional scales, certainly. On Iberian scales, in short." In the opinion of this author, Spain represents therefore a referential scale. Thus, he adds: "... In light of this scale, the European border of Portugal is, more than anything else, the border with Spain"⁴.

Portugal-Spain – cross-border cooperation

The Community's regional policy, throughout its 38 years of existence, has sought the full integration of western European economies and the approximation of the levels of development between Member-States.

The emergence of this policy in 1975 is linked to the need to reinforce the

⁴ Rui Cunha Martins, "Portugal, La integración europea y la integración ibérica: reflexión portuguesa sobre las fronteras europeas" [Portugal, European integration and the Iberian integration: Portuguese reflection on Europe's borders], *Revista de Estudios Europeos* [Journal of European Studies], Valladolid, n.º 44, 2006 e "Fronteira e função: o caso europeu" [Frontier and function: the European case], *Mare Oceanus. Atlântico: Espaço de Diálogos* [Mare Oceanus. Atlantic: Space Dialogues], edited by Maria Manuela Tavares Ribeiro (Coimbra: Almedina/CEIS20, 2007), 117-128.

community's spirit in the light of worsening the imbalance in development which the strong economic growth registered in Western Europe starting from the beginning of the '60s was not able to attenuate, and that became even worse. Simultaneously, and with the goal of fulfilling its objectives, EFRD was created that same year. This European Fund of Regional Development was designed to give financial support to the initiatives that sought to correct Inter-regional asymmetries.

With Greece's entrance into the European Economic Community in 1981, and that of Portugal and Spain in 1986, the differences between the richer and poorer regions were accentuated. In recognising this reality, Manuel Porto defends the view that great emphasis should be given to regional politics, essentially for reasons of three types. «One of them is of an ethical-social and political nature, as it is not fair that the populations in underprivileged regions live in conditions much lower than what is considered to be acceptable or the average of the country or space in question (...). Another reason is of an economic character, and takes into consideration the external disparities resulting from the excessive concentrations seen in more developed regions and urban areas, placing into question not only the growth but the levels of social satisfaction of its residents (...). In the third place, it is currently acknowledged, (...) with the facilities afforded by new technologies of communication and informatics, the regional promotion can be a way of increasing the overall growth of countries, with a much more complete and efficient use of resources' spread throughout their territory (...).»⁵

In fact, the Community's regional policy in general and the European Territorial Cohesion Policy in particular, currently so central in the European debate, are strategic priorities of the European Union (EU) through which the integration and the reduction of economic and social disparities of multiple regions of the EU are sought.

Thus, the European Territorial Cooperation aims at reinforcing, in conjunction with the strategic priorities of the EU, the joint interventions of the Member-States in initiatives of regional development.

It is not too much to recall that the adoption of the Territorial Cooperation as one of the nodal objectives of the European Cohesion policy was expressed in the regulations related to Structural Funds – Reg (EC) 1083/2006, of 11 July (general provisions) and Reg (EC) 1080/2006, of 5 July (provisions on the EFRD).

The support incorporated there establishes three fronts of cooperation. Specifically:

- Cross-border cooperation: promotes the development of economic, social and environmental activities through the joint strategies in the border territories of the EU. It is worth highlighting here the importance of POCTEP, the Portugal/Spain Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013;
- Transnational cooperation: it seeks the territorial integration in large groups of European regions to leverage a sustainable, harmonious and balanced development of the EU. In this sense, two programmes stand out: SUDOE – Southwest European Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 and POCTEA – the Atlantic Space Transnational Cooperation Programme 2007-2013.
- Interregional cooperation: has as its great objective the support of networking through cooperation, exchange of regional and local experiences in the entire EU area.

⁵ Manuel Porto, *Teoria da Integração e Políticas Comunitárias* [Integration Theory and European Policies], 4^o edição (Coimbra: Almedina, 2009), 380-381. The same text is also published in *Compêndio de Economia Regional* [Compendium of Regional Economy], ed. José Silva Costa (Coimbra: APDR, 2002), 624-625.

For the pursuit of this goal, various programmes were created, among which, INTERREG IV C - Innovation and Environment. Regions of Europe sharing solutions; ESPON – dedicated to the making of studies in the areas of land-use planning and its cohesive and sustained development; INTERACT – which deals with the issues of good governance of territorial cooperation programmes and URBACT – for the promotion of exchanges between cities regarding the theme of integrated urban development.

It is now the time to express another thought and accentuate the objective of this work – to analyse (even if in a summary manner) the theme of *Portugal – Europe: Border spaces, cross-border cooperation* and for a better clarification of the issue in the title to study the Operational Programme of Portugal-Spain Cross-border Cooperation 2007-2013.

In this context there is also an analysis of what preceded the approval of the “Programme of Cross-border Territorial Cooperation: Spain-Portugal (2007-2013)”, on 25 October 2007.

Therefore, and seeking the preparation of a Programme proposal, the Portuguese Republic and the Kingdom of Spain created a cross-border Working group that integrated national and regional entities of the two countries, such as the Financial Institute for the Regional Development from Portugal and the Ministry of Finances, from Spain. The work of this commission took place during 2006 and, in February 2007, a programme proposal jointly created by the two Member-States was submitted to the European Committee.

Within it, there are reflected five major priorities that translate into specific objectives with the aim of full insertion of these underdeveloped regions in the European space through cooperation programmes between them. As an example to clearly illustrate this issue, one can call to mind which priorities were identified. Priority I – Joint Cooperation and Management for the Fostering of Competitiveness and the Promotion of Employment, Priority II – Joint Cooperation and Management in matters of Environment, Heritage and Risk Prevention, Priority III – Joint Cooperation and Management in Land-use Planning and Accessibilities, Cooperation IV – Joint Cooperation and Management for Socio-Economic and Institutional Integration, Priority V – Technical Assistance to the Process of Cross-border Cooperation.

If we want to make an outline, we could emphasise that the action of the community policies for the Portugal-Spain Cross-border Region, based on this proposal, started to apply primarily to the improvement of the “connectivity and basic infrastructures of the border areas and the definition of a new approach that seeks to increase competitiveness, foster employment and reinforce the socioeconomic and institutional integration of the cross-border regions”⁶. In fact, there was an epistemological break with the objectives of the previous cross-border cooperation programmes between the two countries, quite concretely within the scope of the INTERREG Community initiative, in the years of 1990-1993, 1994-1999 and 2000-2006.

From what has been said, we easily understand that the new Cross-border Cooperation Programme approved for Portugal and Spain is fully integrated in the objectives of then-*Lisbon Strategy*, which are to develop, as previously mentioned, the joint cross-border activities in the economic, social and environmental areas that have in view sustainable territorial development.

In general terms, the “Operational Programme of Cross-border Cooperation: Spain-Portugal (2007-2013)” has four main axes that translate into five major priorities (the same as those proposed by the Work Commission in 2007). They are:

⁶ Cf. *A Nova Política Regional Europeia* http://ec.europa.eu/Portugal/imprensa/question/cooperacao_territorial_transfronteirica_espnha_portugal_pt.htm.

1. Support and give incentives to business activities, the expansion of SMEs and the development of cross-border tourism, culture and commerce
2. Joint management and protection of the environment and risk prevention
3. Support of the connections between urban and rural areas and the reduction of isolation, improving access to transportation, information and communication networks, as well as cross-border access to the supply of energy and water and waste management services.
4. Support of cooperation for joint development and use of infrastructures, equipment and common services in areas such as health, culture and education.⁷

Operational Programme of Cross-border Cooperation: Spain-Portugal (2007-2013) – five major priorities

Priority	EU Contribution	Public Counterpart Total	Public Counterpart Total
1: Joint Cooperation and Management for the Fostering of Competitiveness and the Promotion of Employment	93 630 953	31 210 318	124 841 273
2: Joint Cooperation and Management in matters of Environment, Heritage and Risk Prevention	76 754 454	25 584 816	102 339 272
3: Joint Cooperation and Management in Land-use Planning and Accessibilities	58 173 774	19 391 258	77 565 032
4: Joint Cooperation and Management for Socio-Economic and Institutional Integration	22 802 434	7 600 812	30 403 246
5: Technical Assistance to the Process of Cross-border Cooperation	16 044 359	2 831 358	18 875 717
TOTAL	267 405 970	86 618 564	354 024 540

Source: http://ec.europa.eu/portugal/imprensa/question/cooperacao_territorial_transfronteirica_espanha_portugal_pt.htm.

In effect, this programme incorporates a multitude of measures that when adopted leads to a new type of cross-border cooperation, as we mentioned earlier. The focus of this programme, in its multiple facets, is, therefore, the promotion of a greater and better articulation of synergies between the main regional, national and community actors in the cohesion policy with the goal of augmenting the development of underprivileged regions and, in this way, to contribute to the full materialisation of the 2020 Strategy.

The POCTEP - Portugal/Spain Cross-border Cooperation Programme provides for the concession of Community aid for the seventeen NUTS III border regions in both countries and seventeen adjacent NUTS III regions, in the pursuit of the objective of European territorial cooperation.

We believe that it is helpful, within this context, to also mention that “the original regions that were eligible for the programme, the NUTS III regions, represent 23.5% of

⁷ Ibidem.

the Iberian Peninsula, 10.6% of the total population and 9.6% of employment rate. The GDP in that zone is 7.5% from the total GDP of the Iberian Peninsula.”⁸

Therefore the “Operational Programme of Cross-border Cooperation: Spain-Portugal 2007-2013” foresees the following division of financing by priority sector, in euros.

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⁸ Ibidem.

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COMMUNICATING THE EU POLICIES BEYOND THE BORDERS

This book is a synthesis of the conclusions of the Jean Monnet Multilateral Research Group entitled *Initiative and Constraint in the Mapping of Evolving European Borders* (www.borders.cvce.eu; www.iser.rdsor.ro) that was implemented between 2011 and 2013.

The book shows the importance of including EU policies and actions in the European Union's communication strategy. More specifically, the book emphasizes the role of policies in building a more solid image of the EU role with regard to its internal action and its external dimension. The book provides a large overview on the impact of borders in communicating European policies and on the manner of developing constructive neighborhood relations. The border serves as a delimitation tool for defining the inside versus outside EU policies, as well as the external communication of EU policies.

The volume has chosen to unfold five of the multitude of the EU's external communication directions:

- The Challenge of Identity Borders in Communication of EU Policies
- The Prioritisation of EU Enlargements
- The Communication of EU's Border Governance
- The Security Dimension of the New EU External Communication Strategy
- Communicating Socio-Economic Cohesion Landscapes in the EU

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