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AN ANALYTICAL VIEW OF REGIONAL GOVERNANCE IN CROSS BORDER COOPERATION: CONCEPTS OF PROTECTED AREAS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN A CROSS BORDER CONTEXT

Abstract:

Transboundary Protected Areas (TBPA) represent a potential strategy for sustainable cross border development. Experts consider them to be versatile tools for cross border cooperation in the areas of environmental protection and peacebuilding.

Against the backdrop of public planning of these protected areas, the chapter will analyze the case of a TPBA nature park, Írottókó-Geschriebenstein, located alongside the Austro-Hungarian border. On the conceptual level, the analysis will focus on large scale protected areas and regional development, and on the organizational institutional level, on regional governance. Írottókó-Geschriebenstein nature park will serve as a model for discussing the framework conditions necessary for protected areas to play a role in cross border cooperation at the interface of different political systems. Which mechanisms need to be considered for TBPA to act as stimuli or even models of regional development based on regional governance?

Despite common ideas and statements in support of the cross border nature park on the part of both Austria and Hungary, numerous barriers to cooperation seem to persist. From an analytical standpoint, trust, legal frameworks and jurisdictions, weak transfer links and bureaucracy, in addition to different manifestations of responsibilities as a civil society constitute those fields of action that are partly superimposed on the matters of content and need to be addressed on a deeper level in cross border cooperation.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the case of cross border cooperation, regional governance tends to be sluggish in organization, not least due to the overarching EU targets that are only partly adaptable to voluntary self governance in a TBPA scenario.

Keywords:

Transboundary Protected Areas, Regional Development, Regional Governance, cross border cooperation, EU Structural Funds policy