

## THE PLACE OF TOURISM IN OPERATIONS OF SELECTED EUROREGIONS IN POLAND

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**Abstract:** *The Place of Tourism in Operations of Selected Euroregions in Poland.* This article is devoted to tourism in programmatic actions of different Euroregions in Poland. The paper shows the essence and assumptions of Euroregions in Poland. There is presented the characteristics of Euroregions in particular Polish borders. The data analysis of tourism attractions in selected Euroregions finished the article.

**Key words:** region, Euroregion, border and transborder regions, tourism in Euroregions, foreign partners

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### Introduction

The today's world characterizes a progressive globalization and economic integration. More and more countries perceive the need of cooperation which is resultant from their geographical location, historical and economical relations or cultural connections, homogeneous natural areas, and the need of making contacts with inhabitants of neighboring territories. Everywhere there, where the political climate favors establishing of cooperation and societies do understand the need for taking up mutual actions, there is a real chance to create Euroregions.

The border and transborder regions fulfill across the border the role of bridges, making the chance of economic development of these territories. The agreement of border regions about the transborder cooperation is described as the *euroregion*.

The notion of "euroregion" comes from the name of the oldest initiative of the transborder cooperation "EUREGIO", which was created in 1958 in the area adhered to the Duchy-German border and means the agreement which has the regional character, made to solve concrete problems related with areas on the each side of the border, possessing institutions called on the basis of the international contract between the national, council or local organizations<sup>1</sup>.

On the evolution of the cooperation a huge impact exert initiatives of the local communities, cooperation in the many areas of life and realization the idea of "Europe citizens" without borders, prejudices, or the cultural differences, which are the result from differences e.g. experience from the recent world war. The region should characterize the network

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<sup>1</sup> <http://winfoniemcy.index.asp> – The Polish-German Chamber of Commerce – Commerce and Law/Euroregions – 2009

connections, which consist of the interior flow productions, the mutual use of infrastructure, production, the migration of population, transferring the information, but also mutual care for the condition of the natural environment, economic, cultural and tourist cooperation.

The aim of this elaboration is to present the description of Euroregions in Poland and their activities in terms of tourism on the chosen examples.

### The description of Euroregions in Poland.

The process of regionalization in Poland started the Neisse – Nisa – Nysa Euroregion (which includes three borderlands of Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany) in 1991.

The Euroregions in Poland are the principles of structures, arisen on the principles of contracts between communes associations situated on the opposite sides of the border, which “came into being in order to promote the regional culture, border tourism or to stimulate the exchange trade and labor market”<sup>2</sup>. The basis for regulation of that relations are international contracts (known as Treaties) which Poland subscribed with Germany (in 1991 about good neighborhood and friendly cooperation), with the Czech Republic (about the border cooperation and contracts relating to the small border movement), with Ukraine (in 1993), with Belarus (in 1991), and with Russian Federation (about development of direct contacts and cooperation between the regions). Separate documents regulate the relationships of the Republic of Poland and Kaliningrad Oblast, where parts, among the other things, declare the trade exchange and functioning of the free economic zones.

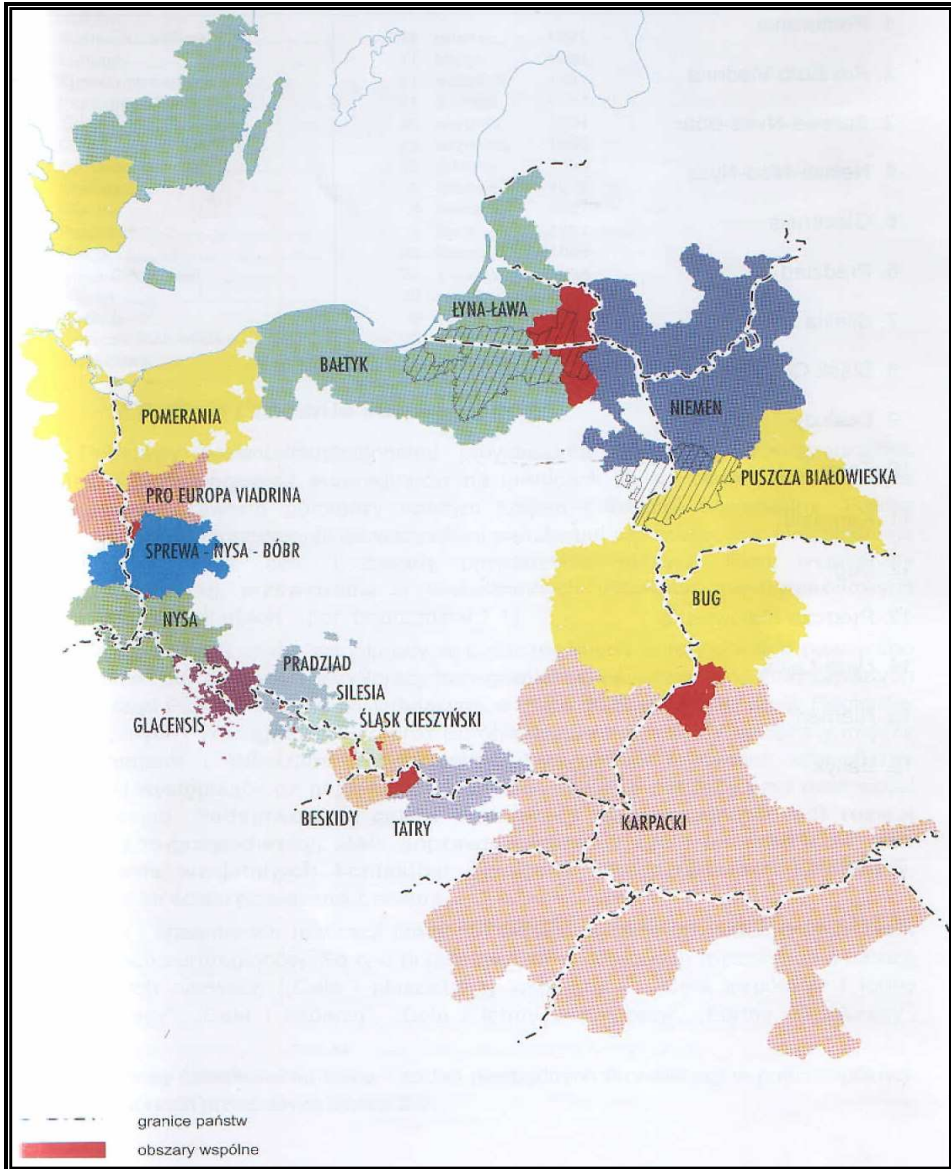
In the last few years 16 euroregions were formed on Polish borders. The table and the map configuration below present it.

**Table 1.** Euroregions in Poland

*Source:* Self-elaboration based on the Euroregions statutes.

	Name	Members	Year
1.	The Neisse-Nisa-Nysa	Poland-the Czech Republic-Germany	21.12..1991
2.	The Carpathian The Carpathia Mountains	Poland-Slovakia-Ukraine-Romania-Hungary	14.02.1993
3.	The Spree-The Nysa-The Bóbr	Poland-Germany	21.09.1993
4.	The Pro Europe Viadrina	Poland-Germany	21.12.1993
5.	The Tatra Mountains	Poland-Slovakia	26.08.1994
6.	The Bug River	Poland-Ukraine-Belarus	29.09.1995
7.	The Pomerania	Poland-Germany	15.12.1995
8.	The Glacensis	Poland -the Czech Republic	5.12.1996
9.	The Neman River	Poland-Belarus-Lithuania	6.06.1997
10.	The Pradziad	Poland- the Czech Republic	2.07.1997
11.	The Baltic See	Poland-Denmark-Lithuania-Russia-Sweden	22.02.1998
12.	The Teschen Silesia	Poland-the Czech Republic	22.04.1998
13.	The Silesia	Poland-the Czech Republic	20.09.1998
14.	The Beskid Mountain	Poland-the Czech Republic-Slovakia	9.06.2000
15.	The Białowieża Forest	Poland-Belarus	25.05.2002
16.	The Łyna River – The Ława River	Poland-Russia	4.09.2003

<sup>2</sup> S. Czarnow: "Niektóre aspekty prawne współpracy transgranicznej i euroregionów", "Państwo i Prawo" 1997, book nr 10, p. 61



**The map 1. Euroregions in Poland**

**Source:** Euroregiony na granicach Polski 2007, Statistic Department in Wrocław, Wrocław 2007, p. 21

### **The General characteristic of Euroregions in Poland**

Below, the characteristics of individual Euroregions is presented, with division on their geographical location

#### **I. The west border.**

**The Neisse – Nisa – Nysa Euroregion** is the first Euroregion in the west and simultaneously the first, which came into being in Poland. The region includes three border areas in the heart of Europe, which touch the borders of Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany. The association include currently 34 communes from the Jeleniagóra province, Zielonagóra from the Łęknica and Przewóz communes and also

from the Legnica province. The main aim is, among other things, leading to create conditions to recreation and touristic movement on the international scale in this "mutual, integrated, holiday and touristic region" but also the promotion of the cultural and historical values.

**The Spree-The Nysa-The Bóbr** is the Polish-German euroregion which occupy nearly the center position in Europe. The superior aim is versatile activities for the border areas of RP and Germany. The Lubuskie Tourism Organization and the Tourist Movement Association in SNB Euroregion are partners. Thanks to their activities the idea of bicycle path on the territory of the euroregion was born.

**The Pro Europa Viadrina Euroregion** was created in 1991 r. The main aim is to support the border partnership and cooperation, supporting the regional identity, tourism promotion, the youth exchange and the environmental protection. To Polish part contain 28 municipalities from the Lubuskie Province and to Germany part Frankfurt on the Odra River. Tourism development cases, among other things, is run by the Working Group for Tourism Euroregion cases, Lubuskie agreement of PTTK (Polish Tourist Country-Lovers' Society) departments, the Ecological Culture Foundation and the Dolnyśląsk Tourism Organization.

**The Pomerania Euroregion** came into being in 1995r. The German part consists of four districts, two cities from the Maklemburgia terrain and two from the Brandenburgia district. The Swedish part consist of 33 communes from the Skania region. Most of the West Pomeranian communes creates the Polish part. Tourism has a significant impact for euroregion's development, especially if we take into account the environmental beauty, interesting history and diverse cultural offer. It allows developing different offers, among other things, in boating, active and qualified tourism segments.

## **II. The east border**

**The Bug River Euroregion** covers terrains placed in the middle part of the Bug River and was formed on 30 April 1992. It's main aim is to develop neighboring cooperation in: regional development, transport and communication, the nature and environment protection, the industry, the trade exchange, the agriculture and the agricultural production, the education and the scientific research, the health protection, the culture and the art, tourism (to create the Border Tourism Information Center near to the Chelminski Tourism Information Center)

**The Neman River Euroregion** was created in 1997 to improve, among other things, the standard of living of the local people on the border of four countries: Poland (the Mazurie and Suwałki Region), Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast), Lithuania and Belarus. The Working Group for tourism cases is involved in tourism in the Euroregion cases. It has started to work on preparation and realization of: assumptions of tourist development strategies, conditions formation for the border, tourism, and brand name development, development of the drill conception of the tourist movement service system and conducting the mutual marketing researches, the tourism market analysis but also to establish cooperation of the tourism organizations<sup>3</sup>.

**The Białowieża Forest Euroregion** was formed on 25 Mai 2002. It is the international association of the local community at the Polish and Belarusian side of the border. The area covers the unique, on Europe and the world scale, complex of the primeval Białowieża Forests. The Polish part is situated in the southeastern part of the Podlaskie Province. The main aim of the euroregion is the border cooperation with neighboring territories of Belarus and Poland, supporting the economic, social and cultural development, sport events and tourism (on condition of balanced development in the forest terrains). The Euroregion promotes especially the bicycle tourism.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.niemen.org.pl](http://www.niemen.org.pl) – 2009 rok

### **III. The North border**

**The Baltic See Euroregion** came into being on 22 February 1998. It is the one of the biggest organizations in Europe (with respect to number of partners, territory and people living in this areas). It include on the Polish part: the Pomeranian and Warmian-Masurian Provinces, the Russian Federation: Kaliningrad Oblast, Lithuania: the Klaipeda Region, Latvia: the Courland Planning Region, Sweden: Blekinge, Kalmar, the Kronoberg Provinces and in Dania - the Bornholm Island. With regard to location, landscape and the cultural values. Tourism has the great importance. Our trumps are: the seaside location, the natural conditions, Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia agglomerations (as the Baltic metropolis), the transit location, the international airport, the seaports, well developed accomodation base, experiences from international cooperation.

**The Lyna River – The Ława River Euroregion** is the newest euroregion in Poland. The founding assembly took place on 14 March 2003. This association is the international association of the local government districts of Warmian-Mazurian Provinces and Kaliningrad Oblast regions (Russia).

### **IV. The South border**

On the southern borderland are located the most Euroregions in Poland.

**The Carpathian Euroregion** was created in 1993 and includes about 1540000 square kilometers, where live over 15 millions of people. The part of the Euroregion is located in the west border of Poland, which is the exterior border of The European Union and includes the part of Subcarpathian Province in Poland and some regions of Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania.

**The Tatra Mountain Euroregion** was created in August 1994 in Nowy Targ by virtue of agreement between Poland and Slovakia. The seat of the Euroregions are cities: in Poland Nowy Targ and in Slovakia Kieżmark. It covers about 8000 square kilometers. There are the most beautiful terrains on the both Polish and Slovakia sides. It has the unique natural values, touring and cultural. There are five national parks: Tatra National Park, Pieniny National Park, Babia Góra National Park, Gorce National Park and Slovak Paradise National Park.

**The Glacensis Euroregion**-it is the Polish-Czech contract that was signed on 5 December 1996 in Hradec Kralove. At present 31 communes on the Polish side and 84 cities and districts on the Czech side are members of the Euroregion. The main aim of the cooperation is to tighten the community contacts who live on the both sides of the border through organizing and supporting mutual undertakings on the field of tourism, sport, culture and education.

**The Pradziad Euroregion**-it is the Czech-Polish association, which was created on 2 July 1997. Some communes are members on the Polish side and there are over 70 of them on the Czech side.

**The Teschen Silesia Euroregion**- was created on 22 April 1998. The Euroregion is situated on the border terrain of the southern Poland and the northeast Czech in the close neighborhood with Slovakia. It covers the terrain of over 1400 square kilometers, where live over 680000 inhabitants. The most significant tramp of this euroregion is its tourism attractiveness. The famous tourist places, rich network of railway and bicycle paths or magnificent monuments are only some factors that influence the attractiveness of this region.

**The Silesia Euroregion** was formed on 20 September 1998. The Polish side creates the Commune Association of the Upper Odra Basin and the Czech side creates the Association of the Polish-Czech Cooperation of the Opava Silesia. On the Polish side there are 29 communes and on the Czech side there are 58 communes and 3 members supporting: the Silesian University in Opava, the District Chamber of Commerce Band and the Silesia Motherland in Opava. The secretariat to the Euroregion creates two offices: Racibórz and Opava.

**The Beskid Mountain Euroregion** was created on the basis of the „Beskids without borders” agreement, from the initiatives of the local government and the Beskids communes of the Polish-Slovak-Czech borderlands from 9 July 2000. Currently on the Polish side 27 communes and 3 districts belong to the euroregion, 63 communes on the Czech side and 62 in Slovakia. It covers the terrain of about 5000 square kilometers where live over million of people. The main aim is to provide the balanced economic, social, cultural and tourist development. There was elaborated a conception of the tourism plan from Beskids and integrated system of the touristic movement service. There are promoted all forms connected with qualified tourism (among other things, mountaineering, and ski and bicycle tourism).

**The Euroregions participation in tourism development.**

Almost in each euroregion tourism development is a statutory task. Very often is called organizational unit (e.g. the commission or the working group) which occupies the tourism affairs. In case of e.g. the Polish-Belarusian border euroregion analysis, such organs were not called<sup>4</sup>. Tourist problems through all members of particular associations are realized. Euroregions in this scope cooperate with the Local and Regional Tourism Organizations (functioning in their terrains) and some of them with the Polish Tourism Organization. According to Studzieniecki „tourism is one of the most frequent mentioned issues, realized through framework of the international cooperation in the transborder terrains that are called Euroregions<sup>5</sup>. Tourism operations (called „trans border tourism”) are indicated in most of the documents connected with the euroregion members' cooperation. In the table number 2 is shown the detailed analysis of the statutory records concerned with tourism.

**Table 1.** The aim and tasks of Euroregions in Poland  
*Source:* Self-elaboration on the basis of the Euroregions' statutes.

Euroregion	The aim and tasks
<b>The Pomerania</b>	To undertake mutual actions for regular and balanced development and to approach its inhabitants and institutions in the euroregion terrains; to support the European unity idea; to cooperate and exchange the scientific, occupational, youth and cultural groups; to develop the economic cooperation; know-how exchange, the technology transfer; to create the complex system of informational order to exchange the information.
<b>The Pro Europe Viadrina</b>	To assure good neighbor relations between Polish and German people; to improve the border inhabitants welfare through formation of a future Polish-Germany transborder economic region; to promote the idea of the European unity and agreement.
<b>The Spree-The Nysa-The Bóbr</b>	Activities to develop the border land, economic, culture, science and education, health and social protection, to develop the system of technical and social-service infrastructure; striving to improve the economic potential; cooperation to prevent and fight against the catastrophe and natural disasters; population integration from the region through formation of conditions and favor direct contacts; the Republic of Poland activities about the euroregion operations.
<b>Neisse-Nisa-Nysa</b>	To improve the transborder information exchange, to elaborate and promote the developmental priorities for euroregion areas; to create mutual, integrated holiday area; to use the funds from the help programmes; to support the communes, districts and other subjects, according to euro regional objectives of development.
<b>The Glacensis</b>	To support activities in the field of: European integration process, cooperation with physical planning, natural environment protection, cooperation in the field of economy and business area, the technical infrastructure, cooperation in border tourism development, the cultural exchange, cooperation in the field of social and humanitarian aid, the mountain emergency services cooperation, cooperation in the field of education system and physical education system.

<sup>4</sup> Organizacyjno – Prawne uwarunkowania funkcjonowania euroregionów i rozwoju turystyki trans-granicznej w Polsce, Tomasz Studzieniecki/ in. Turystyka w ujęciu podmiotowym i przestrzennym: człowiek – przestrzeń – przedsiębiorstwo, Naukowy review. G. Golembki, Poznań 2006, p. 247

<sup>5</sup> T. Studzieniecki, Euroregions – New potential destinations, Tourism review, AIEST, vol. 60/2005

<b>The Pradziad</b>	To support cooperation in the field of: the physical planning, the natural environment; improving the economy level and standard of living, cooperation with fire and disasters elimination, cooperation with tourism development, the cultural exchange and mutual care about the cultural heritage, improving the social interactions, cooperation in the field of social and humanitarian aid
<b>The Silesia</b>	To start the mutual actions through: improving the citizens' standard of living, supporting the infestations and the economic programmes, unemployment counteracting, supporting the idea of the European unity, cooperation and exchange of the social, science, professional and cultural groups, to improve the natural environment condition, mutual cooperation in case of the natural disasters and catastrophes, constructing the complex information exchange system, the editorial work.
<b>The Teschen Silesia</b>	To support activities in the field of: the information and experience exchange connected with region development, solving mutual problems in case of the transport, communication and citizens safety, tourism development, education, sport and culture development, the school and the youth cooperation in the terrain of the euroregion, solving the mutual problems connected with the ecology and with the natural environment.
<b>The Beskid Mountain</b>	The euroregion society integrated and local democracy building process development, economy development activated especially through building the transborder cooperation connections, to care for the nature sources wealth and the natural environment, the human potential development and improving the standard of living of the euroregion's citizens.
<b>The Tatra Mountains</b>	The transborder activities directed to regular and balanced development of the region but also the citizens and the institutions approach with reference to the historical experiences.
<b>The Carpathian Mountains</b>	The organization and activities directed to cooperation between the members in the economy, ecology, culture, science and education field, developing facilitating contacts between the experts, developing the good neighbor contacts and help in making contacts with organizations, agencies and institutions.
<b>The Bug River</b>	The border areas cooperation development in the field of: the land development, communication, transport, education, health, culture, sport and tourism, the natural environment protection, the natural disasters and dangers elimination, contacts development between the citizens and transactors.
<b>The Białowieża Forest</b>	To support activities leading to: natural environment natural sources protection, cooperation in the field of ecology, culture and tourism; social and economic, cultural, scientific and educational exchange; maintain the unique complex of the Białowieża Forest.
<b>The Neman River</b>	To develop activities in the field of: economy, the land development, the public infrastructure, education health, culture, sport and tourism, environment protection, the natural disasters and dangers elimination, contacts development between the citizens, the institutional cooperation but also transactor cooperation.
<b>The Łyna River – The Ława River</b>	To tighten relationships between the members of the association, to maintain and develop the good neighbor cooperation, to support activities connected with economic development; to counteract unemployment, the care for ecology development and the environmental protection, cooperation in the field of transport, communication, security, education and sport, tourism, to improve the living standards of the local citizens.
<b>The Baltic See</b>	To improve the living standards of the local citizens; to develop the good neighbor contacts; to approach the local communities; to break the historic prejudices, the activities for the each side towards balanced development, to support the activities between the regional and local authorities development.

### **The analysis of tourism activities made in selected Euroregions**

To the analysis following Euroregions were exposed: the Pro Europe Viadrina, the Pomerania and the Baltic Sea. At the beginning the amount of members/partners in each euroregion was compared. Their number and the euroregion's area size could be the element that determinates its attractiveness.

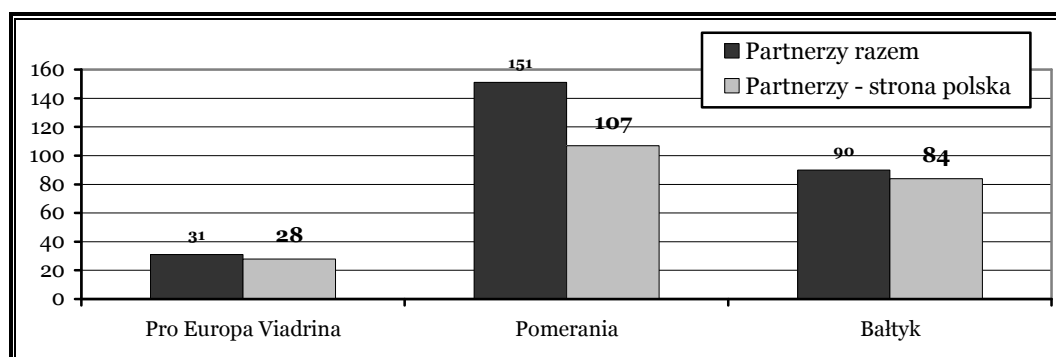
### 1.1. The amount of members

**Table 3.** Partnership in the researched Euroregions

*Source:* Self-elaboration based on the Euroregions statutes.

Euroregion	Poland	Foreign partner	Total
The Pro Europe Viadrina	28 communes	<b>German side:</b> (3) 2 districts, 2 cities (Frankfurt, Oder)	<b>31</b>
The Pomerania	10 districts 97 communes	<b>German side:</b> (11) 8 districts, 3 cities <b>Sweden side:</b> (33) 33 communes	<b>151</b>
The Baltic Sea	4 districts 80 communes	<b>Russia side:</b> (1) Kaliningrad Oblast <b>Lithuania side:</b> (1) Klaipeda County <b>Danish side:</b> (1) Bornholm County <b>Sweden side:</b> Counties: Blekinge, Kalmar, Kronoberg,	<b>90</b>

Below in the diagram is shown the configuration of partners from the analyzed euroregions.



**Diagram 1.** Partnership in the analyzed Euroregions

*Source:* Self-elaboration based on the Table 1.

To analyze the above mentioned facts, we can state that most partners possess The Pomerania Euroregion, and in this way have a big chance to acquire the financial means, to realize more tasks and to undertake them in the more attractive terrain, what, as an effect, decide about the choice of this euroregion as the most popular tourist's movement destination. With relation to other analyzed euroregions, Pomerania possess most of foreign investors. From 258 partners 41,5% represents the polish side, where in case of the Baltic Sea and Pro Europe Viadrina there are 48% of them in our country. In programme of the neighborhood Poland- Belarus-Ukraine there are 40% on our side, but it is a result of not big, mutual number of partners in relation to the rest of the chosen Euroregions.

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