

MANAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN BORDER AREAS ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE CIESZYN SILESIA EUROREGION

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to present Cieszyn Silesia as a modernly managed Euroregion. The paper highlights the advantages of this tourist destination as well as the importance of efficient tourism development management in border areas, including the creation of good neighbourly relations based on mutual respect for national differences as well as undertaking mutually beneficial cooperation based on partnership.

Design/methodology/approach: The research included studies of specialist literature in the field of territorial marketing, devoted to both Euroregional cooperation and instruments supporting the development of tourism in border regions. A total of 24 publications in the form of monographs and scientific articles were used, as well as source materials obtained from the Cross-Border Tourist Information Centre in Cieszyn. An important source of information on the cooperation of the authorities of Polish Cieszyn and Czech Těšín was also an individual in-depth interview (IDI) conducted with the Chairman of the Silesian Railway Association in Cieszyn, Mr. Ladislav Antalc.

Findings: The article emphasizes the need to ensure managerial responsibility and sustainable development of local tourism, which involves taking into account the economic, social and aesthetic needs of various stakeholder groups on both sides of the border. In addition, selected tourist attractions of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion are described.

Research limitations/implications: In the future it would certainly seem worthwhile to carry out representative marketing research, among both actual and potential tourists mainly from Poland and the Czech Republic, in order to identify those elements of the tourist offering of the Cieszyn Region that can be modified and further optimized.

Practical implications: Effective management of tourism development in the border Euroregion of Cieszyn Silesia brings many benefits to local governments, residents, tourists, investors, travel agencies, hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. The article also discusses the main elements of the tourist offering and the advantages of Euroregional cooperation.

Originality/value: The results of the conducted analysis have both cognitive and utilitarian value, especially in the context of developing and implementing a strategy for promoting the tourist offering of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion.

Keywords: Polish-Czech cross-border cooperation, Polish-Czech borderland, Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion.

Category of the paper: General review.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, tourism is considered to be an activity that is important for people's health, for the functioning of regions with tourist attractions and appropriate infrastructure, as well as for the economy of a given country due to its share in the creation of GDP. In the European Union, tourism generates almost 10% of GDP and creates about 25 million jobs (Rapacz, 2020). It should also be noted that tourism, despite its spatial dispersion, is linked with almost all sectors of the economy and constitutes its "flywheel". The tourist attractiveness of individual regions and the intensity of tourist traffic have a significant impact on the development of the tourism industry. In some border regions, tourism plays a leading role in socio-economic development.

Scientific research often addresses the issue of the tourist attractiveness of specific areas. Although previously it was believed that the attractiveness of a region is determined by its tourist attractions and the existing tourist facilities, currently it is assumed that an important element influencing the tourist attractiveness of a region is the way in which tourist traffic is organized, and especially the promotion and the service offered to tourists (Kruczek, Walas, 2012). In addition, more and more emphasis is currently being placed on the aspects of sustainable tourism (Reformat, Pabian, 2020). Sustainable tourism is based on such a method of management that the economic, social and aesthetic needs of various stakeholder groups are met while preserving natural processes, biodiversity and the cultural and economic integrity of a given Euroregion. Therefore, the conditions necessary for the development of tourism in border areas include, among others, an abundance of tourist sights, natural attractions, a clean natural environment, protection of natural resources, as well as providing tourists with the infrastructure they expect, including accommodation and catering facilities.

The main segments of tourists in border regions include the following:

- inhabitants of border regions, i.e. neighbours from across the border,
- people travelling through a given Euroregion in transit,
- domestic tourists interested in active tourism and contact with nature,
- foreign tourists seeking unique landscape attractions,
- school youth and students (Kuśmierski, Dudkiewicz, 2002).

Moreover, it is estimated that by 2030, approximately 29% of tourists will be people aged 60+, making it one of the largest market segments (Rapacz, 2020).

International tourism serves to accelerate and deepen European integration (Merski, 2002). State and local government authorities, entrepreneurs, associations, foundations and other non-governmental organizations become involved in the development of tourism. The creation of Euroregions would not be possible without the activity of local communities living in the borderlands. Sometimes cooperation is sparked by unfavourable phenomena and the need to tackle them, such as illegal immigration; fires caused by reckless tourists; trampling of paths;

littering of forests and waters; noise; air pollution from cars; destruction of vegetation; disturbance of wildlife, etc. Politics often plays a significant role in the development of tourism, e.g. with regard to public transport and spatial management (Gaworecki, 2002). The patterns of behaviour of the residents and tourists in terms of spending leisure time also have a significant impact.

2. Tourism marketing in border areas

The focus of broadly understood territorial marketing is on both the material and non-material values of specific places, i.e. the infrastructure, people, tourist and natural attractions, economic and cultural potential, place brand, image and other attributes (Raftowicz-Filipkiewicz, 2013). Marketing is one of the basic instruments for stimulating demand in economic activity in a competitive market, including the tourism market. Awareness of customer behaviour and needs is the basis for the business decisions of tour operators, travel agencies, hotels, restaurants, ski lift operators, etc.

Another challenge for territorial marketing is virtual marketing, often referred to as e-marketing or “territorial marketing 2.0”. This kind of marketing is an inexpensive way of reaching millions of potential recipients who are interested in conducting business in a given territorial unit, purchasing local products or services, or participating in local events. Studies have shown that in recent years the Internet has become a key tool in territorial marketing (Avraham, Ketter, 2008). This tool has enormous potential in reaching the recipients of the entire spectrum of activities in the field of territorial marketing and can certainly be used much more extensively (Gregor, Gotwald, 2011).

The implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in territorial marketing also offers great opportunities. AI is an interdisciplinary field of science that deals with the creation of computer programs capable of performing tasks that, if performed by humans, would require intelligence (Russell, Norvig, 2021). Artificial intelligence helps in finding solutions that minimize the costs associated with customer acquisition and retention, as well as increasing the effectiveness of promotional activities (Szpringer, 2024). This is achieved through creative solutions and applications, such as real-time content personalization; marketing automation; email marketing and newsletters; mobile marketing automation; live chat; database search and mining (Big Data Marketing); automatic sales chat; inbound marketing; customer lifecycle management; customer recommendation systems; the creation of advertising campaigns; social media posts, and many others. The primary goal of these tools is to obtain and maintain a competitive advantage over other territorial units, which can be regions, cities, districts and municipalities. These activities are addressed to residents, tourists, investors and other internal and external stakeholders. AI means that city authorities are able to offer their customers better tailored

products and services, and consequently experiences that translate into their commercial success.

The key factor in building the competitiveness of tourist areas and enterprises is information technology. Their communication capabilities cannot be overestimated. Apart from being a communication platform, their important attributes include assistance in completing transactions and building relationships (Bednarczyk, 2011). The effectiveness of promotional activities implemented in border regions depends on a range of factors, but the most important role in the process of providing tourist services is played by direct customer service, which includes the staff, their professional preparation and genuine commitment (Wiatrak, 2017).

3. Euroregional cooperation

Euroregional cooperation as a specific institutionalized form of cross-border cooperation has a relatively long history. Much has been done within its framework to improve neighbourly relations based on mutual respect for differences and partnership cooperation. In addition, the European Union has made it an instrument for stimulating peripheral and lagging regions.

The borderland phenomenon becomes particularly visible when such an area starts to experience a new pace of development caused by the ongoing changes (Hojny, 2006).

A Euroregion is not only a geographically separated area characterized by a certain level of economic development, which determines its inhabitants' standard of living. It is also the customs, views, manners and lifestyle of its inhabitants that distinguish them from their neighbours (Nemčok, 2002). In this context, it is very important to prepare tourist guides for intercultural communication. It is necessary to remember that this type of communication is based on empathy and on understanding representatives of foreign nations, and at the same time on striving to be understood by them during a conversation in a foreign language (Staniewska-Ziętek, Wołoszyn, 2013). And it is not only about the grammatical correctness of statements, but also about understanding the context, metaphors, etc.

The border region is, by definition, directly connected with the state border. Thus, in such areas there may be social problems related to historical events and there is a mixing of cultures, folk customs, national languages and local dialects, which can result in both genuine interest and friendship as well as hostility. There is no denying that in Cieszyn Silesia there were also some antagonisms and mutual hostility between Poles and Czechs. These were primarily related to the Polish-Czechoslovak war over Cieszyn Silesia in January 1919, the annexation of Zaolzie by Poland in October 1938, or the dispute over the areas around the cities of Kłodzko and Racibórz in June 1945. Fortunately, all the above examples occurred in the fairly distant past.

A region is understood as a separate, relatively homogeneous area, distinguished from adjacent areas by natural features. A Euroregion is a separate unit including the area of two or more countries, which is a form of cross-border cooperation structure between regions of EU member states and also EU neighbouring countries. A Euroregion is therefore a form of cooperation and connection, the opposite of dispersion and atomisation (O'Dowd, 2003).

The creation of a Euroregion involves the representatives of local and regional self-government units, and sometimes also other social and economic stakeholders of border areas. Euroregions prove to be advantageous as a form of cooperation and activation of peripheral border regions (Greta, 2013).

The specificity of several Euroregions located on the Polish and Czech sides of the border was comprehensively discussed in the monograph “Funkcjonowanie euroregionów na pograniczu południowym Polski” [The Functioning of Euroregions on the Southern Border of Poland] (Santera-Półgrabi, 2015). Additionally, an interesting description of the implementation of territorial marketing tools and strategies in the Czech Republic based on the example of the Kingdom of Wallachia, located next to Cieszyn Silesia, can be found in the following work (Rumpel, Siwek, 2006).

4. Cieszyn Silesia as a Euroregion

There are 16 Euroregions within Poland's borders. These include the following (in order of creation):

1. Neisse-Nisa-Nysa Euroregion (1991, Poland/Germany/Czechia),
2. Carpathian Euroregion (1993, Poland/Slovakia/Ukraine/Hungary/Romania),
3. Spree-Neisse-Bober Euroregion (1993, Poland/Germany),
4. Pro Europa Viadrina Euroregion (1993, Poland/Germany),
5. Tatra Euroregion (1994, Poland/Slovakia),
6. Bug Euroregion (1995, Poland/Ukraine/Belarus),
7. Pomerania Euroregion (1995, Poland/Germany/Sweden),
8. Glacensis Euroregion (1996, Poland/Czechia),
9. Neman Euroregion (1997, Poland/Lithuania/Belarus),
10. Pradziad Euroregion (1997, Poland/Czechia),
11. Baltic Euroregion (1998, Poland/Russia/Lithuania/Sweden/Denmark),
12. Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion (1998, Poland/Czechia),
13. Silesia Euroregion (1998, Poland/Czechia),
14. Beskidy Euroregion (2000, Poland/Czechia/Slovakia),
15. Białowieża Forest Euroregion (2002, Poland/Belarus),
16. Łyna-Ława Euroregion (2003, Poland/Russia).

The socio-political changes in Central Europe after 1989 made it possible to start developing cross-border cooperation between Poland and neighbouring countries. The Czech Republic became one of the most important cooperation partners for Polish local governments. Currently, the Polish-Czech borderland, alongside the Polish-German and Polish-Slovak borderlands, is a model example of innovative cross-border cooperation (Lewkowicz, 2019).

From the perspective of tourism, the most attractive part of the Silesian Foothills is the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion. It is a region characterized by cultural and regional distinctiveness. Its inhabitants have a strong sense of identity, which is certainly connected with the fact that this land used to be part of the Duchy of Cieszyn, located around the city of Cieszyn and the Olza River. Today, Cieszyn Silesia is divided by the state border into two parts, one belonging to Poland and the other belonging to the Czech Republic (Těšínské Slezsko). The territorial location of Cieszyn Silesia is shown in Figure 1.

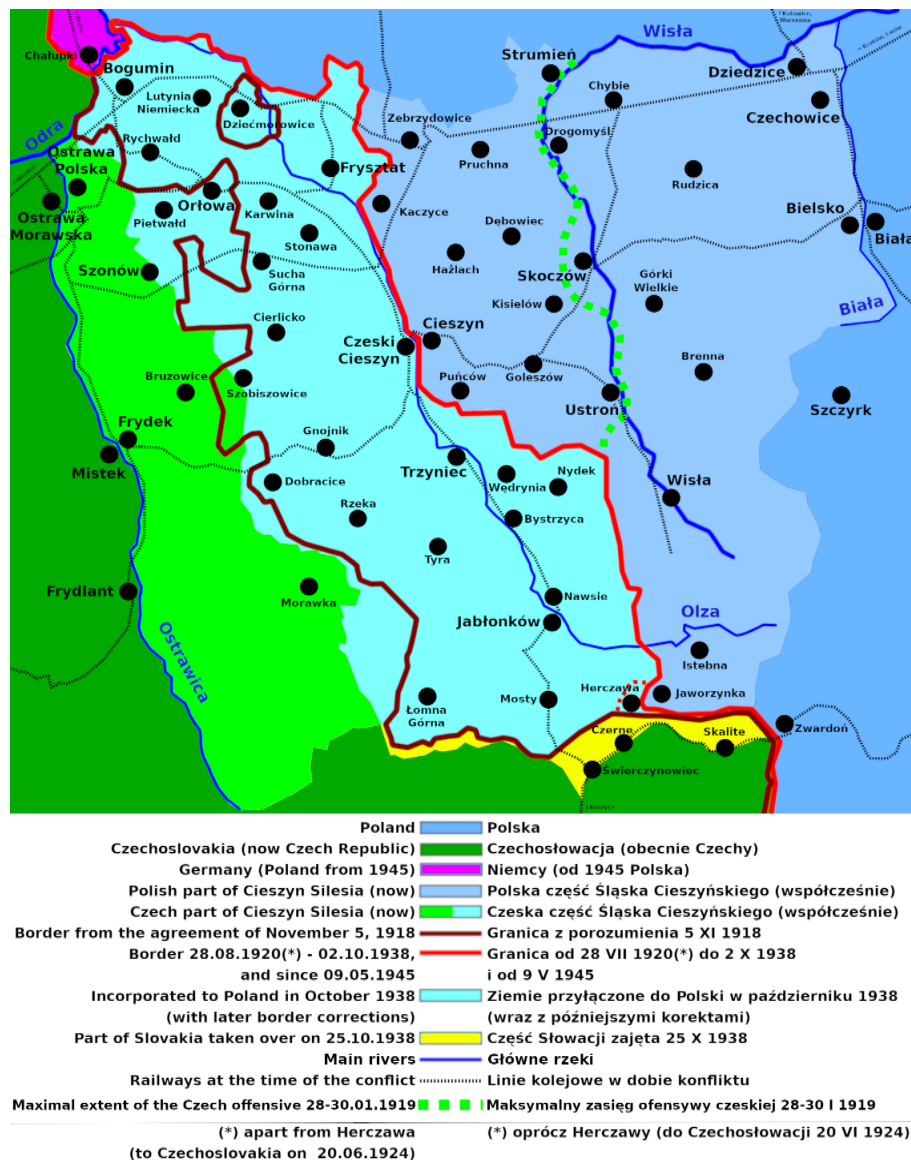


Figure 1. Cieszyn Silesia.

Source: www.euroregion.olza.pl/index2/index.php

Cieszyn Silesia is a historical region in Poland and the Czech Republic in the southeastern part of Silesia, around the city of Cieszyn and the Olza River. It covers an area of approximately 2,280 km². These lands are inhabited by over 800,000 people (approximately 460,000 on the Czech side and 350,000 on the Polish side). The main cities in the Czech part are Ostrava, Karviná, Frydek-Mistek, Havišov, Český Těšín, Jablankov, Třinec and Bohumín; and in the Polish part Cieszyn, Bielsko-Biała Czechowice-Dziedzice, Skoczów, Ustroń and Wisła.

Regardless of the potential benefits and normative solutions regulating the framework of cross-border cooperation, Euroregions, having decades of experience behind them, have developed a number of principles on which exemplary Euroregional cooperation should be based. The following eight principles are the most important:

1. good neighbourliness of borderland residents,
2. maintaining identity (national, state, regional and local) by cooperating territorial units and local communities,
3. voluntary participation in the Euroregion, which is reflected in the procedures for joining and leaving the Euroregional structures,
4. striving for symmetry and parity, which means that each party has the same number of seats (votes) in the different bodies of the Euroregion and has the same right to represent that Euroregion. This principle also applies to the issue of financing Euroregional structures,
5. pragmatism and cost-benefit analysis,
6. being guided by friendship and trust when engaging in joint ventures,
7. consensus, which consists in a continuous search for a common position through talks, negotiations, agreements,
8. rotation, which means cyclically changing the places where various initiatives are organised and chairing of various cross-border bodies and institutions (Lewkowicz, 2013).

The borders of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion are not the same as the historical borders of Cieszyn Silesia. The Euroregion consists of 16 Polish and 43 Czech municipalities. The geographical borders of Cieszyn Silesia go through the cities of Bielsko-Biała, Frydlant nad Ostravicí, Frydek-Mistek and Ostrava. Cieszyn Silesia also includes Beskid spa resorts, such as Wisła, Ustroń, Brenna and Trójkwieś. On the Czech side of the Olza River, apart from Český Těšín, there are also Chotěbuz, Jablunkov and Návsí. The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion includes not only the former Duchy of Cieszyn, but also Jastrzębie-Zdrój and Godów. Cross-border cooperation has connected two different historical regions here.

The city authorities of Cieszyn and Český Těšín, the management of the Euroregion Cieszyn Silesia, the Olza Association for the Development of Regional Cooperation, the “Person on the Border” Association, the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society and the Silesia Travel agency have joined forces to make the most of the extraordinary wealth of sacral and secular monuments, the unique natural environment as well as cultural and sporting events organized

for tourists. Some tourist products or events are prepared jointly, others are offered independently by individual organizations.

The Cross-Border Tourist Information Centre has been established and run by Cieszyn Castle. It is located right next to the border bridge, and the tourists who visit it receive comprehensive information about Cieszyn Castle, the city of Cieszyn, the Cieszyn Silesia region, the Cieszyn tram route as well as the most important events. Since the Tourist Information Centre is located right next to the border with the Czech Republic, the visitors can also receive some tips on what is worth seeing on the Czech side of the Olza, in Moravia and Bohemia. Tourists can also obtain information about places in Europe that are historically related to Cieszyn Silesia. Organized groups can book a guided tour of the Castle Hill.

In the immediate vicinity of the Cross-Border Tourist Information Centre there is a replica of the Cieszyn tram, which used to run regularly, connecting the two parts of Cieszyn on the opposite banks of the Olza River. The Cross-Border Tourist Information Centre is financed from the budgets of the City of Cieszyn and the City of Český Těšín.

5. The main tourist attractions of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion

A comprehensive description of the management of tourism development and the characteristics of the tourist offering of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion is not possible within the framework of this article due to publishing limitations. The wealth of material is due to the fact that the first traces of settlement in Cieszyn date back to the 6th century BC, and the number of unique sights and monuments is measured in hundreds (Panic, 2012). Therefore, only some of the tourist attractions of the Cieszyn Land have been selected and described below. These include the following:

1. Thematic walks.
2. The Street of Cieszyn Women.
3. Rides on historic trains:
 - A cross-border trip to Ostrava Zoo.
 - Event trains.
 - Food trains.
 - Mining express trains.
 - Saint Nicholas trains.
 - Christmas trains.
 - Special occasion trains.
4. Hiking and cycling in Cieszyn Silesia.
5. Attractions for skiers.
6. Cultural events.

An example of **thematic walks** is the event “Discover Cieszyn”. These are summer holiday walks organized by guides from Cieszyn Castle, the Czech Tourist Club and the Cross-Border Tourist Information Centre. The trips take place on Saturdays. They are free for Polish and Czech walkers. Generally, the walks are thematically diverse and the participants can choose one according to their preferences. In addition, trips to the Polish and Czech parts of Cieszyn are organized throughout the year by various travel agencies and the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society (PTTK). The programme of last year’s summer holiday walks is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Thematic walks programme in 2024

Date	Theme of the walk	Organizer
July 6, 2024	A walk with PTTK	PTTK
July 13, 2024	Kolem Olzy tam a zpět	Czech Tourists Club
July 20, 2024	Building bridges – a walk along the Olza river	Cross-border Tourist Information Centre
July 27, 2024	Exkurze hasičské stanice s ukázkou techniky	IZS, Hasičská stanice
August 3, 2024	Meeting with the Cat Gang	Orangery of Cieszyn Castle
August 10, 2024	Exkurze čistírny odpadních vod	Čistírna vod Chotěbuz
August 17, 2024	A few words about Cieszyn crafts	Cieszyn Castle,
August 24, 2024	Na procházku s Prochaskou	Muzeum Těšínska
August 31, 2024	From field to settlement	Volunteer Fire Department Bobrek

Source: Own study based on www.cieszyn.pl/aktualnosci/7807/lato-2024-w-cieszynie

Cieszyn Women's Street is an unusual street on Castle Hill in Cieszyn, dedicated to exceptional women. It was created to mark the role and place of women who created the ordinary and extraordinary life of Cieszyn. It is one of very few, and perhaps even the only such street in Poland. In this street there are latern-shaped park lamps with the names of 18 outstanding women. They were installed in such a way that the entire attention of the tourist is focused on the names of these women. When it is dark, they shine and also show the way, both literally and figuratively.

The street honours women who have made outstanding contributions to Cieszyn Silesia. The idea was implemented in 2010 thanks to the Creative Women’s Club Association with the support of Cieszyn Castle. It is a unique project of this kind in Poland. In 2015, the second part was completed, and in 2018 two new lamps dedicated to members of the National Council of the Duchy of Cieszyn – the first local government in Poland – were added. In 2019, the street gained two new patrons, in whose honour magnolias were planted. These patrons were Olga Havlová (wife of the President of the Czech Republic Václav Havel, a legend of the Czechoslovak democratic opposition and founder of the Committee of Good Will), and the second patron was Danuta Wałęsa.

Rides on historic trains are organized by the Slezský železniční spolek (Silesian Railway Association). The Association was founded in 2016, and its goal is to popularize rail transport among the public. It organizes trips on excursion and sightseeing trains to places that are often inaccessible on a daily basis, thus showing interesting places not only in the Cieszyn Silesia region. As emphasized by the chairman Ladislav Antalec of the Silesian Railway Association, who was interviewed directly, the Cieszyn Silesia region has a wide range of interesting cultural and industrial monuments and sights, and the aim of the association is to connect these places using rail transport. The main motto of the association is to bring together people and ideas using trains. Plans for the future also include the renovation and operation of historical buildings, historical vehicles and cultural monuments in the North Moravia region. In addition to developing the potential of railways as such, the association also educates young people, teaching them how to travel efficiently. The conversation with the chairman made it patently clear that excursion and sightseeing trains are not just a business, but “trains created with passion”, as evidenced by the abundant and original offering.

The cross-border trip to Ostrava Zoo has been organized since 2022 at weekends during summer holidays. The train departs from the Polish part of Cieszyn, stops in Český Těšín, and then travels along non-public coal sidings to the Josefova jáma-Ostrava stop, right next to the gates of Ostrava Zoo. On the way back, it takes a different route: Ostrava Střed, Havířov, Český Těšín. During the journey, tourists can enjoy expert commentary from a guide. Trips to Ostrava Zoo are very popular due to the significant investments that have been made there in recent years. In the 2024 season, around 7,000 people went on the cross-border trip to the Zoo, of whom around 6,500 were from Poland.

Event trains are also very popular with tourists. Various occasions and events are used to organize a ride on a special train. One example are trips to the annual grape harvest in Valtice (South Moravia). The trips are organized by the Silesian Railway Association, Chateau Kończyce Wielkie, the Cieszyn Wine Trail, the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion and the City of Cieszyn. Trips to Valtice are organized mainly for Poles. The train is ten carriages long and an average of 800 people use it every year. Participants can buy a ticket for the train and enjoy the free part of the programme in Valtice, or they can buy the train ride and a ticket for the grape harvest. Both Polish złoty and Czech crowns are accepted on the train, and passengers can take advantage of some refreshments during the journey. The Burčák express train to Mutěnice has a similar purpose, but enjoys less popularity. In Mutěnice, annual celebrations of young partially fermented wine (Burčák) are held. In addition to organizing trips, the association fulfils the mission of reviving the tradition of wine-growing in Cieszyn Silesia, which is surprisingly rich here. For this purpose, wine tourism is being developed and cooperation is being established with winemakers from both Southern Moravia and neighbouring Austria.

The offer also includes **food trains**, such as the “Schnitzel” express train to Malá Morávka, where a traditional “schnitzel festival” takes place, involving most of the local restaurants. One can eat veal, turkey, deer steaks, fried frog legs, kangaroo, ostrich or shark steaks, as well as various other specialities. Those who want to do something more beneficial for their health can take a walk in the beautiful countryside with the cleanest air in the Czech Republic, visit a mountain spa in Karlovy Studánka or take a hiking trip along the white Opava trail.

Another food train is the “Blueberry Express”, which also goes to Malá Morávka during the ripening season of forest blueberries. The local restaurants prepare not only many blueberry dishes for tourists, but also a range of other delicacies, such as flambéed (i.e. doused with high-proof alcohol and set on fire) shark fin, kangaroo steak or wild boar on blueberries. There is also traditional blueberry beer, various liqueurs and lemonades, and blueberry cakes. However, the most popular product is blueberry dumplings, tonnes of which are sold every year.

Mining express trains travel along the routes in the Ostrava-Karviná coal mining region. In cooperation with PKP Cargo International, guided tours on these extraordinary passenger trains are organised every year. The trains run on Saturdays and Sundays along non-public coal sidings in the Ostrava-Karviná coal district. The route leads to places that passenger trains usually do not reach and which the residents are strictly prohibited from entering on a daily basis.

St. Nicholas Trains are an offering that is aimed at families with children. Among the passengers there are also children from orphanages and seniors, for whom a certain number of places are always reserved. St. Nicholas visits all the train carriages and his team rewards the young passengers with small prizes for reciting a poem or singing a song. St. Nicholas Trains run on the last weekend of November and travel along a circular route of the railway stations in Ostrava.

Christmas trains are trains consisting of carriages and locomotives decorated with festive lights that run through Silesian cities such as Ostrava, Karviná, Frydek-Místek and Český Těšín. Light refreshments are served on the train, and the communal singing of Christmas carols accompanied by accordionists creates a wonderful Christmas atmosphere on board this extraordinary means of transport.

Special occasion trains are offered at the request of customers. For example, one can order a “birthday train”. A special train full of amazing experiences is then prepared for the birthday girl or the birthday boy. On the association’s website the customers can find the following information: “We operate in the field of excursion and nostalgic rail transport and have extensive experience in organizing adventure trains. Upon request, we are able to send a special train practically anywhere where there are railway tracks. We always fulfil the customer’s wishes and tailor the events strictly to their requirements”. Rides on special, historic trains are popular with both Czechs and Poles, and Polish is very often heard on these as well as in the top tourist attraction, which is Ostrava Zoo.

Hiking and cycling in Cieszyn Silesia combines history, tradition and modernity. Every hiker will find an activity for themselves here, from gentle walks in the Silesian Foothills, through gentle Beskid walks to mountain glades, to truly steep routes in the highest parts of the Silesian Beskids. The lovers of hiking and cycling trips will find a range of well-prepared and interesting trails and paths leading to picturesque areas, historic churches, former nobility residences, palaces and castles.

Cieszyn Silesia is a region that for years has been recommended as one of the best cycling destinations in Poland. The trails run from popular tourist resorts and lesser-known corners. Road signs will lead the cyclist to gentle ridges, quiet forest gravel roads, and typical mountain sections. Road cycling enthusiasts know the wonderful routes to Trójwieś Beskidzka and to mountain passes (Kubalonka, Biały Krzyż). One can ride on one's own or take part in numerous competitions. Tourism related to downhill cycling, enduro and cross-country has also developed. The ski lifts in Wisła and Ustroń have organized so-called bike parks with excellent routes of varying degrees of difficulty. Fans of extreme mountain biking love downhill (DH), which involves an individual bike ride down steep, natural slopes against the clock. Downhill paths are often very narrow, rocky and intersected with protruding roots. They also have a number of drops of various heights, which are the most spectacular but also the most hazardous features, often causing dangerous accidents and injuries.

In the Polish-Czech borderland there is a special framework for cycling tourism, the so-called Euroregional cycling loop, which has 9 designated cycling routes, each with several sub-routes. Cross-border cycling routes, which partly go through the neighbouring Upper Oder Land and the Czech side of the Silesian Beskids turned out to be not only a hit among cyclists but also an investment and commercial success.

Attractions for skiers are another element of the tourist offering of the Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion. With the beautiful Beskids, this part of Cieszyn Silesia is a favourite holiday destination for winter sports enthusiasts. Skiers and snowboarders find their "promised land" here. For the fans of ski jumping, the World Cup competition held annually in Wisła is a must-see event.

The next important point on the winter sports map of the region is the Kubalonka Pass located between Wisła and Istebna. It is a cross-country skiing centre and generally a thriving sports centre, which has some of the most modern cross-country trails in the whole of Europe. The Silesian Beskids are a favourite place for weekends around nature not only for the residents of the Katowice agglomeration. Its natural charm is often enjoyed by the residents of Zaolzie and some more distant towns in Czechia.

The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion has cross-border potential, which contributes to strengthening the region's assets and expands and strengthens its offering. On both sides of the border, tourists can enjoy diverse, interesting and valuable attractions of the Polish and Czech parts of Cieszyn Silesia. In Cieszyn Silesia, a number of **cultural events** are organized during the summer, which certainly make the stay more attractive for tourists. The most famous and

popular events include “The Three Brothers’ Festival”, “Cinema on the Border”, the theatre festival “Without Borders”, the opera festival “Viva il Canto”, “Cieszyn Jazz Autumn” and “A Decade of Organ, Choral and Chamber Music”, which are organized on both sides of the border, in Cieszyn and Český Těšín.

In turn, the most popular cultural events in the Beskid part of Cieszyn Silesia include “The Traditional Sheep Run” (Koniaków), “A Run for New Life” (Wisła), “Midsummer’s Night” (Brenna), “The Lamb Festival” (Ustroń), “The Days of Koniaków Lace” (Koniaków), “The Romantic Pair Run” (Ustroń) and many, many others. Undoubtedly, the largest folklore event is the August Beskid Culture Week, which every year attracts the best folk bands from all over the world.

The Traditional Sheep Run (in Polish *Tradycyjne Miyszani Owiec*) is when small herds of animals belonging to different farmers are combined into one huge herd, then grazed together until St. Michael’s Day (September 29). The celebration involves collecting the sheep from the farmers and escorting them with music to a special enclosure. It is the most important festival in the shepherding calendar. In Koniaków, after a long winter, on the first weekend in May, several dozen farmers combine their sheep into one large herd so that they can start the traditional grazing. The farmers wear their festive costumes, the trumbita sounds, shepherds’ bells can be heard in the distance, and the shepherds light special fires in their huts.

Among other cultural events, the so-called “Cinema on the Border” is an event worth mentioning. It is the largest festival of films from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the only film event that for over two decades has been held in one city, Cieszyn, but on both sides of the border – Polish and Czech. Divided by the Olza River, the city is connected by the Friendship Bridge, which symbolizes the idea of the festival. From the very beginning, i.e. since 1999, the aim of the “Cinema on the Border” has been to mutually promote Central European cinema on both sides of the border. Film screenings are accompanied by concerts, exhibitions, discussions and meetings with artists, as well as workshops. The rich and original programme of “Cinema on the Border” and the unique atmosphere of the festival have won the hearts of thousands of fans and have been appreciated by the film community with numerous awards.

The “Cinema on the Border/Cinema on Hranici” Film Festival project was born in the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity community from a heartfelt need to learn about the culture of our neighbours. In the 25 years, the number of films shown has been growing steadily, reaching a round hundred in the twelfth edition in 2010.



Figure 2. Film screening on the banks of the Olza River.

Source: <https://borderfestival.eu/pl>

Currently, the festival has the following structure: 6 days of showing films, with at least 4 screening locations in the double city; always over 100 films in total; 5 concerts; and a number of accompanying events. The idea of this film festival is invariably the consistent promotion of the close neighbours' culture.

6. Conclusions

The Cieszyn Silesia Euroregion was established on 22 April 1998 to support cross-border cooperation on the Olza River. The Polish and Czech sides jointly collect, process and share with each other economic, tourist, cultural and sports information. The information is collected by the municipalities, and their activities are coordinated by two Border Information Agencies. The information is made available in about 300 information points and on the Internet. The Euroregion's strategic goals are as follows:

- broadly understood development of the region,
- exchange of experiences and information,
- supporting the culture, education and sports in the region,
- joint development of transport, communication and connectivity in the region, including improving the safety of the residents,
- development of tourism, including improving the flow of tourists across the border,
- cooperation between schools, including joint ecological care (Kaszper, Małysz, 2009).

Over the 25 years of its existence, the Euroregion has proved that genuine, and not just superficial, cross-border cooperation between local governments on the Polish and Czech sides of the border, based, among other things, on the professional management of tourism development, is possible.

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