

PROVISION OF EMERGENCY SERVICES IN EUROPEAN BORDERLANDS: ON THE WAY TOWARDS CROSS-BORDER FUNCTIONAL AREAS?

EXAMPLE FROM CZECH-GERMAN BORDERLANDS

HYNEK BÖHM, University of Opole Poland, Technical University of Liberec, Czechia
MARIE CVIKOVÁ, University of Ostrava, Czechia

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Research Group on
Cross-Border Cooperation




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Czech-German Borderlands: A unique space of Cross-Border Cooperation

- Czech-German borderland as a zone of fluctuating permeability (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Iron Curtain, Schengen Regime)
- Strong socio-economic asymmetries: more developed and connected German side vs. peripheral Czech side
- 1990s: Formation of Euroregions -> institutional groundwork for cross-border cooperation (emerging of cross-border functional regions)
- Fragmented cross-border governance (different administrative traditions and governance structures, limited joint institutions)
- barriers – lack of shared identity, language and cultural differences, economic disparities
- Service provision complicated by geography (infrastructure gaps, mountainous terrain, sparse population)



Czech-German borderlands



Euroregions on Czech-German border

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Borderlands and Emergency Services

- Border proximity enables faster response – but legal and administrative borders still limit action
- EU lacks legislative authority to harmonise EMS; only supportive competence applies
- Since 2013: Bilateral agreements allow regional-level EMS cooperation in disasters and major accidents
- Joint action by EMS, fire and mountain rescue – varies by region (e.g. Saxony vs. Bavaria)
- System differences: governance, insurance, qualifications, language
- Cooperation driven by INTERREG, Euroregions and local trust

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Borderlands and Emergency Services

FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Ongoing efforts to update the 2000 CZ-DE treaty (facilitating fire service agreements at the regional level)

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE

- Intergovernmental agreements followed by „implementation“ agreements (regional level)
- Different interpretation of agreements (uneven levels of cooperation)
- Treaty of the Pilsen Region with the Land District of Cham (Bavaria)

POLICE

- The Schengen Agreement as a guideline

MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

- Ensures the arrival of the most suitable medical emergency service



CBC between Pilsen Region and Land District of Cham

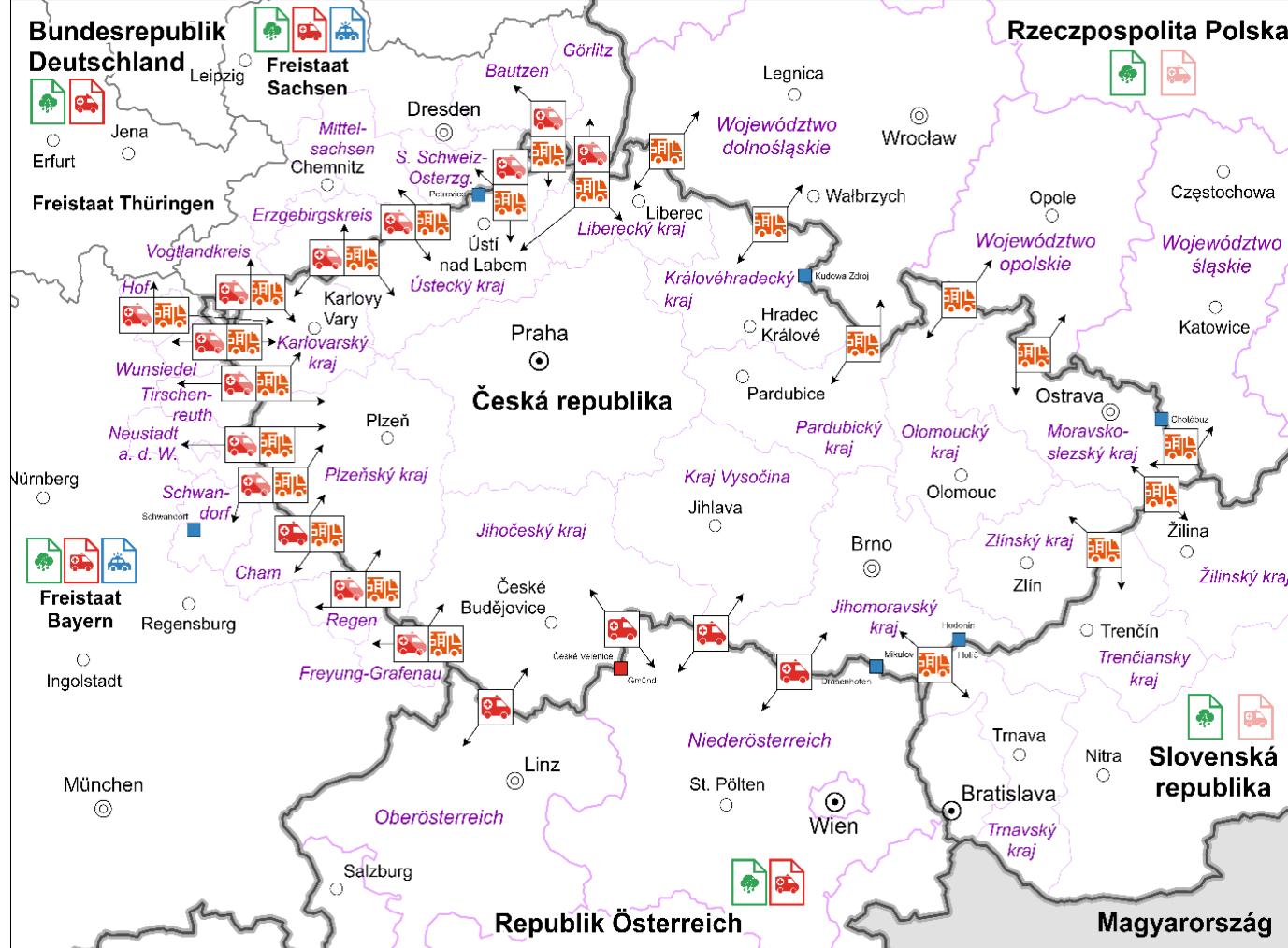
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PŘESHraniční SPOLUPRÁCE SLOŽEK IZS MEZI ČR A SOUSEDNÍMI STÁTY (2024)

Mezistátní přeshraniční spolupráce (MPS) s přímou účastí České republiky

- Vzájemná pomoc při katastrofách a mimořádnostech
- MPS zdravotnické záchranné služby
- MPS policejního sboru
- plánovaná MPS zdravotnické záchranné služby

Subnárodní přeshraniční spolupráce (SPS)

- SPS zdravotnické záchranné služby aktivní (v praxi se vykonává v plném rozsahu)
- SPS zdravotnické záchranné služby pasivní (v praxi se zpravidla nevykonává)
- SPS hasičského záchranného sboru
- směr spolupráce

Společná stanice složek IZS

- společná stanice ZZS nebo lokální spolupráce
- společná policejní a celní stanice

- hlavní město
- významné město
- město
- státní hranice
- hranice NUTS-1, NUTS-2 jednotky zapojené do SPS
- hranice ostatní NUTS-1, NUTS-2 jednotky
- hranice NUTS-3 jednotky zapojené do SPS
- Cham* název jednotky zapojené do SPS

0 50 100 km



Supporting Cross-Border Emergency Services

- INTERREG as a key enabler: co-financing infrastructure, training, planning, and trust-building activities
- Fostering of integration and lasting ties among IRS members and institutions
 - Soft forms: joint training, sports competitions or working group cooperation
- The importance of mutual trust
- Efforts of building cross-border readiness (via legal, human, technical alignment)
- Emphasis on implementation of systemic projects: drills, legal clarity, language skills, command centre links
- Problem: Focus on extraordinary events rather than routine cross-border cooperation

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Barriers

Territorial

- geographical distance, mountainous terrain, limited transportation infrastructure

Operational and organisational

- align unit deployment procedures, training, language skills, ICT systems, and equipment standards, different organisational structure

Institutional

- different governance models (centralised CZ vs. decentralised DE) complicate coordination

Political

- political reluctance and low awareness limit use of local cross-border cooperation tools

Language and cultural

- IZS as an area traditionally perceived through a national prism

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Overcoming barriers

- Multifaceted approach
- Harmonizing legal and administrative framework (bilateral/multilateral agreements)
- Investments to interoperable technologies
- effective setup for sharing resources and assets (system digitization)
- Role of Euroregions - set up systemic and sustainable platforms for the development of cooperation (commissions or working groups)
 - cooperation between Euroregions and regions - pressure on administration
- strengthening cooperation and anchoring it within the framework of joint cross-border rescue plans
- breaking down negative stereotypes and language barrier
- strengthening political will at national and regional levels

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THANK YOU!

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