



Green Paper

***of the Common Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of
the cross-border area Romania- Bulgaria***

***Common Strategy for Sustainable Territorial Development of the
cross-border area Romania- Bulgaria
Project***

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Green Paper of the *Common Strategy for sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria* is an initiative of the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration and of the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, and of the other partners within the project “Common Strategy for sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria” (SPATIAL), implemented under the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme Romania-Bulgaria 2007-2013.

At EU level, cooperation has become more and more a key element of territorial development and a crucial factor in supporting long-term and sustainable growth of regions, member states and of the entire European Union. Article 3 of the Treaty of Lisbon of 1 December 2009, provides, among others, that the European Union should promote economic, social and territorial cohesion as well as solidarity among member states, thus placing special importance on the concept of territorial cohesion meant to respond to the main challenges related to globalisation, climate change, demographic changes, security, energy. Europe 2020 Strategy focuses on territorial cohesion under the inclusive growth priority, together with the economic and social cohesion.

This *Green Paper* proposes and details a development strategy for the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria by 2045, setting the framework for cooperation and coordination of actions to develop the cross-border area. When developing this document, the authors considered the characteristics and specificities of the territory, and the past years developments in terms of human resources, public services, business environment, etc., and identified the policies, programmes and projects which should lead to increased competitiveness, sustainability, safety and quality of life in the area, so as the area would become an attractive, functional and cohesive region, a real access gate to South-East Europe.

Based on the *Common Strategy for sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria*, the document answers the questions of the *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion* having regard to the guidelines provided by the *White Paper “Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area”* and to the territorial priorities for EU development specified by the *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020*. At the same time, the development policies and investments envisaged for the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria are correlated with the objectives and targets set by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and with the interventions provided by the EUSDR Action Plan, ensuring complementarity with the *Blue Growth Strategy*.

2 TERRITORY

The cross-border area covers a territory of 71,930 Km² inhabited by 5.104 million inhabitants, including 16 NUTS III¹ administrative territories (counties and districts/ *oblast*), which are part of six NUTS II development regions.



Map of the cross-border area; Source: Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, 2014

The cross-border area is under the influence of four important cities: Bucharest – the capital of Romania, Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria, Belgrade - the capital of Serbia and Istanbul – the most important trade centre of Turkey. A characteristic of the area is given by the seven twin port cities: Calafat-Vidin, Bechet-Rahova, Turnu Măgurele-Nicopole, Zimnicea-Svishtov, Giurgiu-Ruse, Olteniţa-Tutrakan, and Călăraşi-Silistra.

¹ Annex 1 presents information on NUTS III territories.

Although under the influence of four capitals, the cross-border area includes only two cities with more than 300,000 inhabitants: Craiova and Constanța. A challenge of the area in terms of city network is the decline of the urban centres as a result of the industrial decline – many of the cities along the Danube are mono-functional cities. The decline of urban centres led to massive population loss – demographic change, as a significant share of the young workforce migrated to larger cities in Romania and Bulgaria, or even to other countries.

The lack of connectivity is another major problem of the area, as it includes only two bridges over the Danube and it lacks proper transport infrastructure.

The management of climate changes which cause important flooding (especially on the Romanian riverside) and the desertification of agricultural land due to the lack of irrigation represent another major problem of the area.

The existing cultural and natural heritage in the cross-border area is an important resource to support growth; it is important that this opportunity should be valorised, including by joint projects.

3 AN INTEGRATIVE VISION

The main concern of the initiator and authors of documents was to identify and structure the main challenges the cross-border area should tackle on short-, medium- and long-term, as a unitary territory, following an integrated approach, according to the provisions of the *European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter – the Torremolinos Charter* (Spain, 1983), to formulate a common vision of the area starting from the current situation and from the challenges identified, to define common objectives for the area and to put forward policies, programmes and projects to reach the objectives defined.

Territorial cohesion, participation and inclusion, quality and scientific/professional substantiation are the three core principles underpinning the vision of the *Common Strategy the sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria*.

Territorial cohesion: cohesion will aim at an integrated development of the rural-urban areas and of the Danube Biosphere, to be achieved by operational management and financial contribution provided by central and local public administrations. The long-term vision assumes to support a polycentric and balanced regional development achieved by the connectivity of urban and rural communities with the cultural and environmental values. The cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria will promote the principles of sustainable economy focused on biodiversity and nature protection, on environmental-friendly technologies aiming at the efficient use of water and energy resources.

Participation and inclusion: one of the strategy priorities is to reduce poverty in the area, to develop a competitive territory for future inhabitants, while respecting their identity, autonomy and cultural diversity.

Quality and scientific/professional substantiation: the territory object to the Strategy is complex, and planning and coordination of human and physical resources are crucial for its development, for avoiding errors with major implications, especially in the context of climate changes.

Other elements considered in the substantiation of a unifying vision for the long-term development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria are:

- Innovation, knowledge, entrepreneurship, cooperation shall be encouraged and supported to increase region competitiveness;
- The cross-border area shall be a safe territory for citizens, businesses and visitors, as a result of joint efforts of Romanian and Bulgarian authorities to reduce crime;
- The cross-border area shall be an area of better opportunities, where inhabitants have access to better education, health care services and appropriate living and housing conditions.

An overall perspective of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria shows the complexity and challenges the area will face with the economic growth in the context of asymmetrical development and different administrative systems. Thus, there is a clear need for coordination and cooperation to maximize advantages and minimize costs in the area.

Having regard to the social and institutional challenges, the successful development of the region requires consensus, agreement on a common vision on the future of the area, a clear understanding of the actions to be undertaken to reach the objectives of the vision proposed. Without a common vision and a strategy to make things happen, the positive aspects of the cross-border area, the economic advantages, the cultural and natural heritage, the diversity may be overcome and annulled by the less favourable issues of institutional differences and unbalanced development. In a pessimistic scenario, the lack of commitment for long-term policies might further disparities which may generate sources of tension in the area.

In this context, the **vision** proposed by the *Common Strategy the sustainable territorial development of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria* envisages that **by 2045 the cross-border area should become the Danube region where the common contribution of Romania and Bulgaria should lead to connecting places and people to strengthen a competitive territory, in a valuable natural and cultural environment.**

Resulted from the Strategy, the Green Paper underpins the strategic view on the cross-border area and substantiates the short-, medium- and long-term approach on policy development and implementation. Nevertheless, these strategic documents are not an end in itself. They are an

instrument focused on developing partnerships around certain strategic areas, supported by realistic policy guidelines aimed at the specific realities of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria. These partnerships require the involvement of all central and local institutions in the two territories, according to the multi-and inter-sectorial nature of the elements which are characteristic for the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria.

4 STRATEGIC GUIDELINES TO SUPPORT THE VISION

There are strategic guidelines, linked with the four strategic objectives, identified as the main drivers of the cross-border area progress to increase connectivity, sustainable development, valorisation of natural and cultural resources and citizen safety.

Each of the challenges identified will be tackled by means of policies, linked with specific objectives, aggregated in their effects at the level of the four strategic objectives. For each policy proposed, the analysis provided in-depth details on the programmes and projects whose implementation will contribute to reaching the objectives envisaged. All these are concrete instruments aimed to extend and modernise the existing infrastructure, to protect and reconstruct the environment or to improve public services and to develop the business environment through technological contributions or new types of management.

The architecture of the cross-border cooperation between Romania and Bulgaria in the period of 2014-2030 focuses on the following four strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective 1:

Developing the connectivity between urban and metropolitan areas to favour a sustainable polycentric territorial development

Strategic Objective 2:

Strengthening the role of Danube cities by increasing attractiveness of the public area and providing general interest utilities and services for locals and tourists

Strategic Objective 3:

Strengthening the cultural and natural values network and linking it to similar networks in the Danube and Black Sea region

Strategic Objective 4:

Developing the institutional capacity for cooperation aiming to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion

A number of fifteen projects have been identified as strategic and priorities at the cross-border area level, based on their direct impact to reaching some common outcomes.

The Green Paper is meant to underline the challenges of the present and of the future, the proposed measures and how these contribute to the achievement of the set objectives.

The Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area has the potential to become an Eastern gate of the European Union

Even if transport in the cross-border area covers the maritime and river-based transport, terrestrial road and railway transport, and also air transport, currently the existing transport network does not provide good connectivity between the two countries nor does it ensure easy access of border areas to the TEN-T and major national corridors.

The road and railway infrastructure from the cross-border area is unequally developed in Romania and Bulgaria while, overall, the road and railway density in the two countries are far below the European average. The region is covered by three international airports in Romania and two airports in Bulgaria.

The element that hallmarks the accessibility of the area is represented by the Danube river, the navigable waterway part of the 7th pan-European transport corridor. Lack of river crossing infrastructure turns the Danube from a factor linking the area with the Western Europe, on one hand, and with the South-Eastern European and Middle East, on the other hand, into a rigid border.

From a spatial point of view, the cross-border territory provides the opportunity of air, land, river and sea openness, connecting the Central Pentagon of the European Union with Asia. In this context, we must underline, the key role played by these two capital cities from the point of view of the connectivity for the cross-border area. The Bucharest metropolitan area links modes of transport from the north and east of Romania, Moldova and Transylvania, while road links with Greece, Serbia and Turkey are provided through Sofia.

In order to capitalize on this geographical position, investments are required to finish Corridor IV, connecting the East and the West in the European area, linking Vienna to the west and Istanbul to the east, continuing through the TRACECA network to Georgia and Azerbaijan and the segment in Corridor linking, generally, the North and the South in the European Area, and specifically, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

Building two new road bridges meant to ease the cross-border traffic (in compliance with the Memorandum signed between the European Commission and Bulgaria), to develop harbour-based infrastructure, to provide navigability to Danube all year round.

Priority interventions to connect transport infrastructure of the cross-border area with the TEN-T network include the following:

- ✚ Supplementing the main TEN-T road network in order to connect regional pole cities
 - Romania: Craiova - Bucharest - Constanta, including also county poles Drobeta Turnu Severin – Alexandria – Bucharest and Giurgiu – Bucharest
 - Bulgaria: Sofia - Plovdiv, including also county poles Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Ruse, Veliko Tarnovo
- ✚ Connecting county poles to the expanded TEN-T road network
 - Romania: Drobeta Turnu Severin-Craiova and Constanta – Mangalia - Varna
 - Bulgaria: Pleven – Ruse – Razgrad
- ✚ Connecting capital cities Bucharest-Sofia through the TEN-T road network
 - Romania: Bucharest - Giurgiu (TEN-T network)
 - Bulgaria: Ruse – Plevna – Sofia (expanded TEN-T network) or through Ruse - Veliko Tarnovo - Stara Zagora – Plovdiv - Sofia (TEN-T network)
- ✚ **Connecting harbour cities to the TEN-T network or the TEN-T expanded network**
 - Romania: Bechet, Corabia, Turnu Magurele, Zimnicea, Oltenita, Calarasi
 - Bulgaria: Lom, Orianovo, Nicopol, Svishtov, Tutrakan, Slistra
- ✚ **Connecting harbour cities to the TEN-T river transport network**
 - Modernizing the harbour infrastructure of harbour cities at point a.4
 - Increasing river navigability

The short, medium and long-term vision for the development of the region is focused on the increase of cross-border cooperation and on the social-economic integration of the territory, as the **specific objective** set in this field aims at **providing infrastructure for the development of passenger and freight transport**.

Five policy packages were developed in order to support this aim:

Policy 1.1.-a:

Integrating modes of transport and linking them to the European network, to be implemented through medium and short term programmes and projects

Policy 1.1.-b:

Connecting Danube harbours to the network of municipalities in the cross-border area, to be implemented through medium and long term programmes and projects

Policy 1.1.-c:

Complementary development of the harbour network depending on the role and regional specificity, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 1.1.-d:

Ensuring safe river and maritime navigability, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 1.1.-e:

Increasing the operational capacity of qualified personnel in the river transport sector, to be implemented through regular programmes and projects, depending on the developments recorded in this field

There are four projects of common which should be promoted to ensure the infrastructure for the development of transport of passengers and goods, to be developed and implemented by 2020:

- **Modernisation of TEN-T transport network between Romania and Bulgaria by modernising the Giurgiu-Ruse transit (road-rail bridge) and by connecting the Sofia-Ruse segment with the TEN-T network.** The project will contribute to increasing accessibility in the Balkan area from the TEN-T network.
- **Building the bridge between Călărași and Silistra, a project which will contribute to increasing accessibility in the Southern part of the EU from the main TEN-T network.** The project includes a road sector on the Romanian and on the Bulgarian riversides, an access viaduct on the Romanian and on the Bulgarian riversides, and a bridge of 1680 m.
- **Building a bridge to connect the ports Turnu Măgurele and Nicopole,** a project which will contribute to increasing accessibility in the Balkan area from the TEN-T network, including: a road sector on the Romanian and on the Bulgarian riversides, an access viaduct on the Romanian and on the Bulgarian riversides, and a bridge of 850 m.
- **Modernisation of landing terminals and facilities for passenger and cargo ships,** a project which will contribute to increasing accessibility in the Balkan area from the fluvial TEN-T network. The project envisages the modernisation of Calafat and Giurgiu ports in Romania and of Vidin and Ruse ports in Bulgaria.

The existing potential for agriculture, industry and services supports the economic development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross border area and the overcome of the current status as poor European region

The decline of cities depending on one economic sector, the prevalence of subsistence agriculture, the low performance of tourist activities, the scarcity of research-development activities and the decrease in population are the main challenges faced by the counties and districts in the cross-border area.

The structure of economy and the connectivity to the infrastructure of utilities and services are different, leading to economically competitive or, conversely, disadvantaged areas.

Resource availability (natural, energy, agricultural, human resources), and the proximity of strong functional urban areas (Bucharest and Sofia) are the premises and the drivers of growth in the cross-border area.

Fostering economic activities by improving enterprise growth factors and increasing the existing human resources capacities will lead to population stabilisation in the cross-border area.

Considering the specificity of the area, the focus is on the development of production activities in the transport field, including the development and modernisation of related services (maintenance and repair).

On the other hand, the economic capacity of the two capital cities provides the cross-border area potential to develop a variety of functions in the fields of industrial manufacturing, services, transport, education and research.

There should be special focus on policies for the development of joint research in innovative and competitive sectors of European and international interest; an example is Bucharest metropolitan area with research infrastructure in the field of high power laser, electron accelerators and nuclear Physics instruments.

Although the SMEs share in the border region is below the national average in both countries, SMEs account for more than 99.6% of the active enterprises both in the Romanian counties and in the Bulgarian districts, therefore they represent potential for future economic growth. Therefore, SMEs support to increase competitiveness and production should be a focus in the forthcoming period.

An essential sector of growth in the cross-border area is tourism and services related to the tourism industry. One of the main challenges in valorising the tourist potential of the cross-border area is to turn natural and cultural resources into economic resources by modernising the accommodation provision, by introducing new services, in order to ensure a safe market and complement the tourism markets in the region of the Mediterranean Sea and in Turkey.

The counties and districts in the cross-border area reported an increase in the number of. However, agriculture is characterised by an inefficient structure, with a prevalence of small farms. There was a decrease in the livestock, as well as in the orchards and vineyards areas. The irrigation systems are a major problem for both countries, including in the cross-border area. Although the vegetable production reported good indicators especially in Bulgaria, there are problems with the processing stage, following the bankruptcy of the large canned food factories in some regions, a consequence of privatisations without restructuring or adjustment to the new market conditions.

Despite the problems faced lately, there is considerable agricultural potential, both in terms of arable land and of yield per hectare, and there is a need for solutions to valorise this potential. The Strategy proposes priority actions to support the development of areas and technologies for the production-processing-retail chains, both for vegetables and fruit and for livestock, poultry and fish products.

The short-, medium- and long-term vision on the economic development of the region is focused on integrated policies, on creating links between the economic sectors and the research and technology development centres, market survey instruments and human resources development, **with the specific objective to develop viable local economies, supported by skilled human resources.**

Five policy packages were developed to support this aim:

Policy 1.2.-a:

Increasing the contribution of local enterprises to the development of the cross-border economy, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 1.2.-b:

Developing agricultural production chains based on added value and protection of water resources to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.2.-c:

Developing tourism services as per international quality and safety standards, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.2.-d:

Supporting research, advisory services through entrepreneurial initiatives in the local communities, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.2.-e:

Providing counselling and professional training for employment, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Supporting the economic development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area by connecting the territories to energy networks

The Danube Strategy includes energy as a priority field underpinning the Danube Region interconnection pillar, as Romania (with a low level of energy dependence – 22.7% in 2012), and Bulgaria (36.1% energy dependence level in 2012) as well place the energy sector among their development priorities.

Policies on energy infrastructure and services surpass the level of one country alone or of a region, as their content and outcome result from national and European initiatives and actions, e.g. the TEN-E Network.

At the level of the cross-border region, the existence of a low quantity of conventional primary energy sources results in a priority to identify and develop alternative sources of energy.

Also, another priority is still represented by the increase of the share of energy from renewable sources in the overall consumption of energy.

Policies focused towards supporting ecological innovation in the energy sector, promoting technologies that result in a decrease of CO₂ emissions and also a high-performance management of existing resources are specific to the cross-border area.

The modernization, expansion and interconnection of energy infrastructure are meant to support, in their own turn, **the provision of energy support for the territorial functioning, with efficiency, competitiveness and respect for environment** - the specific objective set for this area of development.

The energy policies support other policies which encourage and lead to the development of local economy and also to an increase in the quality of life in the urban and rural areas of the cross-border area.

Three policy packages were developed in order to support this aim:

Policy 1.3.-a

Upgrading infrastructure and services in the energy sector, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.3.-b

Producing and using renewable energy, to be implemented through long and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.3.-c

Developing cooperation of research on producing green energy, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

In order to increase the production capacity for green energy, we could point out the Turnu Magurele-Nicopole hydro-technical power plant project, whose implementation deadline is year 2017. The project aims to identify viable economic and financial indicators for coverage of funding and, later on, of investments works.

Supporting the economic development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area by expanding the use of digital technologies

Access to knowledge and information contributes to the increased degree of mobility of the labour force and implicitly to the economic development of the area.

Currently, there is a gap between the urban and the rural population in terms of broadband internet connection at the level of the cross-border area, but there is also an opportunity to extend broadband internet access for the population especially in rural and remote disadvantaged areas, and to develop public internet access points.

The short and medium-term increase of the connection rate for households and companies is to be achieved, as well as extending the use of Internet for provision of various services, such as e-diagnosis, tourism services, educational services, emergency situation interventions and also promoting spatial development patterns or building territorial data banks.

The improved connection through the digital network achieved through public-private partnerships, respectively local authorities, private companies, research companies shall lead to the achievement of the specific objective set for this line of action, respectively **improvement of communication in the cross-border area by developing the broadband network**.

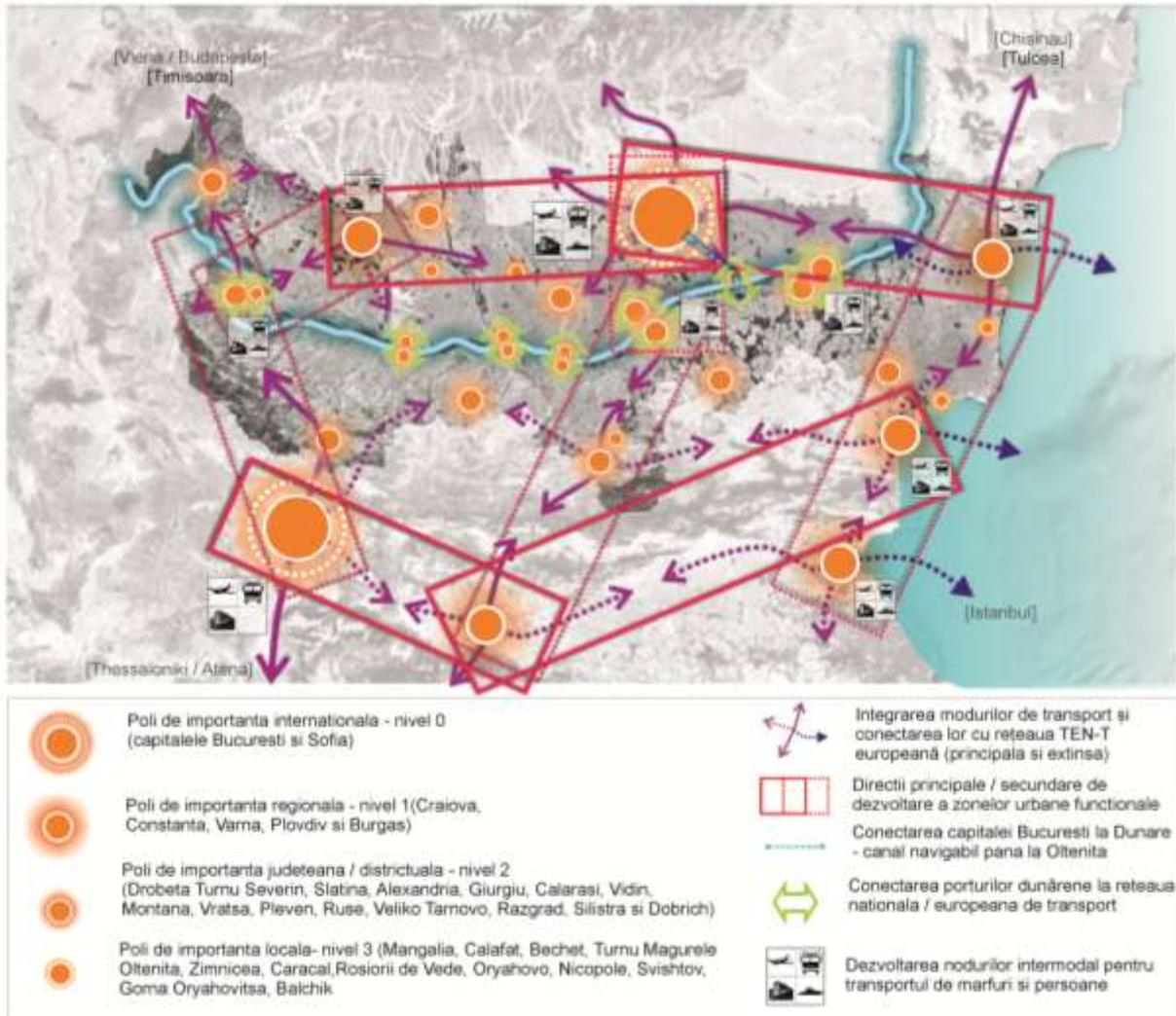
Two policy packages were developed in order to support this aim:

Policy 1.4.-a

Developing the Internet infrastructure and linking individuals and companies, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 1.4.-b

Developing types of digital information/communication, to be implemented through short, long and medium term programmes and projects.



Supporting education, the health system and also social services as drivers for development of economic activities in the cross-border area

The educational system and the health system as well are confronted with staff shortages in the Romanian counties on and in the Bulgarian districts. The healthcare system also records lower values, placed under the European average, in terms of the capacity of existing medical units.

A properly trained population with a higher level of health leads and favours development of activities they involve into and implicitly economic growth, This is why supporting measures aimed at building new facilities for study or practical activities, refurbishment and building medical facilities, as well as refurbishment and equipment of social centres represent actions to be implemented in the cross-border area on the short and medium term perspective.

It is equally important to provide importance and to support those programmes and projects aimed at human resources development in the fields of education, healthcare and social services.

These measures are meant to provide the population in the cross-border area with access to safe services, provided in organized facilities that are equipped in compliance with European standards, with enough properly qualified staff.

Promoting and implementing such types of actions should lead to **the development of human capital by providing general public interest services**, the specific objectives set out for this line of action.

Three policy packages were developed in order to support this aim:

Policy 2.1.-a

Ensuring access to education and health services in a safe and clean environment, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.1.-b

Increasing the quality of social services for disadvantaged groups, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.1.-c

Development of human capital through training and counselling services, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Two projects of common interest may be promoted to support human capital development by providing public services:

- **Illness prevention in the port cities within the cross-border area**, a project aiming to create good health conditions for the members of the local communities and for tourists, to prevent and treat emergency situations caused by accidents and epidemics. The project envisages the development of an Information Centre on the health situation in the cross-border area (on-line), to ensure equipment, medication to prevent and stop epidemics, to organise workshops on epidemics prevention. The project will be promoted and implemented until the end of 2018.
- **To organise thematic workshops and laboratories for the practical training of young people in the cross-border area**, a project aiming to develop training centres to train young people in various fields, according to the local economy demand. The projects include modernisation of working/research areas by refurbishing existing buildings, procurement of furniture and equipment for workshops/laboratories, procurement of materials and logistics, development of training curricula and manuals, delivery of training programmes. The project will be promoted and implemented in the period of 2015-2020.

Territorial endowment of the cross-border area, driver for competitiveness

Easy access of companies to land for investment purposes, of individuals to houses or land for building purposes, the access to energy and utilities ensure the development of economic activities.

Although currently there is a low share of population connected to the sewage systems in the cross-border area and a low share of population connected to the central water supply system on the Romanian territory, we note a fast development of the potable water distribution and sewage network across the entire cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria.

Further short and medium-term support for the development of public utilities, water supply, sewage, public transportation and sanitation in the cross-border area will increase the urbanisation level, will attract investments and foster population migration to these localities.

The measures to monitor potable water quality will decrease the illness risks among population and prevent possible epidemics.

With regards to waste collection, the programmes and projects will have to ensure compliance with the specific legislation in the field, so as to reduce the level of pollution in the Danube cross-border area.

A special focus should be placed on promoting and supporting ship transport to connect the Danube cities and on developing a regional railway route Danube-Black Sea-Mediterranean Sea to connect the cities of Bucharest-Sofia-Athens-Varna-Constanta. At local level, in the cross-border area, alternative means of transport (e.g. cycling) will be supported both for short distance travel between localities and for tourist purposes.

Another important action line on short- and medium-term to ensure quality public services is human resources development for the provision of public services.

All these actions should lead to **better equipped rural and urban areas**, as part of the specific objective of this action line.

Five policy packages were developed in order to support this specific objective:

Policy 2.2.-a

Providing the drinking water supply infrastructure, protecting current resources, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.2.-b

Providing sewage infrastructure observing water quality conditions of the Danube, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.2.-c

Developing the multimodal land and river transport system for increasing mobility, using mostly fuels with low levels of pollution, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.2.-d

Providing a collection system for domestic waste, constructions and medical waste, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.2.-e

Developing human capital through training services on the supply and management of public utilities, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Quality of living – driver for economic development and increased welfare in the cross-border area

The Romanian as well as the Bulgarian territory in the cross-border area is characterised by an increased number of dwellings as well as by an increased level of comfort, according to the latest data published as a result of the censuses organized in the two countries.

The quality of living, represented by housing conditions themselves as well as the related facilities is able to attract population towards those localities that provide higher quality and to turn it away from those with a lower quality.

The increased attractiveness of urban and rural areas is determined by the refurbishment of existing dwellings, including initiatives meant to increase energy efficiency, to provide quality local roads, the refurbishment of the public property, rejuvenation of industrial areas and to insert polluted and abandoned land back to the economic circuit, to increase attractiveness of the public space.

An important part of policies on attractiveness of living conditions consists in the urban and peri-urban green areas required to compensate high temperatures during summer. In addition, other actions are required such as planning and modernizing leisure areas, pools and segments of river flows which can be used for recreational activities, also observing the requirements of biodiversity and safety.

All these measures are able to lead to an **increased attractiveness and quality of living in the urban and rural areas**, which represents the specific objective of this line of action.

Three policy packages were developed in order to support this aim:

Policy 2.3.-a:

Energy rehabilitation of existing constructions (buildings, installations), to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.3.-b:

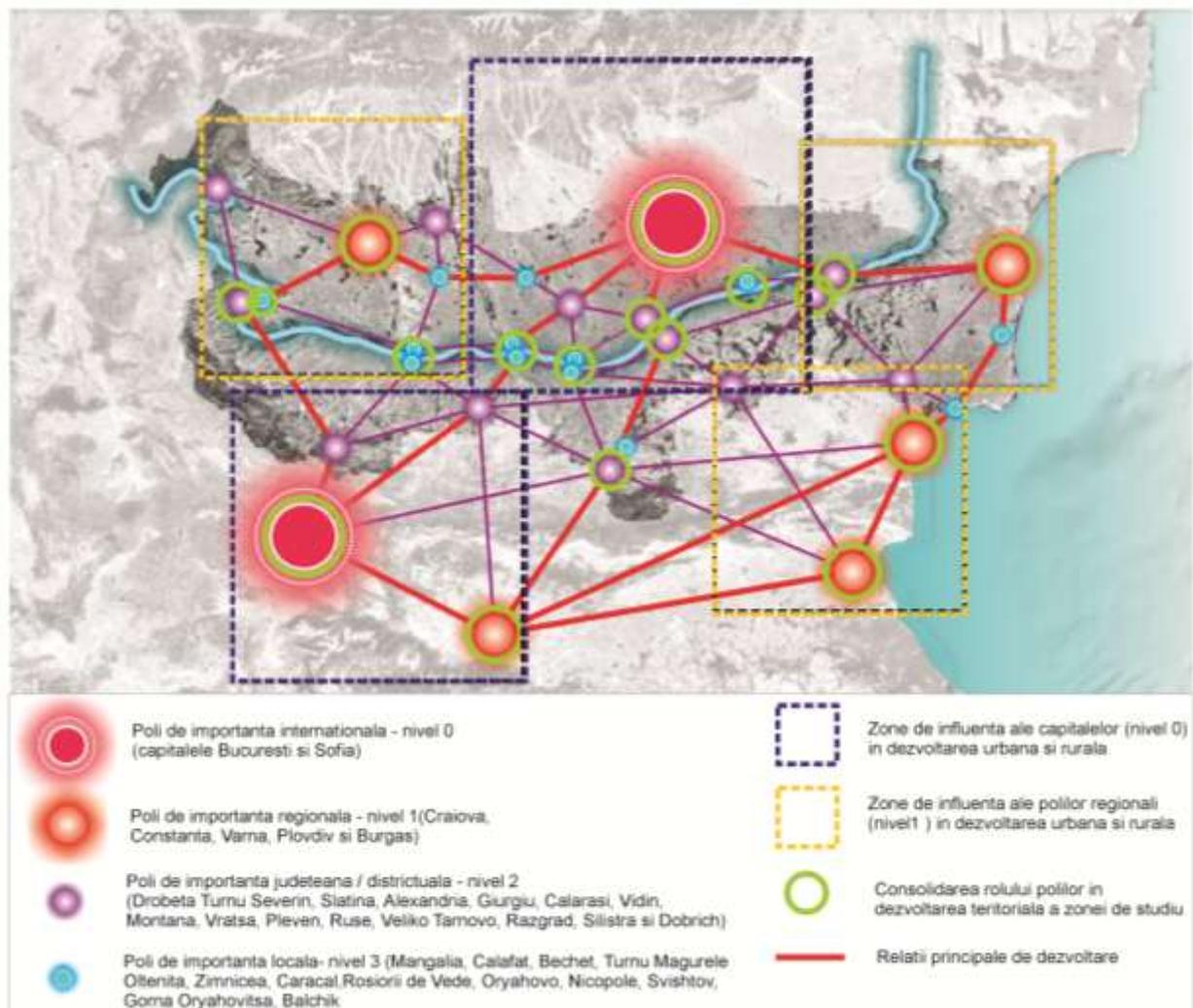
Development and rehabilitation of deteriorated central and urban areas, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 2.3.-c:

Territorial planning of areas required for entertainment and sports, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Two projects of common interest might be underlined in terms of laying out the areas required for leisure and practicing sports in order to increase attractiveness and quality of living conditions in the localities from the cross-border area, with year 2018 as a time horizon for preparation and implementation:

- **Promoting and capitalizing on the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border landscape**, a project that aims to deliver a network of watch points with easy access that allows for the capitalization of the Danube landscape and its inclusion in touristic routes. The project aims to identify and organize spatial information for thirty watch points, as well as to draft technical documentation and to deliver investments for laying out watch points alongside Danube.
- **Creating routes and cultural tourism areas - Planning camping sites along the Danube**, a project that aims to develop tourism on access routes adjacent to Danube river and cautious use of the Danube landscape value. The project intends to identify and properly hallmark the space, to build the required facilities, to deliver a surveillance/management point, to purchase bicycles in order to be rented out, to purchase river means of navigation (rowing boats) for rent.



The cultural-historical and ethnic-folkloric heritage, a resource that can be properly capitalized in the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area

A number of 268 objectives included in the cultural heritage of national and international level, monuments, architectural units, archaeological sites that exist in the cross-border area are kept in the official records of the two countries.

The capitalization of such a resources from the touristic point of view calls on one hand for the refurbishment, protection and preservation of the tangible heritage and, on the other hand, for the provision of access to the identified objectives, in order to link the major tourism markets to the areas with high density of historical and architectural monuments.

The access to the heritage monuments may be provided either terrestrially or, for those concentrations of units placed in the proximity of some of the harbours, by using the Danube river and the harbour-based infrastructure, thus developing the cruise-based tourism.

It is equally important to provide capitalization and promotion of intangible heritage, of all forms and shapes of culture, literature, theatre, folklore, visual arts etc., by exploiting the new presentation technologies.

The actions taken into consideration for the refurbishment of public buildings for multi-cultural activities, restoration and conservation of heritage buildings, archaeological sites, provision of access routes, as well as organization of events linked to the promotion of traditions and history of the territory situated in the cross-border area are susceptible to lead to **increasing the contribution of the cultural heritage of the cross-border area in the European cultural landscape**, a specific objective laid out for this line of action.

A number of three policy packages were proposed in order to support this specific objective:

Policy 3.1.-a:

Preserving and rehabilitating the tangible heritage in tourist areas, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.1.-b:

Valorising the intangible heritage, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.1.-c:

Promoting specific cultural values of the cross-border area, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Conservation, protection and improvement of the natural heritage in the cross-border area, a key condition for providing sustainable development

The Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area is characterized by a significant and diversified natural heritage. The Danube flow is complemented by natural reserves, natural parks and sites, area of special avifaunistic protection, including three biosphere reserves: One on the Romanian soil (Danube Delta) and two on the Bulgarian soil (Chuprene and Srebena).

An area with a large diversity in terms of biology and natural landscape, the cross-border region is subjected, at the same time, over extended areas to some natural and anthropic risks: high flooding risks in some areas, drought risks in some other areas, areas with high risk of landslides, high seismic risk areas, areas exposed to technological risks, erosion problems on the Romanian coastal area, including the Danube Delta.

Future actions will have to take into consideration conservation of biodiversity as well as fighting the risks that affect the area, minimization of negative effects of some natural phenomena, prevention of climate changes effects.

The conservation and restoration of the natural heritage, taking into consideration the specifics of each area, promoting such values, capitalizing the landscape of the cross-border area in an integrated manner, where protection-related aspects are mixed with economic aspects of infrastructure development and touristic promotion would be prospective interventions and potential joint projects developed and implemented in the cross-border area.

An important role in providing protection for biodiversity is represented by research activities required for substantiating the actions undertaken, as the cooperation among the academic institutions, the research ones and the private environment is essential for finding and implementing some viable solutions and technologies.

Preservation of quality and health of natural habitats, monitoring the negative anthropic effects on the eco-systems, protection against natural or industrial disasters, research activities will all contribute to the achievement of the specific objective set out for this line of action, respectively the **preservation of biodiversity and improvement of environmental conditions.**

A number of five policy packages are meant to lead to the achievement of this aim:

Policy 3.2.-a:

Protecting and restoring the natural environment, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.2.-b:

Performing the *Danube Green Corridor* by ensuring air and soil quality, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.2.-c:

Planning and restoring environmental conditions of deteriorated banks and sites, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.2.-d:

Developing the research capacity and implementation of measures for protecting and preserving the biosphere, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.2.-e:

Developing the capacity to know the Danube and Black Sea biosphere, to be implemented through long, short and medium term programmes and projects

Fighting flooding and industrial pollution, priorities for sustainable development of the cross-border area

Taking into consideration the risks posed by flooding that the Danube meadow is confronted with, alongside a series of rivers, mainly those from Mehedinti, Giurgiu, Constanta counties and Montana district, and also the major impact of industrial pollution, the measures taken for preservation of biodiversity and improvement of environmental conditions must also be supplemented by specific measures that aim the two direct threats against the cross-border area.

The programmes and projects focused on supporting some forms of planning and intervention, on providing trained human resources and proper equipment, that complement the above presented measures, are able to **strengthen the risk management and emergency services capacity**, an objective assumed for this line of action.

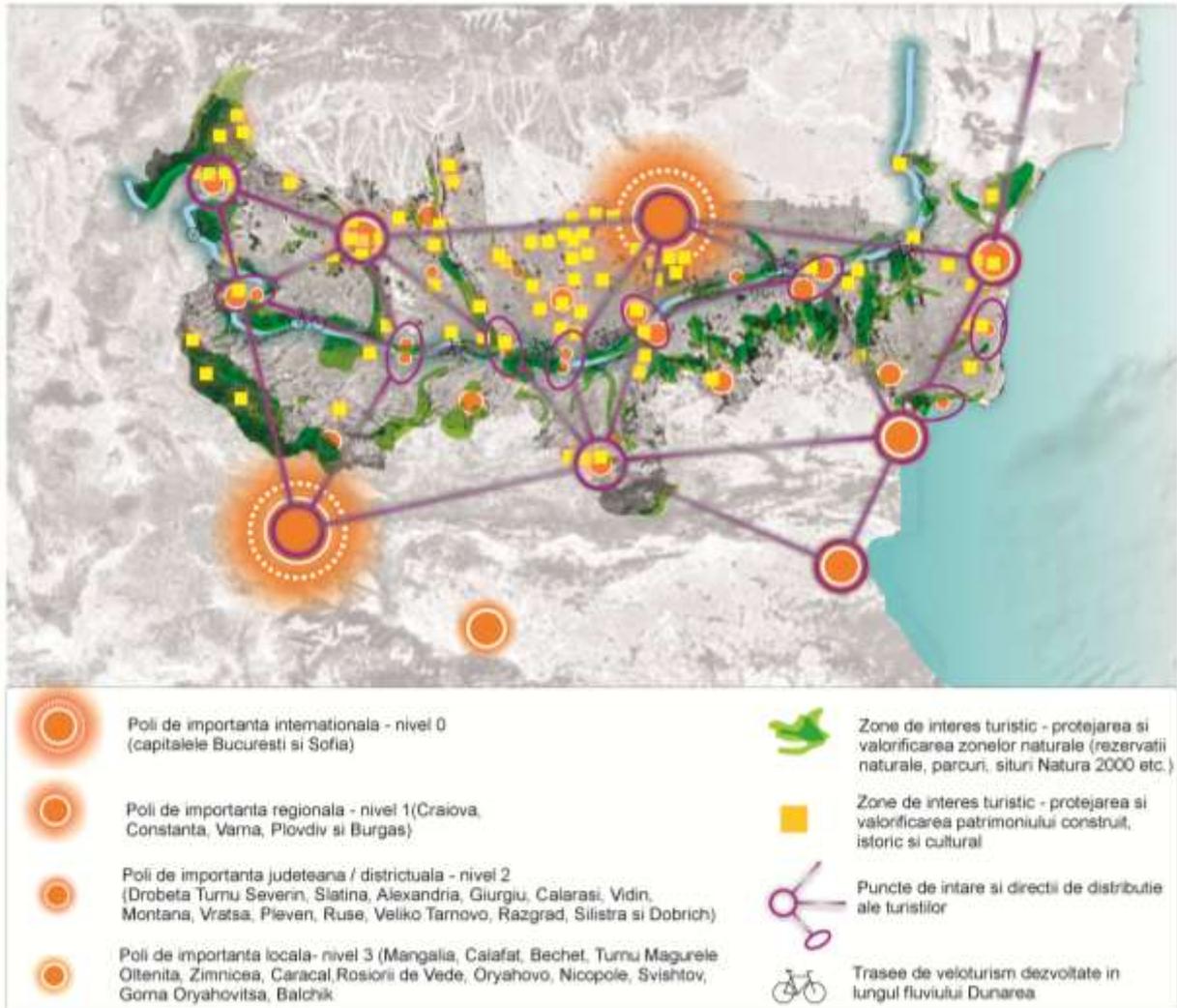
Two policy packages are taken into consideration for the achievement of this specific objective:

Policy 3.3.-a:

Promoting joint investments for planning and equipment required to counteract floods, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 3.3.-b:

Coordinating prevention and counteracting actions for industrial risks, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects



Tackling some fields of common interest for the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area

Planning for development, identification of areas of development with a negative cross-border effect, aspects related to the river-based transport activities, water quality, aquatic fauna, increasing the quality of touristic services in the cross-border area and also provision of safety for the citizens and tourists in the cross-border area, all of these represent areas of common interest for national authorities and those of the local administrative units of the two countries.

Even if they have a different administrative organization structure of their territory and a different institutional structure, it is essential for the authorities of the two countries to set down ways of cooperation and joint action for capitalizing on some common development opportunities.

Identification and usage of new work methods in multi-disciplinary teams, spatial planning drafts that are jointly debated and regulated subsequently as per own national legislations, types of communication between public and private actors as well as types of subsequent active involvement from the private sector and communities in the Danube region in the implementation of joint projects, all represent concrete means that contribute to **providing types of cooperation and management in areas of common interest**, a specific objective identified for this line of action.

Three policy packages are taken into consideration for the achievement of this specific objective:

Policy 4.1.-a:

Increasing the spatial planning capacity for the cross-border territory, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 4.1.-b:

Providing types of consultation and decision-making on joint interest initiatives and projects, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 4.1.-c:

Strengthening the operational capacity to reduce cross-border criminality, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Four projects of common interest were identified to support actions to reach this specific objective:

- **Territorial Observatory for the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria**, a project aiming to organise and access spatial data from the counties / districts in the cross-border territorial cooperation area. The project will be developed and implemented by the end of 2017 and it includes: organisation of spatial information necessary for the Black Sea coastal area planning, organisation of spatial information necessary for planning the Danube water-course development, organisation of spatial data on the demographic, social, economic, cultural and environmental structure of administrative-territorial units in the cross-border territorial cooperation area Romania-Bulgaria, monitoring activities and annual reports. The project is necessary for the development of future thematic surveys, sectorial strategies and for substantiating public or private, national or European decisions on joint investments in the fields of transport and energy, on major economic investments, environmental protection, fighting climate change risks.
- **Setting up the Advisory Committee of Danube Ports**, a project aiming to strengthen the management capacity of the local administration and of individuals and businesses in decision-making process on the area development; the project will be developed and implemented by the end of 2016. The project is also necessary to foster the capacity to represent and support initiatives/projects in organisations such as the Danube Commission or the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River.
- **Common Plan to fight against cross—border crime**, a project aiming to reduce and maintain cross-border crime at a minimum accepted level. The project will be developed and implemented by the end of 2016 and, periodically, until the end of 2020.
- **Strengthen the capacity to manage cross-border crime**, a project aiming to lead to the implementation of common information and operation methods by the competent institutions. The project will be developed and implemented in the period of 2015-2020.

Tackling some issues of general interest for the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area

Increasing mobility, developing tourist activities, valorisation of cultural and natural heritage are fields of general interest and real opportunities for the development of the cross-border area.

Investments in such fields should be substantiated by studies and analyses, by research to document common development opportunities. In the field of tourist services development, it is highly important to provide solutions to ensure tourist information and safety.

The support for developing mobility plans for port cities, the development of tourist information services, the support for investments in ensuring tourist safety in hotels and for the development of tourist marketing plans, heritage management plans and habitat monitoring actions are all actions aiming to **coordinate public and private initiatives on matters of common interest**, the specific objective set for this action line.

Three policy packages were developed to reach this specific objective:

Policy 4.2.-a Performing mobility plans for increasing transport service efficiency, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 4.2.-b Providing safety conditions for tourists, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Policy 4.2.-c Performing research programmes for joint interest areas, to be implemented through short and medium term programmes and projects

Two priority projects of common interest have been identified as supporting the measures needed for the achievement of this specific objective:

- **Mobility plan for the harbour cities situated in the cross-border area**, a project that should lead to increased accessibility and mobility for the harbour cities in terms of terrestrial and river-based modes of transport. The project shall be developed and implemented by mid-2017 and it shall also facilitate the decision-making process on the placement of logistic hubs of regional and local interest.
- **Implementation of an integrated information system for tourists in harbour cities in the cross-border area**, a project that shall be developed and implemented by the end of 2017 and aims at increasing the tourists' and tourism operators' level of trust. The project aims to: deliver information systems on cultural values and tourism, deliver information systems on taxi, medical services, police, legal counselling services and also to purchase equipment and software.

Role of public administration bodies in supporting the development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area

Even if cooperation among administrative authorities at county/district level and at the level of lower ranking administrative units has been rather reduced so far, as it was encouraged especially through the implementation of some common interest projects within the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013, a shift in this approach is required, alongside an awareness on the role played by cooperation in reaching the joint objectives, starting from the planning stage up to the result evaluation stage.

The *Common Strategy for sustainable territorial development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area* underlines the importance of cooperation and capacity building for the local authorities situated on the two river banks of the cross-border area in order to reach the set objectives. Thus, the implementation of the Strategy shall be looked upon as a process for strengthening and developing the administration, for operational capacity building, for promoting some new tools and techniques adapted in order to reach the set objectives.

This line of action also circumscribes the actions taken for operational capacity building of the administrative authorities in order to perform a comparative inventory of the results achieved at local level, within the cross-border area, for measuring effectiveness and consumer satisfaction degree in terms of a certain service provided.

Equally important is the development of a participatory planning-based approach, through the genuine involvement of the private environment, of the non-governmental environment, of citizens in the decision-making process.

This type of measures is able to support **operational capacity building of the administrative authorities on managing local development**, the specific objective of this line of action.

Two policy packages are taken into consideration for the achievement of this specific objective:

Policy 4.3.-a

Performing a benchmarking system based on joint interest services, to be implemented through short term programmes and projects

Policy 4.3.-b

Using modern methods and techniques to involve the community in participatory planning, to be implemented through long, medium and short term programmes and projects

5. CONCLUSIONS

The current document, the ***Green Paper of the Common Strategy for sustainable territorial development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area*** is aimed to serve, together with the Common Strategy and the Action Plan, as a roadmap for the joint future actions taken for the development of the Romania-Bulgaria cross-border area, as a guideline for cooperation at administration level, providing at the same time an useful instrument for the private environment and the citizen on both banks of the Danube river.

It is important for policies to be integrated at all levels, to answer to the needs of population living in territories defined/identified at the most appropriate level.

ANNEX: Matrix matching development objectives with policies

THE DEVELOPMENT VISION												
Cross-border Area 2045: <i>The Danube river region, where the joint contribution of Romania and Bulgaria leads to a connection between places and people so as to strengthen a competitive area, in a valuable natural and cultural framework</i>												
Strategic Objective 1: Developing the connectivity between urban and metropolitan areas to favour a sustainable polycentric territorial development				Strategic Objective 2: Strengthening the role of Danube cities by increasing attractiveness of the public area and providing general interest utilities and services for locals and tourists			Strategic Objective 3: Strengthening the cultural and natural values network and linking it to similar networks in the Danube and Black Sea region			Strategic Objective 4: Developing the institutional capacity for cooperation aiming to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion		
Specific objectives				Specific objectives			Specific objectives			Specific objectives		
Specific Objective 1.1:	Specific Objective 1.2:	Specific Objective 1.3:	Specific Objective 1.4:	Specific Objective 2.1:	Specific Objective 2.2:	Specific Objective 2.3:	Specific Objectives: 3.1:	Specific Objective 3.2:	Specific Objective 3.3:	Specific Objective 4.1:	Specific Objective 4.2:	Specific Objective 4.3:
Providing infrastructure to develop passenger and freight transport	Developing a viable local economic network, backed by high performance technologies and qualified human resources	Providing the energy support of the territorial functioning, with efficiency, competition and environmental respect	Improving communication in the cross-border area by developing the broadband network	Developing human capital by providing general public interest services	Increasing the level of territorial endowment in rural and urban areas	Increasing the attractiveness and quality of living in urban and rural areas	Increasing the contribution of the cultural heritage of the cross-border area in the European cultural landscape	Preserving biodiversity and improving environmental conditions	Strengthening the risk and emergency response management capacity	Providing types of cooperation and management in joint interest areas	Coordinating public and private initiatives on general interest matters	Increasing the administration's operational capacity on managing local development
List of policies				List of policies			List of policies			List of policies		
Policy 1.1.-a: Integrating modes of transport and linking them to the European network	Policy 1.2.-a: Increasing the contribution of local enterprises to the development of the cross-border economy	Policy 1.3.-a Upgrading infrastructure and services in the energy sector	Policy 1.4.-a Developing the Internet infrastructure and linking individuals and companies	Policy 2.1.-a Ensuring access to education and health services in a safe and clean environment	Policy 2.2.-a Providing the drinking water supply infrastructure, protecting current resources	Policy 2.3.-a: Energy rehabilitation of existing constructions (buildings, installations)	Policy 3.1.-a: Preserving and rehabilitating the tangible heritage in tourist areas	Policy 3.2.-a: Protecting and restoring the natural environment	Policy 3.3.-a: Promoting joint investments for planning and equipment required to counteract floods	Policy 4.1.-a: Increasing the spatial planning capacity for the cross-border territory	Policy 4.2.-a Performing mobility plans for increasing transport service efficiency	Policy 4.3.-a Performing a benchmarking system based on joint interest services
Policy 1.1.-b: Connecting Danube harbours to the network of municipalities in the cross-border area	Policy 1.2.-b: Developing agricultural production chains based on added value and protection of water resources	Policy 1.3.-b Producing and using renewable energy	Policy 1.4.-b Developing types of digital information/communication	Policy 2.1.-b Increasing the quality of social services for disadvantaged groups	Policy 2.2.-b Providing sewage infrastructure observing water quality conditions of the Danube	Policy 2.3.-b: Development and rehabilitation of deteriorated central and urban areas	Policy 3.1.-b: Valorising the intangible heritage	Policy 3.2.-b: Performing the <i>Danube Green Corridor</i> by ensuring air and soil quality	Policy 3.3.-b: Coordinating prevention and counteracting actions for industrial risks	Policy 4.1.-b: Providing types of consultation and decision-making on joint interest initiatives and projects	Policy 4.2.-b Providing safety conditions for tourists	Policy 4.3.-b Using modern methods and techniques to involve the community in participatory planning
Policy 1.1.-c: Complementary development of the harbour network	Policy 1.2.-c: Developing tourism services as per international	Policy 1.3.-c Developing cooperation of research on producing		Policy 2.1.-c Development of human capital through	Policy 2.2.-c Developing the multimodal land and river transport	Policy 2.3.-c: Territorial planning of areas required for	Policy 3.1.-c: Promoting specific cultural values of the cross-	Policy 3.2.-c: Planning and restoring environmental conditions of		Policy 4.1.-c: Strengthening the operational capacity to	Policy 4.2.-c Performing research programmes for joint	

depending on the role and regional specificity	quality and safety standards	green energy		training and counselling services	system for increasing mobility, using mostly fuels with low levels of pollution	entertainment and sports	border area	deteriorated banks and sites		reduce cross-border criminality	interest areas	
Policy 1.1.-d: Ensuring safe river and maritime navigability ²	Policy 1.2.-d: Supporting research, advisory services through entrepreneurial initiatives in the local communities				Policy 2.2.-d Providing a collection system for domestic waste, constructions and medical waste			Policy 3.2.-d: Developing the research capacity and implementation of measures for protecting and preserving the biosphere				
Policy 1.1.-e: Increasing the operational capacity of qualified personnel in the river transport sector	Policy 1.2.-e: Providing counselling and professional training for employment				Policy 2.2.-e Developing human capital through training services on the supply and management of public utilities			Policy 3.2.-e: Developing the capacity to know the Danube and Black Sea biosphere				

² Policy coordinated with the NAIADES programme and with “The joint statement on inland navigation and environment sustainability in the Danube river basin”