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**EGTC as a form of development of cross-border cooperation  
of higher education institutions in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine**

**Formulation of the problem.** Cross-border cooperation is an understudied special type of cooperation between higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine, which are located close, but separated by state borders. Higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine should be considered not only as providers of educational, scientific, and technical services but also potentially strong participants in the development of systemic cross-border cooperation, implementation of cross-border educational, scientific and technical projects, and cross-border innovative projects in order to develop their regions, including cross-border regions. Higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine are issued which are clearly aware of their place in the development of Europe and its territories. It seems that today they need to pay more attention to territorial cohesion, that is, to test this form of cross-border cooperation, as a European grouping of territorial cooperation (further in the text – EGTC). The research on cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine seems promising and deserves much more attention in the future because it represents the unused potential of cross-border educational, scientific-technical, and innovative cooperation.

**Methodology.** The following methods were used to perform the research: in particular, the logical-semantic method was used to study the current state of scientific development of issues related to the EGTC, as form of development of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine; a special legal method was used to analyze the legal basis of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine; thanks to the comparative legal method researched the settlement

of the procedure for the creation of the EGTC in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine; a special legal method was used to analyze the provisions of the documents regarding Interreg programs; the forecasting method was used for the purpose of formulating recommendations for EGTC, as a form of development of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine, etc.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Various aspects of the problems of organizational forms of cross-border cooperation were studied by the following scientists, in particular: Alieva P., Benczi M., Bestuzheva S., Böhm H., Chabala O., Chernikov D., Chernomaz P., Chernytska T., Chirva H. Chirva H., Chovancova T., Cirner M., Corbin V., Drápela E., Duleba O., Galiakhmetov I., Goda S, Grigorevska O., Hagerty D., Hajko J, Hryniuk S., Ivachenko L., Jaschitz M., Kalashnikova S., Kalat Ya., Khmyrov I., Kovac P, Krolenko M., Kurowska-Pysz J., Landa O., Lango V., Łażniewska E., Marenich T., Mikula N., Moroz S., Oboletska T., Ocskay G, Opiola W., Orzhel O., Potyatynik B., Prus I., Semenets Yu., Skrypnyk M., Stryzhakova A., Sytnik T., Tolkanonov V., Tsirkun O., Wojciech Z., Zaitseva I., and other. Currently, the existing modern scientific research of organizational forms of cross-border cooperation are concentrated mainly around economic, political science, historical, social issues, issues of international relations, public administration and a small number of legal research. Summarizing the entire complex of special scientific literature, it is worth noting that the EGTC as a form of development of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions in Visegrad Group states and Ukraine, namely their theoretical and legal foundations, has practically not been studied in modern science. It is observed that, for the most part, modern scientific research is concentrated mainly on the study of cross-border cooperation of territorial communities, their representative bodies and their associations, and local executive bodies of Ukraine, which interact with territorial communities and relevant authorities of neighboring states of the Visegrad Group. It seems that the research on cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine is promising and deserves

much more attention in the future because it represents the unused potential of cross-border educational, scientific-technical, and innovative cooperation.

**Presenting main results of the research.** The legal basis for cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine there are Constitutions, and international treaties which regulating relations in this area, consent to their bindingness has been given by the parliaments of these states. Sub-legal normative legal acts of these states clarify details and specify certain aspects of such cooperation. The legal basis for bilateral cooperation, including the development of cross-border cooperation in the field of higher education, is the interstate treaties on good neighborliness, friendly relations, and cooperation, concluded by the Visegrad Group states. However, unlike the Visegrad Group states, it seems appropriate for Ukraine to more clearly regulate the procedure for the creation of the EGTC with the participation of legal entities of Ukraine, since such unsettlement in the future will cause problems for legal entities of Ukraine, which will take the initiative in creating the EGTC.

Today in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine (refers to the border regions of Ukraine bordering the border regions of the EU member states) a large number of higher education institutions are concentrated in the border regions. For example, in the Visegrad group states, namely: in Slovakia about 21, in Poland about 350, in Czechia about 46, in Hungary about 38 and in Ukraine about 120. It seems that a potentially significant number of cross-border educational-scientific and scientific-technical regions, approximately 20, are being formed. Approximately 20 Interreg programs (2021-2027) operate on the territory of these cross-border educational, scientific and scientific and technical regions.

The higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine have development strategies and strategies for the internationalization of higher education institutions and also belong to various associations of universities. However, it seems that none of the higher education institutions of Slovakia, Poland and Czechia is a participant/founder of forms of cross-border cooperation, such as the Euroregion, the EGTC or the ECGs. Instead, it seems that some of the

universities of Slovakia, Poland and Czechia in cooperation with EGTC TRITIA can strengthen the development of cross-border cooperation (Slovak-Polish-Czech border), because the area of activity of EGTC TRITIA appears to be interesting for research and promising for innovation. Unlike higher education institutions in Slovakia, Poland, Czechia and Ukraine, in Hungary, one of higher education institutions, the University of Pécs, is a member of the "Pannon" EGTC together with other legal entities.

Higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine appear to be which aim to erase boundaries in the pursuit of knowledge, who are clearly aware of their place in the development of Europe and its territories in their development, which have potential in building the future of Europe through innovation, etc. It seems that today they need to pay more attention to territorial cohesion, to create continuity between learning, research and innovation. The implementation of such a combination today seems quite possible due to the use of such a form of cross-border cooperation as the EGTC.

The EGTC can potentially be the effective form of cooperation, which will strengthen the development of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine (and, if necessary, territorial cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine). And it can probably become an impetus for the implementation of cross-border educational, scientific and technical projects and cross-border innovative projects with the aim of developing the respective regions, both at the internal borders and at the external borders of the EU. Today, this is quite relevant for the external border of the EU. Higher education institutions in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine can potentially create EGTC with the aim of building an educational, scientific, scientific-technical, and innovative space with a clearly defined profile, without walls and borders with a transnational reach. Institutions of higher education in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine can potentially create EGTC with the aim of building an educational, scientific, scientific-technical, and innovative space with a clearly defined profile, without walls and borders with a transnational reach.

**Conclusions.** Thus, today the higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine should be considered not only as providers of educational, scientific, and technical services but also potentially strong participants in the development of systemic cross-border cooperation, implementation of cross-border educational, scientific and technical projects, and cross-border innovative projects in order to develop their regions, including cross-border regions. Elimination of legal, administrative, technical and informational barriers cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions will create a basis for the successful implementation of cross-border programs and projects together with local and regional authorities and other legal entities of appropriate regions, which, as a result, will contribute to the development of both the regions of the Visegrad Group countries and the reconstruction of the regions of Ukraine in the post-war period. The EGTC can potentially be the effective form of cooperation, which will strengthen the development of cross-border cooperation of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- cross-border cooperation commissions of the relevant Visegrad Group states and Ukraine should organize regular and/or institutionalized consultations with higher education institutions on issues of common interest, to find joint solutions, identify legal and practical obstacles to cross-border cooperation and take appropriate measures;
- to find common solutions regarding legal obstacles in CBC and take appropriate measures. Currently, there are certain problems of regulatory regulation regarding the implementation of a CBC by universities of Ukraine;
- to ensure and improve the information of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group countries about the possibilities of cross-border cooperation with higher educational institutions of Ukraine (Polish-Ukrainian border, Slovak-Ukrainian border and Hungarian-Ukrainian border), which, as a result, will

contribute to the attraction of external financial resources for the implementation of joint innovative projects;

- to pay attention to the development and internationalization strategies of higher education institutions, which would contain a cross-border component, including an innovative component regarding the development of regions and implementation of innovations;

- it is also worth paying attention to the regional strategies of regional development and cross-border cooperation strategies of the Visegrad Group countries and Ukraine, which would contain a component regarding the involvement of higher education institutions as potentially strong participants in the development of systemic cross-border cooperation, implementation of cross-border educational, scientific, scientific and technical projects, as well as cross-border innovative projects aimed at the development of their regions, including cross-border regions;

- it is worth developing a system of statistical indicators and forming databases on current aspects of territorial development and cross-border cooperation, which will make it possible to forecast, identify and compare the expediency and effectiveness of cross-border cooperation projects of higher education institutions of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine;

- to spread the practice of creating EGTC with the participation of higher education institutions in the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine (if necessary). For example, the creation of a pilot EGTC on the external border of the EU, i.e. with higher education institutions of Ukraine, will be relevant at the moment;

- it seems that this can probably become an impetus for the implementation of not only cross-border educational, scientific, and technical projects, which, among other things, will contribute to the integration of higher education institutions of Ukraine into the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, as well as cross-border innovative projects aimed at the development of the relevant regions, and later the development of the relevant cross-border regions;

- at the same time, it is worth noting that the activity strategy of such EGTC should have synergy with the development and internationalization strategies of

higher education institutions, regional development strategies, and cross-border cooperation strategies of the respective region, from which the higher education institution of the Visegrad Group states and Ukraine will be involved in the activities of EGTC;

- as a result, this may increase the number of innovations, formal inventions or EPO and PCT patent applications. Today, the creation of such an EGTC is quite relevant for the external border of the EU.

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