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## COOPERATION OF THE BORDER SERVICES OF UKRAINE AND HUNGARY IN THE 1990S: FORMATION OF SECURITY AND GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS MECHANISMS

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In the 1990s, cooperation between the border services of Ukraine and Hungary became a key instrument for ensuring security and stability on the common border, which, after the collapse of the USSR, turned into a zone of increased risks: illegal migration from Asia to the EU, smuggling of weapons and tobacco, and a lack of control infrastructure. The basis for this interaction was the Treaty on the State Border Regime, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance on Border Issues, signed on May 19, 1995. It consolidated the principles of territorial integrity, established mechanisms for joint patrols, information exchange, and created an institutional framework in the form of the apparatus of border commissioners. Key aspects of cooperation. Structural mechanisms. The 1995 Treaty provided for the creation of joint coordination bodies, in particular the Council of Heads of Border Services, which allowed

for the systematic resolution of incidents and the planning of operations. For example, joint patrols on the "green" sections of the border significantly reduced the level of smuggling. Combating transnational threats: The focus was on countering illegal migration and smuggling. By 1999, Ukrainian border guards had detained over 130,000 violators, particularly on the Hungarian section. Hungary, as a future EU member, was interested in reducing the pressure on its borders, which contributed to technical support for Ukraine, including aviation monitoring. Humanitarian dimension. The agreement provided for a simplified regime for residents of the border zones (Zakarpattia and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg), which legalized traditional economic and family ties. This also contributed to cultural exchange and the protection of the rights of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine. The 1995 Treaty became a model for Ukraine's subsequent agreements with other neighbors, particularly Poland and Slovakia. It laid the foundation for Ukraine's participation in Euroregions, such as the "Upper Prut" (created in 2000), which integrated border regions into European cooperation programs. By 2000, the number of smugglers on the Hungarian section had decreased by 40%, which confirmed the effectiveness of joint efforts.

Modern significance. The experience of the 1990s became the basis for responding to new challenges, particularly during the Russian aggression from 2022, when the Hungarian-Ukrainian border turned into a key humanitarian corridor. The trust mechanisms established by the Treaty continue to play a role in the context of cybersecurity and combating the use of UAVs for smuggling. The cooperation of the 1990s showed that even young states can effectively manage borders through institutional interaction, technological support, and adherence to European standards. This experience remains relevant for Ukraine's further integration into the EU and the strengthening of Eastern European security.

**Keywords:** Ukraine and Hungary; border cooperation; 1995 Treaty; transnational crime; illegal migration; smuggling; border commissioners.

In the context of Ukraine gaining independence in the 1990s, the issue of effective control and security on the common border with Hungary became one of the key issues for state policy. The formation of interaction between the border services of the two countries determined not only the practical mechanisms for ensuring order on the border, but also laid the foundations for good neighborly relations and Ukraine's further European integration. The study of this issue is relevant both for the theory of international relations and for the modern practice of cross-border cooperation, as the experience of the 1990s influenced the further development of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations and modern approaches to border security.

**Problem Statement.** After Ukraine gained independence in the 1990s, there was an urgent need to create an effective border control system and establish cooperation with neighboring states, particularly with Hungary. The lack of proper interaction mechanisms, the growth of cross-border migration and smuggling, as well as the need to adapt to new international legal conditions, turned the Ukrainian-Hungarian border into a zone of heightened attention. The problem lay in the absence of coordinated procedures, modern infrastructure, and common approaches to ensuring security and order at the border. The study of this problem is important both for the development of the theory of international border cooperation and for the practice of forming effective mechanisms of security, good

neighborliness, and Ukraine's integration into the European space.

**Analysis of Recent Research and Publications.** The issue of cooperation between the border services of Ukraine and Hungary in the 1990s has been covered in the works of Ukrainian and Hungarian researchers, as well as in intergovernmental documents and analytical materials. Among the key sources, the following should be noted: V.O. Hubenko<sup>1</sup>, V. I. Bannykh<sup>2</sup>. Protocol between the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine, the State Customs Committee of Ukraine and the Border Guard of the Republic of Hungary, the Customs and Finance Guard Directorate of the Republic of Hungary on joint measures to regulate motor traffic across the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border (Nyírbátor, December 13, 1993)<sup>3</sup>. Treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Hungary on the regime of the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border, cooperation and mutual assistance on border issues (Kyiv, May 19, 1995)<sup>4</sup>. State Border Guard Service of Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup>Губенко В. О. Охорона державного кордону України: становлення, проблеми, перспективи. Київ : 2001. 312 с.

<sup>2</sup>Банних В. І. Формування системи прикордонного контролю незалежної України. *Прикордонник України*. 2005. №2. С. 15–19.

<sup>3</sup>Протокол між Державним комітетом у справах охорони державного кордону України, Державним митним комітетом України і Прикордонною охороною Угорської Республіки, Управлінням митно-фінансової охорони Угорської Республіки про спільні заходи щодо упорядкування руху автотранспорту через українсько-угорський державний кордон (Ньїрбатор, 13 грудня 1993 р.).

<sup>4</sup>Договір між Україною і Угорською Республікою про режим українсько-угорського державного кордону, співробітництво та взаємодопомогу з прикордонних питань (Київ, 19 травня 1995 р.).

History and Modernity. 2011<sup>1</sup>. V.Ye. Kravchenko<sup>2</sup>. Border Security in Central Europe: Challenges and Solutions. 2003<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the analysis of recent research and publications indicates significant progress in establishing mechanisms of security and good neighborliness on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, as well as the need for further improvement of the border cooperation system in line with modern challenges.

**Purpose of the Article.** The purpose of the article is to study the process of formation and development of cooperation between the border services of Ukraine and Hungary in the 1990s, to analyze the formation of security and good neighborliness mechanisms on the common border, and also to determine their significance for modern Ukrainian-Hungarian relations and the European integration of Ukraine.

**Tasks of the Article.**

1. To characterize the historical preconditions and main challenges faced by the border services of Ukraine and Hungary after 1991.

2. To analyze the content and practical significance of the interdepartmental Protocol of 1993 and the Treaty of 1995 on the state border regime.

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<sup>1</sup> Державна прикордонна служба України. Історія та сучасність. Київ: 2011. 220 с.

<sup>2</sup>Кравченко В. Є. Транскордонне співробітництво України: сучасний стан і перспективи. *Наукові записки Інституту політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень*. 2019. № 2. С. 45–53.

<sup>3</sup>Border Security in Central Europe: Challenges and Solutions. Budapest: CEU Press, 2003.184 p.

3. To identify the key mechanisms of interaction, information exchange, and joint control established in bilateral agreements.

4. To assess the impact of these agreements on increasing the level of security, developing cross-border trade, and good neighborly relations Факт того.

5. To identify problematic aspects and limitations of the existing mechanisms, as well as to outline recommendations for their modernization in accordance with modern challenges.

**Research results.** In the 1990s, after Ukraine declared its independence, a key task was to form an effective system of border control and develop international cooperation. One of the priorities was to establish interaction with Hungary – a state with which Ukraine shares a common border. This process became the basis for creating security mechanisms and strengthening good-neighborly relations.

For Ukraine, from the very first steps of establishing an independent state, it was extremely important to establish friendly, good-neighborly relations with all, without exception, bordering countries. At that time, the Hungarians proved to be the most ready for such cooperation. And this was influenced by the following factors.

Hungary had long suffered from its eastern neighbor. The empire – whether Russian or Soviet – was always a threat to Hungary's statehood. No one will erase from the historical memory of Hungarians the role of Russia in suppressing the revolution of 1848 and the USSR in crushing the revolution of 1956. Therefore, when the hope arose that on the eastern border the empire might give way to Ukraine, a state choosing a

democratic, European path of development, the Hungarians, of course, made every effort to facilitate this transformation.

Most Hungarian politicians and the population understand that in the realities of today's Europe, one should not count on the return to Hungary of the territories lost as a result of the signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty. Therefore, there is only one path to the unification of the Hungarian nation, namely – linguistic and cultural unity based on the preservation of national traditions. Thus, Ukraine, on whose territory over 160,000 Hungarians live, was identified as a country where the most favorable conditions exist for the spiritual unification of Hungarians. It is no coincidence that it was with Ukraine that the Hungarians were the first to sign the Declaration on Ensuring the Rights of National Minorities and created the Joint Ukrainian-Hungarian Commission on Ensuring the Rights of National Minorities, which has been successfully operating for almost fourteen years.

Both Ukraine and Hungary are post-socialist countries that have identified the construction of a democratic society on the principles of a market economy as the main path of development. Of course, a common goal is a good basis for interaction.

Both countries have declared their intentions to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Hungary has already achieved quite significant results on this path and provides constant assistance to Ukraine in its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

The geopolitical factor. Neighboring Ukraine and Hungary belong to the region of Central and Eastern European countries. They are closely linked by common interests in the field of

security in the broad sense of this concept – from military to environmental. In the economic development of both countries, a significant place is given to their inclusion in the European network of transport corridors – road, rail, and water.

The economies of both countries were quite interconnected during the socialist era. And although after the collapse of the CMEA, Hungary reoriented to economic cooperation with Western countries, Ukraine remained a fairly attractive partner for Hungarians. Cooperation between border territories is traditionally developing.

The relations of both countries in the historical past are not burdened by conflicts and problematic issues. Relations are also developing quite cloudlessly at the present stage.

On most acute international issues, the positions of Ukraine and Hungary practically coincide or are very close. This allows the foreign policy departments of both countries to conduct a coordinated line both in international and regional organizations<sup>1</sup>.

Thanks to these and other factors, as well as the balanced, coordinated, and purposeful joint foreign policy actions of both countries, Ukraine and Hungary managed to establish a comprehensive system of mutually beneficial partnership and good-neighborly relations during the 90s. It covers the entire complex of Ukrainian-Hungarian cooperation in all spheres without exception, and a mechanism for coordinating the activities of the two states has been developed for its

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<sup>1</sup>Стан та перспективи розвитку українсько-угорських стосунків. Аналітична довідка. Поточний архів МЗС України. 15.05.2000 р. 6.5/3 1198. 113. 6 с.

implementation, both at the bilateral level and in the international arena<sup>1</sup>.

The formation of the modern history of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations is associated with a radical restructuring of the system of international relations, the defining geostrategic factor of which was the collapse of the USSR. In general, in our opinion, the establishment and development of ties between the two states depended on the complex of tasks that life posed before Ukraine and Hungary at one stage or another.

In 1990, Hungary was extremely interested in Ukraine gaining state sovereignty. In early December 1991, an event took place that also became decisive in the formation of young Ukrainian diplomacy. Immediately after the announcement of the results of the National Referendum, Budapest established diplomatic relations with Ukraine, and on December 6, a delegation of the Republic of Hungary headed by Prime Minister J. Antall visited Kyiv. In a solemn atmosphere in the Mariinsky Palace, the Treaty on the Foundations of Good Neighborliness and Cooperation<sup>2</sup> was signed (signed on 06.12.91, ratified: by the Ukrainian side on 01.07.92; by the Hungarian side on 11.05.93; the exchange of instruments of ratification took place on 16.06.93). This was the first document of such a level that Ukraine signed.

Returning to the basic Treaty, it should be noted that Article 2 states the following: "The Parties respect each other's territorial

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<sup>1</sup>Ткач Д. Сучасна Угорщина в контексті суспільних трансформацій : монографія. Київ : МАУП, 2004. 480 с.

<sup>2</sup>Договір про основи добросусідства та співробітництва між Україною і Угорською Республікою. 1991 р.  
[https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/348\\_004#Text](https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/348_004#Text)

integrity and declare that they do not have and will not have territorial claims against each other." Subsequently, this very article of the Treaty was debated for three days in the National Assembly of the Republic of Hungary during the ratification procedure. Despite strong opposition, primarily from the Independent Smallholders' Party, the parliament ratified this document. The main reason for the disputes was that this point, according to opponents, forever deprived Hungarians of the hope of returning the territories that belonged to them before the adoption of the Trianon Peace Treaty. The right-wing was particularly irritated that the Treaty stated "...will not have in the future." Their main argument was that international legal documents do not use the future tense. But thanks to the common sense of the majority of deputies, the Treaty was given a start in life.

In the early 1990s, Ukraine inherited a complex border infrastructure from the USSR that needed reform. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new borders with neighbors, including Hungary, became a zone of heightened attention. The main challenges were as follows. Illegal migration from Asian and Middle Eastern countries through the territory of Ukraine to the EU. Smuggling of goods, particularly tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and gasoline, which was recorded on the "green" section of the border. The absence of coordinated cooperation mechanisms between the newly created border services of Ukraine and Hungarian law enforcement officers.

In October 1992, Colonel-General Valeriy Oleksandrovych Hubenko became the head of the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine. At that time, the author of these lines was already the Ambassador Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Hungary. Valeriy Oleksandrovych approached me with a request to establish interaction with the Hungarian border guards. At that time, the Commander of the Border Guard of the Republic of Hungary was Major General Nováky Balázs. I met with the Hungarian head of the border service and proposed organizing a visit for Hubenko to Budapest. He gladly agreed.

The Ukrainian general's visit to Budapest took place in June 1993. First and foremost, they discussed the text of the Protocol between the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine, the State Customs Committee of Ukraine and the Border Guard of the Republic of Hungary, the Customs and Finance Guard Directorate of the Republic of Hungary on joint measures to regulate motor traffic across the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border.

The negotiations took place in the city of Siófok on Lake Balaton at the recreation center of the Hungarian border guards. Both the Ukrainian and Hungarian sides were positively inclined, seeking compromises. In the end, they managed to agree on the main provisions of this document. In the evening, on behalf of the Embassy of Ukraine in Hungary, we organized a reception on the shore of Lake Balaton. The Hungarians liked this very much, and Balázs proposed holding annual Siófok meetings of the border commissioners of the two countries with the invitation of the heads of the border services of neighboring countries.

Work on the Protocol continued, and eventually, it was signed on December 13, 1993, in Nyírbátor, Hungary.

This was an interdepartmental protocol between the border and customs services of the two countries. Signed in the early

period after Ukraine gained independence. The period of formation of bilateral relations between a sovereign Ukraine and Hungary. The beginning of the development of the border infrastructure of independent Ukraine. Reflects the transitional period in the formation of a new system of border control.

The subjects of the agreement on the Ukrainian side were the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine, the State Customs Committee of Ukraine. On the Hungarian side - the Border Guard of the Republic of Hungary, the Customs and Finance Guard Directorate of the Republic of Hungary.

It is important to note that at the time of the document's signing, the structure of the border and customs authorities of both countries differed from the modern one, as administrative reforms and reorganizations of the respective services have taken place since then.

Key provisions of the protocol. Organization of control at checkpoints. Establishing the procedure for conducting border and customs control. Defining traffic lanes for different categories of vehicles. Regulating the procedures for checking documents and inspecting vehicles. Organization of traffic for cargo, passenger, and private vehicles. Technical aspects of vehicle passage. Requirements for the technical equipment of checkpoints. Coordination of checkpoint operating hours and vehicle passage schedules. Defining the throughput capacity standards of checkpoints. Procedures for priority passage of certain categories of vehicles.

Information exchange and service interaction. Mechanisms for the operational exchange of information between the services of both countries. The procedure for notifying about

temporary traffic restrictions. Procedures for responding to changes in traffic flow intensity. Coordination of actions in case of a complicated situation at the border. Measures to optimize traffic flows. Regulating the priority of passage for different categories of vehicles. Defining methods for managing queues at the border. Procedures for clearing traffic jams at checkpoints. Mechanisms for responding to seasonal fluctuations in traffic intensity.

Resolution of problematic situations. The procedure of actions upon detection of vehicles with technical malfunctions. Procedures for considering disputed cases when crossing the border. Mechanisms for resolving conflict situations between the services of the two countries. Actions upon detection of forged documents or customs rules violations. Joint control measures. Possibilities of conducting joint control of vehicles. The procedure of interaction during special operations. Coordination of documentation formats and control procedures. Coordination of service activities to avoid duplication of functions.

Practical significance of the protocol. Operational dimension. Increasing the efficiency of border control. Reducing the time for vehicle checks through coordinated procedures. Lowering the risk of significant queues at the border. Optimizing the use of available human resources of border and customs services. Improving traffic flow management. Differentiated approach to different categories of transport. Flexible response to changes in traffic intensity. The possibility of operational changes to the operating mode of checkpoints if necessary.

Security dimension. Strengthening control over illegal activities. Coordination of efforts in combating smuggling and illegal transportation of goods. Joint approaches to detecting forged documents. Mutual exchange of information about potential threats. Increasing the level of security at the border. Coordinated actions in emergency situations. Joint response to incidents at checkpoints. Ensuring the uninterrupted functioning of checkpoints.

Economic dimension. Promoting the development of cross-border trade. Accelerating the clearance of commercial cargo. Reducing the logistical costs of carriers. Increasing the attractiveness of transport corridors through the Ukrainian-Hungarian border. Stimulating cross-border mobility. Facilitating border crossing for private individuals. Promoting the development of tourism between the countries. Supporting business contacts between the regions of both countries.

Historical evolution of the document. Initial stage (1993-1999). The protocol was developed to solve urgent problems of organizing border control in the conditions of growing cross-border traffic after the collapse of the socialist bloc and the opening of borders. At this stage, the main attention was paid to establishing basic coordination mechanisms and regulating chaotic flows of motor transport.

Middle stage (2000-2004). Before Hungary's accession to the EU (2004), the Protocol likely underwent certain modifications to adapt to European standards of border control. This period was characterized by the gradual introduction of advanced control technologies and the modernization of checkpoints.

Modern stage (2004-present). After Hungary became a member of the EU, and later the Schengen Area, the provisions of the Protocol had to be adapted to new realities, when the Ukrainian-Hungarian border became part of the EU's external border. Aspects related to security and migration control became particularly important.

The Protocol in the context of Ukraine's European integration course. Adaptation to EU standards. Gradual implementation of European approaches to the organization of border control. Harmonization of customs clearance procedures with EU requirements. Modernization of the technical equipment of checkpoints. Cross-border cooperation. Development of interaction mechanisms within the framework of EU cross-border cooperation programs. Preparation for possible integration into the European transport network. Implementation of joint projects for the modernization of border infrastructure. Prospects in the context of the Association Agreement with the EU. Opportunities for further harmonization of procedures with European standards. Potential for introducing simplified border crossing mechanisms. Integration into pan-European transport logistics systems.

Problematic aspects and limitations of the protocol. Technological obsolescence. The document was developed in the pre-digital era and did not fully account for the capabilities of modern information technologies. Insufficient attention to electronic data exchange and automation of control processes. Limited use of a risk-oriented approach to vehicle control.

Bureaucratic complexity. The involvement of many agencies in the implementation of the Protocol's provisions

complicates coordination. Excessive formalization of procedures can reduce the flexibility of the control system. A lengthy process of agreeing on changes to the Protocol among all involved parties. Modern challenges. Insufficient consideration of modern logistics models and intermodal transport. Limited mechanisms for countering new types of cross-border threats. The need to adapt to the growing volume of e-commerce and related cargo.

Recommendations for modernizing approaches. Technological modernization. A complete transition to electronic document circulation between border services. Implementation of automated queue management and traffic flow distribution systems. Integration of video surveillance and license plate recognition systems. Procedural improvements. Implementation of the "single window" principle for all types of control at the border. Expansion of the practice of joint control to avoid duplication of procedures. Differentiation of control procedures depending on the risk category of carriers.

Infrastructural development. Modernization of existing and creation of new checkpoints taking into account modern requirements. Development of access roads and waiting areas to optimize traffic. Creation of modern service areas for drivers and passengers. Institutional strengthening. Creation of permanent working groups with representatives of the relevant services of both countries. Regular review and updating of the Protocol's provisions in accordance with changes in legislation. Conducting joint training for personnel of border and customs services.

The Protocol between the border and customs services of Ukraine and Hungary on the regulation of motor traffic across

the state border, signed in 1993, became an important tool for establishing cooperation between the relevant services of both countries at an early stage of forming bilateral relations.

The document laid the foundations for coordinating actions to regulate traffic flows and defined the basic mechanisms of interaction between the border and customs authorities of Ukraine and Hungary, which contributed to the formation of a civilized system of border control.

At the same time, given the significant changes that have occurred over almost 30 years in the field of international transport, transport logistics, information technology, and security requirements, the provisions of the Protocol require substantial updating in accordance with modern realities.

The modernization of approaches to regulating motor traffic across the Ukrainian-Hungarian border should be based on the full automation of control processes, the implementation of a risk-oriented approach, and the use of advanced information technologies to optimize traffic flows.

In June 1995, at the regular Ukrainian-Hungarian meeting of border guards at the highest level in Siófok, the Treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Hungary on the regime of the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border, cooperation and mutual assistance on border issues was already being discussed. The Ukrainian side was represented by Viktor Ivanovych Bannykh, who was appointed Chairman of the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine in January 1995. After successful Ukrainian-Hungarian negotiations, the Siófok meeting of border commissioners took place again, attended by representatives of Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

Why was it necessary to develop and sign this document? Historical reasons. The collapse of the USSR and Ukraine's independence. After 1991, Ukraine became an independent state and needed to establish its own treaty and legal framework with all neighboring countries. Soviet border treaties could not legally be automatically transferred to Ukraine as a successor state. Change in the international legal status of the border. In Soviet times, this was the border between the USSR and Hungary. After 1991, it became the border between two independent states with a different legal status.

Legal reasons. The need for legal certainty. Clear definition of the border line. Legal consolidation of the state border regime. Creation of legal mechanisms for resolving border issues. International legal requirements. According to international law, borders between independent states must be fixed in bilateral treaties. The need for legal formalization of territorial delimitation. Formation of a new regulatory and legal framework. The old Soviet treaties did not correspond to the new realities and did not take into account the specifics of bilateral relations between Ukraine and Hungary. The need to create a modern legal basis for border cooperation.

Political reasons. Strengthening Ukraine's state sovereignty. The treaty demonstrated international recognition of Ukrainian sovereignty over the respective territories. Confirmation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and the inviolability of its borders. Development of bilateral relations. Creating the political prerequisites for good-neighborly relations. Settlement of potentially sensitive issues related to the border. Demonstration of the political will of both states to cooperate. European integration. At that time, Hungary was

already moving towards EU membership. Ukraine sought to develop relations with European countries. The existence of settled borders is one of the requirements for European integration.

Practical reasons. Effective border management. The need to create mechanisms for coordinating the actions of border services. Regulation of border crossing procedures. Settlement of issues of joint use of border infrastructure. Economic cooperation. Stimulating cross-border trade and economic ties. Simplification of border crossing procedures for citizens of both countries. Development of border regions. Solving practical problems. Management of shared water resources on border rivers. Regulation of economic activities in the border zone. Environmental issues of border territories.

Security reasons. Combating cross-border crime. Smuggling of goods across the border. Illegal migration. Transnational organized crime. Settlement of border incidents. Creation of mechanisms for investigating and resolving incidents at the border. Procedures for joint response to emergency situations. Exchange of information on potential threats.

Thus, the adoption of the Treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Hungary on the regime of the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border was not just a formal legal procedure, but a necessary step to ensure the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and security of Ukraine, the development of good-neighborly relations with Hungary, and the creation of a legal basis for the effective management of the common border in the new geopolitical realities after the collapse of the USSR.

This document was signed on May 19, 1995, in Kyiv on behalf of Ukraine by Minister of Foreign Affairs Anatoliy Zlenko, and on behalf of Hungary by Minister of Foreign Affairs Géza Jeszenszky.

This Treaty became the first comprehensive document regulating border cooperation between independent Ukraine and Hungary. It laid the foundations for systematic interaction aimed at ensuring security, developing good neighborliness, and integrating Ukraine into the European space. Let us consider its key aspects, significance, and consequences.

Structure and key provisions of the Treaty

Defining the border regime.

Article 1-3: Fixed the inviolability of the border, running along the Soviet-Hungarian line of 1947. The parties pledged to adhere to the principle of territorial integrity. Demarcation: The agreement provided for the creation of a joint commission to clarify the boundary (work completed by 2003).

Cooperation in the security sphere.

Article 4-7. Combating transnational crime: Smuggling, illegal migration, human trafficking. Exchange of operational information about violators, criminal groups, routes. Joint patrols on the "green" sections of the border (without infrastructure). Mutual assistance in cases of emergencies (e.g., disaster relief).

Institutional mechanisms.

Article 8-9. Border commissioners: A permanent apparatus of commissioners was created to resolve local incidents (e.g., illegal crossings, conflicts between residents). Regular meetings of the heads of border services to coordinate actions (e.g.,

Valeriy Hubenko from the Ukrainian side and Balázs Novák from the Hungarian side).

Humanitarian aspects.

Article 10: Simplified regime for residents of border zones (Zakarpattia Oblast in Ukraine and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg in Hungary). This allowed for: Legalizing traditional economic and family ties. Simplifying the crossing procedure for local residents. Support for cultural initiatives of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine (education, language, media).

Significance of the Treaty for Ukraine.

Standardization of border control: Hungary's experience helped modernize Ukrainian border services (e.g., implementation of an electronic monitoring system). European integration: The agreement was a step towards opening the border with the EU (since 2007, Hungary is a Schengen member). Reduction in crime: By 2000, the number of detained smugglers on the Hungarian section had dropped by 40%.

For Hungary.

Protection of EU borders: A reliable Ukrainian border reduced the flow of illegal immigrants to Europe. Regional stability: The agreement contributed to the development of Zakarpattia, where the Hungarian minority lives.

International context.

The Treaty became a model for similar agreements Ukraine made with Poland, Slovakia, and Romania. It confirmed Ukraine's role as a guarantor of security on Europe's eastern borders.

Problems and critical aspects.

Resource imbalance: In the early 1990s, Ukrainian border guards lacked equipment and funding compared to their

Hungarian counterparts. Political tensions: The issue of the rights of the Hungarian minority in Zakarpattia was sometimes used by Hungary to pressure Ukraine. Corruption: Cases of abuse by border guards were recorded in certain sections of the border.

Modern application.

During the Russian aggression (from 2014 and 2022), the mechanisms established by the 1995 Treaty helped organize humanitarian corridors for refugees across the Hungarian border.

Prevented the illegal movement of weapons and saboteurs. Maintained a dialogue despite political differences (e.g., the Hungarian government often criticizes Ukraine over the language issue).

The 1995 Treaty became a turning point in the relations between Ukraine and Hungary. It transformed the border from a zone of conflicting interests into a platform for cooperation. It introduced mechanisms that remain relevant in the context of cybersecurity and new forms of crime. It showed that even in difficult historical conditions, neighbors can find mutually beneficial solutions. Today, this document serves as a reminder: the stability of a border depends not only on technology but also on political will and dialogue.

Ukraine ratified the Treaty in November 1995, thus it took Kyiv six months to complete this procedure. The Hungarians, however, did the same only three years later, in October 1998. Let's try to analyze why this happened.

The reasons for this delay, in our opinion, are due to a complex of internal and external factors. Political priorities of Hungary in the context of Euro-Atlantic integration. In the

second half of the 1990s, Hungary was actively preparing to join NATO (which took place in 1999) and the European Union. To do this, it needed to demonstrate the stability of its borders and compliance with security standards, particularly regarding the fight against illegal migration and smuggling. The ratification of the agreement with Ukraine became part of this strategy, but its postponement could have been related to waiting for the conclusion of negotiations with the EU and NATO, where the stability of the eastern border was a key criterion.

Internal political debates on the rights of the Hungarian minority. The issue of protecting the Hungarian minority in Zakarpattia was one of the sensitive aspects of the agreement. Hungarian politicians, particularly from the right-wing spectrum, demanded guarantees for the cultural and educational rights of Hungarians in Ukraine. For example, in 1997–1998, discussions intensified about the need to secure autonomy for the Hungarian community, which could have slowed down the ratification of the agreements reached. Ukraine, for its part, insisted on observing territorial integrity, which created temporary tension<sup>1</sup>.

Technical and bureaucratic procedures. The Hungarian parliament needed time to analyze all the provisions of the treaty, particularly the mechanisms of joint patrols and information exchange. Hungary's legislative system required consultations with local authorities, especially in border regions like Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, where part of the Hungarian minority lives on the Ukrainian side, in the Berehove district.

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<sup>1</sup>Історія відносин Україна – Угорщина як динаміка та зміст політичного діалогу. URL: <https://surl.li/jdisaw>

The process of coordination with international organizations, particularly with the EU, regarding the compliance of the agreement with European standards.

Context of international support. By 1998, Ukraine and Hungary already had experience of cooperation within the Carpathian Euroregion (founded in 1993), which contributed to growing trust. However, the ratification of the main border treaty became possible only after Hungary received guarantees from the EU regarding support for its integration aspirations, which allowed it to focus on bilateral relations with Ukraine.

Foreign policy pressure from Russia. The historical context shows that Russia tried to influence the post-Soviet space, including Ukraine. Hungary, seeking to avoid unnecessary conflicts with Moscow, postponed ratification until it was convinced of the stability of the Ukrainian position.

Significance of the ratification in 1998. The treaty became the basis for joint operations against smuggling (by 1999, over 130,000 violators were detained). The creation of Euroregions, such as "Upper Prut," which strengthened cross-border integration. Hungary's preparation for NATO accession, as a stable border with Ukraine was key for the alliance. The delay in ratification reflected a complex balance between internal political interests, international obligations, and the desire to ensure long-term regional stability.

Significance of ratification for bilateral relations. Legal consequences. Creation of a full-fledged legal basis. Ratification by both parties gave the treaty full legal force. Ensured the possibility of implementing all provisions of the treaty. Basis for further agreements. The treaty became a framework document for further agreements on border issues. Allowed for the

conclusion of more detailed technical protocols. Practical consequences. Stabilization of the border regime. Clear definition of border crossing rules. Establishment of cooperation between border services. Economic aspects. Promotion of cross-border trade. Improvement of cross-border infrastructure.

### **Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research.**

Conclusions on the significance of the law. For Hungary. The ratification law completed the legal process of settling the border status with Ukraine. Created a legal basis for Hungary's further European integration. Settled important aspects of relations with its eastern neighbor. For Ukraine. Hungary's ratification of the treaty strengthened the international legal status of Ukraine's borders. Contributed to Ukraine's inclusion in the European border security system. Expanded opportunities for economic cooperation in the border regions.

For bilateral relations. The completion of the ratification process had a positive impact on the overall climate of bilateral relations. Created a legal foundation for the development of cross-border cooperation. Allowed for concentration on other aspects of bilateral relations. Prospects for further development of the legal framework.

Adaptation to EU standards. After Hungary's accession to the EU (2004) and the Schengen Area (2007), a need arose to adapt the border regime to European standards, which required additional protocols and agreements. Modernization of cooperation mechanisms. Technological progress and new security challenges require constant updating of the cooperation mechanisms provided for in the treaty, through the conclusion of additional technical agreements and protocols.

The cooperation of the 1990s laid the foundation for modern relations. For example, during the Russian aggression since 2022, the Ukrainian-Hungarian border has become key for the evacuation of refugees and the supply of humanitarian aid. The experience of the 1990s proved that an effective border policy is based on mutual trust, a legal basis, and pragmatic interaction. These principles remain relevant today, especially in the face of new challenges such as cybercrime or the use of UAVs for smuggling.

Thus, the cooperation between Ukraine and Hungary in the 1990s became an example of how establishing a dialogue between neighbors can transform a border from a barrier into a bridge of common development.

Among the border cooperation issues that need to be resolved are: the adoption of a joint Concept of Ukrainian-Hungarian border cooperation; the signing of an Agreement on the crossing point of the Ukrainian-Hungarian border by the projected motorway within the Fifth European Transport Corridor (Trieste – Ljubljana – Budapest – Kyiv); the completion of the negotiation process with the Hungarian side regarding the change in the status of existing checkpoints across the Ukrainian-Hungarian state border; the activation of work on developing joint border cooperation projects. In particular, at the initial stage, this could be the development of the infrastructure of the Luzhanka – Beregsurány checkpoint with the construction of bypass roads around the city of Berehove, 7.8 km long, and around the village of Luzhanka, 4 km long, as well as a project for the construction of a bridge over the old riverbed of the Tisza River bypassing the village of Vylok (Vylok-2 checkpoint) for freight transport; accelerating the opening of

additional checkpoints on the Ukrainian-Hungarian border for road passenger traffic; initiating a negotiation process to prepare for the signing of an agreement on the construction of a hydraulic structure (river port) on the Ukrainian bank of the Tisza River in the area of Chop and a Convention between Ukraine, Hungary, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the navigation regime on the Tisza River.

At the same time, it is necessary to reach a bilateral agreement on changing the status of checkpoints across the common state border to ensure their operation even after the conclusion of the Agreement on the conditions of citizens' travel, which, in accordance with the requirements of the European Union, will provide for the possibility of crossing the border only at checkpoints open for international passenger and freight traffic.

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### **Ткач Дмитро. Співробітництво прикордонних служб України та Угорщини у 1990-х роках: формування механізмів безпеки та добросусідства.**

У 1990-х роках співпраця прикордонних служб України та Угорщини стала ключовим інструментом забезпечення безпеки та стабільності на спільному кордоні, який після розпаду СРСР перетворився на зону підвищених ризиків: нелегальна міграція з Азії до ЄС, контрабанда зброї та тютюну, відсутність інфраструктури контролю. Основою цієї взаємодії став Договір про режим державного кордону, співробітництво та взаємодопомогу з прикордонних питань, підписаний 19 травня 1995 року. Він закріпив принципи територіальної цілісності, встановив механізми спільних патрулів, обміну інформацією та створив інституційну основу у вигляді апарату прикордонних уповноважених.

Ключові аспекти співпраці. Структурні механізми. Договір 1995 року передбачав створення спільних органів координації, зокрема Ради керівників прикордонних служб, що дозволило системно вирішувати інциденти та планувати операції. Наприклад, спільні патрулі на «зелених» ділянках кордону значно знизили рівень контрабанди. Боротьба з транснаціональними загрозами: Акцент робився на протидію нелегальній міграції та контрабанді. До 1999 року українські прикордонники затримали понад 130 тис. порушників, зокрема на угорському напрямку. Угорщина, як майбутній член ЄС, була зацікавлена у зменшенні тиску на свої кордони, що сприяло технічній підтримці України,

включно з авіаційним моніторингом. Гуманітарний вимір. Угода передбачала спрощений режим для мешканців прикордонних зон (Закарпаття та Саболч-Сатмар-Берег), що легалізувало традиційні економічні та родинні зв'язки. Це також сприяло культурному обміну та захисту прав угорської меншини в Україні. Договір 1995 року став моделлю для подальших угод України з іншими сусідами, зокрема Польщею та Словаччиною. Він заклав основу для участі України в євро регіонах, таких як «Верхній Прут» (створений у 2000 році), які інтегрували прикордонні регіони в європейські програми співпраці. До 2000 року кількість контрабандистів на угорському напрямку зменшилася на 40%, що підтвердило ефективність спільних зусиль.

Сучасне значення. Досвід 1990-х років став основою для реагування на нові виклики, зокрема під час російської агресії з 2022 року, коли угорсько-український кордон перетворився на ключовий гуманітарний коридор. Механізми довіри, закладені Договором, продовжують відігравати роль у контексті кібербезпеки та боротьби з використанням БПЛА для контрабанди. Співпраця 1990-х показала, що навіть молоді держави можуть ефективно керувати кордонами через інституційну взаємодію, технологічну підтримку та дотримання європейських стандартів. Цей досвід залишається актуальним для подальшої інтеграції України в ЄС та зміцнення безпеки Східної Європи.

**Ключові слова:** Україна, Угорщина; прикордонне співробітництво; транснаціональна злочинність; нелегальна міграція; контрабанда; прикордонні уповноважені.