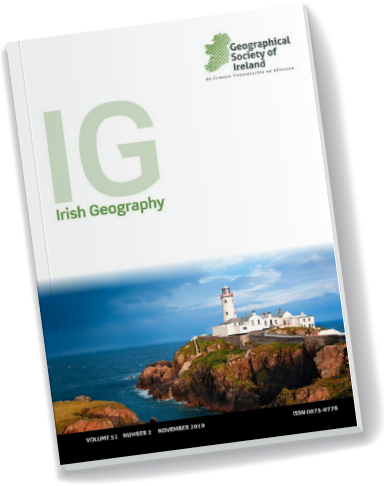

IG
Irish Geography

NOVEMBER 2019
ISSN: 0075-0778 (Print) 1939-4055 (Online)

Models of Cross-Border Collaboration in a Post-Brexit Landscape – Insights from External EU Borders

Brendan O'Keeffe and Caroline Creamer

How to cite: O'Keeffe, B. and Creamer, C. (2019) 'Models of Cross-Border Collaboration in a Post-Brexit Landscape – Insights from External EU Borders'. *Irish Geography*, 52(2), 153-173, DOI: 10.2014/igj.v52i2.1376

Geographical Society of Ireland
An Cumann Tíreolaíochta na hÉireann

Irish Geography
Vol. 52, No. 1 May 2019
DOI: 10.2014/igj.v52i1.1376

Geographical Society of Ireland
An Cumann Tíreolaíochta na hÉireann

Models of Cross-Border Collaboration in a Post-Brexit Landscape – Insights from External EU Borders

Dr Brendan O'Keeffe and Ms Caroline Creamer

ICLRD, Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute, Iontas Building, Maynooth University, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

First received: 17 January 2020 *Accepted for publication: 2 March 2020*

Abstract: Since the UK 2016 referendum, the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland has emerged as the most contested issue affecting the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. The 'backstop' has consistently been the primary reason for the rejection by the House of Commons of the withdrawal deal negotiated between the EU and the UK government. The associated discourses on finding a border 'solution' have raised more questions than answers, with many contributors speculating on what might or might not work, rather than presenting any concrete or workable alternatives to the 'backstop'. The wider debate on how to reconcile the UK's withdrawal with maintaining an open border on the island of Ireland, in line with the EU's fundamental freedoms, has highlighted the distinct differences, in several respects, between internal and external EU borders. Internal EU borders are frictionless and largely invisible, and their significance has declined, due to ongoing processes of European integration and the collaborative arrangements advanced by local-level stakeholders that emphasise commonalities and mutual benefits. Meanwhile, external EU borders are characterised by wide-ranging modes of interaction and governance in respect of cross-border cooperation, and while in some cases, contacts are limited, there are several models and experiences of engagement, and indeed, collaboration. The current debate about the future status and workability of a border on the island of Ireland necessitates an examination of practices across pre-existing external EU borders. This paper responds to this requirement by presenting two case studies, namely, Spain-Morocco and Romania-Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: *Brexit, cross-border collaboration, governance, external EU borders*

* brendanok7@gmail.com (corresponding author)

Engagement and Collaboration in the Irish Border Region – the Implications of Brexit

The deep economic, social and cultural links between Ireland and Northern Ireland leave both jurisdictions particularly exposed to the disruption associated with the UK's decision to leave the EU (hereafter referred to as 'Brexit'). North-South political, legal and institutional ties, common approaches and mutually-beneficial collaborative frameworks have emerged and been consolidated over the past two decades against the backdrop of EU membership and with EU support – both tacit and explicit (Bell, 2016; Tannam, 2018a). Processes of European Integration are strongly associated with local-level inter-jurisdictional collaboration on the island of Ireland (Lagana, 2017). Local authorities have been among the foremost actors in driving cross-border collaboration, recognising the benefits that flow to them and to the people they serve (Creamer *et al.,* 2008; Creamer *et al.,* 2009). Such collaboration has improved efficiencies, enhanced services and engendered modes of collaborative governance that have fostered peace, reconciliation and mutual benefits – both social and economic. Since the UK's decision to leave the EU, the often fraught negotiation process increasingly points towards a reconfigured geopolitical environment post-Brexit. In response, local government actors, businesses, communities and individuals on both sides of the border have been actively questioning the implications of Brexit and have been endeavouring to put in place creative responses to minimise anticipated and potential risks and to maintain the benefits associated with collaboration (AILG 2017; Durrant and Stojanovic, 2018). Indeed, Brexit calls for local authorities, among others, to look afresh at strategies for and means of enabling local economic development (Birrell and Gray, 2017; Ó Riordáin, 2017; UUECP, 2017; Finucane, 2019).

With cross-border engagement on the island of Ireland being at its strongest over the past 15-20 years, particularly across local government, the decision by the UK to leave the European Union in 2016 has cast a dark shadow over collaborative spaces and frameworks (Connelly, 2017). In July 2017, the National Competitiveness Council identified Brexit as 'the foremost downside economic risk' – with immediate effects including uncertainty, reduced growth and exchange rate fluctuations (quoted in Keyes, 2017, 2). Similarly, Grant Thornton stated the referendum result has 'created a great deal of socio-economic uncertainty which will present challenges to local government in the delivery of services and other economic development priorities' (Grant Thornton, 2016, 1). The narratives in respect of Brexit's possible implications for local authorities, border communities and, indeed, the wider geopolitics of these islands have been dominated by an overt focus on preserving an open or frictionless border, although more questions than answers have emerged as to how an external EU frontier on the island of Ireland would work in practice (Connelly, 2017; Murphy, 2018; Tannam, 2018b; De Mars *et al.,* 2018). Meanwhile, concerns have surfaced regarding the re-emergence of constitutional questions and identity politics (Gormley-Heenan and Aughey, 2017; Hayward, 2017). However, the decision by the UK to leave the EU means that new frontier arrangements must now be negotiated and put in place to ensure not only the protection and maintenance of these shared benefits but

also that, in developing new policies, the shared interests of both jurisdictions – Ireland/Northern Ireland and Ireland/UK are maintained (Bulmer and Quagila, 2018).

While the consequences of Brexit may be far-reaching, of immediate concern locally is ensuring that the governance arrangements in place which enable collaboration are 'fit' for purpose in a post-Brexit landscape (Huggins, 2017). Thus, this paper identifies local-level issues that affect the milieu in which cross-border collaboration has been taking place, and considers the potential sagacity, for the island of Ireland, arising from experiences along selected pre-existing external EU borders.

The Irish Border – It's Complex!

On land, the Irish border is 500km/310 miles in length. A now largely invisible and open border, it is characterised by over 200 formal crossing points – from motorways to regional and local routes – and probably the same number again of informal crossing points (NIAC, 2018). It has been estimated that there are over 100,000 daily journeys across the Irish border (Magennis, 2018), with 30,000 people traversing the border daily for the purposes of work alone (NIAC, 2018). Until the 1990s, areas adjacent to the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland were synonymous with socio-political conflict, tension and socio-economic stagnation and decline; all largely associated with Partition and The Troubles (Creamer *et al.,* 2008; De Mars *et al.,* 2018). For many decades, the border region was 'a contested border' (Coakley and O'Dowd, 2007) – physically, politically and culturally, with many citizens perceiving the border as being inconsistent with local economic, community and social linkages and patterns (Creamer *et al.,* 2008). From the 1920s to the 1990s, the dominant trend had been for people on both sides of the Border to live 'back-to-back' (Busteed, 1992). Once a fortified border, the Irish border is today a comparatively frictionless border as a result of the Common Travel Area (CTA), the EU Customs Union and Single Market, and the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (Hayward and Phinnemore, 2017). As well as collectively ensuring the free movement of people/labour, goods, services and capital, membership of the European Union (EU), together with the Peace Process and Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, has also reduced regulatory divergence through the adoption of EU laws and regulations (Hayward and Phinnemore, 2017; Murphy, 2018), thereby enabling collaboration.

The Irish Border and Cross-Border Working

As noted by Morphet (2017), 'One of the major strengths of the EU is the emphasis it places on cross-border and cross-national working between sub-state local and regional bodies' (45). The regional policy of the EU, through a process of territorial integration, aims at harmonisation and cohesion in the development of European regions (European Commission, 1998). For border regions, collaboration in the area of spatial planning, and supportive governance arrangements, are key to achieving this core objective of the EU (Durand, 2014). Over a period of almost thirty years, EU funding programmes have not only

supported physical infrastructure improvements but also committed resources to social and cultural projects that have improved relationships. Local government has a key role to play not only in identifying solutions but also in being a driver and enabler of new frameworks required to sustain existing collaborations while also nurturing new relationships.

The Irish Border and Inter-Jurisdictional Collaboration

Economy and society across the island of Ireland have undoubtedly benefitted from EU integration, and a range of actors, including local government, civil society and businesses, are among the stakeholders engaging in EU-enabled cross-border cooperation. As noted by Murphy (2018, 85-86), 'The EU context was particularly important for the peace process, but it was also economically significant for the way in which the SEM (Single European Market) and the commitment of structural funding supported growth in Northern Ireland' and, indeed, the Southern Irish border counties. Cross-border cooperation across the island of Ireland occurs in a wide range of sectors: energy, social inclusion, connectivity, economic development, health, education, agriculture, and plant/animal health policy and research, environmental protection, waste management. This has been strengthened through Strand Two of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the subsequent spatial strategies of both Northern Ireland (Department for Regional Development, 2001) and the Republic of Ireland (Department of An Taoiseach, 2002). Much of this cooperation activity has grown out of grassroots activity, representing a coming together of multi-stakeholder partnerships centred on local government networks, community partnerships and civil society, and the private sector; and is increasingly linked (strategically) to national and/or regional policies.

Cross-Border Collaboration – Policy and Practice

The *Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*, jointly published by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (IE) and the Department for Regional Development (NI) in 2013, was a significant milestone in cross-border working for central, regional and local government agencies on the island of Ireland. This cited and drew on best practice across Europe, which as the Institute for International Sociology (2015) notes involves local authorities demonstrating the potential of cross-border areas, engaging with other stakeholders and establishing transboundary governance structures. A core objective of the all-island *Framework for Co-operation* was to encourage policy-makers in the public sector to take account of the wider impact of their work, to learn from – and further encourage – collaboration across local government bodies, and recognise the potential benefits of avoiding 'back to back' planning (2013, 27). The Framework identified four priority areas for co-operation to be delivered at two different levels of working (see Table 1).

The work of local government and, as appropriate, other key local stakeholders in delivering on key strategic objectives cannot be underestimated in terms of knowing what needs to happen, where it needs to happen and when it needs to happen. As noted by the

Table 1: Delivering on the Priorities of the Framework for Co-operation

Priorities		Delivery
1. Enhancing Competitiveness	Enhancing physical connectivity to allow sharing of scarce and expensive infrastructure, such as ports and airports; improved access to the North West/ Londonderry; continued investment in energy and communication grids	**Level 1** – The Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government. **Level 2** – Local Authorities in both jurisdictions.
2. Competitive Places	Integrated planning process where Departments, Agencies and Authorities work together to secure a co-ordinated and agreed approach to development of Dublin-Belfast corridor, Dundalk-Newry Twin-City Region, Letterkenny-Derry /Londonderry Gateway	
3. Environmental Quality	Co-operation at a strategic level, and in line with relevant EU Directives to ensure the careful conservation and enhancement of shared natural and cultural heritage assets; protect and enhance the built heritage; responding to the assets of places	
4. Spatial Analysis	Continuation of the sharing of key datasets such as population, employment, transportation, housing, retailing and environmental indicators; enhanced visualisation techniques; analysis of geographically addressed data	

(Source: Extract – Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, and Department for Regional Development, 2013).

ICLRD, in its report on strategic alliances, 'Dealing with the many diverse challenges and opportunities that confront local authorities across administrative and political borders requires robust arrangements founded on mutual cooperation' (Driscoll and McClelland, 2010, 1). Key to effective cooperation is good governance arrangements driven from the bottom-up and initiated by local and/or regional government (Hague, 2017).

There are a number of models used by local governments in promoting collaborative practice. These include formal and informal urban partnerships, European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG), Euroregions and MOUs (Driscoll and McClelland, 2010; Guillermo-Ramírez, 2018). Across Europe, forty-five EGTCs have been created since 2006, but none involve parties from the UK or Ireland (European Union, 2014). The EEIG instrument, on the other hand, has a much longer history than the EGCT, and has been used in Ireland and Northern Ireland on a number of occasions (McClelland and Creamer, 2014). In terms of bilateral agreements, the large number that have been concluded between regions within the EU tend to be general framework agreements, promoting cooperation in a broad range of fields (AEBR, 2001, 102). Such bilateral cooperation is usually 'founded on simple written agreements between the partners consisting of memorandums, cooperation protocols and declarations of intent' (Driscoll and McClelland, 2010, 24).

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a legally non-binding statement of common intent between two or more parties, is arguably one of the most readily understood types of enabling agreement. In 2010, following a detailed review of options, Newry and Mourne District Council (NI) and Louth Local Authorities (IE) agreed on the adoption of a practical, bilateral MOU to cement their long tradition of (mostly informal) cooperation. The agreed cooperation themes were emergency planning; renewable energy and green technology; tourism and recreation; and sustainable economic growth and job creation. These areas were carefully selected to reflect the opportunities and responsibilities presented by the shared natural and heritage resources within the region, as well as the mutual desire to assist in the development of the regional economy. Similarly, in 2013, the Councils of Monaghan (IE) and Armagh City and District (NI) began work on the development of a strategic alliance – again taking the form of a MOU. As neighbouring cross-border local authorities, they have a relatively long history of cooperation spanning a number of sectors, including tourism and heritage, environmental conservation, urban regeneration and, over the past decade or so, the promotion of an all-island economy and the growth of the regional economy (McClelland and Creamer, 2014).

Partnership Agreements

In 2016, the design of new structures to support collaboration between Donegal County Council (IE) and Derry City and Strabane District (NI) led to the development of a Partnership Agreement. Both Councils have a long history of cooperation dating back to the 1970s. With the reform of local government in 2014, in both jurisdictions, and a strengthening of local government functions (Knox and Carmichael, 2015; Lehane, 2018), there was a growing consensus generally around the need to refresh collaborative arrangements. In the case of the North West, following a detailed consultation process involving Council officials, elected representatives, key Government Departments, North and South – and external facilitators – new structures were adopted and ratified by both Governments in July 2016. The new structures are couched in the concepts of place-making, place-based leadership and partnership working between local and central government; with work streams being developed to align with the strategic priorities of: Regional Economic Growth and Investment; Regional Physical and Environmental Development; and Regional Social and Community Cohesion and Well-Being.

Partnership Agreements are also formed around sectoral interests and/or areas of shared challenges, risks or opportunities. This is best demonstrated by the Cross-Border Emergency Management Working Group (CBEMWG) established in 2014 in response to increased frequency of flooding in the Irish border region. Taking a more thematic approach to cross-border cooperation, emergency management/planning is an area in which the notion of proximity – over jurisdiction – becomes a key criteria in determining whether collaborative measures should be put in place or not (Murphy *et al.,* 2016). In addition, the efficient use and pooling of often limited resources in tackling common challenges makes financial sense

– an increasingly key impetus for collaboration among local authorities (Princen *et al.,* 2014).

Issues and Methodology

Be they memoranda of understanding, partnership agreements or other legal, quasi-legal, formal and/or informal modes of engagement, cooperation and collaboration, all are associated with an enabling environment that is the product of both exogenous and endogenous drivers. The impending removal of one of the most enabling drivers of cross-border collaboration, namely joint EU membership, has generated very considerable uncertainty at all tiers of government on the island of Ireland (Bell, 2016; Birrell and Gray, 2017; Schiek, 2018; Doyle and Connolly, 2019). Indeed, the three years since the advent of the Brexit referendum have been characterised by uncertainty across the general body politic in the UK (Vickers and Khorana, 2018; Bogdanor, 2019), while the European Union has devoted considerable time and energies to responding to Brexit-related challenges – arguably to the detriment of other issues, as articulated by Commission President Junker at the end of his term[1]. Thus, since the 2016 referendum, public and academic discourses in the UK, Ireland and beyond have noted the need to find 'solutions' to challenges posed by the border on the island of Ireland, and several commentators have undertaken research and identified the specificities that need to be addressed (e.g., Centre for Rural Economy, 2017; Connelly, 2017; Hayward, 2017; De Mars *et al.,* 2018; Magennis, 2018; Murphy, 2018 and Tannam, 2018b). These endeavours have, to varying degrees, influenced the withdrawal agreements negotiated between the EU and UK, and have cited experiences along the EU's existing external borders.

The EU already has land and maritime borders with several countries on its eastern and southern flanks. Five EU member states share land borders with Russia; four share land borders with Ukraine; four share borders with Switzerland; four share borders with Serbia; three border Belarus; two share land borders with Norway; two share land borders with the Republic of North Macedonia; and two share land borders with Turkey. In addition, there are several bilateral external EU land borders such as those shared by Greece and Albania, and Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina[2]. In the interest of promoting cordial relations with its eastern and southern neighbours – including those in The Caucuses[3], The Middle East[4] and North Africa – the EU operates a 'European Neighbourhood Policy' (ENP). This has been in force since 2004, and was updated in 2011. Its objective is to avoid 'the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights[5]'. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is funded to the tune of €15.4 billion for the period 2014-2020, and it promotes activities in respect of bilateral cooperation. The ENP frequently provides a notable and influential backdrop and framework for cross-border collaborations involving national and local governments, the productive sector and civil society at various spatial scales across the EU's eastern and southern borders. As a consequence of Brexit, the ENP may assume increased significance for stakeholders on both sides of the Irish border.

The aforementioned research that seeks to draw on lessons from other border contexts in proposing arrangements to enable trade, freedom of movement and institutional collaboration to continue across the Irish border has referenced a number of geographies. Foremost among these have been the EU borders with Norway and Switzerland, while there have also been references to the legal and customs arrangements the EU has with Turkey and the Ukraine (Dhingra and Sampson, 2016; Fossum and Graver, 2018; Ott and Ghauri, 2019). As the Brexit negotiations progressed, the initial enthusiasm for Swiss-style or Norway+ arrangements with the EU faded. Bolet (2018, 1) observes, 'the Swiss model is instructive for the UK – but perhaps chiefly because of its inherent problems and unsuitability for the UK'. Similarly, Pérez Crespo (2017) dismisses the Norway and Switzerland arrangements with the EU as applicable to the UK. She notes that 'the UK also suffers a kind of "multiple personality", particularly regarding the wish of Scotland to remain in the single market and the concerns of Northern Ireland in relation to an eventual introduction of a customs border with the Irish Republic' (Crespo, 2017, 122). In concluding his examination of the EU's external borders and trade arrangements with the aforementioned states, Emmerson (2016) observes that association agreements that came into force in 2016 with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova have received insufficient attention. He concludes that 'although obviously not suitable for wholesale adoption, the model has several features of potential interest to the UK' (Emmerson, 2016, 1). As it is beyond the scope of this paper to examine all three border contexts, we outline and discuss some experiences of collaboration across the border between Romania (EU) and Moldova (non-EU). While the economic disparities between this particular border and the Irish border arguably render comparative analysis moot, the geopolitical parallels, particularly the contested nature of the border and the blurred lines between nationhood and statehood, resonate with areas along the Irish border. This article proffers a second case study – namely that of Spain-Morocco, which extends the range of insights beyond those on mainland Europe and introduces the element of a maritime border, which is relevant to the island of Ireland in the context of Brexit. Given the imperative to narrow down the plethora of issues that have arisen for stakeholders along the Irish border since 2016 (O'Keeffe and Creamer, 2018), both case studies deal specifically with governance and legal frameworks, funding arrangements, and the EU role and supports.

Case Studies

Cross-Border Collaboration: The case of Romania-Moldova

At various times in their histories, Romania and the Republic of Moldova have, either in full or in part, constituted a single country or part of another State. The border between Romania and Moldova is the product of geopolitical considerations that pertained in the years 1918-1919 and during World War II, to a greater extent than any ethnic, linguistic, cultural or economic variables. This intensity of communism under the Ceausescu regime in Romania and Moldova's subservience to the Kremlin over several decades up to the

1990s caused both countries to turn their backs on one another in political and institutional terms, thus compounding the border effect on communities and regions on both sides of the Rivers Prut and Nistru[6]. Despite their political separation and Soviet policies of Russification over several decades, Romania and the Republic of Moldova are bound together by shared characteristics, including language and religion (Marcu, 2009; King, 2013). Although they are gradually embracing processes of Europeanisation, many Moldovan institutions have operated to Russian, rather than European/Romanian norms, and discussions regarding cross-border collaboration frequently provoke sensitive debates regarding territoriality and sovereignty. Marcu (2009) suggests that the Romania-Moldova border represents a 'bad border' associated with an underlying lack of security, and with internal instability in the Republic of Moldova due to its 'composite' ethnic structure and genesis as a product of Soviet geopolitics. Romania and the Republic of Moldova are among the poorest countries in Europe. Romania has the second lowest GDP in the EU, and its border regions are generally the most backward in the country. There have also been significant challenges associated with human trafficking, illegal immigration and smuggling in what Şoitu and Şoitu (2010) described as a 'fractured' border region.

Governance and Legal Frameworks

The foundations of cross-border cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Moldova were firstly regulated by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) EU-Moldova, which was signed in 1998. In 2005, the Republic of Moldova and the EU signed an Action Plan for the PCA implementation. The Action Plan noted the cross-border cooperation as one of the major areas of interest to both parties. In 2014, the Republic of Moldova signed an Association Agreement with the European Union. This has consolidated and formalised contacts between Chisinau, Bucharest and Brussels, and, as noted, later in this article, in the case of Spain-Morocco, such high-level frameworks are enabling of sub-national actors who wish to engage in cross-border collaboration. A trawl of documents produced by the various actors also reveals regular references to the Protocol on Trilateral Cooperation agreed between the governments of Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine in 1997, as well as the European Framework Convention on the Transfrontier Co-operation of Local Authorities (Council of Europe, 1980[7]) and the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Council of Europe, 1985).

Up to the coming into force of the Association Agreement, sub-national authorities in the Republic of Moldova had participated in, and indeed continue to engage in, cross-border cooperation within Euroregions, including the Lower Danube, Upper Prut and Siret-Prut-Nistru. Each Euroregion has its own legal structure comprising representatives of sub-national authorities from Romania, Moldova and the Ukraine. The overarching governance structure, in all cases, is the 'Forum of Presidents', which brings together the mayors from the participating local authorities. Each of the three Euroregion associations that intersect with the Romania-Moldova border has enabled local authorities to engage in and to support cultural projects, thus promoting interfacing between local government and civil society. Such projects are frequently associated with a desire on the part of Romanian actors to

reach out to Moldovan partners and civil society. Examples include events dedicated to the day of independence of the Republic of Moldova and Romanian Language Day, as well as several town/village twinning partnerships. Local authorities, in both countries, have also cross-border local authority associations, and these have enabled their members to lever resources for collaborative projects in respect of infrastructure development and local service provision, as well as engagements with civil society and higher-education institutes. Indeed, these structures have seen local authorities expanding their functions and activities. While their achievements are noteworthy (Cojanu *et al.,* 2016; Muntele and Ostopovici, 2018), there is scope for a deepening and widening of relationships; according to one legal expert, 'the opportunities of cross-border cooperation have not been used to the full extent by Moldovan border regions and the actors located there, including by business operators… One of the reasons is facing the difficulties with setting-up of cross-border partnerships among the private entities' (Parcalab, personal communication 6 December, 2018).

Financial Arrangements

The various EU-funded Operational Programmes for cross-border collaboration have been the most significant financial instruments for the funding of cross-border projects. All Romanian regions are classified as 'convergence', making them eligible for higher levels of EU funding (relative to the 'competitiveness' regions). The Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova (JOP RO-UA-MD) 2007-2013[8] (Directorate MA for ETC Programmes, 2007) has been a significant driver of cross-border collaboration. It aimed at creating 'bridges' among the three countries involved, in order to help the border areas overcome their similar development challenges, by working together and finding common solutions[9]. The EU contribution to the JOP RO-UA-MD was €127m, while the participant countries co-financed the programme to the tune of €12m. The geographical coverage includes all of Moldova, the Romanian counties of Suceava, Botosani, Iasi, Vaslui, Galati and Tulcea and the Ukrainian oblasts of Odesska and Chernivetska. The Joint Managing Authority incudes the Government of Romania, as well as the Ministry of Economy and Trade, Ukraine, and the State Chancellery of the Republic of Moldova. Under the competitive bidding process, through which funds were allocated to projects, higher marks were awarded to trilateral, over bilateral partnerships.

EU Role

The Republic of Moldova is one of sixteen countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy. As a consequence of this policy, institutions in Moldova have benefitted financially and structurally, as they gradually adopt European norms and principles, thus contributing towards making Moldova eligible for EU membership. Şoitu and Şoitu (2010, 492) argue that the 'processes of "Europeanisation" have been set in motion through cross-border networks that not only deal with crucial local issues but also transmit democratic principles, new forms of political cooperation with government actors and more effective modes of project implementation'. At the same time, however, Romania's membership of the EU (since 2007)

and the country's drive to join the Schengen Area have brought about increased security along its borders with the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine. Indeed, Romania has had to cease the practice of issuing passports to Moldovan citizens who claimed Romanian identity. The EU has, therefore, added to the complexities of the border; it supports the capacity-building of actors and their ability to engage on a cross-border basis, while at the same time obliging Romania, as any EU member state, to treat its border with the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine as an external EU border.

At the same time, there is increasing evidence of Europeanisation in the Republic of Moldova. The coming into force of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, on 1 July 2016, brings the country into a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with the EU. Consequently, the European Union offers The Republic of Moldova privileged access to the EU market for goods and services. Under the Agreement, the Republic of Moldova is required to align its health and safety standards to those of the EU. According to the European Commission (2018, 2), 'food safety reform will enable Moldova to export its agricultural products, notably animal products, whose safety for consumers is strictly controlled in the EU'. In April 2014, in order to comply with the terms of the Association Agreement, and as part of its drive towards eventual EU membership, the government of the Republic of Moldova approved an environmental strategy (2014-2023). Local authorities are expected to 'undertake the necessary measures for the implementation of the provisions of the Strategy' (2014, i) and to create 'environmental protection units (green sections) to ensure elaboration and implementation of local environmental protection plans', (2014, 11). Indeed, Moldova's increasing alignment with EU environmental regulations and the general greening of its public policies have come in for commendation (Zharova, 2015; Zygierewicz, 2018).

Cross-Border Collaboration: The Case of Spain-Morocco

The external EU border between the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Morocco is mainly a maritime border, but it includes land interfaces. The border is also somewhat contested, with Morocco claiming some territories currently governed by Spain. While Spain surrendered most of its imperial territory, it retains two enclaves in North Africa, namely Ceuta and Melilla, both of which are constitutionally autonomous. Spain also occupies a number of islands and outcrops off the Moroccan coast, and the surrounding waters have been contested by both countries[10]. Thus, cross-border relations are framed by a difficult historical and geopolitical context (González García, 2013). Due to the scale of smuggling, people trafficking and international migration, particularly since the disintegration of the Libyan Arab Republic, the management of the cross-border milieu has an extensive international and geopolitical dynamic that goes far beyond both Spain and Morocco (Naranjo Giraldo, 2014).

Governance and Legal Framework

The advent of democracy in Spain in the 1970s, its subsequent military withdrawal from Spanish Sahara and the country's accession to the European Union in 1986, have all contributed significantly to a normalisation of relations between Spain and Morocco, and have provided the macro-level conducive political context that has enabled and strengthened inter-state and cross-border collaboration. Collaboration is evident across all governance levels, and while the initial steps towards common approaches were spearheaded by the national governments, often with EU support, (Spanish) sub-national actors actively collaborate with Moroccan institutions on several fronts (Hernando de Larramendi and Mañé Estrada, 2008).

Among the national-level frameworks that are operationalised and given effect by local authorities is the 'Convention on Mutual Technical Cooperation and Assistance', formally agreed by the governments of Spain and Morocco in January 1987. The Convention was updated by means of protocol in 1997. These inter-governmental agreements have enabled the creation of the Moroccan-Spanish Mixed Commission as an overarching institutional infrastructure that includes representatives of both countries. This operates under the aegis of both foreign affairs ministries. In practice, this allows for joint responses and joint provision of emergency services in the territorial waters between Spain and Morocco. It also allows for the emergency (fire and rescue) services from both countries to assist one another, both at land and on sea. This includes entering one another's territories (land and waters). The successes associated with joint delivery of emergency services led, in 2010, to the signing of an 'Administrative Agreement' between Spain and Morocco that provides for collaboration in respect of the training of agency personnel and collaborations with NGOs.

González-García (2013) distinguishes between the legal and governance frameworks relating to cross-border collaboration between Spain and Morocco, and Spain and Gibraltar on the one hand, and between Spain and Portugal, and Spain and France, on the other hand. She observes that unlike the initiatives that have flown from Spain's treaties with France and Portugal, 'none of those with Morocco have attributed cooperation-related competencies to the local authorities in Ceuta/Tetuán and Melilla/Nador' (González-García, 2013, 545). Despite this, the regional government of Andalusia has utilised Article 246 of its Statute of Autonomy (2007) to engage directly with the Government of Morocco and with sub-national actors across the Straits of Gibraltar. Indeed, in her analysis of the operation of EU programmes involving Morocco, González-García concludes that the Government of Morocco was 'happy to maintain close relations with the regional government of Andalusia, as these were unaffected by territorial issues' (2013, 550). One of the more substantial outputs of this relationship between national government (Morocco) and regional Government (Andalusia, Spain) has been the establishment of the Intercontinental Mediterranean Biosphere Reserve – which is now a UNESCO-listed biosphere reserve[11].

Financial Arrangements

Cross-border collaboration draws on multiple funding sources. These include EU funding streams, such as INTERREG and actions associated with the ENP. Indeed, up to the advent of

the recent crises in the Middle East, since 2009, Morocco was the single largest beneficiary of EU financial transfers associated with its neighbourhood policy. Projects attract funding from the Spanish government and other EU countries, as well as from NGOs and private donors. In addition to direct funding of cross-border projects, there are also some cross-border financial transfers in the form of development aid. Spain's General Secretariat for International Cooperation on Development (SGCID) provides specific supports to Morocco-based SMEs. The evaluation of the most recent programme acknowledges the fund's outputs and the benefits associated with technological transfers (Secretaria General de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, 2016). However, it is somewhat critical of what it perceives as a lack of alignment with other policy objectives – mainly on the Spanish side.

EU Role and Supports

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) provides the overarching framework that guides the European Union's policy in respect of relations and interactions with Morocco and other states with which it has an external border. Though not a member of the EU or European Free Trade Area (unlike Norway or Switzerland), Morocco is covered by INTERREG arrangements, as well as other EU instruments (Hernando-Cirado, 2015; Carrera *et al.,* 2016). The EU tends to apply soft power in ensuring that national and sub-national authorities in Morocco apply EU environmental regulations. The European Maritime Safety Authority (EMSA) assists actors in Morocco (and other countries) 'in the implementation of EU regulations and helps them to build the administrative capacity to prepare and implement these regulations… through training, workshops, operational support, pilot projects [and] targeted bilateral assistance' (Rimkuté and Shyrokykh, 2017, 13).

The Operational Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation Spain – External Borders (POCTEFEX[12]) operates with reference to the ENP and in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean[13] and European Neighbourhood Instrument[14]. The specific geographical coverage extends over all provinces (i.e., sub-regional units) in Spain and all Moroccan regions that constitute any part of the maritime border, both in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean. In many cases involving INTERREG projects, there has not been a cross-border equivalence in respect of the governance tiers at which actors operate. As with most cross-border collaborations in this geography, functional alignment, rather than institutional scale, emerges as the main determinant in the selection and coming-together of project partners.

Pragmatism despite Contestations – Potential Parallels and Implications for the Border on the island of Ireland

Relative to internal EU borders, those between Spain and Morocco and between Romania and the Republic of Moldova are more pronounced, have visible infrastructure, and are relatively hard economic borders. They are also characterised by considerable geopolitical

complexities and actors engaged in working across these borders are mindful of historical legacies and political sensitivities. Despite the many challenges, both these external EU borders are much softer than are many of the other EU's external borders – particularly on its eastern flank (e.g., with Russia and Belarus). With EU support, authorities in all four countries have succeeded in softening their borders. In all cases, the central governments are to be credited with putting in place supportive frameworks and institutional arrangements to enable lower-tier actors and agents to interface with one another and realise joint initiatives. Much has been achieved, and stakeholders note the need for further local-level engagement, particularly with civil society.

In the case of Romania-Republic of Moldova, the fall of communism, Moldovan independence, Romania's accession to the EU and the application of the ENP have contributed to a shaping of conditions and structures that enable actors, at various tiers, to engage collaboratively across the border. To date, actors have focused on the provision and modernisation of infrastructure, the formation of cultural and economic linkages and the capacity building of institutions, rather than on joint service delivery or integrated spatial planning. Local authorities, particularly in Romania have been proactive in promoting cross-border linkages and in reaching out to sub-national actors in Moldova and in the Ukraine. EU funding has been essential in enabling cross-border projects to proceed, while the authorities themselves have put in place the necessary local structures and governance mechanisms to set out their strategic objectives and to deliver and manage projects. These local authority-led initiatives are occurring in a border context that remains characterised by long-standing complexities and sensitive political considerations, particularly on the parts of national authorities. Thus, their long-term significance is likely to be seen as part of the normalisation of inter-state, as well as inter-regional relations.

The existence of Euroregions involving actors from Romania, the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine facilitated and accelerated cross-border collaboration. Progressive decentralisation since the advent of democracy and relative alignment of local authorities, competencies have also contributed to collaboration. In contrast, Spain and Morocco lack the scaffolding associated with a Euroregion, and there are sharp contrasts between both countries modes of governance – with Spain being highly decentralised and Morocco being centralised and comparatively authoritarian. The lack of institutional fit between actors in both countries has, to some extent, been compensated for by proactive approaches by State authorities to promote a supportive political environment and to allow for flexibility and innovation in enabling actors, at different scales and tiers to work with one another. Cross-border collaboration has also been sustained by Morocco's participation in several EU frameworks, including Interreg[15] and Erasmus[16], and by Morocco's increasing adherence to EU standards.

Both these external EU borders (Romania-Republic of Moldova and Spain-Morocco) have been softening over the past two decades, despite unresolved geopolitical matters and territorial contestations. The Republic of Moldova shares features with Northern Ireland in that some members of the population favour unification with the adjoining state – Romania and the Republic of Ireland respectively, while others prefer to maintain a separate

political identity. This has presented challenges for political leaders and for those who wish to promote inter-community and inter-state collaboration and cordiality. As cross-border collaboration has evolved over the past two decades, the constitutional issue has taken something of a back seat. Instead, protagonists have focused on pursuing joint projects and on operating collaborative governance structures – a sign of pragmatism infusing politics. Regulatory alignment with the EU in several areas, and growing adherence to EU norms, particularly in respect of the environment and governance, also facilitate Moroccan and Moldovan collaboration with their EU neighbours.

Concluding Remarks

Over the past two decades, cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland has been progressively evolving, with actors from local government, civil society and government departments increasingly engaging with one another and delivering joint initiatives (Harvey, 2005; Creamer and O'Keeffe, 2013; Carr, 2017; Tannam, 2018b). EU membership and the associated processes of Europeanisation (Rees *et al.,* 2010) have probably been the most significant enablers of cross-border collaboration in that these have brought about a gradual softening of the border, ensured regulatory alignment in both jurisdictions, provided access to valuable funds and ushered in collaborative modes of governance (McCall, 2013). The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement has further engendered an enabling environment and has formalised inter-jurisdictional collaboration in several fields. The normalisation of north-south and east-west relationships associated with the Peace Process, particularly since the St Andrew's Agreement of 2006, has enabled stakeholders to set aside constitutional issues and to overlook territorial contestations in striving to promote mutually beneficial economic and social development (Lagana, 2017). This article has outlined how actors from both sides of the border have co-created a number of collaborative models and frameworks to enable systematic interfacing and to sustain collaborative relationships. These include joint working groups, MOUs and partnership agreements, and experiences along the Irish border indicate that innovation and flexibility are preferable to imposing a singular model across this diverse geography. The 2013 *Framework for Co-operation* represents government acknowledgement of local-level actors' collaborative efforts, and it commits national authorities to supporting cross-border collaboration among regional and local authorities. The document states, for example, that 'integrated planning processes at the local level, where agencies and authorities in both jurisdictions work together on a cross border basis, are essential in enhancing the potential and quality of strategic places on the island, that straddle such cross-border locations' (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, and Department for Regional Development, 2013, 30). Models of collaborative working have gradually, over two decades, moved from being experimental to mainstream.

In many respects, the trajectory of collaborative working on the island of Ireland over, the past two decades, is both a microcosm and a representation of similar trends traversing the boundaries of all EU member states. Actors, including regional and local authorities across

the EU, have, with member state and supranational supports, overcome the legacies of past conflicts and territorial disputes, and have mainstreamed trans-jurisdictional collaborative governance, collaborative spatial planning and seamless cross-border service provision (OECD, 2013; Reitel *et al.,* 2018; Stoklosa, 2019). The range of governance models and institutional structures across internal EU borders varies, depending on local conditions, including geopolitics and the capacity of local actors. Unlike in other comparable geographies, however, actors along the Irish border have not experienced a devolution of competencies from national to sub-national authorities, regionalisation or decentralised decision-making to the same extent as has generally occurred across the EU. Thus, Europeanisation has been tempered on the island of Ireland, and it is noteworthy, for example, that the Irish border lacks a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Thus, the relative institutional thinness of structures for collaborative decision-making on the island of Ireland, represents a particular vulnerability in the context of Brexit. The unprecedented instance of a member state leaving the EU and the disorderly manner in which this has played out since 2016 compound uncertainties and have left local authorities and civil society along the Irish border asking profound questions about the future governance, resourcing, scale and scope of cross-border collaboration (Centre for Rural Economy, 2017; Hayward, 2017; IBEC, 2017; Gilmartin *et al.,* 2018; McCall, 2018). This paper has sought to answer some of the questions that have emerged, specifically in respect of legal frameworks, financial arrangements and the role of the EU. Since the 2016 referendum in the UK, there have been references in public discourses to experiences along pre-existing external EU borders, and in particular, those with Norway and Switzerland (Anderson, 2018; Fabbrini, 2017; Fossum and Graver, 2018). By looking specifically at experiences along the EU's borders with the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Moldova, this paper has sought to add to the body of evidence available to practitioners and policy-makers involved in either delivering or enabling cross-border collaboration on the island of Ireland.

The insights from Spain-Morocco and Romania-Republic of Moldova add to the corpus of case study material seeking to provide pointers for the functioning of cross-border collaboration on what is to become an external EU border. They demonstrate that despite challenges associated with geopolitics, physical geography, economic disparities and cultural divergence, cross-border collaboration can happen, and can have significant impacts. Both case study locations are hampered by complexities that are more profound than those that are likely to exist along the Irish border, even in the event of a so-called hard Brexit. Yet, local-level actors have been proactive in establishing, nurturing and sustaining modes of governance and structures of engagement and collaboration that have levered considerable EU and non-EU resources and have enhanced local economies, living conditions and the natural environment. In both case study contexts, the respective State authorities have created enabling environments through the establishment of scaffolding mechanisms, including collaborative decision-making fora that provide guidance and an impetus, although at times, political relationships have been testy. These inter-state agreements and structures have also enabled dialogue and levels of accord in respect of constitutional and territorial issues. Regulatory alignment with the EU, the embrace and

application of Europeanisation and participation in EU programmes and initiatives on the parts of Morocco and the Republic of Moldova are conducive to collaborative working and decision-making. Their experiences indicate that being outside the EU will not prevent Northern Ireland from doing likewise and from availing of the modes of engagement and benefits associated with the EU Neighbourhood Policy.

Acknowledgements

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD) would like to acknowledge the funding and support of this initiative through the 'Reconciliation Fund' administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

References

AEBR: Association of European Border Regions, 2001. *Trans European Cooperation between Territorial Authorities: New challenges and future steps necessary to improve cooperation.* Gronau: AEBR.

AILG: Association of Irish Local Government, 2017. *AILG Issues Paper on Brexit and Local Government*. Maynooth: AILG.

Anderson, J., 2018. Ireland's borders, Brexit centre-stage: a commentary. *Space and Polity*, 22 (2), 255-269.

Bell, C., 2016. *Brexit, Northern Ireland and British-Irish Relations*. European Futures: Edinburgh.

Birrell, D. and Gray, A.M., 2017. Devolution: The Social, Political and Policy Implications of Brexit for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Policy*, 46 (4), 765-782.

Bogdanor, V., 2019. *Beyond Brexit – Towards a British Constitution*. London: Bloomsbury.

Bolet, D., 2018. Is Switzerland a model for the UK-EU relationship? *LSE Brexit: Continental Breakfast 6*. London School of Economics.

Bulmer, S. and Quagila, L., 2018. The politics and economics of Brexit. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25 (8), 1089-1098.

Busteed, M., 1992. The Irish Border: From Partition and Confrontation to Cooperation? *Boundary Bulletin*, 4, 13-17.

Carr, G., 2017. *The Rule of the Land – Walking Ireland's Border*. London: Faber & Faber.

Carrera, S., Cassarino, J.P., El Qadim, N., Lahlou, M. and den Hertog, L., 2016. EU-Morocco Cooperation on Readmission, Borders and Protection: A model to follow? *CEPS Papers in Liberty and Security in Europe.* No. 87, 1-18.

Centre for Rural Economy, 2017. *After Brexit: 10 Key Questions for Rural Policy in Northern Ireland.* Newcastle University: Centre for Rural Economy. See http://www.ncl.ac.uk/media/wwwnclacuk/centreforruraleconomy/files/after-brexit-ten-key-questions-for-rural-economy-northern-ireland.pdf

Coakley, J. and O'Dowd, L., 2007. The new Irish border: changing political, economic and social dimensions. *In:* J. Coakley and L. O'Dowd, (Eds). *Crossing the Border – New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland,* Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 87-103.

Cojanu, V., Gavriş, A. and Robu, R., 2016. *In:* Search of Emerging Polities: Thematic Agendas of Selected European Cross-Border Cooperation Structures. *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 16 (1), 57-71.

Connelly, T., 2017. *Brexit and Ireland: The Dangers, the Opportunities, and the Inside Story of the Irish Response.* Penguin Books.

Council of Europe, 1980. *European Framework Convention on the Transfrontier Co-operation of Local Authorities*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe, 1985. *European Charter of Local Self-Government*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Creamer, C. and O'Keeffe, B., 2013. Raising the emerald curtain: communities and collaboration along the Irish border. *In:* C. Crowley and D. Linehan, (Eds). *Spacing Ireland: Place, Society and Culture in a Post-boom Era.* Manchester University Press, 58-72.

Creamer, C., Blair, N., Keaveney, K., O'Keeffe, B. and Driscoll, J., 2009. *Rural Restructuring: Local Sustainable Solutions to the Rural Challenge.* Armagh: ICLRD.

Creamer, C., Blair, N., O'Keeffe, B., Van Egeraat, C. and Driscoll, J., 2008. *Fostering Mutual Benefits in Cross-Border areas: The Challenges and Opportunities in Connecting Irish Border Towns and Villages*. Armagh: ICLRD.

De Mars, S., Murray, C., O'Donoghue, A. and Warrick, B., 2018. *Bordering Two Unions: Northern Ireland and Brexit*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Department for Regional Development, 2001. *Shaping our Future – Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland, 2025,* Belfast: Corporate Document Services.

Department of An Taoiseach, 2002. *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020: People, Places and Potential*, Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Department for Regional Development, 2013. *Framework for Co-operation: Spatial Strategies of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland*. Dublin: Department of Environment, Community and Local Government.

Dhingra, S. and Sampson, T., 2016. *Life after Brexit: what are the UK's options outside the European Union? CEP BREXIT Analysis*. London School of Economics and Political Science.

Doyle, J. and Connolly, E., 2019. The Effects of Brexit on the Good Friday Agreement and the Northern Ireland Peace Process. *In:* C.A. Baciu and J. Doyle, (Eds). *Peace, Security and Defence Cooperation in Post-Brexit Europe*. Springer: Switzerland, 79-95.

Driscoll, J. and McClelland, A., 2010. *Developing a Strategic Alliance between Newry and Mourne District Council and the Louth Local Authorities.* Armagh: International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

Durand, F., 2014. Challenges of Cross-Border Spatial Planning in the Metropolitan Regions of Luxembourg and Lille. *Planning Practice and Research*, 29 (2) 113-132.

Durrant, T. and Stojanovic, A., 2018. *The Irish border after Brexit*. London: Institute for Government.

Emmerson, M., 2016. *Which model for Brexit? CEPS Special Report No. 147*. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.

European Commission, 1998. *European Spatial Development Perspective: Towards Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Territory of the European Union*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Commission, 2018. *EU-Moldova relations, Factsheet, issued 02/05/2018*. Brussels: European Commission.

European Union, 2014. *EGTC Monitoring Report 2013: Towards the New Cohesion Policy*, Brussels: Committee of the Regions.

Fabbrini, F., 2017. (Ed), *The Law and Politics of Brexit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Finucane, J., 2019. Brexit – a Belfast Perspective. *Special UCC Jean Monnet Lecture* – delivered 24 October 2019, University College Cork.

Fossum, J.E. and Graver, H.P., 2018. *Squaring the circle on Brexit: Could the Norway model work?* Bristol University Press.

Gilmartin, M., Burke-Wood, P. and O'Callaghan, C., 2018. *Borders, Mobility and Belonging in the Era of Brexit and Trump.* Bristol: Policy Press.

González García, I., 2013. La Cooperación Transfronteriza Entre España y Marruecos Mediante Políticas y Programas Europeos: La Incidencia de las Cuestiones Territoriales. *Revista de Derecho Comunitario Europeo*, May/August 2013, 535-574.

Gormley-Heenan, C. and Aughey, A., 2017. Northern Ireland and Brexit: Three effects on the border in the mind. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19 (3), 497-511.

Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2014. *Decision No. 301 of 24.04.2014 on the approval of the Environmental Strategy for the years 2014-2023 and of the Action Plan for its implementation.* Published: Official Monitor no. 104-109 of 06.05.2014, art no: 328. Chisinau: Government of the Republic of Moldova.

Grant Thornton, 2016. *Understanding Local Government Brexit Impacts.* July 2016. Available at: https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/globalassets/1.-member-firms/united-kingdom/pdf/publication/2016/local-government-brexit-web.pdf

Guillermo-Ramírez, M., 2018. *Looking beyond our borders – a good practice paper on the cross-border strategies, models and solutions applicable to the Central Border Region of Ireland/ Northern Ireland.* Enniskillen: ICBAN.

Hague, C., 2017. Transboundary Effects of Brexit: European Experiences of transboundary working. Paper presented to a joint Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Ireland and RTPI Northern Ireland event, *Planning Across Boundaries in a Changing Context*, 24 October 2017, Ballymascanlon House, Dundalk.

Harvey, B., 2005. *The Emerald Curtain: The Social Impact of the Irish Border*. Monaghan: Triskele Community Training and Development.

Hayward, K., 2017. *Bordering on Brexit – Views from Local Communities in the Central Border Region of Ireland/Northern Ireland*. Enniskillen: Irish Central Border Area Network.

Hayward, K. and Phinnemore, D., 2017. The Northern Ireland/Ireland border, Regulatory alignment and Brexit: Principles and options in light of the UK/EU Joint Report, *Queen's University Belfast Research Portal,* 8 December 2017, Available at: https://pure.qub.ac.uk/portal/files/147219266/Hayward_Phinnemore_NI_IRL_Regulatory_Alignment.pdf

Hernando-Criado, E., 2015. Andalucía y Marruecos, ¿territorios de paso o de cooperación? *Perspectiva Socioeconómica*, 1 (1), 70-87.

Hernando de Larramendi, M. and Mañé Estrada, A., 2008. *La política exterior española hacia el Magreb: actores e intereses*. Barcelona: Ariel.

Huggins, C., 2017. The overlooked dimension? Brexit and local governance. *Local Perspectives on Europe,* 30 June 2017. Available at: https://localperspectives.ideasoneurope.eu/2017/06/30/overlooked-dimension-brexit-local-governance/

IBEC, 2017. *Brexit: challenges with solutions*. Dublin: Irish Business and Employers' Confederation.

Institute for International Sociology, 2015. *European Experience of Citizens' Participation in Cross-Border Governance.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Keyes, J., 2017. *Briefing: Brexit – A Border Perspective*. Local Government Information Unit. 1 August 2017.

King, C., 2013. *The Moldovans: Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press.

Knox, C. and Carmichael, P., 2015. Local government reform: Community planning and the quality of life in Northern Ireland. *Administration,* 63 (2), 31-57.

Lagana, G., 2017. A preliminary investigation on the genesis of EU cross-border cooperation on the island of Ireland. *Space and Polity*, 21 (3), 289-302.

Lehane, K., 2018. *Local government and local economic development: perceptions and experiences of the Local Government (Reform) Act 2014*. M.A. Thesis, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick.

McCall, C., 2013. European Union Cross-Border Cooperation and Conflict Amelioration. *Space and Polity,* 17 (2), 197-216.

McCall, C., 2018. Brexit, Bordering and Bodies on the Island of Ireland. *Ethnopolitics*, 17, (3), 292-305.

McClelland, A. and Creamer, C., 2014. *Establishment of an Enabling Agreement between Monaghan County Council and Armagh City and District Council. Briefing Paper – Phase 1: Assessment, May 2014.* Armagh: International Centre for Local and Regional Development (Unpublished).

Magennis, E., 2018. Brexit and Regional and Spatial Strategies. Presentation to: *ESPON (European Spatial Planning Observation Network) Conference, Regional Spatial Strategies: the Architecture of Effective Regional Development*, 9 May 2018, Custom House, Dublin.

Marcu, S., 2009. The geopolitics of the eastern border of the European Union: The case of Romania-Moldavia-Ukraine. *Geopolitics,* 14 (3), 409-32.

Directorate MA for ETC Programmes, 2007. *Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova (JOP RO-UA-MD) 2007-2013*. Bucharest: Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds.

Morphet, J., 2017. *Beyond Brexit? How to assess the UK's future*, Bristol: Policy Press.

Muntele, I. and Ostopovici, I.V., 2018. Regiunea de Nord-Est a României în contextul vecinătăţii estice. *In:* I. Muntele, A. Ungureanu and C. Rusu, (Eds). *Spatiul geografic românesc la 100 de ani de la Marea Unire*. Iasi: Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 143-164.

Murphy, C., Creamer, C., McClelland, A. and Boyle, M., 2016. The value of Cross-Border Emergency Management in Adapting to Climate Change. *Borderlands: The Journal of Spatial Planning in Ireland*, 5, 34-46.

Murphy, M.C., 2018. *Europe and Northern Ireland's Future: Negotiating Brexit's Unique Case*. London: Agenda Publishing.

Naranjo Giraldo, G., 2014. Desterritorialización de fronteras y externalización de políticas migratorias. Flujos migratorios irregulares y control de las fronteras exteriores en la frontera España-Marruecos. *Estudios Políticos*, (45), 13-32.

NIAC – Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, 2018. *The Land Border between Northern Ireland and Ireland*, HC329, London: HMSO.

OECD, 2013. *OECD Reviews of Regional Innovation – Regions and Innovation: Collaborating Across Borders*. Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

O'Keeffe, B. and Creamer C., 2018. *Governance Infrastructure for Collaborating Across External Borders – Position Paper.* Maynooth: International Centre for Local and Regional Development.

Ó Riordáin, S., **2017.** *Brexit – The view from Local Government – Paper commissioned by the Local Government Information Unit*. Dublin: Local Government Information Unit.

Ott, U.F. and Ghauri, P.N., 2019. Brexit negotiations: From negotiation space to agreement zones. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 50 (1), 137-149.

Pérez Crespo, M.J., 2017. After Brexit… The Best of Both Worlds? Rebutting the Norwegian and Swiss Models as Long-Term Options for the UK. *Yearbook of European Law*, 36 (1), 94-122.

Princen, S., Geuijen, K., Candel, J., Folgerts, O. and Hooijer, R., 2014. Establishing cross-border cooperation between professional organizations: Police, fire brigades and emergency health services in Dutch border regions. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23 (3), 497-512.

Rees, N., Quinn, B. and Connaughton, B., 2010. *Europeanisation and New Patterns of Governance in Ireland.* Oxford University Press.

Reitel, B., Wassenberg, B. and Peyrony, J., 2018. The INTERREG experience in bridging European territories. A 30-year summary. *In:* E. Medeiros, (Ed). *European Territorial Cooperation Theoretical and Empirical Approaches to the Process and Impacts of Cross-Border and Transnational Cooperation in Europe*. Berlin: Springer, 17-23.

Rimkuté, D. and Shyrokykh, K., 2017. *The role of EU agencies in the acquis transfer – the case of European Neighbourhood Policy countries – TARN Working Paper 14/2017*. Oslo: ARENA Centre for European Studies.

Schiek, D., 2018. Brexit on the island of Ireland: beyond unique circumstances. *Northern Ireland Legal Quarterly,* 69 (3), 367-395.

Secretaria General de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, 2016. *Evaluación Conjunta – programa de apoyo a los centros tecnológicos industriales para el desarrollo de la pequeña y mediana empresa marroquí – Informe Completo.* Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación Secretaría de Estado de Cooperación Internacional y para Iberoamérica.

Şoitu, C. and Şoitu, D., 2010. Europeanization at the EUs External Borders: the Case of Romanian-Moldovan Civil Society Cooperation. *European Integration*, 32 (5), 491-506.

Stoklosa, K., 2019. *Borders and Memories: Conflicts and Co-operation in European Border Regions*. Vienna: LIT Verlag.

Tannam, E., 2018a. Intergovernmental and Cross-Border Civil Service Cooperation: The Good Friday Agreement and Brexit. *Ethnopolitics,* 17 (3), 243-262.

Tannam, E., 2018b. *Beyond the Good Friday Agreement: In the Midst of Brexit.* London: Routledge.

UUECP – Ulster University Economic Policy Centre, 2017. *Brexit and the Border Corridor on the island of Ireland: Risks, Opportunities and Issues to Consider*. UUECP and the eleven local authorities from the Ireland/Northern Ireland border corridor.

Verdú Baeza, J., 2012. El medio ambiente como instrumento de cooperación transfronteriza: la Reserva de la Biosfera Intercontinental del Mediterráneo entre Andalucía y Marruecos. *Anuario Español de Derecho Internacional*, 28, 397-416.

Vickers, B. and Khorana, S., 2018. *Navigating Uncertainty: Towards a Post-Brexit Trade and Development Agenda – Economic Paper Series*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Zharova, L., 2015. Comparative Analysis of EU Membership Candidate Countries Legal Economic Framework (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova). *Marketing and Management of Innovations,* (2) 170-181.

Zygierewicz, A., 2018. *Association agreements between the EU and Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine – European Implementation Assessment*. Brussels: European Parliament.

Endnotes

[1] President Junker's statement can be read on: https://www.politico.eu/article/brexit-awaste-of-time-and-energy-jean-claude-juncker/

[2] The EU has several other de-factor external borders: Italy and Austria also share borders with other territories, namely San Marino and Liechtenstein. France borders Monaco, while both France and Spain share borders with Andorra. These smaller jurisdictions are much more closely aligned with the EU – economically (e.g., most use the Euro), legally and socially than are the countries to the EU's east and south.

[3] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

[4] Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine

[5] European Commission website: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/overview_en

[6] The Nistru flows along much of the border between the Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

[7] The Framework was subsequently amended in 1995 and 2004.

[8] The OP continued to operate up to 2017.

[9] As stated on the Operating Programme's website: *Common Borders – Common Solutions* http://www.ro-ua-md.net/programme/overview/ accessed 19 July 2019.

[10] In addition to the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, the disputed territories include the waters of the Bay of Algeciras; the Isles of Chafarinas and Perejil (Parsley); the outcrops of los Peñones de Vélez de la Gomera and Alhucemas; and the island of de Alborán.

[11] For more information on environmental/ecological cross-border projects, see: Verdú Baeza (2012).

[12] *El Programa Operativo de Cooperación Transfronteriza España – Fronteras exteriores*

[13] The Union for the Mediterranean is an intergovernmental institution bringing together 43 countries to promote dialogue and cooperation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Its official website is: https://ufmsecretariat.org/

[14] This instrument provides financial and technical supports to projects and initiatives that give effect to the European Neighbourhood Policy. Details are available on: https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/policy/european-neighbourhood-instrument-eni

[15] Interreg is one of the key instruments of the European Union (EU) supporting cooperation across borders through project funding. Its aim is to jointly tackle common challenges and find shared solutions in fields such as health, environment, research, education, transport, sustainable energy and more. Information is available on: https://interreg.eu/about-interreg/

[16] The Erasmus programme (European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) is an EU funded programme that organises student exchanges. Information is available on: https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/what-and-where-study/studying-overseas/what-erasmus