

## KNOWLEDGE OF BORDER AREAS. THE CONTRIBUTION OF SPANISH GEOGRAPHERS

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Frontiers are the scars that history has drawn over maps illustrating, at the same time, the spacial discontinuity between neighbouring and sovereign states. In the Iberian Peninsula, the terrestrial frontiers and the adjacent boundary lands constitute areas of great geographical significance, both in their environmental and socio-economic characteristics as well as in their demographic and territorial importance. The frontiers include the Hispano-Portuguese border-line traversing 1,234 Km from the outlet of the river Miño to the mouth of the Guadiana river and crossing the landscape most representative of the western Peninsular; the isthmus forming the Hispano-French and Andorran frontier and extending 435Km from the Gulf of Gascuña to Cape Creus over the spectacular and rugged orography of the Pyrenees; as well as Gibraltar's sandy boundary.

These frontiers are historical. The oldest, the Portuguese-Spanish border, dates from the thirteenth century when in the Treaty of Alcañices (1297) the borders between the kingdoms of Portugal and Castilla y León were established, having reached southern parts during the Reconquest. The Hispano-French frontier was to be delimited in the Peace of the Pyrenees (1659), although it had been partially acting as a frontier from 1258 (Treaty of Corbei). Nevertheless, the unusual situation of Andorra, dependent upon both France and the Bishop of Urgel, the Hispano-French border line leaving the Arán Valley in Spanish hands, and the rights of the residents of the Spanish valleys to French pastures, were all relics of past social and economic relationships which were dominated by private and local agreements. However, the present frontiers as we know them in the present day were not ratified until the

middle of the nineteenth century. The Hispano-Portuguese frontier was established by the Treaty of Lisbon (1894), after the disagreements in Olivenza, Badajoz, and Couto Mixto on the Gallego border-line; the Hispano-French frontier was established by the Treaty of Bayona (1856-62-66).

Except for some anthropological or linguistic studies and for some essays written by travellers and writers, like Unamuno, we have shown no real interest in the discovery of the frontier as a geographical and geopolitical fact. The documentary by A. PINTADO and E. BARRENECHEA (1972) on the underdevelopment of the frontier line was perhaps the first attempt to raise the issue of the many common problems afflicting the Hispano-Portuguese frontier area. Until then the two Iberian regimes, the Franquista and the Salazarista, had imposed a policy of isolation and ignorance between the two countries. This point marked the emergence of a research concern in which the study of the border territories is the main objective, using a theoretical basis and not avoiding the approaches of Political Geography or of the integral methodology of Regional Analysis. The Iberian Conferences on Geography will be the protagonists in this process of understanding, information interchange, diagnosis, and more recently of trans-border cooperation in these lineal zones. Lines of research which we shall see consolidating and gaining strength with our integration into the European Common Market. The abolition of the frontiers and the creation of the Unique Market opens new perspectives for the study of these disfavoured areas of which the majority - in the case of the Hispano-Portuguese borderline all of them - have been designated Objective 1 regions. The proposals contained in the study on *Los Pirineos. Presentación de una montaña fronteriza* which seeks to «contribute to pervasive and integrated transport between both States and to the integrated development of the Pyrenees» (MOPU-DATAR, 1989, p.11) are also relevant in this respect.

## **1. THE FRONTIER AS A GEOGRAPHICAL FACTOR. THE CONSOLIDATION OF A LINE OF WORK AND RESEARCH**

In effect it was at the I Iberian Conference on Geography, held in Salamanca in 1979, when we were warned of the great geographic importance of the frontiers, and recommended to its study and discovery. With reference to Spain and Portugal it was indicated to us that: «on both sides of the frontier a wide area of economic depression and progressive desertification is extending across both countries in a union like a creaking hinge. Relatively important cities like Badajoz and Elvas close, as hands extended, wishing to entwine lovingly across the frontier. There are towns, like Rio de Onor, which straddle the same borderline, and disdainfully maintain their rural areas on both sides of the frontier communally with their neighbours without regard to their respective nationality. It is a frontier that in a short distance is formed by important physical features, but which never have the scale by which the Pyrenees distinguish the peninsula as a whole». These words of Cabo Alonso encourage the combined research of geographers from both countries on this «poor area which on both sides of the frontier requires attention from scientists of both countries» (CABO ALONSO, 1981). Thus, the study of frontiers was shown to us to be vital and exciting, and after papers like those written by A. Medeiros on the mountains to the north of La Beira, and by C. Cavaco on continental Portuguese agrarian structures, our curiosity will grow enormously.

In the III Iberian Conference on Geography, held in Barcelona, our gaze focuses on the study of the Luso-Spanish and the Franco-Spanish frontiers, including research relating to maritime space (SUÁREZ DE VIVERO, 1984). The main paper on *La frontera como factor geográfico* (LÓPEZ TRIGAL, 1984) not only examines conceptual and terminological questions, but also the dynamics of marginalisation and underdevelopment are explained.

Later in the V Conference, organised by the University of León in 1989, research on frontier areas was strengthened, emphasising both human and economic inter-territorial relationships (CABO ALONSO, 1992). After this period a working group of Spanish and Portuguese geographers was established to concentrate on the questions of migration and demography, and with new and thought provoking results regarding Portuguese emigrants in Spain (LÓPEZ TRIGAL, (Chairman), 1994).

Additionally, in the geographical framework regarding «The Iberian Peninsula: an area in transition» developed at the VI Conference (Oporto, 1992) papers were included related to local and regional policies. For the first time reference was made to endogenous and integrated development, and to the young Community programme, LEADER. The Spanish contributions emphasised the situation and programmes in mountainous areas (MARTÍN JIMÉNEZ, 1992), the socio-economic disparities in Extremadura (MORA ALISEDA, 1992), the interventionist policies of the frontier region Castile and Leon with Portugal (PLAZA GUTIÉRREZ and LLORENTE PINTO, 1992), the cooperation between Galicia and the North of Portugal (PÉREZ IGLESIAS and ROMANÍ BARRIENTOS, 1992) and in the transport network and transfrontier communications (CORTIZO ÁLVAREZ y MAYA FRADES, 1992). In this respect it is necessary to point out that by this time a relative maturity and continuity in the study of frontiers had been reached, although lacking depth in such decisive questions like landscape evolution and transformation, environmental conflict in protected natural areas and sensitive environments, and especially, in relation to water usage, which in the future will be one of the key factors in transfrontier relations. Such gaps, though, were filled to a great extent in the VII Iberian Conference on Geography, which took place in the University of Extremadura in 1995. Additionally, within the European Community regional planning framework for the southwest, issues like environmental deterioration; management of protected natural areas; water usage and hydrological planning; urban policies regarding historical centres, and transfrontier planning and development were all dealt with quite thoroughly.

Other meetings have allowed Spanish geographers to consider frontier territories. In this respect the Ajuda Meetings, held at Olivenza (Badajoz) in 1985, must be highlighted due to the paper on *La Frontera como factor Geográfico* in which peninsular research is evaluated by the lecturer Campesino Fernández (CAMPESINO FERNÁNDEZ 1987, pp. 207-224). An analysis of the spacial and mental incidence of the frontier in Portugal written by Profesor Gaspar (GASPAR, 1987 pp. 225-233) also stands out in this respect. Thus our attention is drawn to the importance that, after integration into the European Community, regional development programmes between both countries will have in the immediate future.

In the same way at the different *Regional Studies Meetings*, held in the last five years, under the auspices of the Spanish Association on Regional Science, the analysis of frontier areas has been undertaken in order to set up research into depressed areas in work specifica-

lly related with peripheral and frontier regions. For example like the work discussed at the *XIV Regional Studies Meeting: Regional Integration and Revitalisation* held in Salamanca at the end of 1993, with an outstanding contribution from Spanish Geographers and the growing presence of Portuguese colleagues. Despite this, at the *Congresses on the Castile and Leon Regional Economy* held at Salamanca (1988), Leon (1990), Segovia (1992), and Burgos (1994) no specific papers on transfrontier integration have been included. Although some geographer's contributions have succeeded in incorporating the spacial dimension to sectoral or macro-economic thought, with valuable references to understanding the frontier zones in the Castile and Leon region.

With the organisation of the INTERREG-II, a European Community initiative for the correction of inequality in frontier zones, the team-work of geographers has gained an important professional and research dimension, mainly in the Geography Departments of the Universities of Extremadura, Leon and Salamanca. From here they have coordinated various applied and inter-disciplinary territorial reports and diagnostic studies.

Besides the specific reference to the stretches of frontier considered in the INTERREG-II initiative (Miñota and Gallego, Trás-os-Montes and Zamora, central frontier of the Beira Interior and Salamanca-Cáceres, Alentejo and Badajoz, Algarve and Huelva), in the summaries included in the volume *Frontera y Desarrollo* (SÁNCHEZ, CABERO and MARTÍN, 1993) there is an analysis on the situation of the frontier areas in the European and Peninsular context. This proposes strategies for endogenous and integrated development by using the physical and human resources or either the material or immaterial value of the area's heritage to shatter, with the European Community aid, the negative trends, problems of every type and the effect of the frontier which overflows in the surroundings of the border area.

One should also underline that this new and recent view of frontier areas has been developed with the constant and decisive collaboration from our Portuguese colleagues, and that contact with the French geographers has also begun. These contacts are stimulating different meetings, seminars, and conferences on transfrontier relations and cooperation in which spacial and infrastructural, environmental and demographic, cartographic and socio-economic problems have been interpreted not only from the specialised or sectoral viewpoint, but coherently using the integrational interpretation of geographical analysis.

## **2. THE HISPANO-PORTUGUESE BORDERLINE. FROM MUTUAL IGNORANCE TO TRANSFRONTIER COOPERATION**

The Spanish provinces and Portuguese districts contiguous with the frontier form a broad area of almost forgotten and unknown space in the extreme southwest of Europe. The seven Spanish provinces (Pontevedra, Orense, Zamora, Salamanca, Cáceres, Badajoz and Huelva) total 86,442 square kilometres surface area, with a population, in 1991, of 3,324,784 inhabitants. The districts in Portuguese frontier space (Viana do Castelo, Braga, Vila Real, Bragança, Guarda, Castelo Branco, Portalegre, Évora, Beja and Faro) total 52,486 square kilometres, with a population of more than 2,429,000 inhabitants. Thus, forming an extensive area with a significant volume of population, which in the previous decades suffered intense emigration, and a predominantly agrarian and agricultural landscape, broken only by the hydroelectric exploitation of the great common rivers, above all the Duero and Tajo, which form the frontier.

From the geographical perspective which concerns us, one can confirm that the first approach to understanding the frontier area was contributed, unintentionally, by some pioneering work. These include the works on common traditions in the district of Sayago (CABO ALONSO, 1956), on Arribes del Duero (CRESPO REDONDO, 1966) and more recently, and as part of a more defined line of study, the studies on the transformation of the landscape in the frontier areas around Aliste (PLAZA GUTIÉRREZ, 1989 and 1990) and the mountains in the province of Salamanca (LLORENTE PINTO, 1995).

The questions which have occupied much of the research on the frontier (CAMPESINO FERNÁNDEZ, 1986, 1987; PLAZA GUTIÉRREZ, 1989) have been related to the weakness of demographic situation and of the wide, empty areas with population densities of less than 10 inhabitants per square kilometre. But the aging population and the continual population loss (more than 50% between 1900 and 1991), together with the inability to overcome the negative population growth, have reinforced the more insurmountable obstacles of this struggle: to end the deterioration of the social fabric and to secure and settle population in these areas.

In the study of geographic scenarios and of frontier territorial structures, another fruitful line of research explains the situation of marginalisation and decline together with the processes of modernisation and transformation (CABERO DIÉGUEZ and PLAZA GUTIÉRREZ, 1987) which are by-products of the improvements in accessibility, dam construction and exploitation of hydroelectricity along the length of the border fringes. Additionally, processes of change brought about by tourism are evident in heritage areas and villages in places of great natural beauty. This trend remains, however, less impressive than the transformation of industry or agriculture.

Closely related to the forgoing ideas, and no doubt of great geographic interest, are the problems concerning the great communication axes. With the growing presence of strong nodes and inter-relational strategies, new territorial dynamics are being generated around these axes. From this perspective the frontier area is losing its traditional meaning and is becoming decisive in the linkage of more distant areas, whilst forsaking zones lacking accessibility. One must underline the importance of the study on the road from Irún to Aveiro (E-80), which still has nearby the well known break in its continuity, the customs office at Fuentes de Oñoro. Whilst an important study has been written on the new dynamics of access related to the Atlantic arc or axis at the north frontier of Miño, especially between Porto and Vigo, where a greatly ambitious metropolitan area is being constructed at the real atlantic frontier. Reference should be made to the historical structure provided by the river Deuro and the new developments which are again being encouraged; to the paralysis of the Zamora-Bragança axis, and to the closure of the transfrontier railway between La Fuente de San Esteban and Braça d'Alva.

Additionally, studies, more from the Portuguese perspective than the Spanish sector, have been completed on the urban hierarchy of the frontier area. In this analysis, and in reality, the dynamism of urban transport links in the Oporto-Vigo corridor, (including centres of population important in the urban hierarchy), and the Huelva-Faro corridor (stimulated by the notable improvement in its road infrastructures), are contrasted with the weakness of the mid-frontier urban centres, which are hardly able to stimulate new strategies of dynamism and synergy in their surrounding districts (LÓPEZ TRIGAL, 1990,1995; CAMPESINO FERNÁNDEZ, 1981,1982).

Under the auspices of FEDER and the European Community initiative INTERREG - for transfrontier cooperation and development - diagnostic reports and studies free of excessive scholarship and statistics have been completed by Spanish and Portuguese teams during the early 1990's. In these a contemporary image of the frontier and its resources and shortages is presented, including its traditional and modern agricultural operations, its economic weaknesses and new centres of activity, its demographic losses and its hope of recovery, and finally strategies and solutions as a whole. Despite presenting an analytical plan, the local scale and the constant cartographic and graphical support endow these studies with an undoubtable methodological and geographic value (SÁNCHEZ LÓPEZ and CABERO DIÉGUEZ, 1994; LÓPEZ TRIGAL (chairman), 1994; LÓPEZ TRIGAL, CABERO DIÉGUEZ and others, 1995). To these publications we can add other local scale studies which examine changes in the landscape and in the regional planning in more detail, and explaining thoroughly the evolution of district boundaries, like those in Los Arribes, El Abadengo, La Tierra de Vitigudino, La Tierra de Ciudad Rodrigo and La Sierra de Gata (CABERO DIÉGUEZ, IZQUIERDO MISIEGO, LLORENTE PINTO, and others, 1995).

With this information on the frontier areas and on the timid response from several administrations, the shape of transfrontier cooperation and the proposal of common measures and action for the improvement of local development and the quality of life of border populations has progressed. These proposals and cooperation deal with overcoming this phase of emigration and desolation, this period of isolation and abandonment which contrasts with the growth of the large urban centres, ie the Portuguese cities and coastal areas, and the latest phase of investment which was based almost exclusively on infrastructures. Political policy-making is, however, not without geographic thought and understanding of an area as full of difficulties and uncertainties as the frontier (CABERO DIÉGUEZ, SANTOS, and JACINTO, (coordinators) 1994).

### 3. THE PYRENEES FRONTIER

We are dealing with a frontier zone and a common mountain range and with a community interested in the traditional use of this territory, for example the «facerias», or pasture agreements, as well as more modern uses like tourism or hydroelectric facilities; and not forgetting the ancient activity of smuggling. It is a frontier territory formed on one side by a mountainous area since the 1659 treaty, and marked by anomalies in the division of water deposits, and by both physical (Eastern, Central and Western Pyrenees) and political divisions (the regions and provinces/departments, as well the Principality of Andorra).

This frontier has developed over the previous centuries in an environment of dialogues and agreements. Paradoxically «the mountains (the French frontier) are less divisive than the rivers (the Portuguese frontier)», although evidently these mountains have so far been an physical obstacle or barrier which has separated the ebb and flow of human contact from one side to the other. But the inhabitants who live along this frontier have understood how to make the most of the differences between the two sides, the northern or Atlantic part (French, with the occasional Spanish valley, like Arán), and moving eastwards, the southern or Mediterranean side, (Spain and Andorra).

The geographical contributions and studies on this frontier have been initiated by the French (in Plandé, Deffontaines, Viers, Sermet, specialists in this area, and more recently

Laborde), who have analysed various aspects of its formation, the frontier regions, and the cooperative and conflicting relationship between both sides. On the part of the Spanish, Salvador Llobet published some pioneering studies about Andorra in 1946. More recently some research of special interest to geography has been edited, like the work of X. Febrés *El Pirineu, Frontera i Porta de Catalunya* (1984) and, likewise, as an Hispano-French interdisciplinary contribution the excellent work *El Pirineo, presentación de una montaña fronteriza* (1989), supported by the organisations DATAR and MOPU (Spanish Ministry for Public Works and Town Planning) is worth highlighting.

Together with the previously mentioned studies, recent work of Spanish geographers on this Pyrenees frontier is more scarce, although interest in this subject is growing. We can organise this work according to university and centre:

- 1) In Barcelona, at the III Iberian Conference on Geography, Lluís CASSASAS I SIMO (1984) studied the role of the frontier phenomenon in the zone of the river Ter and the area of district capital Camprodon. From a historical geographic point of view he observed how, in this area, the frontier of 1659 has been a geographic factor which has changed the district in an important way. In the last few years a protegee of the lecturer Casassas, Xavier MUÑOZ I TORRENT, has been an efficient organiser of transfrontier meetings and research. His latest work, in Catalan, *Les Politiques Europees de Cooperació Transfronterera* (1995) is outstanding. Here, in a normative, institutional, and financial context, he presents the achievements of cooperation over the last few years.
- 2) At the University of Zaragoza, the doctoral thesis by Maria Jesús LLUELLES LAREROSA (1990), and the work of the lecturer Vicente BIELZA DE ORY (in collaboration (1988) and in the departmental magazine (1993), have advanced the study of transfrontier cooperation and of regional planning in a common area, like the central or Aragon Pyrenees.
- 3) Lastly, this line of research is being initiated in centres in the Basque Country. For example in the brief study by Eugenio RUIZ URRESTARAZU and Rosario GALDOS URRUTIA (1995) on the transfrontier cooperation between the two Basque border areas.

#### 4. THE TERRESTRIAL AND MARITIME FRONTIERS IN THE SOUTH

In the south of the Iberian Peninsula we are dealing with a multi-frontier area different to the aforementioned borders with the Portuguese and the French. On one hand, we are dealing with the maritime frontier formed by the Strait of Gibraltar. On the other hand, with frontier lines a few kilometres in length, enclosed by wire and iron gates, and well-guarded by soldiers and customs officers - ie the Gibraltar territory, in the Andalusian province of Cadiz, as well as the cities of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco -. Thus in the south of Spain a completely geostrategic landscape is visible, acting as a decisive factor and an essential step in both intercontinental and maritime transport. In this area smuggling of both people and important substances (like drugs) is common; whilst at the frontier the three relevant countries maintain a divisive frontier line, and do little but guard each other. There are no plans to change this situation, although there have been some projects for new transport links.

This phenomenon has undoubtedly contributed to some contrasting and important geographical effects, which could become an extensive field of research. But, so far the only important line of research has been established, by the lecturer from the University of Cadiz, Juan Manuel SUAREZ JAPON (1988, 1991, 1992). He focussed on the multi-frontier province of Cadiz with two main points: the population density of this province from the historical geography perspective, and the present situation in the area around Gibraltar and the district of the bay of Algeciras, including its potential for development based upon cooperation between the cities in this metropolitan area.

##### **5. AN EXAMPLE OF TRANSFRONTIER COOPERATION IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF THE PENINSULA: EXTREMEDURA-BEIRA INTERIOR-ALENTEJO / ANDALUSIA-ALENTEJO-ALGARVE.**

Membership of the European Union in 1986 brought about the discovery that the Iberian frontier, devoid of planning over the centuries, was the most underdeveloped Objective 1 region in the European Community. This fact instigated the recovery (and not planning) of this territory via the financial resources and structured funding of the operational programme INTERREG, for the supposed development of the area. The aim was to exchange it's status as an opaque barrier, for that of an accessible transfrontier region.

In 1987 the first transfrontier contacts were made in the form of multi-sectoral meetings. From these meetings the European Commission derived its proposal «*Operational Programme for the development of the frontier regions of Portugal and Spain, 1989-1993*» (September 12th 1991) and it's co-financing by INTERREG I (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1991). Of this fund 43 percent was invested in the sub-programmes for establishing transport infrastructures, agriculture and rural development, heritage recovery, conservation of hydrological resources, provision of water, sewerage, and transfrontier cooperative action (CAVACO,1995).

The fertile relationship between professionals of geography, economics, and architecture in the frontier universities (Extremadura, Evora and Covilha) instigated the *Estudio de las Regiones Fronterizas Hispano-Lusas* (VV.AA., 1992 a) which, completed in September 1992, constituted in document form the proposals for INTERREG II, 1994-1999 (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1995). This work, in close coordination with the network of universities of Salamanca, Leon, Lisbon, and Coimbra (VV.AA., 1992 b), is the first example of inter-disciplinary research being applied to the regional planning of the new transfrontier territory.

In this proposal the investment of INTERREG II are destined for the sub-programmes of economic development (agriculture and rural development, economic infrastructures and facilities, professional training and job creation, reinforcement of urban infrastructures and equipment, business dynamism and collaboration, tourism, social and institutional facilities, and the creation of structures of cooperation and collaboration), environment, heritage architecture and tourism, communications, an improvement in accessibility, telecommunications, and management.

On the other hand, on fulfillment of the European Framework on Transfrontier Cooperation, and of Article 6.2 h of the Statute of Autonomy of Extremadura (February 25 1983) the foregoing points will be established in the *Protocols of Cooperation*, signed by the Govern-



ment of Extremadura and the Portuguese Regional Governments of the Alentejo (Puente de Ajuda, January 17 1992) and of central Beira Interior, (Puente de Alcántara, May 27 1994).

This inter-regional cooperation is complex; each issue being multi-dimensional and including multiple fields (social, cultural, economic, and political) as well as being multifaceted, as it introduces numerous players into the game (European Community organisations, government organisations, Public Administration, local corporations, economic agents, associations, etc). In the first management phase, the development of action has necessarily gravitated to the public institutions because of the need to stimulate a collaborative dynamism, which once consolidated, should involve private investment and social collectives. The cooperative dynamism requires the arbitration of an organic structure integrated by a *Permanent Work Group* and by *Technical Commissions* specialised in sectors considered as priorities for the regional development.

To summarise, the strategies of transfrontier cooperation are determined by «new frontiers» - institutional, social, economic, and cultural -. The transition from an ancient situation of conflicting interests to another, characterised by joint action, cannot be improvised as any policy of cooperation requires a earlier policy of integration: cultural and linguistic understanding; homogeneity of laws; taxation and currency; overcoming locational restrictions; common interests amongst businesses; construction of a transfrontier market; concurrence of productivity; solution of problems of communication, employment, salaries and social security; xenophobia... These will require the integration of sectoral activities and projects in a general process of regional planning, urban planning of the basic infrastructural pillars, hydrological and telecommunication planning... (GASPAR, 1995).

One cannot discuss transfrontier cooperation between the regions of Andalusia, Alentejo and Algarve until INTERREG I has begun to channel its investments (35 percent of the total) towards the improvement of connective infrastructures (85 percent), essential support of regional planning, the conservation of hydrological resources, and to supply and sewerage infrastructures (12 percent).

Amongst research undertaken, the study on the Transfrontier Territorial Transport Links, Algarve-Alentejo-Andalusia (JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA, 1995 a) by the Junta de Andalusia and the Portuguese Regional Governments of Alentejo y Algarve is worth highlighting. It serves as a framework for the selection of action to include in INTERREG II.

Newer modifications to such initiatives have effected the opening of the exterior frontiers of southern Andalusia (Cadiz and Malaga) with the north of Morocco, as well as including projects to connect the Spanish and Portuguese natural gas pipeline networks, supported by the REGEN initiative. Whilst also proposing transfrontier endogenous development measures to improve the road infrastructures and urban facilities, to create employment, support training and the dynamism of the fabric of the business sector. The distribution of available resources between the different sub-programmes manages the equilibrium in the set objectives: transfrontier accessibility, communications and telecommunications (36 percent); socioeconomic development (46 percent); and environment and heritage architecture (27 percent).

The main projects included in INTERREG II stress the improvement of the infrastructures in the Seville-Lisbon and Seville-Huelva-Faro routes; in small sections near the frontier - the frontier passage between Sanlúcar de Guadiana and Alcoutín, the improvement of the transversal route from Alcoutin to the bridge over the river Guadiana, the connection of the

hospitals in Huelva and Algarve via the telecommunications network; the decontamination of the Guadiana river and projects, still not yet defined, for the development of tourism in the zone between Guadiana-Costa de la Luz-Algarve. It is important to indicate that although embryonic, these are projects of common interest.

Recently a Cooperation Protocol has been signed between the Government of Andalusia and the Portuguese Regional Government of the Algarve (JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA, 1995, b) for the creation of a work group to guarantee the cooperation and preparation of projects, programmes, and proposals in all areas and sectors applicable to community co-financing.

Management functions rely on the Council, the Coordination Committee, the Sectoral Commissions and in the Cabinet of Transfrontier Initiatives. These facilitate cooperation via the joint analysis of problems and opportunities in transfrontier territory, the coordination of the prioritised projects towards inclusion in the programme, and thus moving towards a political-administrative practice to provide unity to the integration process.

Lastly, it is necessary to link together the transfrontier cooperation with the regional planning instruments in the implicated regions: Andalusia (JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA, 1990 and 1994) and Algarve (COMISSAO DE COORDENAÇÃO DA REGIAO DO ALGARVE, 1990). In this sense the study *Articulación territorial transfronteriza Algarve-Alentejo-Andalucia* is worth considering closely. This work concentrates on the urban system, the communications network, environmental values, thus enabling a general strategy for the improvement of accessibility in the transfrontier territory via the strength of an integrated understanding of the new territory.

In summary, after a decade of interventions it has been confirmed that the frontier area has not been able to overcome its precariousness, eccentricity, and dependence upon the European Community and upon national economically important centres (external factors). It is also having serious problems in the process of overcoming the frontier effect (internal factors). It will be necessary to pay attention to the phenomena of the relocation of production stimulated by the improved accessibility (exogenous factors) and the growing importance of the local productive resources (endogenous factors).

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