

The presented thesis focuses on the phenomenon of the cooperation of rural municipalities. The cooperative mechanism is one of possible ways for small municipalities to solve problems resulting from their limited financial, material and human resources. The cooperation with neighbouring municipalities or other actors of spatial development allows them to realize projects and activities, that they otherwise could not realize themselves because of the costs or spatial extent of the project or activity beyond their territory.

The main objective of the thesis is to classify several types of the cooperation in rural region and to apply these classifications to the model region. First the fundamental theoretical background and external and internal factors affecting the cooperation of municipalities are discussed. Further several classifications of the cooperation were compiled based on theoretical findings and recent research results. As research method, applied in model region, guided interviews with representatives of the selected rural municipalities were chosen.

The first two initial hypotheses of the thesis were confirmed within the selected rural municipalities in the region of the Bohemian Paradise: The formality of the cooperation is growing, respectively its intensity is decreasing according to growing number of cooperating entities (municipalities). The third hypothesis asserting that the county administrative boundary represents a barrier for the cooperation of the municipalities was not confirmed.

All types of cooperation based on compiled classifications were found out in the selected municipalities. The long-term development cooperation focused on realization of certain projects or activities was dominating in case of the formal cooperation. Both categories of associations according to structure of actors (same or different type within one association) were observed. Mostly it was not possible to clearly classify the informal cooperation.

Conclusions of the paper confirmed that for rural municipalities the mechanism of cooperation could present an important instrument for overcoming problems resulting from their limited sources.