

European Institutions Involved In The Regionalization And Regionalization Policy Instruments

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Abstract: - One may believe that it is better to transplant European successful models, such as the Polish model, or other regionalization schemes in the other European countries. I believe the French tradition of our law and our national peculiarities would be more suitable to be considered for regionalization strategy based on creating new rules that will govern this new reform. So I endorse a traditional and temperate view considering phasing the necessary reforms in the medium and long period in which communities are prepared for their effective implementation. But in this paper I intend to present some interesting aspects of the regionalization process in the European Union. What is the future architecture of the EU in relation to development gaps, what can be done to find suitable solutions to the global crisis which is badly affecting regional and local communities? These are legitimate questions, and that is why we are looking to find adequate strategies for political, economic, social and administrative matters. Some countries were able to find good solutions that today make it possible to mitigate the adverse effects through administrative reorganization and a real decentralization, through social and political solidarity.

Key-Words: - transborder cooperation, administrative reorganization, region, regionalism, regionalization, regional decentralization, intermediary level, basic level.

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Introduction

In a “Europe of Regions” in which regions are public bodies pursuing solutions to excessive central administration trends and meant to combat corruption and bureaucracy, to bring citizens closer to the administrative decision, the process of regionalization represents a more advanced form of territorial organization in European countries today. Within EU we find different form of territorial organization, the first category of countries is that with no intermediary level, but only with the basic level and national level; the second category of countries has three levels of governance- basic, intermediate and national, conventionally called departmental system; the third category of states includes those with two levels of the interim administration, the four levels in total – the regional system.

Departmental system is purely a conventional/traditional regional system and is inspired from the administrative-territorial department existing in France, where department is the first intermediate link, and region is the second².

Based on a study by the European Parliament one could identify five types of regionalization³:

1. Administrative regionalization is characterized by the fact that the national government has created subordinated authorities or institutions working under his control or in his name. Examples are provided by countries such as Greece, Portugal, England, Sweden, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

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² Corneliu-Liviu Popescu -, *Constitutional issues on regionalization in Romania* "- Annals of University of Bucharest, January-March, 2002-I, pp. 38-39;

³ Gerard Marcou - La régionalisation en Europe. The articles of the European Parliament Working - L-2929 Luxembourg, 1999 , April 2000, pp. 17-34;

2. Regionalization through local authorities. In this case, the specific functions of existing local and regional authorities meet, either by extending the initial responsibilities either by cooperation in a broader context, countries like Germany, Denmark, Finland and Ireland offering this example.

3. Regional decentralization. This system involves the creation or replacement of a new regional authority at a level above the existing territorial authorities. The typical example is offered by France and Eastern Europe, as countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Slovenia have introduced a new system of regional decentralization.

4. Political regionalization or regional autonomy. This regionalization is considered a model that tends towards regional autonomy and it is found only in certain areas of Portugal and the UK, specifically Scotland and Wales. The essential difference lies in the legislative powers granted by the constitutional system to this type of regions.

5. Federal regionalization. A federal state is in itself is an advanced form of regionalization, though its specific institutions are influenced by the trend of regionalization. Also, regionalization is not a uniform process. In some federal countries there may be several types of regions. Germany and Austria are federal states in EU which have also regions.

If the five types of regionalization are distinguished through the position they detain within national states it should be noted that the central governments are never absent, even though their powers are limited in countries where regional autonomy is strong. Regardless of how it performs, regionalization should not lead to the removal of the role that the central state plays in the regional development process.

Thus, we may say that regionalization aims at speeding up the economic development and creating a better balance in the distribution of wealth at national and European level by trying to raise the less developed areas. In turn, regionalism is usually bringing more power and more governance in the region in all its components, reinforcing identity and cultural aspects.

In the literature, regionalization process was given 3 meanings: *pseudo-regionalization* (understood as a form of de-concentration of state administration at the territorial level), *stricto sensu regionalization* (the administrative one that works at an intermediate power level between basic level ensured by cities, counties or municipalities, departments and national level represented by the government) and *political regionalization* (super-regionalization, that is no longer an administrative one halfway between regionalization and federalism). Regionalization policy includes the very large size of the regions, corresponding to spaces with a deep cultural, historical, economic identity, and then submission to the State of some competences intimate related to the exercise of national sovereignty, existence of legislative powers for elected regional assemblies, absence of the uniqueness of the regions at national level, abolition of administrative controls exerted by the state, the existence of an administrative control exerted by the region on lower level local territorial autonomous communities.⁴

The legal basis for regionalization in EU is the Regulation (EC) no. 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003, firstly amended by Commission Regulation (EC) no. 105/2007. Subsequently, NUTS was completed by adding new regional subdivision of the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (Commission Regulations (EC) no. 1888/2005 and no. 176/2008). Regulation (EC) no. 1059/2003 of EP and EU Council amended for the second time Commission Regulation (EU) no. 31/2011, which entered into force on 1 January 2012.

Regional statistics and regional indicators are the cornerstone of the European Statistical System. Their nature was established in the early 70s, based on negotiations between the national statistical bodies of the Member States and Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Communities. Statistics users have expressed a growing need for a better harmonization at the Community level in order to have comparable data for the entire EU. To facilitate collection, transmission and publication of regional statistics, a harmonized EU NUTS level has been created, replacing the system set up before by the Eurostat. The single legal framework established by Regulation (EC) no.1059/2003 was meant to ensure more stability of the regional statistics. It also establishes a common procedure for changing them in the future⁵.

NUTS system provides a breakdown of the economic territory of the Member States, which includes their extra-regional territory. It is composed of parts of the economic territory that can not be considered as part

⁴ Corneliu-Liviu Popescu - „*Constitutional Issues on Regionalization in Romania*”, Annals of University of Bucharest, January-March, 2002-I, pp. 38-39;

⁵http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/fiches_techniques/2013/050106/xml/04A_FT%282013%29050106_RO.xml;

of a region: airspace, territorial waters and the continental shelf, territorial enclaves (embassies, consulates, military bases), and deposits located in the territorial waters and operated units that are located in this area.

NUTS classification is hierarchical to the extent that it subdivides each Member State into three levels: NUTS 1, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3. Second and third levels are subdivisions of the respective first and second level. A Member State may decide to extend the hierarchical levels in detail. Definition of territorial units is based on administrative units existing in the Member States. Thus, an administrative unit designates a geographical area for which an administrative authority is empowered to take administrative or policy decisions in accordance with the established institutional and legal framework of the involved Member State.

Some of the existing administrative units, used for hierarchical NUTS classification are listed below⁶:

1 NUTS 1 "Gewesten / regions" in Belgium, "Länder" in Germany, "Continental", "Região dos Açores" and "Região da Madeira" in Portugal, "Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland" and "Government Office Regions of England" in the UK, "statisztikai nagyrégiók" in Hungary, "Regiony" in Poland, "uzemi" Czech Republic "economic regions" in Bulgaria.

2 NUTS 2 "Provincies / Provinces" in Belgium, "Regierungsbezirke" in Germany, "periphery" in Greece, "Comunidades y ciudades Autónomas" in Spain, "Regions" in France, "Regions" in Ireland, "Regional" in Italy, "Provincies" in the Netherlands, "Länder" in Austria, "tervezés-statisztikai régiók" in Hungary, "voivodies" in Poland, "oblast" in Slovakia, "oblast" in the Czech Republic, "planning regions" in Bulgaria, "development regions" in Romania.

3 NUTS 3 "arrondissements" in Belgium, "Amtskommuner" in Denmark, "Kreise / Kreisfreie Städte" in Germany, "nomoi" in Greece, "provincias" in Spain, "départements" in France, "Regional Authority regions" in Ireland, "province" in Italy, "LAN" in Sweden, "maakunnat / landskapen" in Finland, "maakond" in Estonia, "megyék" and "megyei jogu varasok" in Hungary, "Regional" in Latvia, "apskritys" in Lithuania, "Gzejjer" in Malta, "podregiony" and "powiat" in Poland, "Region" in Slovakia, "statisticne regije" in Slovenia, "Region" in the Czech Republic, "oblast" in Bulgaria, "counties" in Romania.

If the population of a Member State is, as a whole, lower than minimum threshold for NUTS, that Member State constitutes a territorial unit NUTS at that level. If, for a given level of classification, there is no big enough administrative unit in a Member State that level is formed by joining an adequate number of administrative units smaller and in the same neighborhood.

Local administrative units LAU 1 and LAU 2 (LAU - Local Administrative Unit), sometimes referred to incorrectly NUTS 4 and NUTS 5, are the primary components of NUTS regions. Any extension of NUTS to LAU is not a completed project or even completely decided, the more some Member States currently are reorganizing existing administrative divisions to adapt to the socio-economic situation and to meet the needs of planning and development of the regions concerned, especially in terms of requests for grants or development aid granted by the European institutions or to facilitate cooperation between administrative institutions of different European regions.

Amendments to the NUTS classification may be adopted in the second half of the calendar year, respecting an interval of at least three years. Member States shall inform the Commission of any changes relating to administrative units or on other changes that could have an effect on NUTS classification (for example, when changing constituents, which may affect level limits of NUTS 3).

Changes to the smaller administrative units will change NUTS if they involve a population transfer of more than 1% of the concerned NUTS 3 territorial units.

The first amendment of the regulation was adopted in 2006 and entered into force on 1st of January 2008. The second amendment came into force on 1st of January 2012 and will be implemented by 31 of December 2014.

European Parliament insisted on numerous occasions that certain elements such as how are treated smaller administrative units deserve special attention. Establishing a NUTS level for smaller administrative units would allow to take better account of the real situation and to avoid disparities, especially those related to the fact that regional entities may be very different, in terms of population, although are ranked at the same NUTS level.

In its resolution from 21 of October 2008 on governance and partnership at national, regional and project-level in the field of regional policy, European Parliament called on the Commission to examine the relevant NUTS level to identify the area where an integrated development policy could be best implemented, including the areas of concentration of population and labor (cities, suburban areas, rural areas adjacent) and

⁶ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/ro/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_5.1.6.html#_ftnref1;

territories justifying specific thematic approaches (e.g., mountain ranges, river basins, coastal areas, islands, areas where the environment was affected).

Opting for or against regionalization remains a purely political decision, associated to the idea of state organization. This idea evolved and is evolving according to the role played by the state, territorial communities and according to the importance of these entities in everyday life of citizens.

European States know either a single level of local government (Luxembourg, Finland and Portugal) or a two-tier system of local government (Greece, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands, UK, Sweden) or a system with three levels of local government (France, Italy, Spain).⁷

1. Terminological aspects regarding the notions of region, regionalism and regionalization

The concept of region. The concept of region is not entirely unknown to the historical evolution of the state in general, especially in Western Europe, the concept of region had multiple meanings over time, making its legal regulation to be various and extremely diverse even today⁸. In the European Community, Council of Europe and the Assembly of European Regions one couldn't find a definition. No doctrine managed to universally define this concept. So it is difficult to define this term because states experiences on regionalization are different, taking into account local customs and wishes of the population. Some states do not recognize to the regions the quality of governance level, and some make various distinctions regarding the nature and functions of the regions, on which they developed different concepts.

In the first variant, region is the entity located on the lower level of the central state, having political representation, this being ensured by the existence of an elected council, or, if this is missing, by the existence of an association or a body set up at the regional level by communities located at a lower level⁹. This definition follows from art. 1 of the status, of European Regions Assembly applied rather in the German Landers, in the Dutch provinces, French regions or in England unitary councils, so that its usefulness does not appear as obviously. This does not foresee administrative regions, even no international provision from the system of Council of Europe or from European Union does not require a certain type of administrative-territorial organization.

In the second variant, the European Parliament adopted the Community Chart of Regionalization, which exposes an institutional and geographical concept of the region. Chart means by region that territory which, in geographical terms, is a clear entity or a similar group of territories, where there is continuity and whose population has some common features and the desire to preserve and develop its identity, in order to stimulate cultural, social and economic progress.

Region can be understood as a certain territory that does not overlap with the area bounded by administrative criteria, to identify this one needs other criteria such as: socio-economic degree, the interest which it presents for all socio-economic overview a particular type of economic or social activity, criteria of geographical, cultural, social and ethnographic order.

The concept of regionalism. Regionalism, whether acting within the borders of a country or across borders, represents the dynamics of present and future Europe. Its sources varies, but it is considered as a form of protest against the authority of national capitals by people who feel that are belonging in historical or cultural terms to a particular European space than to the nation state whose borders are the result of history¹⁰.

Regionalism term refers to a concept and a policy that establishes a greater control over political decisions by regions, over political, economical and social decisions, usually through the creation of political and administrative institutions, with legislative powers¹¹. Regionalism is defined as an ideology and a political movement recommending an increasingly region exercise control on political, economic and social affairs, on its territory. Regionalism means that the region exists above all in people's minds. It exists as a result of a historical and socio-economic process¹².

⁷ Dana Apostol Tofan, op. cit., pp 132-133.

⁸ Simina Tanasescu, *Regionalization in Romania and its implications in the legislative framework* " Altera, Regionalization in Central and Eastern Europe, No. 19, 2002, page. 5;

⁹ http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PressComm/Publications/DeclarationRegionalism/.dam/110n/ro/DR_ROUMAIN.pdf ;

¹⁰ John Newhouse - *Europe's Rising Regionalism* - Foreign Affairs, January February 1997, pag. 67;

¹¹ John Loughlin - *Europe of the Regions and the Federalization of Europe*, Publius, Fall 1996, pag. 149

¹² Idem 8

The concept of regionalization. The regionalization and region terms cover political and administrative realities very different in European countries. Thus, regionalization can be a political regionalization (Spain, Italy), an incorporated regionalization, as a result of the creation of unitary state by the union of several countries, which keeps a certain individuality (UK), a diversified regionalization, with regional frameworks established not only on territorial and political criteria, but also on other criteria, such as language and culture (Belgium, before its transformation into a federal state), a classical administrative regionalization, through decentralization, creating regions as autonomous local regional authorities in administrative terms (France), a functional regionalization through devolution, creating regions as a simple districts of the state administration (Greece), a cooperative regionalism, creating regions as institutionalized forms of cooperation between local territorial collectivities (Romania).

Regionalization is a process by which operates the construction of autonomous action capacity aimed to promote a sub-national territory, supra-local also, by mobilizing economic resources or, where appropriate, competent identity of local or regional solidarities, in developing its potential. This process can work from existing institutions or from a new territorial cutout designed to better meet these objectives. It is always conditioned by the constraints performed by political and institutional framework, whose outcome may be governed by other stakes.

2. European institutions involved in the regionalization process

2.1. Regional representation in the European Union

Regions have a significant representation in the EU, so they act alone or form associations. Brussels is the headquarters of many institutions of the European Union; there are many delegations organized under embassy model which ensure that Community decisions do not harm their particular interests and they can get as many European funds. So we may mention the Council of Communities and Regions of Europe, the Conference of Regions Presidents which have legislative powers.

a) Regional representation in the Council of European Union

After the Maastricht Treaty and amending of Article 203 EC, ex 146 EC, Member States may be represented in the Council by provincial or regional ministers. This option is only recognized to the entities well defined as they are in Germany, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom which have a state structure that allows the participation of such entities. Community provision implies the opportunity to delegate governmental powers belonging to state power, so that these regions can successfully invoke the principle of subsidiarity.

b) Committee of the Regions (CoR)

CoR is the Assembly of regional and local representatives in the European Union. Since its creation in 1994, under the Maastricht Treaty, CoR has been in constant evolution. Its role has been strengthened primarily by the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997 and then by the Treaty of Lisbon, in 2009.

Its involvement throughout the EU legislative process was done through its mandatory consultation at all stages of the legislative process, by European Commission, Council of Ministers and European Parliament. Also, if the measure adopted does not comply, the CoR has the right to take legal action in the Court of Justice of the European Union.

It is interesting the fact that 50% of Europeans believe that elected officials at local and regional level are better able to represent them at European level¹³.

Committee of the Regions is the EU's sub-national voice before other government bodies - national and European. It was able to impose as an interlocutor of the other European institutions or states. In terms of organization, the Committee of the Regions has a President, a Vice President, 353 members from 28 member states of the European Union, which represents local and regional communities (Article 263 EC Treaty).

Its members exercise their functions in full independence, in the general interest of the Community. The mandate of a member of the CoR is for 5 years, beginning on the effective date of his appointment by the Council. The mandate of a member or an alternate member is terminated by resignation, by the completion of

¹³ <http://cor.europa.eu/ro/about/Pages/key-facts.aspx>

the electoral mandate on which he was appointed member of the CoR, or by death. A successor is appointed by the Council for the remainder of the term.

c) Council of European Communities and Regions (CECR) - Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

Council of European Communities was founded in Geneva in 1951 by a group of European mayors, before opening the gates for regions and became the Council of Europe Communities and Regions (CECR). This Council is the largest organization of local and regional authorities in Europe and among its members has national associations of cities and regions (around 100,000 cities and regions).

CECR aims at a united Europe based on local and regional autonomy and democracy. To achieve this objective, it attempts to influence the future of Europe, strengthening local and regional contribution through an impact on community legislation and policies, encouraging the exchange of information at local and regional level, working with partners around the world. The nation state is not in the concerned field of the Council. CECR is the European oldest and largest association of local and regional authorities. This is an organization that brings together national associations of local and regional authorities from 40 European countries and is represented through them at all territorial levels - local, intermediate and regional.

Association of Communes of Romania became a member of Council in 2006 meeting in Innsbruck, attended by 41 mayors of communes from Romania.

Since its creation in 1951, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) promotes the building of a united Europe based on peaceful and democratic local self-government, the principle of subsidiarity and citizen participation¹⁴. CEMR, a nonprofit organization, was founded in 1951 by a group of European mayors under the name of "Council of European Municipalities", regions falling later in the structure of the board, adopted form maintained also today.

Today, CEMR is the largest organization for local and regional government in Europe, its members being national association (50) of regions and municipalities from 38 countries. These associations, all together, represent the interests of over 100,000 local and regional authorities. The primary goal of CEMR is to promote a strong, united Europe, based on democracy and the principle of decentralization and subsidiarity. The efforts of this organization stretch on a wide range of activities and themes, such as public services, regional policy, environment, transportation, equal opportunities etc¹⁵.

2.2. Regions at the Council of Europe level - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Since 1957, the Council of Europe has decided in favor of local authorities representation among whom were also regions, and in 1994 founded the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as an advisory body of the Council of Europe, replacing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. It works based on the Statutory Resolution 2000 of Ministers Committee of the Council of Europe. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is the voice of the regions and cities in Europe, which provides a place for dialogue where the local and regional elected representatives may discuss common problems, their experience and present their views to governments. It advises the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on all aspects of local and regional politics, acting in close cooperation with national and international organizations representing local and regional authorities, organizing hearings and conferences at local and regional level to reach a wider public whose involvement is essential for the establishment of a genuine democracy. Equally, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities prepares regular country reports on the situation of local and regional democracy in all Member States, watches in particular upon the application of the European Chart of Local Autonomy, and supports the new Member States of the Congress in carrying practical tasks necessary to achieve an effective local and regional autonomy. Congress consists of two chambers: the Chamber of Local Authorities and Chamber of Regions. Bicameral assembly includes 318 members and 318 alternate members, each of them representing the choice of the more than 200,000 local and regional authorities of the Member States of the European Council. Rooms alternate in electing the Congress President for a term of two years.

Congress meets once a year in Strasbourg where there are hosted agreed European organizations delegations and those of some non-member states as special guests or observers. A standing committee,

¹⁴ http://www.ccre.org/en/article/3_2 ;

¹⁵ http://www.acor.ro/new/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=55;

composed of representatives of all national delegations, meets between the Congress plenary sessions with various committees during the fall and spring.

The Congress is organized around four statutory committees:

- a) *Institutional Commission of the Congress*, empowered in particular to prepare reports on the development of local and regional democracy in Europe, assisted by a committee of independent experts;
- b) *Commission on Culture and Education*, responsible for media, youth, sport and communication;
- c) *Commission for Sustainable Development*, responsible for environmental issues, landscaping and urban planning;
- d) *Commission on Social Cohesion*, responsible for matters relating to employment, citizenship, inter-community relationships, equality between women and men, and solidarity.

Chamber of Regions has a working group on regions with legislative powers.

To carry out its duties, the Executive Director of the Congress is responsible for managing the budget and the activity of 40 officials of Congress Secretariat. Congress helps the member states of European Council to fulfill their duties to implement a genuine local and regional autonomy. The Congress is the spokesman of regions and municipalities, providing a framework for dialogue where local and regional elected representatives may discuss common problems, compare experiences and express their views in addition to their governments.

Congress advises the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on all aspects of local and regional policy. Also, it works in close cooperation with national and international organizations, representing local and regional government, organizes conferences on specific topics and draws country reports, on local and regional democracy from member states, represents local and regional authorities interests in European policy making, observes local and regional elections.

3. Regionalization policy instruments

3.1. Structural Funds.

Structural Funds are financial instruments, administered by the European Commission, whose purpose is to provide support at structural level. Financial support from the Structural Funds is intended mainly to the less developed regions in order to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union, in order to eliminate economic and social disparities between regions.

Structural Funds has a contribution on three strategic objectives of the Economic and Social Cohesion Policy of the European Union:

- a) *Convergence or reducing disparities between regions*. States may apply for funding for regions having a GDP/capita below 75% of the European average.
- b) *Regional competitiveness and employment*. States may apply for funding the regions not eligible for the convergence objective.
- c) *European Territorial Cooperation*. Thematic objective supporting the adaptation and modernization of policies and systems of education, training and employment of labor.

Structural Funds have an important role in shaping EU regional policy. They are the means by which the EU Member States determine administrative remodeling of the Member States on behalf of a harmonious economic development of the Union. Thus, Union's regional policy depends largely on the management of these funds. We are witnessing an Europeanization of national regionalization policy. Structural Funds annually absorb almost a third of EU funds and are a serious incentive for this process.

3.2. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

EGTC was established in order to facilitate cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation between Member States and regional and local authorities within them. They allow partners to implement joint projects, to exchange experience and to improve methods of coordination regarding planning. The legal basis is Regulation (EC) no. 1082/2006, based on the Article 175 of the Treaty of European Union.

EGTC may receive either task to implement programs financed by the European Union, or any other cross-border cooperation project with or without Community financial intervention. Examples of such activities include:

- implementation of cross-border transport facilities or hospitals;
- implementing or managing cross-border development projects;
- exchange of experience and good practice;
- managing of joint-border programs that may finance projects of common interest to EGTC partners.

Currently, there is a European grouping of territorial cooperation, the European Network of knowledge on urban policies (EUKN - European Urban Knowledge Network), whose members have a common geographical policy. EUKN is a platform for exchange of ideas and experience in urban development.

Building a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation has several advantages to its members:

- allows members to constitute a single legal entity and to use a single set of rules to implement joint initiatives in two or more Member States;
- allows interested parties of two or more Member States to cooperate in joint initiatives without having to sign an international agreement subject to ratification by national parliaments;
- allows Member States to answer together and directly on calls for proposals launched under EU regional programs and to act in this context as a single management authority.

A European group of territorial cooperation may be formed from partners on the territory of at least two Member States, belonging to one or more of the following categories: Member States; Regional authorities; Local authorities; Public bodies; Associations consisting of bodies belonging to one or more of these categories.

European Groups of Territorial Cooperation are acting on behalf of their members, which adopt statutes through special agreements. These conventions describe the organization and its activities. The area of application of these activities is limited to cooperation field chosen by elected members. Furthermore, competence of the European Group of Territorial Cooperation powers is limited by the respective competencies of its members.

Applicable right for the interpretation and application of the Convention belongs to the Member State where the EGTC has its head office. Members decide whether EGTC is a separate legal entity or one with its tasks delegated to them.

Members adopt the estimated annual budget of EGTC, which is subject to an annual report prepared and certified by independent experts. Members are responsible in financial terms for any liabilities in proportion to their contribution to the budget.

So far, there were created 37 European groups of territorial cooperation in the 18 EU Member States, but the number continues to grow. In 2011 and 2012 there were created seven and six European Groups of Territorial Cooperation. EGTC Register is administered by the Committee.

Regulation (EC) no. 1082/2006 on EGTC has taken into account requests from the European Parliament, regarding particularly a clear definition of territorial cooperation, the need to specify the financial responsibility of the Member States and the jurisdiction and provisions on publication and/ or registration of EGTC statutes. The Council also decided to resume the idea expressed by Parliament, and to apply the law of the Member State where the EGTC has its registered office.

This year European Parliament and Council of EU have debated on the new proposal of European Commission amending the existing regulations on EGTC. Legislation on cohesion policy and structural funds is prepared in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, where the Parliament and the Council have equal powers.

European Parliament closely follows the effectiveness of creating new European groups of territorial cooperation. Moreover, in its resolution from 21 October 2008 on governance and partnership at national, regional and project level, in the field of regional policy, the European Parliament called on the Member States that have not yet adapted their national legislation to enable the implementation of the European groups of territorial cooperation (EGTC) to take such action in the shortest possible time.

Conclusions

Regionalization in the European Union is not found under a unitary form, but has some similarities in various fields, such as cross-border cooperation, infrastructure development etc. European regionalization process has in the foreground some economic aspects and control of disparities between the various regions. As main tools for implementing regional development strategy there are made available important financial resources, while also involving European institutions with expertise and associative forms of administrative entities that are part of a new administrative developments.

This process is one of major complexity, involving a change in the administrative concept, in a way to give up the nation state prerogatives in favor of new administrative entities. Through this process, the administrative decision is close to the local decision, which significantly reduces administrative centralization. Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly, there is an apparent contradiction, since we live in an era of globalization, but globalization is fostered by local regionalization process.

In a united Europe, full of diversity through state mechanisms and with so different administrative regulations, there are many commonalities, but still is looking for legal and functional formula to generate administrative performance in a period affected by the economic crisis.

So I think Romania will have to choose between European examples, the one where things went well and efficiently, to distinguish between the good aspects and the less good ones and take into account the particularities of the national administration. This requires solidarity, wisdom, professionalism, communication capacity with communities and obviously takes a lot of courage.

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