

SOME ASPECTS REGARDING REGIONALIZATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract:

Regional development policies initiated in the last decades, European countries, aimed at recovery economic and social development locally, economic recovery less developed areas, reducing disparities between the levels of development of the regions.

In the EU, there is no compulsory law or practice concerning regionalization. This means that there is no unique model which ought to be implemented without discussion by all the candidates / members.

Indeed the EU indicates no model at all, it rather prefers to leave the States free to decide on their own an institutional architecture, based on their own historical path. By doing so, the EU intends to avoid the troubles linked to the variety of social situations inherited from the long term history. It hopes, moreover, that provided the formal aspects are respected, the citizen will be able to take possession of their own institutions and will play the game of multi level governance.

Keywords: *development policies, multi level governance, regionalization.*

Regional development policies initiated in recent decades, by the European countries, aimed at relaunching economic and social development at the local level, economic recovery of the less developed areas, reducing disparities between the levels of development of regions (Popa, 2014).

Speaking of the "Europe of tomorrow", Denis of Rougemont stated: "If we look at Europe, by far, we see very clearly what it is. If someone looks at us, for example, from the perspective of the United States, it is clear that we are all Europeans. [...] If one looks closer at Europe, then it disappears. This resembles the story of the biologist who wanted to study an elephant under a microscope, and could not ever find the unity of the studied object ". Further, concluded: "We will build Europe by regions [...] EU policy should consider deleting ethnic boundaries and promoting diversity" (Rougemont, 1970).

The first basic elements of the regional definition a space and a human group, positions the region as a liaison between the local community (with a clearly defined territory and a community) and state (defined territory, living in a nation). But these two concepts of space and group can be immediately "reused" in two different directions that lead one towards regionalization, another to regionalism, the first focusing on space (organization and within it), the second of the group, community (identity and action) (Alexandru, Popescu-Slăniceanu, Căraușan, Enescu, Dincă, 2003).

Regionalization is often confused with regionalism. However, they are processes with different specificities, describing regional level between the two movements which, in certain circumstances, there may be an interaction.

Regionalism is a process more or less spontaneous in the form, of shaping regional identities based on cultural community, of language, traditions, belonging to a geographical region, lifestyle, way of thinking, being initiated by local communities and promoted by them centrally. Regionalism does not appear from awareness of regional imbalances, but from the feeling of incompleteness and inability to assume their cultural identities within a given framework, highlighting the social and economic backwardness and national state centralism (Macovețchi, 2014)

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The phenomenon of regionalism emerged as a normal reaction at the the inadaptability of the political and social structures of the states, at the human community demands, constantly evolving. Regionalism is the result of bottom-up, community awareness by some regional imbalances, economic underdevelopment, ethno-cultural alienation, state centralism living.

Regionalization, however, is the process that takes place from top to bottom, whereby Member acknowledges regional imbalances, with all the accompanying phenomena - ethno-cultural alienation, economic underdevelopment, excessive centralization - decentralization and go accordingly to their political and legal system through a regional institutionalization.

The two phenomena are complementary and, therefore, are most often confused (http://www.cse.uaic.ro/fisiere/Documentare/Suporturi_curs/I_guvernanta.pdf).

Although fundamentally, is a socio-economic process, regionalization is seen as supporting the functional changes affecting intermediate levels of government. Thus, the term regionalization is often understood as the process of creating a new level in the territorial organization of a state (<http://victorbostinaru.ro/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/descentralizare-si-regionalizare-modelul-francez.pdf>), an average level of the governance system (<http://www.revista22.ro/regionalizarea-europa-si-romnia-10836.html>). The term region was defined differently by the European institutions.

The Council of Europe appoints the region as a "medium size range likely to be geographically determined and is considered to be uniform."

If it is accepted that the term "medium size" is totally subjective, it can not be assigned a scale type to the region. Instead, the link between the territory and the human element that inhabits, element that appears as an awareness of the homogeneous character of the region, is always present when it comes to defining it (Alexandru, Bădescu, 1997).

On the other hand, the European Union defines the region rather from the administrative point of view as being "an echelon immediately below that of the state."

According to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) identifying administrative units depending on the size of the territory there: the village, the department / county and regional level.

In this respect, the Regions Community Charter¹ states in Article 1 that in this book, by region means a territory formed from the geographical point of view, a net drive, or a group of territories where there are similar continuity, in which population possesses certain common elements and wishing to keep the resulting specificity and develop in order to foster progress culturally, socially and economically.

By the common elements of a specific population means a Common specificity of language, culture, historical tradition and interests of economy and transport. It is not essential that all these elements are combined in all cases.

The various names and legal-political nature that these entities can receive the various states, autonomous communities, provinces, nationalities, etc., do not exclude from the considerations set out in this Charter.

Furthermore, Article 2 of the Charter states that "the Member States of the European Community are invited, given the popular will, historical tradition and the need for proper and efficient administration of their functions, particularly in planning economic development, to institutionalize their territories (or keep where they exist) regions under Art. 1 of the Charter.

¹ Document prepared by the European Parliament on 18 November 1988 adopted as official document of the European Community of 19 December 1988.

The Assembly of European Regions (AER), regions defined as "low-level state political entities that have certain powers exercised by the government, which in turn is accountable to a democratically elected assembly"¹.

The region is the territorial public entity corresponding to the level immediately below the state and endowed with a government that has its own political powers.

The region is recognized in the constitution or the law which guarantees its autonomy, identity, powers and the organization method.

The region is endowed with its own constitution, a statute of autonomy or a law, acts that are part of the legal structure of the state at the highest level and that at least define the organization and powers. Changing the status of the region can not be done without its participation. Within a state, the regions may have a different status, depending on the particularities of their historical, political, social or cultural. The region expresses its own political identity susceptible to dress very different political forms, depending on each region's democratic desire to adopt the type of organization that goes to his preference.

The region equips their administrative apparatus both personally and with own property and adopt its emblems of representation.

According to the Torremolinos Charter, the concept of territorial- spatial planning is defined as,, a geographical expression of economic, social, cultural and ecological society ", its objectives being:

- balanced socio-economic development of regions;
- improving quality of life;
- responsible management of natural resources;
- environmental protection and rational use of land.

To achieve its goals, territorial - spatial planning must be:

- Democratic, in particular to be conducted in a manner that ensures the participation of the inhabitants involved and their political representatives;
- Comprehensive: to ensure coordination of the various sectorial policies and integrate them in a holistic approach;
- functional: to take account of regional consciousness based on values, culture and interests sometimes beyond the administrative borders and territorial cohesion, while taking into account the institutional arrangements;
- Long-term oriented: to analyze and consider the long-term trends and the evolution of phenomena and interventions in the social, cultural, ecological and environmental field.

Legal doctrine has established a true classification of different types of regions (Tănăsescu, 2002).

- Political regions, parts of a State which is the boundary between federal and unitary states with its own powers in the legislative and executive matters, but still retains a judicial system only in the central state (Spain, Italy);

- Built regions - result of the creation of a unitary state by merging several countries that still retain a certain individuality (UK, which today tends toward federalization);

- Diversified regions with regional frameworks established not only by territorial and political criterion, but also on other criteria, such as language and culture (Belgium, before its transformation into a federal state);

- Classical administrative regions created by decentralization as autonomous territorial collectivities, from the administrative point of view.

¹ Declaration on European regionalism The Assembly of European Regions (AER) meeting in Basel General Assembly on 4 December 1996.

Embodying these issues in the process of setting up a new European Union we can highlight three decisive directions which define the ascendance of the regional reality (Alexandru, 1997);

- Firstly, the regions contribute to economic development and to achievement of the objective of economic and social cohesion; - Secondly, the regions contribute to bring citizens closer to the reality of the European Union, enabling greater institutional democratization; - Thirdly, the regions are exponents of a pluralist Europe, in which very diverse cultural, linguistic and social realities, coexist.

Itself European Parliament in its resolution on Community policy in the field of culture, of the 1st of December 1993 stated that "the road to the EU passes through the manifestation and European cultural identity, which is the result of an interaction of civilizations and a plurality of national , regional and local cultures.

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union in 2020 - "Towards a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe, composed of Diverse Regions "(ATUE 2020), adopted on 19 May 2011, reaffirms the common objective of the European Union: territorial cohesion. It thus shows that the EU objectives defined in the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth can only be achieved if it is taken into account the territorial dimension of the strategy, as development opportunities vary from one region to another (http://www.minind.ro/cctc_2014_2020/dse/Agenda_teritoriala_a_UE_2020.pdf)

Territorial priorities for the European Union defined by ATUE 2020 are:

1. promoting polycentric and balanced territorial development;
2. Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural areas and specific;
3. Territorial integration in cross-border regions and transnational;
4. ensure global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies;
5. improving territorial connections for individuals, communities and businesses;
6. Managing and connecting ecological values, landscape and cultural regions.

Choosing the proper regionalization of the administrative system of the country is based on four assumptions related to:

- a) the major problems to be solved by the new administrative-territorial reform in terms of disparities and territorial cohesion;
- b) territorial groups of socio-economic and cultural similarity;
- c) knowing the flows and major regional structure configurations
- d) recognized at European level requirements for designing efficient tier 2 regions (NUTS 2 - 800 000 inhabitants minimum, maximum 3 million inhabitants¹) with administrative status (http://regionalizare.mdrap.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Raport-de-progres-2_CONREG.pdf).

In Romania it is considered that the regional system constitutes in the European Union, a veritable model of administrative organization (Panduru, 2006).

In the European countries the forms of regionalization correspond to different political and administrative realities prevailing in the respective countries. The models applied differ depending on the powers granted the regional authorities, the institutions involved, the degree of decentralization, existing five types of regionalization (Gerard, 1999).

1. Administrative Regionalization, which is characterized by the fact that the state creates authorities subordinated to the government or institutions working under its control,

¹ Regulation (EC) no. 1059/2003 of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) published in the Official Journal no. L 154/2003, p. 1 - 41. the Regulation noted was amended by Regulation (EC) no. 1888/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2005, published in the Official Journal no. L 309 1 25.11.2005, by Regulation (EC) no. 105/2007 of 1 February 2007 the Commission published in the Official Journal no. L 39 1 10.2.2007 and Regulation (EC) no. 176/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 February 2008 published in the Official Journal no. L 61 1 5.3.2008

or on its behalf. Such examples are offered by countries such as Greece, Portugal, England, Sweden, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

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

3. Regional Decentralization. This system involves the creation or substitution of a new territorial authority to a level above the existing territorial authorities, considered to be a region. A typical example in this case is France. In Eastern Europe as an example of this system we have countries like Poland and the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Bulgaria and Slovenia have introduced a new system of regional decentralization.

4. The regionalization policy or regional autonomy. This type of regionalization is considered a model aiming at regional autonomy and is found only in certain areas of Portugal and the United Kingdom specifically in Scotland and Wales. The essential difference lies in the legislative powers granted by the Constitution to such regions.

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