

# Regionalism, Regionalization and Regional Development

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**Abstract** *Sustained development is a concept associating other concepts, in its turn, in the EU practice, e.g. regionalism, regionalizing and afferent policies, here including structural policies. This below text, dedicated to integration concepts, will limit on the other hand to regionalizing, otherwise an aspect typical to Europe and to the EU. On the other hand, two aspects come up to strengthen this field of ideas, i.e. the region (al)-regionalism-(regional) development triplet has either its own history or precise individual outline of terms.*

**Key words** Development, regional development, sustainable development, types of regions, Euro-regions

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## 1. Introduction

Regions are either within country territories, or multicountry, but for both kinds and sizes aspects and facts that are common inside and specific, as seen from outside are to be underlined. A science of regions did developed so far all over the world, but the European, i.e. the EU, case came to strengthen it. This paper does carry such a development in the literature, but equally regards economic development, as sustained.

## 2. Literature review

Bibliography studied in such an order comes from within the EU process research, as well as from outside it and more precisely the reach Romanian literature rather refers to the EU. As for the EU related literature, it certainly starts with Bela Balassa and Jacob Viner, in 40s and 60s, but references to regional development are rather delayed.

## 3. Methodology of research

There are here competing historical analysis and synthesis, semantic analysis and economics of development and cohesion, as face to face with the integration process of EU type analysis, here including specific institutional development.

## 4. History of regionalism

The ancient world's States generally were enough centralised powers, except for what was the Ancient Greece in her specific period of life. Later on, the feudal State stopped

being quite able to monitor its afferent geographical territory and this was the historical moment in which the local jurisdictional competence and other related competences were given birth. There was the law and administrative gap between rural and urban areas doing the same. Cities were reaching some brand new privileges on contractual bases as a kind of „liberation”, whereas concomitantly, rural areas were staying subordinated to the two authority institutions that were landlord and church; sometimes and in some regions with specific culture some local self-administration was historically noticed at that time.

Back to the feudal State, it was both concerned by its external boundaries, since previously by the ones of individual domains, and then preoccupied by delimiting inland counties and provinces. And back to rural areas, subservient to landlords and church interests, since law was further needing and calling for the financial dimension to work with so the State’s power, as centralised this time, was also coming back locally.

Further on, in the 16th and 17th centuries primary formulas of *national sovereignty* appear as corroborated with monarchical absolutism tendencies specific to the Middle Ages. Then, they were cutting some of the previous contractual liberties and self-governing elements of cities. In the next 18th century this European social and political picture was getting filled by color, whereas in the next further 19th century impetus come for the pace of development, i.e. markets enlarged to national size, they modernized and helped national States’ formation. The new entrepreneurial social class appeared and strengthened and they dragged in a concept like the one of *human rights*. Nevertheless, such developments were equally giving space to other contrary or subversive ones. National States’ boundaries weren’t exactly following the ones of local communities, i.e. as a result ethnical and cultural shaping was getting uniformized sometimes as really frustrating for some of communities and their peoples.

The same 19th century was also the one of *federalism*, conceptually related to *regionalism*. Remember the German example for the whole Europe in which such a relationship was getting concrete.

## 5. Regionalism, regionalizing and afferent policies in the EU

Debating on regionalism is already a „theme gauge” face to resenting some kinds of crises, e.g. regional and ethnic, that occurred in 1910 and 1960 in Europe. But first it is important to make the proper difference between regionalism and regionalizing. *Regionalizing is another territorial organising level for the State, regional institutions and corresponding transfer of competences (to this new level)*. Regionalizing is a political initiative for that State. And given the specific of the region, a certain autonomy results and regionalism might be human, cultural, linguistic etc. *Regionalism* is a political discourse which’s finality is *federalism*. The regionalism’s conceptual approaches are: (i) political and ideological, (ii) administrative and (iii) economic, and there are several categories of regionalism, as follows (W. Lang, 1982):

(1) in *national framework*, with subvariants: (a) „bottom-up” (federalism) and (b) transferring some prerogatives inside the territory (descentralizing);

(2) *transnational*, within culturally unitary geographical areas, as similar to cooperation implementings of „euro-regions” type;

(3) *international*, i.e. organised structures like the Security and Cooperation Organisation in Europe (SCOE), ASEAN, Union of Western Europe and so on.

Of course, the EU claims either key concepts like *descentralizing*, *regionalism*, *regionalizing*, or reference documents like *Comunitary Chart of Regionalising* and *European Chart of Local Autonomy*. Besides, *subsidiarity* appears for its first time in 1989 and that was in a Communitary chart-document regarding basic social rights of employees adopted by the European Council, then taken over by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

*Subsidiarity* is a fully political concept aiming the approach of political decision to individual citizens, i.e. the document comes up as opposite to the State and to its legislation harming them. Actually, despite the later concept's appearance, the earlier *Chart of Local Autonomy* (1985) was mentioning something about, ... public responsibilities exercise... directed to those authorities closer to citizens'.

It is sure that the European Community wasn't carrying a quite clear idea on *regional policy* since its very beginning – i.e. the Treaty of Rome (1957) –, when member countries were rather proving uniformity of their individual economic development. Then, primary signs of a regional problematic get visible in 1961 inside the States' Community area. Then, in 1965 the first report regarding regions was drawn by the European Commission. In 1967 the, General Direction for Regional Policy' was founded as afferent to the *Common Market*, as its basic document literally expresses. In 1969 regional policy is starting by primary concrete reforms proposed. In 1972, when a heads of States and Governments' reunion both a common view on regional policy and basics of what even currently is the *Fund of Regional Development* were asserted. This organism was coming three years later, in 1975, joining other organisms of profile like the *European Social Fund* (ESF, founded in 1960) and the *European Fund for Agricultural Orienting and Guaranteing* (EFAOG, founded in 1962).

## **6. Regions and regional development**

*Communitary Chart of Regionalizing* defines the *region* as ,a territory that forms a territorial unit or an ensemble of territories as such with a specific to be preserved, a continuity of this and a corresponding popular mentality to maintain and exploit it for economic, social and cultural sakes'. Region is the second hierarchical level of administration, after the State's central administrative level. In law terms region and regionalizing regard two different political and administrative realities, at least in the EU understanding. *Regionalizing* could be:

(a) *political* or *State level* – e.g. in Spain and Italy;

(b) *incorporated* – where a unitary State results from other States' unification and those previously existing States prefer to keep their specific, e.g. the UK;

(c) *diversified* – on a given regional framework that might include, besides territorial and political criteria, others like language spoken and/or cultural criterion – e.g. in Belgium, previously of becoming a federal State;

(d) *administrative* (i.e. *classical*) – resulting from administrative decentralising that turn geographical regions into local territorial communities that perform certain levels of autonomy (administrative) – e.g. in France;

(e) *functional, through deconcentration* – State makes (delimitates) regions as territorial circumscriptions for its proper administration – e.g. in Greece;

(f) through *cooperation* – regions resulted from cooperation between local collectivities get equally institutionalized – e.g. in Romania (Popescu, 2006).

To be noted that none of the above individual procedures is perfect or perfectly satisfying and so compromises between different procedural types arise as inevitable in context. That is why, besides the above *becoming* criterium, the one of *presentation* might also result into three types of regions:

(1) *homogenous* regions are likely to express in such a way through criteria like: the *economic* criterion – e.g. similar individual incomes; one dominant economic sector –; the *geographical* criterion – e.g. common natural resources exploited; similar climate, topography; the *social and political* criteria – e.g. some „regional identity”, common historical development. Differences within the region of this type are seen as less significant;

(2) *nodal* regions – which are rather polarized and all interest for homogeneity or uniformity is minimal; regional cohesion, when existing, comes from interaction of internal flows, from also polarized relationships and interdependences around center that is usually dominant;

(3) *planning or programming* regions – that claim a specific unity, but it results rather from institutional and administrative framework and/or from some sustained development policies previously applied.

The EU's political bias for regional development consists in creation and perpetuity of the European identity. Actually, the „sustained development policy” expression is understood as a unitary set of measures addressed to *distinct regions, be they belonging to one country or a group of countries*, proper to get *adequately funded*. Several items here contribute, but including also candidate countries on this list of regional policies is relative recent fact. Usually, developing countries are viewed separately than the list of European and EU member countries. It was the European Council of 22 June, 1993, in Copenhagen that has extended the *Phare* type Programmes for candidate countries from national democratic institutions strengthening (Directorate of Foreign Affairs was responsible for) to directly supporting the EU extension and these countries joining it. Later on, in 1997 and 1999 these fundings

were even significantly increasing. The so called „Agenda 2000” became the turning point of making the Phare programmes focus on the whole institutional inventory of the EU joining by States. In other words, the EU itself was taking over the effort related to this strategy for the candidate countries. The last were going to restrict on procedural negotiations and on signing documents. These were called the, Copenhagen Criteria’, complied in a document signed in 1997, i.e. „Agenda 2000”, with the reform of the EU’s policies together with EU joining strategies of the candidate countries. Of which policies, the ones regarding regional topic area were included in Annex 3.

## **7. Conclusions about Euroregions**

This is an apart development of the EU’s regional policy. In 1998, at a meeting in Prague an EU Commission’s representative was expressing in such a sense, but significant was equally the circumstance of the Eastern European countries mobilized towards joining the EU. The *Euro-region* was coming to be defined as a *transborder territory with two or more State administrations involved in, whereas unifying tradition and culture concomitantly evolving, sometimes together with cooperation of local authorities*, as well. Look at the following Diagram for Romania.

*Tabel 1. Euroregions of Romania*

<b>Nr.</b>	<b>Euroregion</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>The other countries</b>
I	<i>Carpatica</i>	1993	Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia
II	<i>Dunărea-Criş-Mureş-Tisa</i>	1997	Hungary, Serbia
III	<i>Dunărea de Jos</i>	1997	Moldova, Ukraine
IV	<i>Prutul de Sus</i>	1997	Ukraine
V	<i>Giurgiu-Ruse</i>	2001	Bulgaria
VI	<i>Dunărea de Sud</i>	2001	Bulgaria
VII	<i>Dunărea Inferioară</i>	2001	Bulgaria
VIII	<i>Dunărea 21</i>	2002	Bulgaria, Serbia
IX	<i>Danubius</i>	2002	Bulgaria
X	<i>Siret-Prut-Nistru</i>	2002	Moldova
XI	<i>Dunărea de Mijloc-Portile de Fier</i>	2005	Bulgaria, Serbia

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