RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND SUB-REGIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE EUROPEAN NATION-STATE

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Contemporarily the 'nation-state' is facing challenges both from within itself by sub-national regions and from above, the European Union (EU). As power becomes more centralised under the EU, existing borders will become less significant and demands to control local matters will generally increase.[1] In this atmosphere local authorities feel that they can manage their affairs better than distant bureaucracies, either of national capitals or Brussels. They mostly believe that they can cope with issues like crime, drug trafficking and immigration better than the national authorities.[2]

From a functional perspective, the strengthening of sub-national regions was a response to overload in central government and the need to decentralise the delivery of public goods. From the perspective of democracy theory, it is argued that by reducing the distance between citizens and the central state, the conditions for participatory democracy are enhanced.[3]

Regional and local governments have started to play a role as partners of development and operate as one of the important actors in the European integration process. Especially regional elites are among the most active supporters of further integration in many areas of the Union.[4] On the other hand, regions have an important source of influence on European policy-

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[1] Steele, S. The Desire To Go It Alone. *Maclean's*. Vol. 105, No. 11. 03.16.1992.

[2] Newhouse, J. Europe's Rising Regionalism. *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 76, No. 1. New York. Jan/Feb 1997. p.67.

[3] Christiansen, T. Regionalism and Supranationalism in Western Europe. EUI Seminar paper, March 1992 in Laffan, B. *Nations and Regions in Western Europe*. Retrieved on February 6, 2001 on the http://www.ecsanet.org/conferences/2blattan.htm

[4] Leonardi, R. Cohesion in The European Community: Illusion or Reality?. *West European Politics*. Vol. 16, No. 4., October 1993. p. 514.

making because most European policies were implemented by them.[5] Also sub-national governments increasingly use the context of the EU to extend their powers within their nation-states.[6]

According to one point of view, if national governments can maintain their control over these processes, they may use them to strengthen their own power by ensuring that Community institutions will remain intergovernmental.[7] From another point of view, a new political structure is created in which nation-states may disappear in favour of a 'Europe of The Regions'.[8]

In some cases the growth of sub-national regional political consciousness within the nation-states has affected the structures of member states.[9] In some states, to accommodate to the decentralisation trends, national governments have to rearrange their political structures.

Some people see the enhancement of EU initiatives on behalf of the sub-national regions as the possible erosion of nation-state sovereignty. According to this point of view, Europe may provide an external support system for sub-national communities which try to escape from the control of their central government.[10] From the perspective of some sub-national authorities, generally there is no difference between responding to European or national legislation.[11] So they mostly see both of them as superior controlling bodies over themselves.

Consequently, with the introduction of a new level of governance into the centre-periphery relations within the nation-state, the new political structure can be generally defined as a 'triangular relationship of Europe'. This relationship

[5] Borzel, T. A. From Competitive Regionalism to Cooperative Federalism: The Europeanization of the Spanish State of The Autonomies. *Publius.* Vol. 30, No. 2. Philadelphia, Spring 2000. pp. 18-19.

[6] Guyomarch, A., Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. (1998). *France in the EU.* London: Macmillan Press. p. 190.

[7] Keating, M. (1995). Europeanism and Regionalism. In: Jones, B. & Keating, M. (eds.). *The European Union and the Regions.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. p. 10.

[8] Keating, M. Regional Autonomy in the Changing State Order: A Framework of Analysis. Regional Politics and Policy. 2/3 1992. In: Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism.* pp. 10-12.

[9] Laffan, B. Nations and Regions in Western Europe. Retrieved on February 6, 2001 on http://www.ecsanet.org/conferences/2blattan.htm

[10] Cardus, S. Identidad cultural, legitimidad politica e interes economic. In: Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism.* p. 8.

[11] John, P. The Europeanisation of Sub-National Governance. *Urban Studies,* Vol. 37, No. 5/6. Edinburgh, May 2000. p. 878.

includes the levels of EU, the nation-state and sub-national regions. The effects of EU and sub-national regions have increased in some nation-states and institutional linkages have begun to emerge between them.[12] This may be also defined as 'triangular politics'. The final structure of this relationship between these three levels can not be foreseen by now, it will continue its transformation process and can be understood better after some a time.

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND
THE SUB-NATIONAL REGIONS

At the beginning, the EC did not seem very important for sub-national regions, because it concentrated on few policy areas.[13] But as the integration process of the EU accelerates, the sub-national regions will have to be involved more in this process.

Sub-national regionalism has accelerated in Europe as a response to reassertions of cultural and historical identity and to pressure for democratization. In addition to these, the development of the EC has accelerated sub-national regionalism, with the effect of economic integration, because in the peripheral regions of Europe there are fears about the negative effects of the more integrated market by increasing the economic disparities among them.[14]

Especially from the 1980s, many of the legislative measures of the EU institutions have affected local and regional governments, like the changes in planning regimes, vocational and professional training, local transport, environment, trading standards, health and consumer protection.[15] For this reason, sub-national regions need to take information about these new measures while at the same time they are trying to influence these developments on behalf of themselves.

The sub-national regions have mostly started to become the institutions responsible for implementing the growing EU legislation, especially in fields

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[12] Allum, P. *State and Society in Western Europe*. Cambridge: Polity Press. 1995. p. 455.

[13] John, P. The Europeanisation of Sub-National Governance. pp. 878-879.

[14] Keating, M. The Continental Meso: Regions in the European Community. In: L.J. Sharpe (ed.), The Rise of Meso Government in Europe, Modern Politics Series, Vol. 32, London :SAGE Pub., 1993. pp. 296-297.

[15] John, P. The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance. p. 879.

like environmental protection, common standards and transport. They have thereby started to become more effective actors in European policy networks,[16] although they are mostly active in the implementation process of EU policies, rather than the decision-making process.

Sub-national regions have generally acted in two ways. One of them can be called rejectionist regionalism, which opposes European integration with the fear of further loss of democratic control and the superiority of market principles. Since the 1980s, the opposition of the sub-national regions has started to be transformed into more positive attitudes and engagement of them in the EU by different means. They have started to use the mechanisms of the EU on their behalf. The EU has been mostly started to be seen by them as a source of material support for economic development, especially through structural funds. From a political perspective, they have used Europe as a framework for the international projection of the region and, in some cases, as a source of support for regional cultures and languages.[17] So the sub-national regions of Europe have started to see European integration as providing a Pan-European roof under which they can assert their identity and extend their autonomy.[18]

The EU provides different alternatives of access through national governments, the Parliament and lobbying. But there is still a lack of institutions for representation of sub-national governments in the EU process.[19] In order to affect the decisions which are taken in Brussels, the sub-national regions have to improve their contacts with the EU.

On the other hand, the regional policy directorate of the Commission and sub-central authorities have promoted contacts to improve their information flow. They have a common interest in promoting contacts and exchange information. Some regional and local governments have tried to form direct links with the EU by opening offices in Brussels. Despite the opposition of national governments this kind of linkage has spread, which includes all the

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[16] Guyomarch, A. Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. France in the European Union, p. 190.

[17] Keating, M. The New Regionalism in Western Europe Territorial Restructuring and Political Change, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Pub., 1998. p. 163.

[18] Laffan, B. Nations and Regions in Western Europe. Retrieved on February, 06.2001 on http://www.ecsanet.org/conferences/2blattan.htm

[19] Keating & Hooghe, 1995 in Keating, M. Nations Against The State, -The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland , London: Macmillan Press, 1996. p. 225.

German länder, six French regions and two departments, some Italian regions, four Spanish regions and four British local authorities. The main aim of establishing these offices is to monitor developments in the Commission and put pressure on national governments.[20] They provide information for sub-national regions on upcoming initiatives. They also have a symbolic role in projecting regions in the European arena and in presenting them as participants in the policy process. On the other hand, they also provide information about regional views to Commission officials, who otherwise only depend on national governments for information. But these offices have been mostly effective when they work in co-operation with their national governments.[21]

Sub-national authorities do not simply set up offices for the amount of resources potentially available; instead of this the political factors are more effective.[22] The first office was opened in 1984. By December 1995, the total number reached more than 140 offices.[23] Some of these offices represent one region, some represent consortia of regions and some of them represent municipal governments.[24] These offices also inform regions about the availability of different kinds of Community funds. On the other hand, there has been a huge increase in the number of visits to Brussels by regional and local delegations for taking information and improving relations. Commission officials welcome the visits but state that they are ineffective in providing extra funds to regions, because these are given under rules and procedures.[25]

Sub-national regions are therefore very active in trying to influence EU policy-making through a network of contacts, lobbies and partnerships. This situation is also beneficial for the EU because it tries to find regional partners

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[20] Allum, P. State and Society in Western Europe. pp. 455-456.

[21] Keating, M. The New Regionalism in Western Europe. p. 170.

[22] John, P. The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance. p. 886.

[23] Hooghe, 1995. p.22; Scottish Enterprise, 1995. In: Charlie Jeffery, "Regional Information Offices in Brussels and Multi-Level Governance in the EU: A UK-German Comparison" in Charlie Jeffery(ed.), The Regional Dimension of the European Union- Towards a Third Level in Europe?, London: Frank Cass Pub. 1997. p. 183.

[24] Keating, M. & Hooghe, L. By-passing The Nation-State? Regions and The EU Policy Process", in Jeremy Richardson (ed.), European Union - Power and Policy Making, London: Routledge Press, 1996. pp. 221-222.

[25] Keating, M. "The Continental Meso: Regions in the European Community. p. 306.

for the formulation and implementation of its regional policies.[26] Most lobbying has concentrated on the Commission, with the formation of delegations and the establishment of offices in Brussels.[27] The Commission encourages lobbying by sub-national groups to obtain sources of information and to strengthen the *communautaire* spirit.[28] However, the Commission could not develop continuous direct links with all sub-national authorities because it has a small bureaucracy. For this reason, its main links are still with member states.[29]

On the other hand, if regional interests are more effectively integrated into the national policy-making system, they will be better dealt with in Brussels. They may also be more effective if they provide links with powerful sectoral interests.[30]

Generally there is not much exact evidence that sub-national activities have influenced EU decision-makers; rather, EU decision-makers have used the lobbies during implementation of these policies or to legitimate policies. On the other hand, sub-national authorities mostly have to follow the agenda of their nation-states. Sub-national influence can be seen when expert lobbies pass information to the Commission, so that it can manipulate the national government.[31]

On the other hand, the sub-national regions do not have common interests, because sub-national regionalisms differ in their character and their strength according to the conditions of different societies and the impact of national and international forces on them. It is not possible to explain all of them with a single model.[32] They differ in their population, area, economic capacity, cultural background, institutional structure, political capacity, strength of their business, social networks and civic cultures. Because of the differences among them, it is really hard for the sub-national regions to prepare a common policy to defend and improve

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[26] Hooghe and Keating, 1994. In: Keating, M. Nations Against The State. p. 51.

[27] Serignan, M. L'Evolution des relations entre la CEE et les Collectivites territoriales", Apres-demain, 314-15(1989), 4-7. In: Keating, M. Europeanism and Regionalism. p. 14.

[28] Keating, M. The Continental Meso: Regions in the European Community. p. 307.

[29] Anderson, J. Skeptical Refections of a 'Europe of the Regions': Britain, West Germany and the European Regional Development Fund. Paper to the American Political Science Association annual meeting, San Francisco, 1990 In: Keating, M. The Continental Meso: Regions in the European Community. p. 307.

[30] Keating M. & Hooghe, L. By-passing the nation-state? Regions and the EU policy process. pp. 220-222.

[31] John, P. The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance. pp. 887-888.

[32] Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism*. p. 9.

their position. In addition to these, completion of the internal market, monetary union and global capital mobility will probably increase interregional competition.[33]

We can generally classify the sub-national regions of the EU member states in four different categories: Group 1 involves regions with wide-ranging powers such as an elected regional parliament, with a right to levy taxes, budgetary and legislative powers. German länder and Belgian provinces can be given as examples of this group. Group 2 involves regions with advanced powers, such as an elected regional parliament, a limited right to levy taxes and limited budgetary powers. Spanish autonomous communities and Italian regions can be given as examples of this group. Group 3, involves regions with limited powers. French regions, Dutch provinces, Scotland and Wales can be given as examples of this group. Lastly, Group 4 involves regions with no powers, no elected regional parliament, no right to levy taxes, no budgetary and legislative power and all of its financial resources are transferred by central government. Greek nomoi, Portuguese planning regions, Irish and English counties can be given as examples of this group.[34]

The effectiveness of sub-national regions mostly depends on the quality of their institutional infrastructure and their ability to take action. Some sub-national regions only enforce legislation of the EU applicable to them, without being able to influence the formulation and implementation of relevant Community policies.[35]

Generally there are two main reactions of the sub-national regions by the EU. The first group sees European integration as an opportunity to escape from the authority of their nation-state. The second group of regions comprise those that adopt the 'internal colonialism' thesis and oppose Europe because they see it as a 'rich man's club'.[36]

In some sub-national regions, especially in the ones that can be defined as stateless nations, there are powerful autonomist or separatist movements which mostly see the EU as a way to by-pass the nation-state.[37] They think that accelerating direct relations with the EU will probably positively affect their autonomy.

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[33] Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism*. pp. 20-21.

[34] Wiehler F. & Stumm, T. *The Powers of Regional and Local Authorities and Their Role in the European Union*. p. 246.

[35] Ibid., p.251.

[36] Lafont. La Revolution Regşonaliste. In: John Loughlin. Europe of the Regions and the Federalization of Europe. *Publius*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Philadelphia, Fall 1996, p. 143.

[37] Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism*. p. 21

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (COR)

The Maastricht Treaty introduced the COR in 1992 as a consultative body to the Commission with the same status as the Economic and Social Committee. It came into existence in 1994.[38] With the COR, there is an official recognition of the sub-national territories.[39] But the COR is only a consultative body and does not have effective powers.

The setting up of the COR is an important change in the institutional architecture of the EU, because with the COR the representation of the sub-national level was permitted for the first time.[40] However, it is still distant from the ideals of some of the more radical regionalists, who want a regionally based second chamber of the EP.[41]

One of the main aims of establishing the COR was to strengthen economic and social cohesion of the member states. On the other hand, the COR contributes to making the European integration process more democratic and giving reality to European citizenship. It aims to work towards an ever closer EU of citizens. To achieve this aim, it organises conferences and seminars in the various regions of the member states.[42] Generally we can say that the COR acts as a spokesperson and gives information about the European institutions to the sub-national regions of Europe,[43] essaying to build a bridge between the EU institutions and its people.

The COR can issue opinions upon request or on its own initiative. But the Council and the Commission can ignore its comments. It does not have access to the European Court of Justice. Because of this, the COR has been dissatisfied with its role .[44]

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[38] Ibid.,p.15.

[39] Loughlin, J. Representing Regions in Europe: The Committee of the Regions. In: Charlie Jeffery (ed.). *The Regional Dimension of the European Union - Towards a Third Level in Europe?*. London: Frank Cass Pub. 1997. p. 163.

[40] Loughlin, J. Representing Regions in Europe: The Committee of the Regions. Ibid., p. 157.

[41] Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism*. p. 15.

[42] "The Committee of The Regions-Five Questions, Five Answers", European Union Committee of the Regions official website, Retrieved on January 4, 2001 on http://www.cor.eu.int/5q5a/5q_en_intro.html

[43] Website of the COR, "Bringing the Union Closer to the Public", Retrieved on April 15, 2001 on http://www.cor.eu.int/presentation/prxro100_en.htm

[44] Website of the COR, "Trends and Policy Issues", Retrieved on December 16, 2000 on http://www.du.edu/~kbording/pag8.htm

On the other hand, different member states define sub-national regions within themselves differently and they have different regional administrative arrangements. Moreover, there is the question of representing regional or local levels of government or both at the COR.[45] So the difficult question to answer is which kind of regions should be represented and how they can be selected. At Maastricht, it was decided that both regions and local authorities would be represented at the COR. The choice of who would represent the regions and local authorities was left to the national governments.[46]

Representation in the COR is based on population size. It has 222 members in total. Germany, France, the UK and Italy have 24 members in the COR each and Luxembourg has the smallest number, 6.[47] But numbers were changed with the eastern enlargement of 10 new member states in May 2004. These representatives have mainly two functions; to defend their interests in the EU policy-making process and secondly to inform their regions about all EU activities. They are independent . They stay in their regions, close to the citizens. Plenary sessions are held in Brussels five times a year. It may also meet on its own initiative.[48] By staying in their regions, its members have a chance to know what is going on in their regions.

On the other hand, the COR's status is only advisory although the Commission has to consult it about the following issues; the framework of EU policy on education, culture and public health, while defining guidelines concerning the establishment of trans-European networks, policy on economic and social cohesion and regulations which provide the coordination of the structural funds.[49] In addition to these, when the Council and the Parliament are drafting legislation or an action programme which has a regional aspect, they consult the COR and it asks one of its commissions to prepare a draft opinion.[50]

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[45] Newman, M. (1996). *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union*. New York: St. Martin's Press. p. 129.

[46] Loughlin, J. Representing Regions in Europe: The Committee of the Regions. p. 157.

[47] Krause, A. A Europe of Regions Becoming Reality. *Europe*. No. 335. April 1994. p. 22.

[48] "The Committee of The Regions-Five Questions, Five Answers", European Union Committee of the Regions official website, Retrieved on January 4, 2001 on http://www.cor.eu.int/5q5a/5q_en_intro.html

[49] Gray, C. The Committee of the Regions. In: Brouwer, Lintner and Newman, op.cit., p. 104. In: Newman, M. *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union*. p. 122.

[50] Website of the COR, "The Mandate of the COR", Retrieved on April 15, 2001 on http://www.cor.eu.int/presentation/prxo100_en.htm

Before the Amsterdam Treaty, the COR's advisory function was restricted. But today the COR's responsibilities include a wide range of areas: transport policy, guidelines of employment policy, incentives to promote co-operation between member states in the employment field , social provisions, implementing decisions concerning the European Social Fund, support measures in the field of general training and youth, cultural field, health sector, definition of guidelines for the construction and expansion of trans-European networks, definition of the objectives and general rules of the Structural Funds, setting up of the Cohesion Fund, implementing decisions in respect of the European Regional Development Fund and environment policy. [51]

The COR has eight commissions. These deal with regional policy, structural funds, economic and social cohesion, cross-border and inter-regional co-operation (commission 1); agricultural and rural development and fisheries (com.2), trans-European networks, transport and information society (com.3), urban issues, energy and environment (com.4), social policy, public health, consumer protection, research and tourism (com.5), employment, economic policy, single market, industry and SMEs (com.6), education, vocational training, culture, youth, sport and citizens' rights (com.7), and the commission for institutional affairs (com.8). These commissions examine documents issued by the Council, the Commission or the Parliament and prepare 'draft opinions'. These opinions have to be adopted by all the members during the plenary sessions. Then the draft becomes an 'opinion'. These opinions of the COR are forwarded to the Commission, the Council and the EP.[52]

So the COR reflects one of the institutional reactions to the ongoing processes of decentralisation.[53] It is an institutional indicator of increasing importance of sub-national regions within the EU.

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[51] "The Committee of The Regions-Five Questions, Five Answers", European Union Committee of the Regions official website, Retrieved on January 4, 2001 on http: //www.cor.eu.int/5q5a/5q_en_intro.html

[52] The Committee of The Regions-Five Questions, Five Answers", European Union Committee of the Regions official website, Retrieved on January 4, 2001 on http: //www.cor.eu.int/5q5a/5q_en_intro.html

[53] Hesse, J. J. & Wright, V. (eds.) (1996). *Federalizing Europe*. Oxford University Press. pp. 393-394.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT
SUB-NATIONAL REGIONS OF EUROPE

The greater permeability of political boundaries with the creation of the EU has led to increasing territorial contacts between related sub-national groups such as the Catalans of France and Spain, or the Celts of Brittany, Ireland and Great Britain, which helps to enlarge their field of action.[54] These sub-national regions compete for market share, investments and technology, on the other hand they try to provide opportunities for co-operation.[55] Co-operation between sub-national regions dates back to the early 1970s. The co-operation is motivated by the identification of common problems and interests.[56] The economic reasons for co-operation are search for investment, technology transfers and markets for their exports.[57]

Generally there are two kinds of co-operation among the sub-national regions of Europe. One of them is cross-regional European area agreements, which are mostly among geographically adjoined regions. The Atlantic arc, which includes twenty-two coastal regions in the EU, and the Saarland-Lorraine-Luxembourg-Trier/Westphalia Euro district can be given as examples of this kind of co-operation. Another is cross-regional motors of development agreements which are mostly among regions that have common interests or future prospects. The Four Motors agreement can be given as an example of this type, which includes the regions of Rhône-Alpes, Lombardy, Catalonia and Baden-Württemberg.[58] Wales also joined this initiative in 1990 but not as a full partner because at that time it did not have a regional assembly. Co-operation fields include economic co-operation, student exchange, environmental information, research results and technical transfer. In addition to these, the 'Four Motors' group has been to the forefront in the promotion of a 'Europe of

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[54] Safran, W. The French State and Ethnic Minority Cultures: Policy Dimensions and Problems. In: Thompson, R. J. & Rudolph, J. R. (eds.) (1989). *Ethnoterritorial Politics, Policy and the Western World*. Boulder: Lynee Rienner Pub. p. 119.

[55] Keating, M. Is There a Regional Level of Government in Europe?. In: Gales, P. Le & Lequesne, C. *Regions in Europe*. p. 25.

[56] Weyand, S. Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process. In: Jeffrey, C. (ed.). *The Regional Dimension of the European Union - Towards a Third Level in Europe*. pp. 166-167.

[57] Keating, M. *Is There a Regional Level of Government in Europe?*. p. 25 .

[58] Newman, M. *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union*. p. 115.

the Regions'.[59] The main idea was that the four regions would together become an engine for European growth.

Cross-border co-operation is more likely to further the integration process than co-operation between sub-national regions which are geographically far apart.[60] A lot of investment in large projects has been done at the regional level, mostly in co-operation with neighbouring regions.[61] On the other hand, in contrast to ad-hoc contacts between the sub-national regions, institutionalised, regular forms of co-operation are more advantageous in terms of continuity.[62]

Some regional organisations that try to influence the policy-making process of the EU are the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, the Association of European Frontier Regions, the Working Group of Traditional Industrial Regions and three Alpine groups. [63] The Atlantic Arc brings together the maritime regions of France, the UK, Portugal and Spain. Quartiers en Crise is an association of towns with inner city problems. There are some other sectoral organisations such as RETI (Régions Européennes de Technologie Industrielle).[64]

The International Union of Local Authorities and the Council of Communes and Regions of Europe have been closely associated with the Council of Europe, which they persuaded to establish a Permanent Conference of Local and Regional Authorities. In 1986 they opened a joint office to deal with the EC.[65] The main aim of the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe is the promotion of local democracy. It has adopted several charters and conventions on local self-government, transfrontier co-operation, participation of foreigners in local public life, regional languages, urban issues and young people. The Assembly of European Regions was founded in 1985. It played an important role especially in formulating a regional input to the negotiations leading to

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[59] Harvie, 1993. pp. 60-63. In: Laffan, B. Nations and Regions in Western Europe. Retrieved on February 6, 2001 on http://www.ecsanet.org/conferences/2blattan.htm

[60] Weyand, S. *Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process.* p. 180.

[61] Newhouse, J. Europe's Rising Regionalism. *Foreign Affairs.* Vol. 76, No. 1. New York. Jan/Feb 1997. p. 67.

[62] Weyand, S. *Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process.* p. 180.

[63] Keating, M. *The Continental Meso: Regions in the European Community.* p. 307.

[64] Guyomarch, A. Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. *France in the EU.* p. 212.

[65] Chauvet, J.-P. Participation des collcetivites territoriales aux decisions europeenes: Le Role des lobbies locaux et regionaux. Apres-demain, 314-15(1989), 9-12. In: Keating, M. *Europeanism and Regionalism.* p. 15.

the Maastricht Treaty. Its responsibility in institutional development has been taken over to some degree by the COR but it still plays a role in regional matters, especially in lobbying on policy issues. It has been weakened by its heterogeneous membership, particularly by the division between strong and weak regions.[66]

On the other hand, there are transnational networks which are based on common interests. These networks may have formal arrangements and take on the characteristics of a lobbying group. Other initiatives are based on functional interests like the MILAN network, which is based on motor interests. Not all of them are bottom-up networks which are sponsored by the Commission to connect together the participants in Community Initiatives, such as the RECITE (Regions and Cities in Europe) programme which was started in 1991. Some bottom-up networks are greatly influenced by the Commission, like the European Regions of Industrial Technology.[67] Another network among sub-national regions of Europe is Dionysos, which includes ten French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese wine-growing regions that organise the transfer of technology to the least-developed regions.[68]

Some functions of this kind of organisation are to help promote trade, to provide information for the Commission or for the EP, to help to set the agenda and have an input in new programmes. In addition to these, they collect information about current developments in the EU for their members.[69] Some people give important symbolic significance to inter-regional co-operations. But they accept that they face great difficulties in practice because of the different administrative systems in different states and they also compete for investment and markets.[70]

Important differences in economic potential between the sub-national regions may also have a negative effect on co-operation.[71] Moreover, if there has been limited solidarity between sub-national regions within the nation-states, there will probably be less between advantaged and disadvantaged regions of

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[66] Keating, M. *The New Regionalism in Western Europe.* pp. 178-179.

[67] John, P. *The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance.* pp. 886-887.

[68] Keating M. & Hooghe, L. *By-passing the nation-state? Regions and the EU policy process.* p. 226.

[69] Guyomarch, A. Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. *France in the EU.* p. 212.

[70] Keating, M. *Nations Against the State.* pp. 157-158.

[71] Weyand, S. *Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process.* p. 180.

different nation-states. It also seems that the wealthier regions have taken most of the benefits from inter-regional co-operation.[72]

As a general rule, cross-border and interregional co-operation positively affect further deepening of the integration process. But this is closely related to the national governments' willingness to transfer the necessary competencies to the authorities of the sub-national regions.[73]

The promotion of co-operation between the sub-national regions would also be in the interests of the EU, because acceptance of EU policy by EU citizens could be increased if EU initiatives helped sub-national regions to solve their problems autonomously, by cooperating with the other regions across the border.[74] With funding programmes like INTERREG or LEADER, the sub-national regions enter into partnership arrangements with their equivalents in other member states.[75]

As we can see, inter-regional co-operation could positively affect the idea of a 'Europe of Regions' and also a 'Europe of Citizens' in which "decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen" as stated in the Maastricht Treaty.[76]

CONCLUSION

The political structures of the member states of the EU are not similar, varying from centralised unitary states to federal states, and relations between sub-national regions and their central governments may differ according to the political and administrative structure of their nation-state.

Generally, there are two hypotheses about the possible future relationship between nation-states and the EU. One of them is that nation-states would adapt to the new challenges and would continue to control many areas of policy-making. The other is that European integration and sub-national regionalism would weaken nation-states both from above and below. This would lead to multi-level governance and even, for some, to a 'Europe of Regions'.[77] It implies that national institutions and powers will weaken under the growing power of

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[72] Newman, M. *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union*. pp. 133-134.

[73] Weyand, S. *Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration Process*. p. 180.

[74] Ibid., p.181.

[75] Guyomarch, A. Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. *France in the EU*. pp. 211-212.

[76] Weyand, S. *Inter-Regional Associations and the European Integration process*. p. 181.

[77] Guyomarch, A. Machin, H. & Ritchie, E. *France in the EU*. p. 190.

the EU and regions and cities would take their place, with direct access to the European policy-making process.[78]

So the idea of 'Europe of Regions', in its most radical understanding, implies the dissolution of the nation-state and most of the central government functions are started to be carried out by the EU and regional and local authorities. From a more flexible point of view, the regions should supplement nation-states in the EU decision-making process instead of replacing them. This point of view is sometimes defined as 'co-operative regionalism'.[79]

So we cannot simply expect a 'Europe of Regions' as a new political structure of Europe. But the intergovernmental vision of the EU is not sufficient either to explain the current political structure.[80] Sub-national regions are not mostly seen as alternatives to the nation-states. Moreover, sub-national regions rarely try to displace states or take over state functions.[81] But some of them want to replace the existing Union with a federation of regions and small nations, which is the policy of the many Basque nationalist groups. On the other hand, some sub-national regionalisms see European integration as a process that reduces the cost of their independence. The others, which are more pragmatic, see Europe as an arena in which their nationalist aspriations can be expressed and legitimated and they also try to influence the EU on available matters. The Catalan CİU party can be given as an example of this group, which has been very active in promoting a 'Europe of Regions'.[82]

So the notion of the 'Europe of Regions' still remains highly questionable for the foreseeable future. Another important question is whether a 'Europe of Regions' would assist in enhancing cohesion in Europe, or would strengthen or weaken solidarity within states and across states.[83] On the other hand, it still has a long way to go in winning support from EU governments, which try to defend their centralised government.[84] So the transformation of the EU, into a 'Europe

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[78] John, P. *The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance.* p. 882.

[79] Newman, M. *Democracy, Sovereignty and the European Union.* p. 117 .

[80] Keating, M. *Nations Against the State.* p. 51.

[81] Keating, M. *The New Regionalism in Western Europe.* p. 11.

[82] Ibid, pp. 163-164.

[83] Harvie, 1993. p. 72. In: B. Laffan. Nations and Regions in Western Europe. Retrieved on February 6, 2001 on http://www.ecsanet.org/conferences/2blattan.htm

[84] Krause, A. A Europe of Regions Becoming Reality. *Europe.* No. 335, April 1994. p. 22.

of Regions' still remains an utopia, but reflects the important trends towards decentralisation and Europeanisation.

On the other hand, continuation of the enlargement process makes the decision-making process more complex, because a greater number of states with greater diversities have to be accommodated. If each member state decentralises internally and regional representation becomes increasingly reflected in EU policy-making, it will be too hard for the EU to protect its cohesion.[85]

So we can say that the possibility of the idea of a 'Europe of Regions' does not seem possible in the foreseeable future, but the beginning of discussions about this idea shows that there has been an increase in the importance and influence of sub-national regions in Europe. According to Keating, "European politics is regionalized, regional politics is Europeanised, while national politics is both Europeanised and regionalised."[86]

The EU still seems to be dominated by nation-states, and sub-national regions follow to a large extent the agenda of the nation-states. A new Europe is emerging, that is neither a federal Europe, which is based on the notion of a 'Europe of Regions', nor an intergovernmental Europe, which is based on the primacy of the nation-state.[87] So the general structure of the EU has not been finalised yet. It is still going through an evolutionary process.

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[85] Newman, M. *Democracy, Sovereignty and The European Union.* p. 136.

[86] Keating, M. *Is There a Regional Level of Government in Europe?.* p. 25.

[87] Loughlin, J. *Europe of the Regions and the Federalization of Europe.* p. 153.