



# Yearbook

Decentralised Cooperation



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Within the framework of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme, and as a product of the work performed by the European Union – Latin America Observatory on local Decentralised Co-operation, as coordinated by the Barcelona Provincial Council and the Montevideo Municipal Government, we present this third edition of the Decentralised Co-operation Yearbook in which we put forward a few analyses on the reality of local decentralised co-operation and discuss matters that will be grounds for future work.

### 1. The URB-AL Programme

In its first two stages, the URB-AL Programme worked along the following main themes:

- *Exchange of experiences and work in local government thematic networks;*
- *Institutional support for local associations to help them achieve sustainable results;*
- *Direct involvement by participants in the planning, execution and financing stages of projects to ensure a greater participation in the projects.*

These three elements aimed to favour a project's direct impact on the planning and execution of long-term local public policies which benefit citizens in all thirteen thematic settings of the Programme.

During the first two stages of the programme, which involved a 64 million Euro subsidy from the European Commission, 188 regular projects were started, involving almost 600 local communities. Of these 600 communities, 31 benefited from European Commission subsidies of up to 800,000 Euros to finance the implementation of "good practices" collectively identified by participants during the exchange of experiences.

In July 2007, a conference took place in the city of Rosario on "Lessons and experiences arising from the URB-AL Programme -- Contributions of local and regional policies towards social and territorial cohesion", organized for the purpose of analysing the strengths and weaknesses of this teamwork. The meeting brought together over 150 participants from 90 local and regional governments in Europe and Latin America, ratifying the ever lasting interest in the Programme, its achievements and work practices.

### 2. THE ODC (Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation)

I should like to emphasize the work carried out by the Observatory's team in helping to shed light on the hitherto obscure world of local decentralised co-operation. In 2004, during the run-up to the Valparaíso Conference – the first conference consisting of local governments, organized within the framework of the URB-AL Programme and working towards the Guadalajara Summit – people became aware that both the number of actors and the amounts involved were significantly larger than imagined.

Just like the URB-AL Programme was a pioneer in terms of direct cooperation and the creation of networks between cities in the mid 90s, we believed it was essential for the Programme to focus more deeply on getting to know actors and their practices in local decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America.

Today, thanks to the work carried out by the ODC and other institutions which have concentrated on studying these processes, the dynamics and practices of this kind of co-operation are better and more widely known.

The Observatory was also commissioned to disseminate the URB-AL Programme's "good practices", and in particular its work methodology aimed to achieve sustainable results and impact through institutional support and direct participation of local governments. We still strongly believe that these are the sort of actions that allow a sustainable impact to be made on the planning and execution of local policies, when they respond to real local priorities.

### 3. The new URB-AL

As from 2008, a new stage of the URB-AL Programme which has been granted 50 million Euros to be used over the next 4 years, will seek to reinforce local and regional public policies, aimed at social and territorial cohesion.

The new URB-AL stage will be implemented within a new framework, which has the following characteristics:-

**New political priorities:** These priorities are adopted by governments in the EU and Latin America in their Statements of Heads of State arising from the last summits (Madrid, Guadalajara and Vienna). **Social cohesion** in particular, has become the chore of our cooperation (representing up to 40% of all the Commission's regional and bilateral co-operation with Latin America for the 2007-2013 period).

**New procedures:** These procedures are entered into force by REGULATION (EC) No 1905/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, dated 18 December 2006 which establishes a financing instrument for development cooperation, containing provisions applicable to all actors of the cooperation which is directly or indirectly funded by the European Commission.

As per the URB-AL Programme's Actions Agenda passed by the Committee of Member States on 26 September, 2007 and by the Commission on X December, 2007.

**The Objective** of the new Programme is to try to increase the degree of social cohesion in Latin America, both at local and regional levels.

**The specific objectives** are the following: to promote social cohesion processes and policies in a limited number of Latin-American territories and cities, which can subsequently be considered by other local governments in the region as a referential model for the making of local and territorial social cohesion policies.

**Actions:** the new programme finances projects of significant importance in cities and regions of Latin America which foster the consolidation of local and regional social cohesion public policies in the following fields:

-Local economic development (in particular, local policies which support the creation of employment and innovation);

-The covering of basic needs and services, particularly in the most disadvantaged groups or territories (access to education, health, sanitation);

- Citizen participation, particularly in youth and women, including favouring culture as a means of local identity and multicultural policies;

- Territorial cohesion, including transnational actions;

-The institutional capability of local and regional governments to reinforce their ability to act in creating and applying policies that reinforce social cohesion.

On behalf of the European Commission, I would like to thank all the members of the Observatory who, over the last three years in which we have worked together, have contributed to the URB-AL Programme, to the debate on local decentralised co-operation and its connection with social cohesion policies.

*Alejandra CAS GRANGE*  
Director for Latin America  
EuropeAid Office for Cooperation



I am pleased to welcome this third Yearbook which, in a way, confirms that when it comes to co-operation between Latin America and Europe, things have definitely changed. An air of sincerity and commitment is flowing through European and Latin American cultures, its cities, towns and people, favouring a more practical and closer co-operation. Local governments speak up and they do so through decentralised co-operation, which, thanks to its specific nature – and its increasing efficacy – evidences a significant turning point in terms of the relations between the different countries and regions in our respective areas.

The development of municipal diplomacy, exercised on the basis of equality, co-responsibility, and the building of common projects between partners who believe in partnership, has introduced a well-known and

essential policy into the processes of decentralised co-operation, taking them away from the vertical and highly hierarchized models so frequently seen in the past. From this point of view, we share an indispensable and determining value: local autonomy. Decentralised cooperation can only achieve positive results provided it is built upon strong, consolidated, deeply-rooted capable local governments who have the necessary resources to render quality services effectively, in other words, local governments who have effectively become active agents of sustainable development and democratic progress.

Solidary efforts of decentralised cooperation are favouring the creation of new areas for the construction of a fairer and more prosperous global society. In a globalized world, because communities in each country and region

are not isolated, they influence and depend on each other. For that reason the creation of spaces where citizens are brought together is highly valuable and timely, and thus effective in meeting the primary needs of citizen and rendering good public services as well.

To restore the role of local administrations in global development through the use of a key instrument such as local decentralised cooperation, requires nothing but the realization that they are also part of the State and are, therefore - it is important to underline - the nearest access citizens have to the State, an access approached when problems arise in a society that is keen to advance and improve its wellbeing and quality of life. Thus, we ask governments to view us as helpers instead of competitors. Because of our specialization, resources and powers, we, the local governments, with a certain degree of autonomy, are able to take responsibility for developing useful and suitable public policies, thus becoming a powerful and essential engine of change, progress and social cohesion.

Within this framework, the European Union - Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation has been efficiently analysing and disseminating what has been achieved by local and supra-local governments in our two areas. We needed a certain space where we could share the projects, thoughts, good practices, challenges and questions we face every day. In its short but prolific life, the Observatory has contributed to reinforce the very purpose of local decentralised cooperation as a strategic tool for mutual institutional strengthening between Latin America and the European Union. This reinforced purpose undoubtedly enables a new way of interaction between local governments and communities. It constitutes a new model grounded on reci-

procity, mutual interest and leadership of public administration and involvement of local actors. In this way, not only do we contribute to improving the social, economic and cultural reality of the territories we co-operate with, but also, and above all, we are setting the basis for these improvements to modify structures, by encouraging Government decentralisation, by improving the distribution of public resources and local funds and by strengthening local public activities.

Once again, the Yearbook provides an excellent and complete insight on the current state of affairs of decentralised cooperation between Latin America and the European Union. The idea is to assess our project and this municipal diplomacy which is determined to seek new referential frameworks and guidelines with which to strengthen economic development, social cohesion and environmental sustainability in our societies. I am positive that the contributions that appear in the following pages will prove to be extremely useful in achieving this objective.

*Celestino Corbacho*  
*President of Barcelona Provincial Council*





Decentralised co-operation has become a singular tool for weaving networks between cities and regions which can help bring about new stability. Local spaces have progressively become essential in order to level and compensate the accelerating speed of globalization and its implications, thereby contributing to the protection and development of the human dimension and also serving as building blocks in the construction process of social cohesion. Moreover, decentralised co-operation plays an important role when it comes to building up collaborative links, encouraging interaction between communities and the efficient use of short-term resources.

Simultaneously, interaction and co-

operation that are built-up by strengthening links and the setting of common goals are likely to turn into powerful elements for the creation of new stability and increasing levels of equality which result in the mutual benefit of actors. Joint development may be different although it must be simultaneous.

Among the most promising aspects in the current stage of globalization is the increase in joint development potentials. Cities and regions play leading roles in their effort to attain this goal thanks to their ability to establish associations, both at national and international levels and to enter programmatic networks that complement each others' capacities and objectives.

The same kinds of problems, of varying intensity and severity, arise throughout the different territories. Decentralised co-operation and networks contribute towards promoting social cohesion and the building of open societies, capacity-building that enables welfare and quality of life expectations for the populations when they interact with the world, developing values and spaces for coexistence and safety, and building competitive conditions within an increasingly complementary system

In this context, where the forces acting in different directions result in greater levels of imbalance and instability, we find it essential to progressively reinforce spaces for

co-operation that aim at joint-development. Thus, the tasks carried out by the Observatory in Decentralised Co-operation need to be regarded as a tool used to achieve this goal. The path followed has been important and the achievements made were significant, this indicates the need to multiply efforts in the same direction.

**Ricardo Ehrlich**  
*Mayor of the Montevideo Municipal Government*



## Introduction to the Yearbook 2007

I am pleased to introduce Yearbook 2007, a new edition of a publication that, year after year, presents the progress made by the EU – Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (ODC) in its study of the relations between sub-national governments in both regions, as well as leading articles on the subject.

Once again, this year the Yearbook provides interesting overviews on the co-operation phenomenon between local and regional governments of Latin America and the EU. These overviews let us learn more about the phenomenon and enable us to assess its entire potential. In this respect, it is worth mentioning Jean-Pierre Malé's article, which represents a significant contribution because it presents different dimensions to decentralised co-operation, as well as studies

of its tendencies. We have also tried to deepen the analysis in certain areas which we thought necessary.

Accordingly, we have focused our attention on decentralised co-operation in the regions or the role national governments play to foster co-operation between local and regional governments in their territory.

The Observatory prides itself in being able to count on the participation of extraordinary authors in the field of international co-operation and/or local government international relations, who are also experts in the topics they address. Likewise, the Observatory has made further efforts within its organization to prepare material to be used in the dissemination of knowledge gained over three years of work

in decentralised co-operation. Accordingly, we feel we need to make maximum use of the Observatory's privileged vantage point in order to assimilate such diverse sources of knowledge on the phenomenon we study.

The Yearbook's contents reflect areas of substantial progress made during this year's study on decentralised cooperation which have been ratified or consolidated at several meetings in which the Observatory participated as an exponent on the subject. Worthy of mention among these meetings is the II ODC Conference organized in Guatemala, which found clear progress by focusing on the essential elements that must be prioritized in relations between local and regional governments of Latin America and the EU. There are, however, other meetings which made valuable contribution to this study, one of which is the July 2007 conference that took place in Rosario which was called *"Lessons and experiences arising from the URB-AL Programme -- Contributions of local and regional policies towards social and territorial cohesion"*, and the "1st Forum of local communities of EU - Latin America and the Caribbean", which took place in November 2007 in Paris, France. All these meetings together with the Observatory's participation in countries such as Chile, Colombia, France or Belgium, and having been provided with new knowledge and experiences, some of which have been partly incorporated in this edition, demonstrate the high level of recognition achieved over the last three years of operation.

I would also like to mention that this publication appears in times of utmost importance for the Observatory's consolidation. In this third year we have successfully completed the initial stage for which we had set very ambitious goals. Among these goals

we underline the importance of counting on a general overview of a rich and complex phenomenon such as EU-Latin America decentralised co-operation, as well as creating valuable tools for the actors who participate in decentralised co-operation activities and to demonstrate the relevance of an observatory with characteristics such as ours. In this respect, we hope that all of our publications, as well as the services and information provided by us are found to be useful and interesting.

Upon the completion of the first stage, we are opening a new period with the intention of keeping the tools we have created updated and improving their impact. But at the same time, we are starting to provide new services and knowledge on the subject matter based on what we have learned so far, and this will undoubtedly contribute towards "Strengthening the Local EU-Latin America Partnership", this being the Observatory's latest goal.

Lastly, I would like to take advantage of this occasion to, once again, thank the members of the Observatory's Antennae who have contributed to this initiative and to thank the institutions and people who have made the publication of the this Yearbook 2007 possible, since without their contributions the Observatory's tasks would have been very difficult to carry out.

*Agustí Fernández de Losada*  
General Coordinator  
EU-Latin America Observatory  
on Decentralised Co-operation



This third edition of the EU - Latin America Decentralised Co-operation Yearbook is of utmost importance for the Observatory team since it rounds up the first cycle of the publications initially predicted within the framework of the European project which resulted in the creation of the Observatory. For this reason, we have respected the model we defined for the first edition of the yearbook, although we have introduced slight changes which could attract more interest and respond to new needs.

Thus, as in the last two years, the yearbook is still divided into the same five large sections, as follows: (1) analysis of local decentralised co-operation; (2) social cohesion and poverty reduction; (3) governance and institutional strengthening; (4) regional integration processes and globalization of local governments; and (5) case studies. The difference with the previous editions lies in section 4, where the “impact of local governments” was included – widening the scope of study in terms of the impact local governments have on the international scene.

Even though the structure of the Yearbook has remained mostly unchanged, the content of the articles present new aspects and reflect certain advances made in the study and clear chan-

<sup>1</sup> These sections are in keeping with the Observatory's strategic guidelines which correspond to the key spheres of EU - Latin America decentralised co-operation.

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ges in the Observatory's focuses of attention. In actual fact, while the last edition (Yearbook 2006) mainly concentrated on offering a general overview of decentralised co-operation practices by offering concrete examples, this new edition is largely devoted to presenting certain aspects concerning inter-municipal interaction and co-ordination, within the field of the decentralised co-operation phenomenon (DC). By way of example, the article on DC-supporting policies implemented by national governments, the article showing the potential inter-municipal alliances can offer for relations between local governments in Latin America and those in the EU, and the two articles focused on the regions, all deal with this specific concern.

Further details of the contents of each of the five sections to the Yearbook are presented as follows:-

### 1. Analysis of decentralised co-operation

The first section focuses on a general analysis of decentralised co-operation. Here, readers may expect to find articles that deal with the actors that take part in decentralised co-operation, the different methods used in their relations, the approaches applied or the most controversial aspects of this phenomenon. The first article: “Overview of current practices and tendencies in public decentralised co-operation” is part of the Observatory's

effort to raise awareness as regards the different views and strategic lines of action adopted by local and regional governments for the relations between each other, as well as the impact they aim to achieve. This article specifically concentrates on studying the evolution potential that local governments have for developing, rectifying and improving their DC actions.

We also present the three articles that focus on activities performed by the relevant inter-municipal actors in the field of decentralised co-operation, as are the regions and national governments who wish to support this field.

As to the regions, the ODC has sought to deepen their study given the technical and financial importance of their activities, not to mention their ever increasing political relevance in the international scene. With the purpose of offering a wide description of the roles regions play in decentralised co-operation, we have decided to prepare two articles: the first one deals with the context surrounding their actions, starting out with a country with extensive experience in this field; and the second article offers an extensive geographical panorama of co-operation relations defined by regions in the European Union and Latin America. In the first case, Gildo Baraldi, Director of Gildo Baraldi, Director of the Osservatorio Interregionale sulla Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (OICS), has prepared an article based on the Italian reality in terms of decentralised co-operation, a reality in which the regions in the country are clearly in the forefront. In the second case, Santiago Sarraute, on behalf of the ODC, analyses the nature of partnerships developed by regions in both geographical areas. For the analysis he uses the information available from the ODC database, which is also available from the Observatory's Resource Centre ([www.observ-ocd.org](http://www.observ-ocd.org)) to all those who are interested.

National governments, according to the ODC, are also outstanding actors for they play a role that is increasing in importance in terms of

their boosting decentralised co-operation of sub-national governments in their territory. Therefore, we have intended to prepare a first study of the characteristics of the policies applied by these public administrations and the tools they can offer. Jean Bossyut's article proposes a (theoretical) framework in which to analyse these policies, to be applied in the study of the European reality.

### 2. Social cohesion and poverty reduction

As widely stated at different forums throughout 2007, such as the Urb-AI conference which took place in Rosario and the EU-LAC Forum of Local Government Representatives which took place in Paris, decentralised co-operation constitutes a tool that can help local policies aimed at poverty reduction and (in a wider sense) furthering social cohesion.

It is precisely the municipalities and regions that must face new challenges in the building of local societies that are more integrated and cohered in order to overcome the difficulties that arise from, as yet, a scarce awareness of the role they play, both in terms of their authority and in the distribution of resources among the different levels of public administration. From this point of view, even though decentralised co-operation does not provide enough resources to mitigate structural shortages of local ministries of economy in Latin-American countries, it can be an important tool for encouraging exchanges and for initiating mutual actions that help the planning and implementation of public policies that can improve the current local situation.

In this Yearbook 2007 we have attempted to describe in detail how the Latin-American reality affects the chances of local governments there to take action in furthering social cohesion. In this respect, Víctori Godínez, a member of the Observatory's Advisory Committee provides a study showing how local action within this field is possible from economic growth, the labour market and tax systems in different Latin-American countries.





Within the general parameters of social cohesion, migratory movements are of special interest to the ODC since decentralised co-operation constitutes a great tool to help local governments face this phenomenon. With the purpose of visualizing this potential, we have tried to include an article that studies the effects of this phenomenon in local policies, starting out with a general view on the current migration movements that have the highest impact in Latin American and the EU. Mireia Belil and Albert Serra analyse the realities around these movements focusing particularly on the role played by local governments in the handling of this issue, on the underlying models they apply to approach this reality and on the possibilities provided by decentralised co-operation to boost any actions within this field.

### 3. Governance and institutional strengthening

The third section of the Yearbook examines the extent to which decentralised co-operation has had a material impact on improving the capacities of local institutions and, on a wider scale, on the technical and political strengthening of local and regional governments.

Firstly, we have tried to highlight how decentralised co-operation relations can be of sufficient importance to merit their inclusion on local agendas where they are frequently not given priority. In this respect, Elisabeth Maluquer and Laia Franco demonstrate the degree of influence projects can have on broadening institutional attitudes towards gender issues such as those projects arising from the “Woman and city” network (previously called: “Promotion of Women’s participation in local decisions” within the framework of the URB-AL programme).

Secondly, we have focused on the interest shown by association of municipalities or “inter-municipalities” due to their great potential to improve their local actions, as well as to provide

effective decentralised co-operation relations. In this respect, Nicolás Moret’s article describes the current state of affairs of this mechanism for local co-operation between the European Union and Latin America and presents information as to how it behaves when it comes to forming decentralised co-operation partnerships.

### 4. Regional integration processes and globalization of local governments

The participation of local and regional governments in the international arena is having multiple effects. The Observatory wished to highlight the strengthening of regional integration processes, for it is a phenomenon that implies new management practices in the supranational sphere. However, other phenomena are also important, as is the case of cross-border co-operation or the impact of local events on issues that are addressed by multilateral institutions.

The Observatory has published several articles and a case study on regional integration which have gone towards making the main integration initiatives carried out in the Europe - Latin America context more widely known. Once these initiatives have been identified, we now aim to carry our annual follow-ups of the effective capacity of organizations created by local governments with the purpose of having an impact on the management of regional integration in Latin America and the European Union. For this purpose, Javier Sánchez, a member of the ODC Advisory Board studies in detail the effects local issues have on EU decision-making authorities and he provides a common analytical matrix to assess the effects these issues can have on Mercosur and the Andean Network of Cities in their respective processes of regional integration. Furthermore, he provides a diagnosis on the current state of affairs of this issue, prepared with the collaboration of the technical secretaries to the above mentioned municipal networks.

Networks play a role of paramount importance in the dynamics of local government globalization. The reason for this is mainly due to the fact that it enables institutional strengthening among its members and it also influences national governments with multilateral entities. Therefore the Observatory believes in the importance of encouraging these kinds of initiatives within local and regional governments. In actual fact, creating and sustaining networks may be an interesting option to decentralised co-operation activities that are based on bilateral relations (city to city, or region to region). In this respect, Rainer Rothfuss, consultant for the “Cities for Mobility” network has compiled interesting information on four network examples. This enables him to assess the benefits of networks both for the entities that coordinate them and for their members, as well as to study the feasibility of a local government to create or maintain a network.

### 5. Case study

The last section in our publication examines the current state of affairs of decentralised co-operation in countries which are highly dynamic in this field. In this edition, the ODC has intended to highlight cases in Argentina and Spain, for they are highly dynamic countries in terms of decentralised co-operation in Latin America and the EU, respectively.

In fact, Argentina has been chosen as the Latin American country with the largest number of relations between local and regional governments of that territory and their European counterparts, according to the information gathered by the Observatory. We felt it was important to request the participation of the International Co-operation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Religious Affairs in order to prepare a study on this country for it possesses a holistic insight thanks to its intense activity aimed at globalizing local and regional governments

there. The article prepared by Ana Cafiero, Special Representative for International Co-operation Affairs of the above mentioned Ministry – contributes to learning about the institutional context of local governments as well as the governments in the provinces in Argentina, as it provides a wide sample of its activity in the field of decentralised co-operation.

Similarly, Spain, apart from being the European country that has developed the most decentralised co-operation relations with Latin America, is also the country whose local and regional governments invests the largest amount of resources in co-operation with development. In his article, Christian Freres demonstrates this great activity by reviewing the institutional context in the co-operation for development of local and regional governments in Spain, and the priorities that these establish, to finally arrive at a description of the direct co-operation that they developed

To sum up, we, the Observatory’s team wish this Yearbook to be enlightening and hope the readers can provide us with their opinions and suggestions on how to gradually raise awareness on decentralised co-operation.

**Jean-Pierre Malé**  
Executive Director of the EU - Latin America  
Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (ODC)





An abstract painting featuring bold, primary colors (red, blue, yellow, black, and white) in rectangular and square blocks. The composition is dense and geometric, with some areas showing texture from the brush or canvas. A small yellow triangle is at the top center, and a red square is below it. A large red rectangle is in the middle. A blue rectangle is to the left of the center. A yellow rectangle is on the far left. A black rectangle is at the bottom left. A red rectangle with a yellow triangle inside is at the bottom right.

## Analysis of local decentralised co-operation

*The first section focuses on a general analysis of decentralised co-operation. Here, readers may expect to find articles that deal with the actors that take part in decentralised co-operation, the different methods used in their relations, the approaches applied or the most controversial aspects of this phenomenon. The first article: "Overview of current practices and tendencies in public decentralised co-operation" is part of the Observatory's effort to raise awareness as regards the different views and strategic lines of action adopted by local and regional governments for the relations between each other, as well as the impact they aim to achieve. This article specifically concentrates on studying the evolution potential that local governments have for developing, rectifying and improving their DC actions.*

*We also present the three articles that focus on activities performed by the relevant inter-municipal actors in the field of decentralised co-operation, as are the regions and national governments who wish to support this field.*

*As to the regions, the ODC has sought to deepen their study given the technical and financial importance of their activities, not to mention their ever increasing political relevance in the international scene. With the purpose of offering a wide description of the roles regions play in decentralised co-operation, we have decided to prepare two articles: the first one deals with the context surrounding their actions, starting out with a country with extensive experience in this field; and the second article offers an extensive geographical panorama of co-operation relations defined by regions in the European Union and Latin America. In the first case, Gildo Baraldi, Director of Gildo Baraldi, Director of the Ossevatorio Interregionale sulla Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (OICS), has prepared an article based on the Italian reality in terms of decentralised co-operation, a reality in which the regions in the country are clearly in the forefront. In the second case, Santiago Sarraute, on behalf of the ODC, analyses the nature of partnerships developed by regions in both geographical areas. For the analysis he uses the information available from the ODC database, which is also available from the Observatory's Resource Centre ([www.observ-ocd.org](http://www.observ-ocd.org)) to all those who are interested.*

*National governments, according to the ODC, are also outstanding actors for they play a role that is increasing in importance in terms of their boosting decentralised co-operation of sub-national governments in their territory. Therefore, we have intended to prepare a first study of the characteristics of the policies applied by these public administrations and the tools they can offer. Jean Bossyut's article proposes a (theoretical) framework in which to analyse these policies, to be applied in the study of the European reality.*



Introduction





## Analysis of local decentralised co-operation

# General overview of current practices and tendencies in public decentralised co-operation

Jean-Pierre Malé. \*

### Key Words:

*Decentralised co-operation* |  
*Models of co-operation* |  
*European Union* |  
*Latin America* |  
*Co-operation for development* |

*Based on a general view of the experiences and practices already gathered and analysed by the Observatory, the first part of this article attempts to identify in a descriptive and necessarily schematic way, a few unifying topics or principal perspectives which guide the co-operation between European and Latin American local administrations.*

*The second part aims to record, for each of these unifying topics, the main forms or methods of co-operation and their potential impact, and to describe the development perceived for each one of these “models” of co-operation and the links established between them in order to enable local governments to gradually transform and improve their own co-operation.*

\* Executive Director of the European Union-Latin American Observatory on Local Decentralised Co-operation (malemj@diba.cat).

## 1. Introduction

This article is a revised and more detailed version of the document entitled “Decentralised co-operation: developing models for a greater impact”, by the same author. It was written within the framework of the preparatory stages for the II Annual Conference of the European Union-Latin American Observatory on Local Decentralised Co-operation held in Guatemala (May 2007). It is based on the research and analysis of the phenomenon of decentralised co-operation that the Observatory has been carrying out throughout its first three years of existence, with the contribution of its Antennae in Barcelona and Montevideo and the experts and collaborators who have actively participated in training, research, debate and dissemination activities.

Let us remember that the main interest of the Observatory is the decentralised co-operation (DC) between public administrations and, in particular, the initiatives which link municipal and regional public institutions in Europe and Latin America directly. We will refer to it as “public decentralised co-operation” (PDC) from now on. One of the Observatory’s greatest challenges is to get to know, describe and disseminate this kind of co-operation. This article fits precisely within this framework.

PDC is an emerging phenomenon with special characteristics, both in terms of its participants as well as the method of co-operation that can be established between them. The specificity and added value of this co-operation arise from the ability of PDC to bring together autonomous participants who are politically independent and technically competent in the field of local management and urban policies, and who also guarantee or are responsible for the social cohesion and development of their local societies.

We are actually referring to local or regio-

nal “governments” which can commit to certain initiatives, both by funding and executing them. By making use of their autonomy, these local administrations create or adopt certain forms of co-operation based on strategies and decisions of their own, which are often original and innovative.

Based on these premises, we understand that the world of PDC appears to be complex and varied; relationships between the participants depend mainly on the willingness and interest of each one of them, resulting in a wide variety of cases with specific forms that reflect particular situations and motives.

Likewise, acknowledging the fact that PDC needs to be analysed case by case in order to cover its entire diversity does not prevent us from identifying and classifying its most frequent manifestations, with the purpose of achieving a better understanding of the phenomenon and its potentialities.

The frequent repetition of certain practices by local governments allows us to refer to “models” of DC, with the understanding that the concept of model is not used in a normative sense (“models to be imitated”), but rather in its descriptive sense (that is, the main “kinds” that exist).

This effort to identify models or typical practices would always need to be seen from a highly dynamic and developmental perspective. Relations between local governments (LGs) may evolve and they usually undergo changes in time. It is therefore of interest to study both the initial characteristics of each one of the models of co-operation as well as its tendencies, and potentialities to evolve and mature.

Lastly, in the third part, we aim to provide as a conclusion certain elements for assessment and to record certain tendencies regarding the evolution of public development co-operation, in order to highlight possible guidelines for its quantitative and qualitative strengthening.



## 2. How do LGs co-operate? Current unifying topics of PDC

Based on the study of a representative sample (almost 1,200 bilateral relations between local and regional governments identified by the Observatory to date), relationships may be classified by “core subjects” or “unifying topics” which give substance to PDC interventions. The following are the five main core subjects:

- A) *humanitarian aid and assistance,*
- B) *support for the different local public policies and strengthening of institutions,*
- C) *economic development and promotion of activities within a territory,*
- D) *political pressure to modify general conditions in the exercise of local power, and*
- E) *cultural change and relationships with citizens.*

These could be understood as unifying “topics”, but this typology goes beyond that, since each one of these topics may be associated to a particular vision, a particular philosophy and a particular co-operation practice. This is the reason why we take these topics as starting points or initial references for our reflections, and, based on them, attempt to define a kind of descriptive “map” of the main existing practices.

Before continuing, it is important to point out that these guidelines are neither exclusive nor rigid. Topics may overlap or complement one another during the execution of PDC. As we may see, this same fluidity and flexibility make it possible for an institution

to evolve and change throughout time, based on its experience and the specific context.

One of the main objectives of this article is to highlight the ability of these topics to evolve and transform themselves, thus providing LGs with useful tools so that, when starting out from a certain point, and inspired by existing experiences, they can improve, broaden or diversify their co-operation.

## 3 How do LGs co-operate? Forms, methods and impact

With the purpose of providing a general view of PDC between the European Union and Latin America, we intend to describe in detail each one of the above mentioned topics, pointing out their possibilities for having a significant impact, and estimating the evolution of their forms and methods.

### 3.1.TOPIC A]: Humanitarian aid and assistance

*In this first unifying theme emphasis is made on emergency situations and problems of poverty. The main idea was for co-operation to actually have a direct impact on the material conditions of certain population sectors which are often regarded as vulnerable or outcasts.*

## Presentation

The conjunction of certain claims or motivations by the two participants in the relationship determines the kind of link between them, at least in its initial stage. If there is a correlation between the expectations of each one of them, a relationship that reflects this situation is built that is based on a common reference or horizon. In order that the fight against poverty and the humanitarian assistance aspects are at the core of PDC, a particular claim by the LG in the south (in this case: obtaining external resources to solve their most urgent social problems) needs to converge with the outlook of an LG in the north (which regards its co-operative activities as providing assistance and transferring resources for the fight against poverty).

When these conditions are in place, attention is focused on the flow of assistance, and we can say that the relationship is built around a CORE THEME which, in this case, is the transfer of material resources.

## Main prevailing forms

This material assistance can take different forms, and in general a certain evolution is noticed that we can detail as follows:

1| Very often the first step is a kind of “indirect” co-operation, through an NGO for Development (NGOD).

Strictly speaking, this kind of co-operation would not be included in what we usually refer to as PDC, since it does not ensure the establishment of a direct relationship between the two public institutions. However,

we mention this kind of co-operation as it is widespread within the European municipalities that have begun to co-operate according to the traditional logic for North-South co-operation, and because it is still a significant reality in certain countries.

In this case, the LG in the North provides funding for co-operation activities which are mainly of assistance, and which have been proposed and will be carried out by the NGOD. It does not need to establish a direct relationship with the LG in the South, neither does the municipal body need to get involved in anything other than funding, often using the NGOD’s method for project proposals.

2| A different version of the previous model – which, from our point of view is more interesting due to its content and potential for positive development – can be defined when this model of co-operation focused on the fight against poverty is carried out by means of direct co-operation. Local administrations implement co-operation projects intended to alleviate specific social situations, although in this case, they themselves promote these projects, moving from the role of mere funders to perform a role in which they become active agents of co-operation.

3| When this relationship becomes official and it occurs in the mid and long-term, it may be channeled by means of a multiannual co-operation agreement or town-twinning. In certain countries of Central America for example, town-twinning is often a means for direct co-operation. Thus, many of these agreements focus on covering the basic needs of the population in the South, although this formula may also be useful when applied to other forms of co-operation not specifically focused on the fight against poverty.<sup>1</sup>

1 | We will not address the history of town-twinning agreements here, many of which are based on political solidarity, particularly in Nicaragua, Cuba, El Salvador, etc.



4|In certain cases, town-twinning agreements can bring in the support of different local organisations (such as schools, hospitals, companies, universities, etc.) apart from their own institutional potentialities, all of which foster a broader relationship which could be described as: “from local society to local society”.

5| Finally, these town-twinning agreements sometimes develop towards a form of town-twinning network of European cities paired with a municipality in the South, or, vice-versa, towards an informal network of cities in the South that are twinned with a single European municipality.

### Impact and limitations of this form of co-operation

The aim of PDC is to have an impact on poor or vulnerable sectors of the population. This transfer of funds is justified by the material conditions of certain population sectors (due to poverty, social exclusion phenomena, natural disasters). In general, co-operation is expected to have an impact on or materialise in the immediate improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable groups, or those below the poverty line. These actions often include direct assistance to the population, access to basic services (water, housing, health care, etc.), building or restoration of social infrastructure, small lines of credit, etc.

Therefore, we aim to achieve a well defined impact. However, the real potentiality of PDC to have a meaningful impact on poverty through these kinds of initiatives that are aimed directly at target-populations is debatable. In order to estimate the possible impact of the-

se kinds of initiatives we need to bear in mind that the resources that the LG of the North may assign to co-operation, are rapidly surpassed by the needs of the different communities in the population. In addition, these governments cannot cover the needs in an effective way, following public plans for the universal and sustainable protection of social needs. As a result, they can only perform limited activities of a palliative or symbolic nature, which may, in turn, introduce inequalities in the coverage of social services.

### Additional Comments

This first guideline on decentralised co-operation is rather widespread in Europe, since it is the one that most easily allows the association of NGOs and citizens with the work done by local governments, bearing in mind that public opinion is usually very anxious to see tangible results, even when they are limited and not easily sustainable. It is also of a symbolic nature, based on an expression of material solidarity that aims to increase the feasibility, in this case, of a relationship between citizens.

Likewise, this first “model” of public decentralised co-operation also raises several questions and is a controversial issue amongst the LGs that have implemented it.

Indeed, in the case of indirect co-operation through an NGOD, a local institution is substituted by private agents. The LGs of the North provide public funding to support and foster these participants, instead of strengthening institutions and improving local governance. Thus, it is very difficult to guarantee the sustainability of these activities, particularly when the LG is not involved or committed to them.

As to direct co-operation which focuses on raising funds, certain Latin American LGs present legitimate claims to their European counterparts, although we believe that in some cases, they reflect a lack of experience in the field of co-operation. When they first contact foreign participants, Latin American LG claims tend to be rather vague, thus showing that they are not aware of what they can expect from the PDC, and that they are unable to distinguish between decentralised co-operation and bilateral co-operation at the national level or multilateral co-operation. In our opinion, the problem with this position is that a simple request for funding from northern municipalities does not value their specificity and the added value of their co-operation.

Lastly, with reference to the kind of relationship that is established, it is worthwhile mentioning that, when the main concern is co-operation for development in its most classical aspect, this co-operation is generated in a single direction, since the flow of resources constitutes the main element in the relationship, and this applies both to indirect co-operation through an NGOD and to direct co-operation. At best, a direct relationship is established between local governments in Europe and Latin America, although it is always based on an asymmetric donor-receiver pattern.

### Prospects for development and quality improvement

Among the forms of co-operation we have mentioned, direct co-operation between local institutions offers more prospects for development. It has the advantage that, in time, it could lead to other forms of co-operation since both institutions are directly involved,

so they can review their initial approach in the light of their results, taking into account the maturity and expertise acquired in this field.

Upon facing the above mentioned limitations, the participants can take their relationship further in three directions:

- Firstly, there is a progressive awareness of the importance of strengthening the competence of the institutions in Latin America, of designing and executing their own policies for the fight against poverty and for social cohesion, instead of performing specific activities from the LGs in Europe.

- Secondly, it is evident that for the fight against poverty to be realistic and sustainable, it needs to focus on access to employment, the fostering of activities and the improvement of income, which in turn implies encouraging and supporting economic growth at the local and territorial level.

- Thirdly, this first model of co-operation, which enables groups and associations in Latin America to make direct contact with those in Europe, may give rise to a common interest in deepening learning and cultural and political exchange, favouring these aspects rather than remaining in the field of assistance, which has often been the starting point of the relationship.

Thus we can perceive the possibility of the participants, following a rather natural and logical evolution, gradually making progress towards topic B (local public policies) or towards topics D (economic and territorial development) or E (cultural change and relationships with citizens).

### 3.2. TOPIC B): Support for local public policies and strengthening of institutions

*In this second unifying theme emphasis is made on the support to the different local public policies - aiming to achieve a greater impact on the overall population through these policies – an on the general strengthening of local institutions, both by improving their technical skills and their political consolidation.*

#### Presentation

Going beyond the vision of immediate assistance to vulnerable communities, many LGs have become aware that the fight against poverty and integral development at the local level do not depend so much on the specific activities directly promoted by co-operation, but more importantly on the public policies the local government is able to promote and carry out.

Under these conditions, co-operation no longer focuses on covering the most urgent social needs in a direct way. Instead, it tends towards the improvement and consolidation of local public policies in each one of the sectors involved – with its emphasis on the social sphere. Co-operation aims to support local governments in order to reinforce their potentiality to provide basic public services (water, housing, education, health, etc.) and, more generally speaking, to support those sectors where LGs are known to either have recognised competence or to act in order to respond

to the pressures and demands of the population. Thus, co-operation becomes a means of enabling local governments to face the existing challenges in a more effective way.

As an example, we may mention the support the PDC may provide in order to apply social cohesion policies at a local level. Integral social cohesion policies by local governments need to aim at providing the population with greater access to social services, employment, decent and non-exclusive housing, the best possible safety, ensuring that there is no discrimination against any sector, that citizenship is consolidated and that people feel they belong to a community, etc. All of this can be achieved through a series of public policies ranging from urbanism to culture, covering social sectors and the promotion of economic development, and leading to wide-ranging potential co-operation between LGs.

In its initial stage, interventions based on this TOPIC usually concentrate on a certain area (education, youth, gender, environment, etc.). After a certain period the determining factors and more general limitations that curtail the effectiveness of the relevant specific policy become evident. For instance, deficiencies can be detected in the following areas: in the information systems, in strategic planning, in the organizational patterns, in the operational management of the local institution, in the mechanisms applied to obtain resources, in the training of personnel or in the local government's ability to get the different local agents involved. In this case we are dealing with transversal and structural aspects that affect each and every one of the local policies, and require a different kind of co-operation, going beyond departmental or sectorial boundaries.

Thus, co-operation may gradually move towards an integral institutional strengthening, which shows in a way that

there is more interest in supporting local institutions than in applying certain sectorial policies.

The general strengthening of a local institution may be interpreted from a strictly technical and organizational point of view (strengthening the abilities of local institutions in the field of strategic planning, objective-led management, human resources management, tax collection and local tax authority, etc.) and/or from a more political and strategic point of view (strengthening local democracy, inter-relationships between the different social and economic participants, forms of participation and agreement, transparency and accountability, etc).

Besides, we are more confident that, for both parties, the PDC's main target must be the mutual strengthening of the institutions that are part of the local governments, and this is to be achieved through this specific relationship, establishing privileged bonds and alliances between similar local institutions.

Mutual strengthening is necessary and, in certain cases, essential, as in the following cases:

- it guarantees actions are continuous and sustainable;
- it can be the grounds for building, managing and assessing local public policies,
- it is basic for improving the quality of democracy and the integration of the different participants,
- it reflects the desire to create and reinforce a local public space which takes into account the rest of the world, by means of agreements and alliances between local governments.

#### Main methods currently applied

The main methods used within the framework of this topic for the support of local public policies and institutional strengthening may be summarized as follows, beginning with those that are more immediate, and moving on towards more complex and developed forms:

##### 1. "Vertical" bilateral relationships focused on material support to institutions in the South.

Many times, during the initial stage of a relationship between cities in the North and South, the strengthening of the institution in the South consists of providing it with materials, equipment or buildings. In other words, attention is focused on transferring material resources. This form of relationship has been referred to as a kind of "container-co-operation" due to the fact that it consists mainly of sending ambulances, rubbish collection lorries, computers, etc.

##### 2. "Vertical" bilateral relationships focused on transmitting learning and techniques from North to South

Once they have overcome the above vision, most LGs in the North adopt the transmission of know-how as their line of development, trusting that the experience they have gained by managing local problems may be transmitted to their partners in the South, in each of the sectors. This transmission usually takes place between institutions, between officials in similar positions (city to city, region to region), although it can also take place between associations of municipalities. This vision materializes in terms of technical assistance, training and/or advice, which the government in the North offers to its counterpart in the South.

3. “Horizontal” bilateral relations based on exchange and reciprocity. Current tendencies, inspired by the logic of the international projection of cities, go beyond the classic North-South vision. We can mention various cases where the two institutions involved state their wish to achieve exchanges based on equality. In this case they deliberately seek a symmetrical relationship, since they appreciate that it undoubtedly leads to mutual growth, to their openness to new systems of organization and different cultural contexts, thus producing a richer learning experience for both sides.

4. These horizontal relationships may be even broader when they are established within the framework of actual local government networks, which are especially founded with the purpose of favouring learning, the exchange of experiences and, in certain cases, the accomplishment of projects in common. These are themed networks focused on issues that are directly within the local governments’ field of action and competent authority. Some of them have been created and continue to be autonomous, and do not receive financial aid from any national or multilateral programmes. In this respect, the most remarkable example is that of the 13 networks established within the framework of the Urb-AL Programme, covering various sectorial issues and the integral strengthening of institutions.

In all of the above mentioned situations, the principal beneficiary in this kind of co-operation is the local or regional institution in the South – or the two institutions (in the North and in the South) if the relationship established is reciprocal. This line of development places the transfer – or the exchange – of material resources (provision of material and equipments, infrastructure, etc.) and/or non-material re-

sources (training, transmission of experiences, empowerment, etc) at the core of the relationship between the institutions, in order that the sectorial policies carried out by the municipal or regional administrations are more effective and help strengthen the relevant institutions, both on the technical side - such as the quality of governance – and in terms of strengthening local democracy.

Apart from these forms of co-operation that involve the active participation of LGs in the North and South, we can also mention the programmes for the support of local administrations which are carried out by the multilateral and bilateral co-operation initiatives of the various countries. The people involved in these relationships are becoming more aware that the transformations taking place in the various countries, together with the pressures exerted by social problems locally, suggest the need for a strengthening of the Administrations<sup>1</sup> at this level. It is worth mentioning that these programmes are not part of the PDC, although they represent a reality that needs to be taken into account, as they have consequences for and interfere with this kind of co-operation. It is important for Latin American governments to clearly distinguish between, on the one hand, programmes for decentralisation and technical assistance for LGs performed by the main participants, and, on the other, the direct relationships established autonomously with LGs that can provide direct experience, and their institutional and political support

### Impact and limitations of this kind of co-operation

As regards the strengthening of institutions, as well as in the sphere of support to local policies, the potential for influence

that PDCs have is significant in spite of its limited economic resources, as it is acting within its competence and is unique in terms of the provision of knowledge, experience, etc. in specific situations.

In this line of development, PDCs really are a privileged device for mutual strengthening of local governments. Their scale and common practices allow them to be operational and effective in this specific field. Moreover, these practices have a broadening effect, since by strengthening institutional capabilities they can extend and improve local public policies.

The limits of this kind of intervention arise from the existing difficulties in overcoming the simple pattern of city to city bilateral relations and in being able to respond to the same problems on a larger scale. Undoubtedly, other forms of co-operation that can provide a more generalized effectiveness are needed to meet the global needs of local administrations – within a single country or an entire continent.

### Additional comments

This model of co-operation is advantageous since it can influence the creation of capabilities and not the direct coverage of needs from the North. This action can have more positive effects in the mid-term when facing poverty and all the problems created by the deficiencies detected when carrying out consistent public policies.

Besides, this model of co-operation clearly acknowledges that the LG in the South is politically and operatively responsible for the situation of the population, and thus it tends

to support this participant and not those of the private sector. This represents definite progress in terms of sustainability and strengthening of public spaces.

We need to bear in mind that it can continue to constitute a transmission of knowledge or systems from the north in one direction only, with the possibility of clashing in many cases with the difficulties of “exporting” models to other social and economically diverse contexts. In some cases this limited approach may be justified. In other contexts it may seem to be detached from reality, as, for instance, with large Latin American cities that have more resources and experience than their European counterparts.

### Prospects for evolution and quality improvement

This kind of co-operation should gradually reduce certain aspects of unilateral transmission of resources and technology, developing towards a more balanced model. Reciprocity, based on mutual interest, will definitely favour institutional strengthening by means of two institutions which regard themselves as equals and learn from common experiences.

For this purpose, LGs in Latin America should avoid taking an exclusively “demanding” role, and reflect on what they can “offer” their European partners.

The model of co-operation that focuses on institutional strengthening, institution by institution, may subsequently develop towards broader forms of intervention directed to a group of local governments.<sup>2</sup> It can also aim to influence general elements that hinder or obstruct the technical and political strengthening of LGs (refer to Topic D: political pressure).

2 | In this case, municipal official may be called to act as consultants, experts or trainers in the programmes that the national governments or the multilateral bodies design in order to reinforce the local technical capacities.

3 | For instance, the foundation of a School of Local Public Administration to train municipal and regional technical staff and officials elected, or the preparation of manuals and guides to be used for the implementation of local actions.



### 3.3. Topic C]: Local and territorial economic development

*In this third unifying theme emphasis is made on local economic progress, and the main idea is to actually have an impact on activities concerning production, on the social and economic agents, and on territorial aspects.*

#### Presentation

This topic can combine two complementary perspectives: work integration and the fight against unemployment, often referred to by municipal governments, and economic promotion and territorial development, often fostered by supramunicipal territorial governments or associations of municipalities (districts, metropolitan areas, etc.)

At the municipal level, there are concerns regarding the living conditions of certain sectors and their economic and social integration, which lead local governments to intervene in order to guarantee better access to the labour market. This means, for instance, greater employment prospects when unemployment levels are high or upon the existence of exclusion or limiting factors in labour terms. Consequently, many local governments get involved in the implementation of certain measures and information systems to be applied in the local labour market, vocational guidance services, work integration support, negotiation with employing companies, etc.

Access to employment is considered the real target of local social policies and one of the local government's challenges. The role

played by these local bodies is essential and dynamic, both for promoting and encouraging economic ventures or boosting local initiatives by multiple participants.

This line of work arising from municipalities interrelates with and complements the perspectives for economic co-operation between territories, that are created when two areas, counties or regions get together to defend joint interests, to promote certain production activities, to introduce technological innovations or to improve marketing conditions of the products manufactured in their territories.

Decentralized co-operation is often based on this logic, which we could refer to as “co-development”, understanding this term as the joint and interdependent efforts for development by two territories (not as the intervention of groups of immigrants in co-operation activities).

Many competent participants who are experienced in this field - mainly regional governments and urban metropoli that have started to carry out specific actions in terms of economic promotion, attraction of investments, job creation, marketing of local products, promotion of tourism or productive activities, participation in industrial relocations, etc. – show that there is great concern for local development as a focal point of PDC relations.

This topic can also be developed by medium sized municipalities – particularly by local governments that gradually become aware that the fight against poverty forces them to intervene in this field – or from the intermunicipal sphere, arising from sources of work, the natural regions or areas of similar activities or monoculture, which need to stimulate and promote the activities which are basic for economic and social balance in their territory

#### Main methods currently applied

1) Certain bilateral relations, from municipality to municipality or, more often, from region to region, focus on economic development, promoting the flow of information regarding development conditions, the exchange of planning methods, the fostering of productive activities, territorial management and, in many cases, projects for productive development, with potential interactions between European and Latin American partners.

2) Together with these bilateral relations – which are executed by means of specific projects or town-twinning agreements that have developed towards this kind of project -we need to point out the creation and subsequent strengthening of local government networks that are based on common interests to be defended or on similar initial situations. This has been a common practice in Europe (network of suburban areas, association of textile producing areas, Arco Latino local and regional governments, etc.) and it could expand further within the framework of decentralised co-operation between the European Union and Latin America.

3) Furthermore, interesting experiences of “multilateral” relations between groups of municipalities have arisen, based on geographical proximity, which imply a sense of belonging to the same space or territory. This is the case of DC activities that are carried out from an intermunicipal or county perspective to contribute to the design and implementation of strategic plans in a group of municipalities or in a particular area in Latin America.

<sup>4</sup> | An example of this is the Madrid-Madrid Alliance, which involves the participation of the Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid, the Federación de Municipios de Madrid (Association of Municipalities of Madrid), 22 Spanish municipalities, the INIFOM in Nicaragua and other nine Nicaraguan municipalities.

We can also mention the experiences of certain municipal associations in France, which are now becoming known, especially in the Southern Cone; or the co-operation systems at the regional level that are coordinated between regions and municipalities, developed by certain regions in Italy. This kind of DC favours co-operation between local governments according to their geographical situation. Territorial proximity and the consciousness of belonging to a common reality (employment area, economic region, etc.) constitutes the variable that brings together and determines these collaborations, both in the North as well as in the South.

The logic of territorial development – which often leads to intermunicipal initiatives – determines the need to prepare plans for institutional co-ordination at all levels, that include negotiation and compromise processes with other local agents, without their being limited to NGODs. Thus, we can say that PDC changes from a city to city vision to a territory to territory vision.<sup>4</sup>

#### Impact and limitations of this kind of co-operation

Within this topic, the first objective is to boost the productive network and create long-lasting jobs, by promoting activities and encouraging the creation of companies, etc. However, apart from improving certain material effects, the aim is to improve the quality of co-operation, in terms of the negotiating capacity and interrelation between economic and social participants, raising awareness so that they can take responsibility for the social and economic future of a territory. For this purpose, actions taken within this topic usually involve local economic and social agents, and



this constitutes a singular and specific characteristic of this kind of co-operation.

The lack of or the limited formally recognized competent authority of local governments, the lack of public-private discussions, the financial limitations, etc. are the obstacles which limit the influence of PDCs in this field.

As we have already mentioned, with regard to the fight against poverty, the resources that LGs in the North can assign to co-operation are scarce. For this reason, we cannot expect LGs to develop large production or marketing projects on their own. We need to bear in mind that the specific role of LGs is not the direct promotion of production activities, but rather the fostering and boosting of the production network (companies, production cooperatives, groups of producers, etc.) and the social network.

Within this framework, and in order to enable LGs to carry out these activities, the role of the PDC may be a determining factor. The objectives are:

- to transmit or share the experience of LGs in terms of economic promotion, assistance for the creation of companies, incentives for production activities, etc.<sup>3</sup>

- to train local technical staff<sup>5</sup>

- to design and encourage projects of common interest to the two territories

- to connect the economic agents in both cities or regions.

<sup>3</sup> | Various DC programmes are dedicated to implementing networks of local development agents, for instance, in the Metropolitan Area of San Salvador.

<sup>6</sup> | It is reasonable to believe that Europeans have more experience in the field of municipalities. European LGs have gradually taken a more participating role and currently act as local development promoters, something new for them in the European context. For this reason, they are willing to support local development processes that are encouraged by the local and territorial governments in Latin America.

<sup>7</sup> | There have been many experiences of co-operation in the sphere of production, such as the introduction of cattle breeds, the development of vineyards for wine production, and the spread of aquaculture at French-Brazilian meetings.

## Additional information

The role of the local administrations in terms of local development is still ongoing.<sup>4</sup> In Latin American countries, regional and municipal competent authority in this field is limited, and it varies depending on the country. Moreover, there are certain difficulties for the implementation of European Union-Latin American DC given the existing asymmetries, and the progress of “territorial” co-operation is rather slow. If local administrations manage to overcome these obstacles, PDC will actually have a positive impact since the European LGs can share their experience as promoting agents that boost the economic growth of their territory.

Besides, this space for co-operation also offers very interesting features, and it can avoid being a one-way relationship, from donor to receiver, since it offers fields of activity that are based on common interests and reciprocity.<sup>7</sup>

## Prospects for evolution and quality improvement

Starting from co-operation practices that are based on local development, we can mention different lines of development:

1) Within this same topic, a gradual evolution from the classical view of the one-way transmission of knowledge and techniques, towards the design and proposal of mutual interest activities will take place, thus contributing to an advance towards a more specific vision of partnership (aiming at integral local development, including social and cultural aspects).

2) Concerns for local development sometimes lead to better identification of the deficiencies or inexperience that local and regional administrations in the South have on these issues – they have rarely been associated with the design and implementation of regional and national strategies. Consequently, there are some cases that involve relationships that develop towards institutional strengthening (Topic B), or that combine these issues with local development.

3) This topic also allows for innovative improvement in the discussions that arise with the economic and social agents, with the purpose of facing jointly the challenges that globalization represents to local social and economic networks.

4) The above may also result in a gradual increase in political pressure for the role of local governments as regards development to be more widely recognized, thus constituting a link with topic D analyzed below.

## 3.4. TOPIC D]: Global activities and joint political pressure

*In this fourth unifying theme emphasis is made on the need to modify the general conditions (degree of autonomy, competence, funding, etc) that usually restrict local entities. The idea is to actually have an impact on national governments and the legislative bodies for them to acknowledge this situation and for them to regard local governments as relevant actors in the field of social cohesion policies and economic and territorial development.*

## Presentation

Local governments that are involved in city-to-city, or region-to-region relationships have a clear perception of the influence or impact caused by their individual actions, and experience directly the effects and consequences of the bilateral relationships they develop. They are able to assess the transformations achieved at this level and the improvements in local conditions.

A series of bilateral relationships can jointly represent a more global phenomenon that, due to its very size, may have an impact on a wider framework of reference. When we recognize that town-twinning agreements originated after World War II between French and German cities definitely contributed to the building of a new Europe, we clearly understand that the accumulation of specific cases results in a global transformation that surpasses the “micro”, case by case, perception. Even though we need to understand the individual motivations and perceptions of the participants, there is more to understanding the political phenomenon represented by PDC and its potential impact.

From the moment we underline this global dimension of PDC, and its ability to influence certain spheres or decision levels beyond the basic local level, LGs can create and implement other forms or methods of intervention that transcend the “traditional” bilateral relationship from local institution to local institution.

Local administrations at the supramunicipal level are probably in the best position to take this step, since they have a more global vision of the DC phenomenon and its political and institutional implications. They can propose multi-level actions aiming to influence the national and regional agendas, and thus have an impact on all local governments and on the exercise of local power – and they can offer municipalities a more coherent action framework.

On the other hand, local and regional governments, as organizations of political representation, can take a position vis-à-vis events that go beyond their territory or their condition of strictly local institutions. Problems such as climate change, world peace, economic imbalances, or inequality between men and women, are just a few of the issues they are concerned with. Such political positioning may influence certain public policies to be implemented, both at a local and a national level.

### Main methods currently applied

The topic which combines global actions and political pressure is only just emerging, with good prospects for the future. PDC participants pave the way in a not well known field that provokes different questions, such as the relations that need to be established between the concept of decentralised co-operation and the wider sphere of global diplomacy as a whole. We will not attempt to clearly define these fields, although we will definitely deal with the ways decentralised co-operation activities may lead LGs to widen their perspectives and consider acting in a different way.

A few pioneer local institutions have begun to take action in this field in different ways, by using the following strategies:

1. Creating and fostering forums and/or spaces for dialogue, national or regional discussions, bringing together government divisions at different levels, political parties, social and economic agents, NGOs, social groups, etc. As an example, we can mention the European Union-Latin American Forum of Local Governments, held for the first time in Paris, in November, 2007, or the CONFEDELCA.

2. Creating instruments to encourage reflection and research in this field, as for example, the Institute for Local Development of Central America (IDELCA), founded to support

state decentralization processes and to strengthen local authority.

3. Searching for new ways to provide a space where local powers can be heard and achieve a growing representation in the European integration institutions (Committee of Regions, Eurocities networks, Metropolis, etc.) or in Latin American regional integration institutions (Andean Cities Network, Mercocities, etc.).

4. Lobby actions, strengthening of associations that represent local governments (UCLG, CEMR, FLACMA, etc.) and promotion of municipalism.

5. Participation in campaigns on global topics in order to raise awareness and work for municipal diplomacy (peace, the environment, etc.).

### Impact and limitations of this kind of co-operation

These kinds of actions seek, in the first place, to attain a favourable transformation of local governments in each country, especially in terms of the distribution of public resources, competence or power relationships between central government and local governments. These requested changes are part of the general claim for a greater decentralization of the State. The general objective is for local governments to improve their areas of competence and to assign financial resources, so that they can exercise local power and apply their development strategies. Likewise, we may mention the need for regulation and consolidation of public functions to ensure continuity of local policies and of decentralised co-operation efforts in order to strengthen them.

Secondly, this topic aims to contribute to a more significant presence and representation

of the local world in the system of public decision-making, with the intention that it is represented formally – at least at the consulting stage – within the decision-making bodies, and in the forums and platforms where debates arise and decisions affecting the local world are made.

It is also the intention to influence all national and regional policies, taking into account the opinions of local responsible agents, so that national and regional agendas that do not normally take into account the problems of every day local life and of the proximity of citizens, are modified accordingly.

This kind of co-operation may also, by means of *lobbying* actions or political pressure on public opinion, have an impact beyond national levels and refer to global development conditions (peace, environment, etc.)

There is more to joint action with other governments than the “corporate” interests they represent as local institutions. In fact, there are other areas of common interest, for instance, environmental problems (through networks such as ICLEI or the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development) and the promotion of peace (as is the case of the “*Mayors for Peace*” network that fights for the abolition of nuclear weapons), where LGs are starting to take action.

As we have already mentioned, this topic seeks to influence national governments, the elected representatives, centres of power and opinion makers, multilateral bodies, associations of municipalities and local governments, representatives of the civil society, etc.

We can say that the area of influence aimed at is no longer local or territorial but rather national and international and, in certain cases, global.

### Impact and limitations of this kind of co-operation

The impact of this kind of co-operation does not depend automatically on the amounts invested, but on the potentially attainable political impact.

In this respect, without significant financial resources but with a strong political will, PDC can contribute to the process of change in the different countries, and it can also play a determining role in the creation of spaces for dialogue with multiple participants, among other situations.

### Additional information

In our opinion, the fact that local governments become aware that PDC is not limited to the bilateral relations a municipality or region may establish with its counterpart is significant in order to make progress towards a more global level of intervention. This level could, in turn, represent a means to influence political processes that have consequences in local life, intending to modify structural conditions that limit and restrain local governments.

### Prospects for evolution and quality improvement

Political pressure is an emerging topic that needs to be reinforced gradually, both by increasing the number of local governments involved in this process, and by building a discourse that clearly explains the reasons why local governments cannot limit their action to establishing bilateral relations, but must implement other forms of action.

From this perspective, the challenge is represented by the need to progressively structure a phenomenon such as decentralised co-operation, that is atomized and has multiple

forms. This assumes that primary local participants share this structural and integral vision, which enables them to overcome their limited vision on their own immediate interests.

### 3.5. TOPIC E]: Cultural change and relationships with citizens

*In this fifth and last unifying theme emphasis is made on cultural changes and on the chances of causing shift mentalities and representations through Public Decentralized Co-operation. The idea is to actually have an impact on achieving better trained and open-minded citizens, who know more about the state of international affairs, who are more aware of cultural diversity and participate more in campaigns that aim to achieve global changes.*

## Presentation

The knowledge citizens have of the international reality and of living conditions of different peoples is one of the determining factors which can favour global transformations. PDC relations represent a chance to open a window on the world by means of interaction between citizens and cultural expressions. It means that the different peoples can learn about reality and progressively modify their attitudes through direct interaction between groups and individuals.

Migrations and massive geographical movements of people who come from different cultures and socio-economic contexts

have also encouraged, within PDC, the development of this form of action. In Europe, groups of immigrants often exert pressure to set up relations with their countries of origin and they actively participate in the strengthening of these relations.

## Main methods currently applied

1. Cultural exchange is the most widespread method, channeled by relationships between cities and between regions.

These culture-oriented bilateral relations – especially town-twinning agreements – have usually fostered the active participation of local groups and representatives<sup>5</sup> of the citizens. Indeed, multiple town-twinning agreements have been led by citizen committees supported by municipal governments. This has in turn favoured the direct participation of educational or health institutions, neighbourhood associations, groups of university students, school children and other local groups.

Among the most common practices in this field, we find the direct interrelation between individual citizens or groups of citizens (trips, supportive stays, etc.), as well as all sorts of cultural exchange programmes such as the organization of activities to offer a panorama of citizenship reality and/or its cultural expressions.<sup>6</sup>

In a further practice that arises from those mentioned above, the local governments involved introduce the potential global influence their PDC relations can have, in order to apply them to specific policies. This usually happens in schools, where in some cases, new activities are organized through these relationships.<sup>7</sup>

2. These bilateral relations are the starting point for the creation of city networks

that focus on cultural exchange and common activities. For example, we can mention the Interlocal network, which brings together municipalities in Europe and Latin America, and seeks to deepen the role of culture in the integral development of people.

3. New original methods of “co-development” are also being sought, such as associating the countries of origin and destination of immigrants, going beyond the repetition of formulas for bilateral projects based on humanitarian assistance.

## Impact and limitations of this kind of co-operation

This kind of co-operation aims to influence the whole population or citizenship. Likewise, the emphasis is on the effects of culture in terms of identity, open-mindedness, and personal and social transformations, rather than on material needs and benefits.

It intends to bring peoples with different cultures together, and to transform the stereotypes or social representations that tend to build barriers between the different groups. In turn, cultural actions influence the reinforcement of basic group identity and, at the same time, favour an intercultural dialogue that is based on specific situations.

In this field, co-operation is without doubt a privileged vector for the change intended, since it offers and puts within reach of the

population in the cities that have direct contact with other worlds, that it is vital for the development of culture and the transformation of mentalities.

## 4. Final comments on the evolution of DC models

*After going over the global phenomenon of PDC, we deem it convenient to underline that the evolutions detected suggest not only visible changes in forms and methods, but also significant changes in the role of the different participants involved in the co-operation, deepening and progressive broadening of citizen participation, and in agreements with other participants. Lastly, as a conclusion of this brief description of PDC practices, the following findings are worth mentioning:*

A. PDC is a complex and highly dynamic phenomenon.

Based on the autonomy of LGs, PDC appears to be a complex phenomenon that adopts different forms and constantly evolves. We have offered a certain model typology, which can somehow reflect the phenomenon’s rich nature, although these models are far from being rigid or unrelated. We were able to prove the dynamic nature of PDC and its potentiality for giving rise to internal changes, and its growing capacity to influence the general context.

B. Each local government is capable of improving and developing its DC

<sup>8</sup> | Several town-twinning experiences in Nicaragua prove the potentiality of this kind of co-operation. They involve municipalities with very different cultures and languages such as Belgium, Germany, United Kingdom, Holland or Austria.

<sup>9</sup> | For instance, within the framework of town-twinning between Fougères and Somoto, which started in 1986, every two years the city of Fougères organizes the “land and peace” festival, an initiative that seeks the promotion of peace by directly involving children and youths in Fougères. Twenty youngsters from Nicaragua and cities in different continents are invited to participate in it.

<sup>10</sup> | Students from a municipality in Guatemala exchange photographs and information about their every day life with students in one municipality in the centre of Europe.





As we have seen, each participant lives through and assimilates his own experiences, and then evolves. By analyzing the five topics of PDC, we have seen the development capacity of each prevailing model, as well as the local government's latent potential for evolving from one model to another. Under this viewpoint, this article aims to reveal the significant scope of action that local governments have to improve the quality and intensity of their co-operation.

C. There have been qualitative leaps (noticeable changes) in the methods applied for co-operation.

We have seen that PDC relations have been traditionally established from city to city or from region to region, "bilateral" relations being the main figure between counterparts. In the evolution of the practices we have analyzed, at least two meaningful changes that represent true "qualitative jumps" and which contribute to the transformation of PDC stand out.

Firstly, we introduced and developed the figure of multipolar relations between cities and regions, following a pattern of networks, based on several concerns (territorial proximity, common thematic interests, similar characteristics, common interests to be defended, etc.). This formula has broadened the possibilities for contact and exchange between local governments and has favoured relations that treat the different participants as equals. This is, undoubtedly, an important tool to make progress towards horizontal and more reciprocal relations.

Secondly, we have seen that, apart from obtaining simple exchanges between local governments, the aim is to try to influence the overall situation and the structural conditions which limit both local autonomy and the

exercise of local power in each country to respond to the growing demands of the citizens. This, in turn, has resulted in the need for other kinds of intervention, that are more global and political, and for dealing with other kinds of participants.

D. Local governments widen their scope of competent authority and take up a leading role in co-operation.

A further aspect we wish to point out is the fact that it is not possible to think of PDC without the existence of a clear political will by the local governments, with regard to establishing direct links and to co-operate with one another. As long as it mainly involves the transferring of resources and human assistance, it can be done indirectly, through NGODs or associations and "supportive" groups. However, when co-operation follows other lines of development, such as economic growth, local public policies and *lobbying* actions, the role of the local government is a key one.

In fact, in all cases, local governments have played a leading role in certain fields and functions that until not long ago were alien and unknown to them. Consequently, new learning needs to be developed, so that they can carry out these actions and build new structures. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the gradual move towards professionalism and structuring of the international relations and co-operation departments, within the organizational chart of regional and local governments.

E. Local governments tend to develop a strategy that involves greater citizenship participation and the activation of and interrelations between local participants.

Another tendency that is revealed is that the more LGs deepen and improve

their co-operation, the more actively they participate and the better the quality of their participation. If we focus on the perspective that understands co-operation as the transfer of resources towards the most vulnerable groups, participation is often limited to trying to involve beneficiaries in managing the assistance. However, if co-operation focuses on local economic development and on local public policies, the active participation of economic and social agents becomes essential, not in terms of their receiving assistance or being the beneficiaries of these actions, but rather as participants in municipal and regional development. Lastly, when we work at the level of strengthening institutions and joint political pressure, it is the entire organization and

functioning of local democracy that counts, and this can be improved by an active PDC.

F. We are making progress towards multi-level forms of governance

Throughout these different forms of development we move forward towards richer and more complex forms of governance, based on negotiations by different participants, and at different levels. In effect, when local concerns are included within a wider territorial vision, or when local participants come into contact with the state or multilateral institutions, original experiences of public/private agreements and coordination between institutions come into being.

*Lastly, we will briefly list some of the emerging phenomena and future tendencies, which are advisable to follow and encourage:*

- By aiming to improve the material conditions of certain underprivileged communities, we gradually achieve a broader impact on local institutions and the general conditions in the exercise of power in each country.*
- By attempting to materially or technically reinforce local administration, we make progress towards local democracies and citizen participation and we advance towards strengthening public spaces and local political actors.*
- By establishing co-operation between cities we advance towards co-operation between territories, which involve a great many economic and social actors and enable the local governments to act as the promoter of development and to encourage agreement between economic and social agents.*
- By strengthening local power at the "micro" level in each municipality, we make progress towards the gradual construction of instruments for the representation, defense and promotion of municipalism at international level.*
- By adopting a North-South bilateral position, we make progress towards the creation of horizontal models, which enable their participants to be equal and capable of establishing more reciprocal relations.*





## Analysis of local decentralised co-operation



# A panorama of italian decentralised co-operation towards latin america and the caribbean: vital role of the different regions

Gildo Baraldi. \*

### KEY WORDS

Decentralised co-operation |  
Regions |  
co-operation for development |  
paradiplomacy |  
decentralization |

*In 2006, the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (ODC) published in its Decentralised Co-operation Yearbook a superb and thorough analysis called “The case of Italian decentralised co-operation towards Latin America”, written by Marina Izzo and Andrea Stoccherio, two researchers from the Centro Estudios de Política Internacional (CeSPI) (Centre for the Study of International Politics). Despite its significant development, during the past year Italian decentralised co-operation still evidences the features described in the above mentioned article. Thus, we recommend reading this analysis, and in order to avoid being repetitive, we will now concentrate on presenting a general view of Italian decentralised co-operation, which is led by its regions, and current problems it undergoes. In this respect, we will focus on co-operation with Latin America and the Caribbean, where one can observe the development in the region and in areas where, over recent years, significant efforts have been made.*

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### 1. Local autonomies of Italy

Italy is divided into 20 different administrative regions, one of which is Trentino Alto Adige, which is formed by two autonomous provinces (Trento and Bolzano), which have the same authority as any region. The regions and autonomous provinces are rather different in terms of size and population, ranging from almost 9 million inhabitants in Lombardy, to a little over 100,000 inhabitants in the Aosta Valley.

Each region is divided into one or more provinces, and each province is in turn divided into several Municipalities: all in all, provinces add up to 100 and municipalities amount to over 8,000.

The parliaments (Councils) and governments (Boards) of each region, province and municipality are directly elected by the citizens who live in the territory.

Regions also have legislative powers on issues within their jurisdiction, while provinces and municipalities (referred to as “local bodies” when considered together) only possess administrative power over the territory itself.

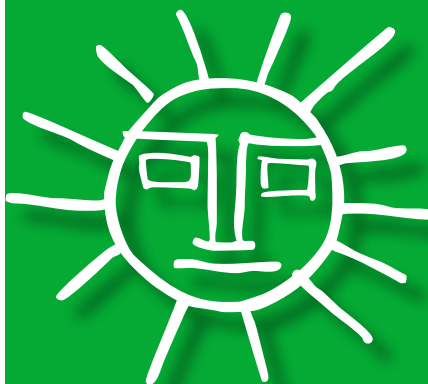
After the reform of the Constitution in 2001, Italy became a semi-federal State. Such was the reform that the region were recognized to have “full” autonomy, limited only by the principles provided for in the Constitution. This full self-governing power has an impact on the regions’ legislative autonomy: the State passes laws concerning only 17 matters, while regions can pass laws on topics (called “matters of shared legislation”) that are not exclusively reserved for the State, in compliance with the subsidiary principle. Among these shared matters are international relations and

relations with the European Union (EU), as well as foreign trade. As we will see below in this article, co-operation in the international sphere is still controversial.

### 2. What is decentralised co-operation?

The action of international co-operation carried out by local and regional self-governments is “Decentralised co-operation”. In Italy, this is a rather recent phenomenon which is growing fast, supplementing the actions carried out by State, national and international institutions and NGOs. Decentralised co-operation does not intend to be an alternative form of co-operation, but rather be complementary and subsidiary to other forms of co-operation.

In fact, Italian territorial autonomies have no jurisdiction in matters concerning foreign policy, neither is international solidarity formally recognized as one of its “missions”. Regions and local bodies need to promote the full social, cultural, economic and environmental development of their communities. Therefore their actions need to be based on demands that arise in their territories, although in a global world these cannot be limited to only those having an impact inside its borders. It is necessary for them to support territorial economic internationalisation, to promote (cultural and social, apart from economic) exchanges, to integrate immigrants (by setting immigration levels according to the demand for labour in our territories and by favouring immigrant employment in their own country of origin, with the purpose of reducing immigration under desperate circumstances), to support the communities of Italian emigrants (who tend to feel more identified with their country of original than with an abstract national identity), to disseminate cultural diversity and education for development and to back their own civil society’s interest in international solidarity.



The nature of decentralised co-operation is defined in response to these needs. Therefore, it does not appear as a new form of co-operation for development, but as an innovative and subsidiary method that complements national and international initiatives to handle foreign relations in the form of global partnerships between territories. Moreover, the fact that Act n.131/03 applied under the amended Title V of the Italian Constitution provides that “the autonomous regions and provinces (...) may enter into agreements with other territorial bodies belonging to other countries, with the purpose of favouring economic, social and cultural development” is no coincidence, and it further reads that “they may, enter into agreements with other countries, aiming to execute and apply international agreements (...) or agreements involving technical or administrative matters, or those that deal with programmes, with the purpose of favouring their economic, social and cultural development” (Article 6)

Decentralised co-operation is based on reciprocity and mutual interest. It is not only co-operation for development, or a means to support processes of territorial internationalisation, and it is neither focused on just improving immigration flows (thus strengthening the so called “call” component, very useful in Italy and other countries of origin, and providing populations with stability and therefore avoiding the “escape” effect), or only focused on our emigrating communities being valued and supported in other countries. Decentralised co-operation is at the crossroads of the above mentioned issues and much more; it builds up international partnerships between all active forces in both territories.

Decentralised co-operation, due to its nature and institutional position, is the capability of territorial governments to establish agree-

ements based on reciprocal advantages with their partners in other countries, so that the strong areas in one territory can complement and surpass the weaknesses in another. Territorial administrations have the task of designing, co-ordinating and directing the agreement, although they cannot execute it directly. The execution is left to the active entities in both territories, who are summoned for its planning and implementation.

Territorial entities or subjects, when not necessarily involved in these interventions, evidence several typologies: public and private, favourable or not. They range from those entities that have specific jurisdiction concerning co-operation, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to those that are more relevant in the sphere of internationalisation, such as the small and medium sized companies (SMEs), co-operative societies, credit institutions, and other institutional entities such as local entities in the territory and its implementing bodies, the immigrant-organized Communities, other entities such as training or educational centres, Universities, social organizations, search centres, etc.

### 3. Historical origin and development of decentralised co-operation in Italy

Some local governments in Italy started acting in the field of international co-operation in the 60s during the last century. As an example, let us mention the case of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, which in those days initiated an intense co-operation project in the North of Mozambique, with the purpose of working for territorial development and governance of the so called “zones set free” by the Frelimo. From then on, several local autonomies in Italy promoted and provided

financial aid for ONG actions in the territory. In 1987, when the current national law on co-operation for development was passed, almost all regions<sup>1</sup> participated in the debate for a regional law on international co-operation.

However, it was not until the last decade of the 20th century that decentralised co-operation turned into a consolidated phenomenon in Italy. This massive phenomenon was triggered by the wars in the Balkans: first the conflict between Serbs, Croatsians, then it was the war between Serbs, Croatsians and Muslims in Bosnia, then came the massive exodus in Albania, after the fall of Enver Hoxa’s regime, and last it was the international war against Serbia, led by Kosovo and the assistance to Kosovan refugees in Albania. The great human and social suffering as well as the economic ruin caused by these occurrences not far from Italian borders forced several municipalities, provinces and regions to take emergency measures and actions of solidarity, reconstruction and co-operation in that area.

Though Italian decentralised co-operation in this initial form failed to show the characteristics described in the previous paragraph, it did, however, evolved to acquire the full and current attributes of international relations between local autonomies.

This historical origin, the availability of consistent funding by the European Union and a specific national law,<sup>2</sup> the need to maintain the area in harmony, to manage immigrations flows and control sea and land border crossings, all contribute to still regard the Balkans as a priority in Italian decentralised co-operation, and where a large part of these actions are concentrated.

A second priority in the Mediterranean (North of Africa and Middle East) Basin has continually been established for similar reasons: availability of community and national financing that are different from those provided by local autonomies, curbing instability and conflict in the area (especially in the Lebanon and Palestine), increase in immigration, harmony in the area, geographical proximity and close economic and transport ties.

Over the past three years, as we will see later on, the interest of Italian regions in Latin America and the Caribbean grew significantly. There are various reasons for this: the continuous presence of the Italian community in those countries; similar and complementary political, administrative, economic, social and cultural structures; a leading role of SMEs and their clusters in the economy; the presence of reliable and trustworthy institutions who are approachable, who form decentralised cooperation partnerships for co-development between the territories where decentralised co-operation (DC) is based.

The Balkans, the Mediterranean Basin, Latin America, are all priority areas formed by medium developing countries, but exclude the poorest areas, whereas the “Millennium Goals”, by contrast, are mainly directed towards the fight against poverty. It would be possible to think that Italian DC, founded upon solidarity, has abandoned this ethical priority. In actual fact, this is not true. Above all, a relatively high income per capita is the result of an arithmetic operation that ignores the differences between the rich and the poor and the existence of extremely poor sectors and social exclusion in those countries. Secondly, partnerships for development cannot be initiated by means of direct relations with local

<sup>1</sup> | This law seems to be outdated and since 1996 the Italian Congress has been trying to amend it, although this has not been possible yet.

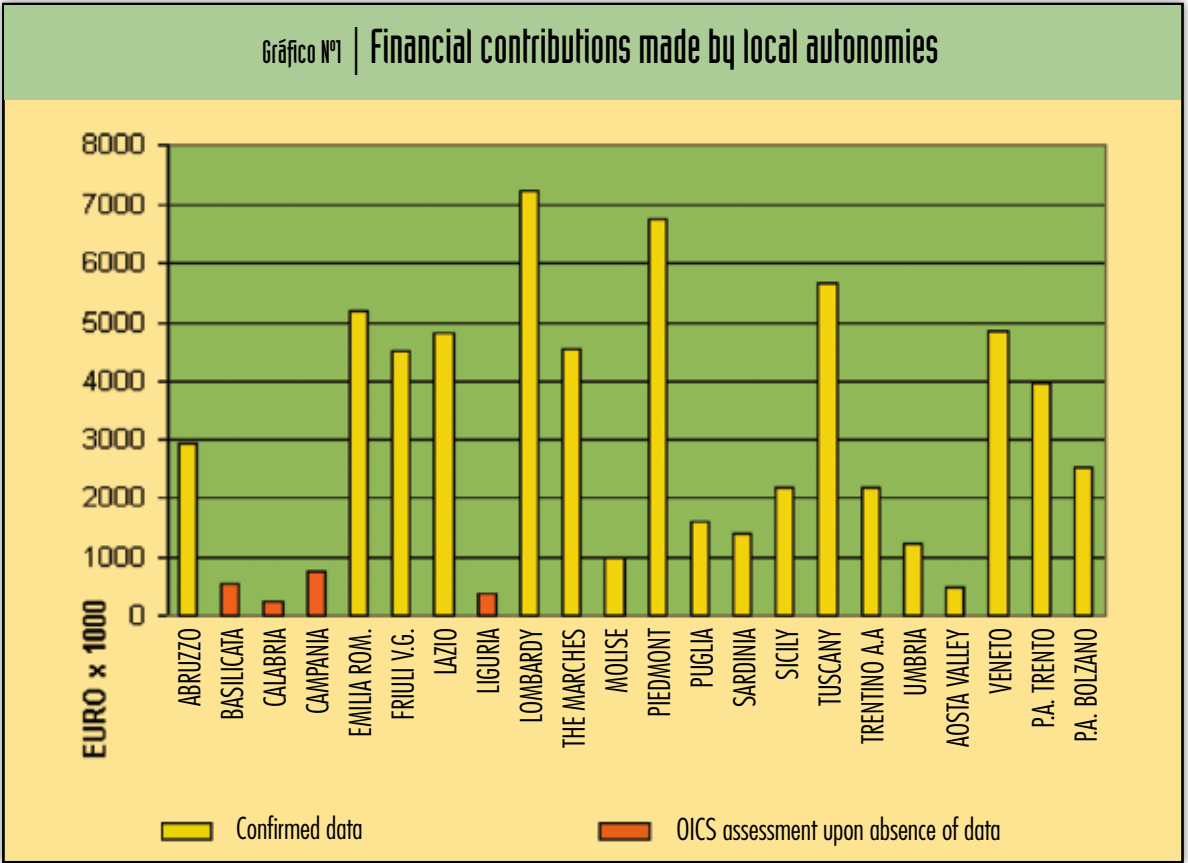
<sup>2</sup> | Law of 21st March 2001, n. 84, “Regulations of Italian participation in the stabilization, reconstruction and development of Balkan States”.

populations, for it is necessary to have reliable and approachable institutions, democratically appointed that actually represent the interests of the people they govern. These institutions are easily found in areas of priority but hard to find in the poorest countries. Thirdly, many DC actions take place in Africa and in other areas of great poverty. Given that only NGOs can directly work towards helping these people, with the approval of local institutions but not necessarily with their active participation, the financial resources that each region sets aside for international co-operation are divided into two parts: one of them is used to finance the territorial partnerships which we have been mentioning, and the other one to contribute to the initiatives proposed by the NGOs in their territory.

#### 4. Financial volume of decentralised co-operation

Financial contributions made by local autonomies towards international co-operation are growing steadily.

If we only take the balance sheets of the autonomous regions and provinces into account, we see that the financial contributions amount to 70 million Euros per year, as shown in the 2006 Chart. This amount includes financial contributions for co-operation initiatives directly approved and controlled by the regions; the contributions granted to NGO projects in their territories; regional



financing for joint initiatives co-financed by national governments, the European Commission or International Organizations. We have not taken into account financial contributions made to Italian communities abroad or those involved in internationalisation.

There is no data supporting the total contribution of money made by local bodies (provinces and municipalities), although we may reasonably estimate it accounts for one fifth of the amount contributed by the regions.

Apart from contributions in money, we need to add the value of other payments in kind (of equipment, services and staff). In this assessment we have also considered the approximate market value of the materials used (health and hospital instruments, means of transport, etc.), that were donated by local autonomies, once transport, connection and in-site start-up expenses have been paid.

#### 5. Institutional involvement and relations between national and community co-operation

As we have mentioned before, institutional involvement in terms of DC is still a subject of controversial interpretations despite the reform of the Constitution and the scope granted by Law N° 131/03. The Italian Constitution states that foreign policy is one of the 17 issues that within the central government's exclusive jurisdiction, and the national statute on international co-operation that the Congress has still not been able to reform, establishes that: "co-operation for development is within the scope of Italian fo-

reign policy". Based on that, the Constitutional Board has blocked several regional laws on international co-operation and the Italian Foreign Office usually interprets, in a restrictive way, the powers granted to the regions, by art 6 of Law N 131/03, and thus limits such authority to economic internationalisation or to the implementation of initiatives undertaken by central government. On the contrary, the system of the regions believes that international co-operation policy is a "part of" of the country's foreign relations and not part of foreign policy, and that these relations are in turn grounded on several pillars: foreign policy, security, foreign economic policy and international co-operation itself. The first two are under the National government's jurisdiction; the latter two require the participation of the entire country-system and are therefore "matters of shared legislation".

As from 1989 almost all Italian regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano have passed one or more regional laws on co-operation,<sup>3</sup> and they have created an internal organization which is ruled by the Council's President or Counsellor Delegate (an "Assessore").<sup>4</sup>

Likewise, a new department for handling relations with the different regions and local entities has been created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a new decentralised co-operation office has been created within the ruling department for international co-operation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is accepting more and more programmes for international co-operation that are proposed by the regions and jointly financed by the

<sup>3</sup> Here we are referring only to those that were approved by the Constitutional Committee. All regional laws on decentralised co-operation, and the references to regional structures which have competent authority on the matter may be consulted at [www.oics.it](http://www.oics.it)

<sup>4</sup> Regional, provincial or municipal ministries in the Italian local autonomies are called "Assessorato", and the corresponding Ministers are called "Assessore".



two parties, and it is also inviting regions to participate in the execution of co-operation programmes led by the governments, as well as to help finance them.

The Italian government has at last authorized a consortium formed by four regions (Umbria, Tuscany, The Marches and Emilia Romagna) to officially represent Italy in the design of a decentralised co-operation agreement with the Brazilian Federal government. Also, it has recently signed an additional protocol with Brazil, that complements the co-operation agreement entered into by the two governments, that expressly refers to decentralised co-operation, which states that “the Parties acknowledge that the local and regional governments are authorized to establish, with their counterparts, agreements concerning co-operation activities” and “agree to create a bi-national Committee, formed by the National Governments and the local and regional entities in the two countries, which will meet once a year.”

Back in 1999, the Senate approved a text which fully validated decentralised co-operation<sup>5</sup> during the discussion over the drafts prepared for the reform of the National law, and still, this is the main position in the parliament.<sup>4</sup>

To sum up, relations between Italian decentralised co-operation and co-operation stemming from the central government

develop without there being any clear regulations on the matter and therefore, they evidence somehow schizophrenic aspects: despite it presenting a generally positive scenario, based on complementarity and reciprocity, it is sometimes invaded by conservative impulses coming from the old centralist spirit.

Relations with co-operation led by the European Commission are well known, and they are obviously the same as those applicable to other member States. However, in the case of Italy, the participation of its decentralised co-operation in community programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean is still moderate. Unlike this, Italian decentralised co-operation strongly focuses in the countries of the Mediterranean Basin, especially within the framework of the new pre-adhesion programmes (IPA) and (ENPI) (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument).

There is also a community line, especially created for decentralised co-operation, which includes all forms of co-operation for development by different bodies of the national governments or the international and community institutions: NGOs in the North and in the South, associations and other actors.<sup>6</sup> With the purpose of avoiding misunderstanding and “unfair competition” with the NGOs, regions refrain from using this line of work, the same as the local bodies, who rarely take part in it.

## 6. Programme, Planning, Execution and Assessment Instruments

We have already mentioned that different aspects of co-operation for development coexist within decentralised co-operation with components concerning territorial globalization and assessment, and there are also good local government policies for migration flows supported and backed by communities of Italian origin living abroad.

At the national level, each one of these components is ruled by a different ministry, which possess consolidated instruments and certain methodologies for programming, planning, executing and assessing actions. However, this reality is still unheard of in the territorial partnerships of decentralised co-operation, where co-operation is grounded on “processes” instead of on “projects”.

For this purpose, all joint initiatives of decentralized co-operation and government, community or United Nations Agencies co-operation necessarily and appropriately need to be referred as the project’s “tools box”. Thus, Italian regions are developing, with the scientific collaboration of the CeSPI (Centre for the Study of International Politics), a deep in itinere and ex post assessment of many of their ongoing initiatives, with the aim to build up a “tool box” of their own, especially designed for decentralised co-operation, in order to be

used by them and to be proposed for use at both national and international levels.

## 7. Decentralised co-operation in Latin America and the Caribbean

We invite you to read again the article by Izzo and Stocchiero we have already cited, published in the Observatory’s 2006 Yearbook, for it thoroughly describes Italian decentralised co-operation towards Latin America and the Caribbean.

Between 1990-2005 Latin America was the “forgotten continent” for Italian co-operation at the national level. During this period co-operation was mainly limited to applying a few resources to financing Italian NGOs that worked to improve the worst realities in the area, to supporting certain interventions in Argentina, subsequent to the serious economic crisis of 2001-2002,<sup>7</sup> and to convert the debt into development projects in some countries (Peru and Ecuador).<sup>8</sup>

In April 2006, the new Italian government introduced significant changes and gave a new impulse to co-operation with Latin America and the Caribbean, especially in terms of economic co-operation. This greater interest was undoubtedly somehow caused by the Reform of the Constitution, which esta-

<sup>5</sup> | In order to pass a national Law the same bill needs to be passed subsequently and during the same legislative period, by both the Senate and the Representatives. Unfortunately, during the 1996-2001 legislative period the bill was only passed by the Senate.

<sup>6</sup> | We quote part of the draft passed: “The regions, autonomous provinces and municipalities (...) may (...) autonomously promote initiatives concerning co-operation for development, international solidarity and exchange at decentralised level, with central or peripheral administrations, local entities and other public and private bodies, which represent the interests of different groups, in the partner Countries”

<sup>7</sup> | Precisely, with the purpose of avoiding misunderstandings, in Italy we usually adopt the expression “decentred co-operation” instead of “decentralised co-operation”.

<sup>8</sup> | Unlike the Brazilian case, the organization of Italian regions in Argentina will be based themes rather than on their geographical proximity: the Friuli Venezia Giulia region will act as coordinator for all the other regions, the Emilia Romagna region will coordinate the partnerships in the city of Buenos Aires, the Piedmont region will coordinate those in the province of Córdoba, The Marche in Santa Fe and Tuscany in Mendoza.

<sup>9</sup> | We quote from Izzo-Stocchiero’s article: “Around 74.3 million euros in credits were settled by means of financial aid for Bolivia. Besides, the Italian government has partially reconverted Peru’s concession debt (127 million dollars in five years) as per a bilateral agreement between the two countries, which establishes the financing of projects regarding the fight against poverty (defined by the civil society), and national programmes that aim to boost the economy and increase alternative crops for cocaine plantations in the Andean country. Likewise, the Italian government decided to reconvert Ecuador’s debt that derives from previous financial aid credits, applying it to programmes for the reduction of poverty carried out with the active participation of the civil society.”

blishes a Foreign Electoral District for Elections to both Chambers in the Parliament, to include Italian citizens who reside abroad.<sup>9</sup>

In October 2007 the government held an important Italy-Latin America Conference, with the participation of almost all governments in the area. Many of them also entered into or renewed bilateral agreements for co-operation with Italy. This Conference was preceded by 11 thematic conferences,<sup>10</sup> most of which were organized by Italian regions.

Today, Italian regions and local entities are taking the place the Government left vacant in the past, significantly increasing the attention they pay to Latin America and the Caribbean and evidencing strong governance impulses. Consequently, this geographical area has become the second great priority within Italian decentralised co-operation, after the Mediterranean-Balkan Basin.

Hence, most regions and many of the local entities have defined collaboration agreements with their Latin American counterparts.

The “100 cities for 100 Italy-Brazil projects” programme, described in the Izzo and Stocchiero article and co-ordinated by five thematic panels,<sup>11</sup> was extended to include several other cities and provinces, and a

few regions as well (Liguria, Lazio, Abruzzo and Piedmont).

In like manner, the collaboration agreement between four Italian regions in Brazil,<sup>12</sup> the other Italian-Brazilian programme described in this article, attracted other regions (Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Piedmont). During the past year, the initiatives under this programme increased in number and consistency, and initiatives for triangular co-operation between Italy, Brazil and Portuguese speaking African countries were also proposed.

Brazil is the Latin American country that evidences the strongest presence in terms of Italian decentralised co-operation, followed by Argentina, where several Italian regions and local entities initiated partnerships with provinces and municipalities throughout the country. It was no coincidence that Italian participation played the most predominant role in the two meetings (September 2005 and July 2007) the Argentine Department of Foreign Affairs held in Buenos Aires, with its provinces and entities, and its European and Latin American counterparts. Needless to say, these events also increased Italian-Argentine decentralised co-operation. In 2008, the Governments of Italy and Argentina, four Argentine provinces (Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Mendoza) and other Italian

regions,<sup>13</sup> will embark on a joint programme named “FOSEL”, focusing on local social-economic development and the professional training of SMEs and its cluster.

In their study, Izzo and Stocchiero also refer to a cross-border inter-regional networks initiative for territorial development and integration in South America. Today, this initiative has become a programme named “open frontiers” that focuses on eight cross-border areas,<sup>14</sup> where Italian regions and local administrations have made their cross-border and inter-regional expertise available to their South American counterparts (especially due to the role they played in the design of the European Union integration policy and in the definition of the pan-European transport corridors, as those connecting neighbour countries in North Africa, Middle East and the Balkans). This expertise covers several matters regarded as priority for all Latin American governments, such as: cross-border and inter-regional co-operation, oceanic transport corridors, local development, foreign trade, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the environment and sustainable development, innovation and technological development. Many regions are already committed to take part in this programme, namely: Lombardy in Central America, Piedmont and Tuscany in the Ecuador-Peru area, Tuscany, Basilicata and the autonomous province of Bolzano in the Chile-Peru-Bolivia area, Friuli Giulia in the

South American Mesopotamia, and lastly, Umbria in the mid-Amazonia.

Several Italian local autonomies have participated in the programmes of the European Commission for Latin America, especially Eurosocal and URB-AL. This participation has been useful although it was also rather fragmented and lacked the adequate link between the European individuals who participated in the various initiatives, and between them and the strategies of their corresponding governments. During the URB-AL Conference held in Rosario (Argentina) in 2007, after discussing this lack, Italian regions and local entities have proposed that the Commission and the other European and Latin American actors implement a common strategic action.

## 8. Conclusions

Towards the end of the article on Italy published in the previous edition of the Yearbook, Marina Izzo and Andrea Stocchiero presented what they regarded as “the challenges of Italian decentralised co-operation” before a panel. Even prior to this publication, local autonomies had recognized these challenges some of which have now been met with certain success.

As a result of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs showing a more open approach towards

<sup>10</sup> | *The regulation cited above has a great impact in Latin America, since this geographical area concentrates the largest Italian communities living abroad. In the 2006 elections, the votes of Italian citizens residing abroad were a determinant factor for the same coalition to achieve a majority in both Chambers; without these votes, majorities in the Chambers would have been different.*

<sup>11</sup> | *All the preliminary Conferences were organized at the national level, where several representatives of Latin American governments and the Italian local autonomies attended. Five of them were organized in Rome (Preservation of cultural heritage; cross-border co-operation; infrastructure Networks, Labour, unions and solidarity groups; Information) and five were organized by different Regions in their capitals (Co-operation between Italy and Mexico - Milano, Lombardy; Italian Communities in Latin America - Genoa, Liguria; Development and partnerships, the role of the Regions - Milano, Lombardy; Decentralised co-operation in the new period of Relations between Italy and Latin America - Perugia, Umbria; Higher education and university co-operation - Torino, Piedmont; Science and Technology - Trieste, Friuli Venezia Giulia).*

<sup>12</sup> | *Childhood and youth, women's rights, management of water resources and waste, housing and transport policies*

<sup>13</sup> | *The programme is grounded on the following lines of development: economic development (led by Umbria), social policies (led by The Marche), culture (led by Tuscany), cooperativism (led by Emilia-Romagna).*

<sup>14</sup> | *Unlike the Brazilian case, the organization of Italian regions in Argentina will be based themes rather than on their geographical proximity: the Friuli Venezia Giulia region will act as coordinator for all the other regions, the Emilia Romagna region will coordinate the partnerships in the city of Buenos Aires, the Piedmont region will coordinate those in the province of Córdoba, The Marche in Santa Fe and Tuscany in Mendoza.*

<sup>15</sup> | *The eight cross-border areas are the following: 1. Southern Ecuador – North-eastern Peru; 2 Aymara with no frontiers: Southern Peru – Northern Chile - West Bolivia; 3. North-eastern Argentina – South-western Paraguay – Southern Bolivia; 4. Amazonia area of: Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Venezuela, Surinam, Guyana and French Guyana; 5. South American Mesopotamia: Western Argentina – Southern Brazil – Uruguay; 6. South-western Brazil – North-eastern Paraguay – South-eastern Bolivia; 7. Central America: Mexico (Chiapas) – Guatemala – El Salvador – Honduras; 8. Haiti – Dominican Republic.*





decentralised co-operation, the local autonomies system initiated actions in geographical and thematic programmes, designed within a political and strategic framework in coordination with the national government, aimed at the Mediterranean-Balkan basin or at Latin America.

Certain decentralised co-operation actions often involve a single region, province or municipality, and this is somehow positive since it multiplies interventions and contributes to their keeping connected to the “elective affinities” between the two territories. However, not long ago, Italian regions started to coordinate actions with one another, so did local entities among themselves and each region with the local entities in their territory. These coordinated actions in turn related to their counterparts, that is, the governments’ associations in the partner countries. All of this is appearing to be working well to overcome the project’s fragmentation.

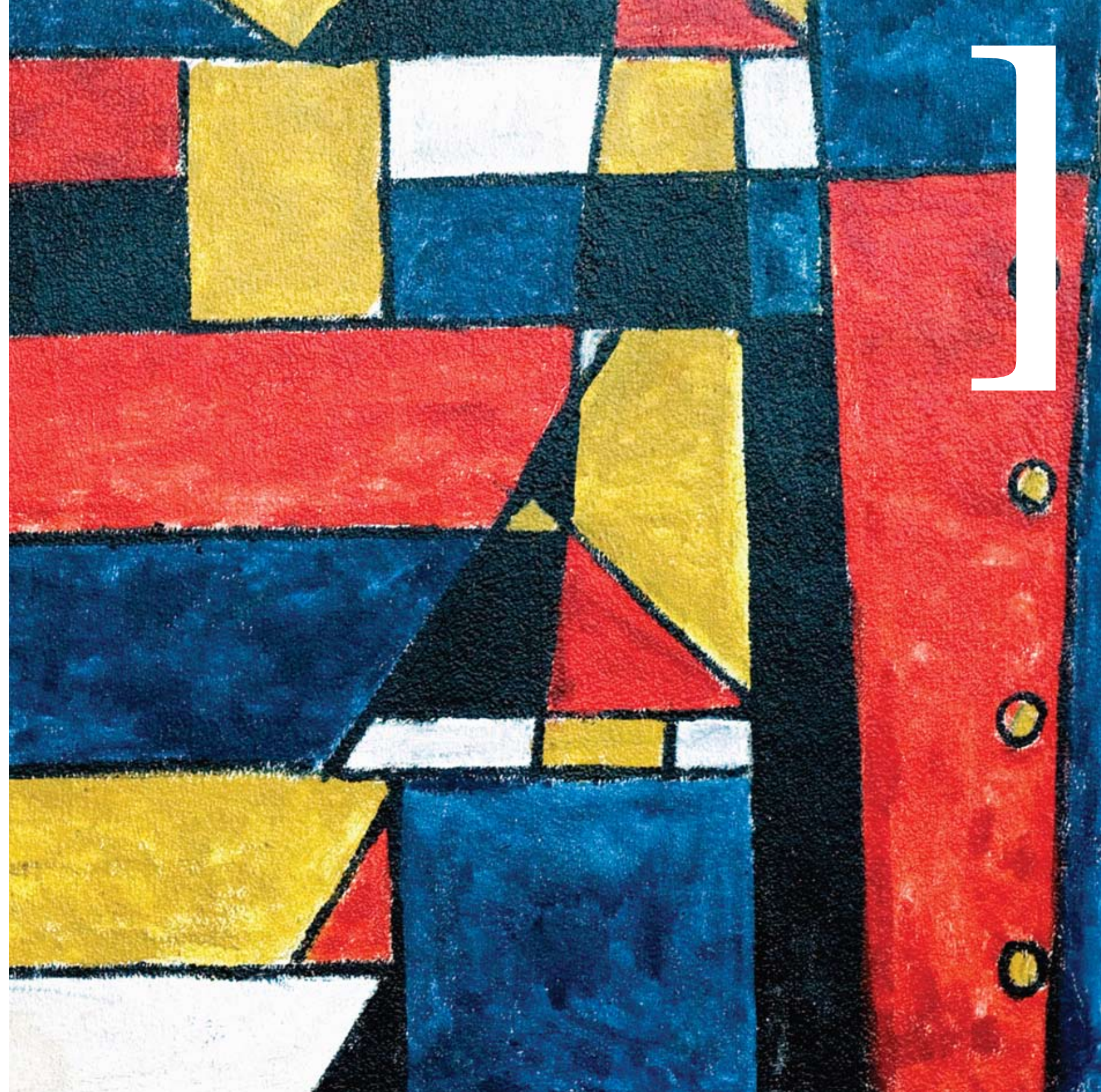
However, in spite of the recent improvement in the field, we still need to strengthen the coordination between the local autonomies system and the national Government. For this purpose, and with the aim to favour a clear interpretation about the institutional

organization of decentralised co-operation, the Italian regions have come to an agreement with the Government as to the proposed legislative reform presented before Parliament, and are currently actively participating to speed up the reform.

The proposals made by local Italian autonomies before the European Commission on the new URB-AL programme demonstrate the effort put in to avoid the programme’s fragmentation into hundreds of projects across many municipalities, provinces and regions and thus leave the way open to achieve coherent actions within a common political and strategic framework.

Furthermore, what we stated in the previous paragraph evidences how local autonomies are promoting broad programmes based on complementarity and division of work among the different actors involved.

Lastly, we make reference to the actions carried out by the regions that go towards the design of specific instruments which plan and monitor decentralised co-operation and which improve the quality of territorial partnerships through the study and assessment of programmes that have already been implemented.







# *A study of decentralised cooperation partnerships by regional governments in Latin America and the European Union*

Santiago Sarraute Sainz. \*

### KEY WORDS

Decentralised cooperation |  
Paradiplomacy |  
International relations |  
Cooperation for development |

*Latin America and the European Union are currently evidencing active agendas in the field of institutional relations. These relations are characterised by highly relevant technical and financial skills and a growing political weight in the international field. Therefore, this article focuses on studying the nature of those relations, especially in terms of the singularity of public decentralised cooperation relations established between these two geographical areas. The information obtained for the analysis by the EU- Latin America Observatory on Decentralized Cooperation (ODC) is constantly being added to the deeper it goes into the phenomenon of Decentralized Cooperation. This article will review the difficulties faced by regions when it comes to finding exchange spaces of their own within the networks, instead of simply profiting from the benefits arising from bilateral cooperation relations established with other subnational institutions. As we make progress in this analysis, we will show the uneven geographical distribution of these relations; we will go over the different forms of action that currently exist in the regions of both Latin America and the European Union with regard to the institutional links they establish; and we will review the role the national governments play in the light of some of these established relations. Last, the conclusions will point out a few of the challenges arising from this analysis.*

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## 1. Introduction

The role regional governments are playing in the field of public decentralised cooperation (PDC)<sup>1</sup> between the European Union (EU) and Latin America (LA) is steadily gaining importance. Both the human and financial resources involved and their impact on reality clearly demonstrate this fact.<sup>1</sup> This activity is especially relevant in the so called European Arco Latino<sup>2</sup> and in the Latin American Southern Cone,<sup>3</sup> where, according to the information collected by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation (ODC), 65% and 59% of their corresponding regions are actively participating in these kinds of relations. As a matter of fact, regions are relevant actors within the PDC phenomenon, and thus the ODC is especially interested in analysing the nature of their activity. In this particular article, the analysis concentrates on the nature of LA-EU partnerships established by these governments, and it intends to complement what Gildo Baraldi states in this Yearbook.

Although it briefly presents the participation of regions in the subnational government networks, the article mainly focuses on the study of bilateral relations (BLRs).

Indeed, this second form of relations is the most frequent one when it comes to LA-EU institutional relations involving regions, and it also enables a more detailed study of the characteristics of the partnerships established by them.

In this way, based on the data gathered by the ODC, we intend to present the regions' main trends in terms of their international partnerships. Consequently, we will carry out a quantitative analysis to find out which the most active regions are and what the main characteristics (geographical features, administrative level, etc) of the sub-national institutions they relate to, are.

However, this numerical analysis may overlook certain important characteristics of this kind of relations. Therefore, this article will emphasize on specific examples that provide more information about the behaviour of regions when they decide to get involved in PDC.

## 2. Methodology

This article concentrates on those partnerships (mainly bilateral) between subnational governments in Latin America and the

<sup>1</sup> | In this article we will call "public Decentralised Cooperation Relations" (PDC) to those relations which imply a certain agreement between two subnational institutions.

<sup>2</sup> | According to the Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas para el Desarrollo (Department for Planning and Assessment of Policies for Development) of the Secretaría de Estado de Cooperación Internacional (International Cooperation State Secretary) in the follow-up of the PACI (International Cooperation Annual Budget 2006), contribution in terms of Ayuda Oficial para el Desarrollo (Official Financial Aid for Development) (AOD) from the Spanish regions added up to 324 million€ in 2006, where Cataluña and Andalusia accounted for 56 and 53 million € respectively. Likewise, as Gildo Baraldi's article published in this Yearbook states, the contribution by Italian regions in terms of AOD was also significant, adding up to almost 70 million € in 2006.

<sup>3</sup> | Arco Latino is not only a theoretical concept, since there is an association of provinces mainly in Spain, France and Italy (<http://www.arcolatino.org>) Besides, this concept has also been used in the field of relations between Europe and Latin America (see Fazio 2001).

<sup>4</sup> | Countries included in the Southern Cone are: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.



European Union that include the participation of regions. For this purpose, the Observatory has a wide definition of a region, given the existing differences between countries in Latin America and the European Union. Hence, we can find federal states such as Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil or Mexico, as well as regions in unitary states as Spain, France, Italy, Chile and Colombia.

The characteristics of decentralised cooperation BLRs that were identified by the ODC, the strategies applied to obtain such information, the limitations of the information obtained and other details in the article are similar to those included in the second part of the article “Analysis of bilateral relations between subnational public administrations in Latin America and the European Union”, published in the previous Yearbook.

The above mentioned article underlines the fact that the relations we could refer to as paradiplomacy are numerous in the case of relations between regions.<sup>4</sup> These are the types of relations that, on occasions, merge into a single partnership of traditional policies of cooperation for development in which the assistance provided by the EU in Latin America takes on mayor importance. Moreover, in countries like Chile or Argentina, there seems to be no differences between cultural, economic or cooperation for development relations.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the study focuses

on the definition of links, regardless of their contents.

### 3. Regions in EU-LA networks

The LA-EU subnational government networks are a space that has not yet been consolidated in terms of the exchanges within its regions.

There are several reasons for this. First, regional governments lack enough networks that meet their needs. A good indicator of this is the fact that only five out of the twenty networks that were identified, evidence a significant participation (>20% of members) of regions in Latin America and the European Union. On analysing the networks that are mainly made up by local governments, we clearly find that most of them focus on the problems or characteristics of cities, and therefore it is hard for regions to fit in. This situation has become more critical with the creation of networks arising from the URB-AL programme, which again, prioritized the need of local governments.<sup>6</sup>

Second, the networks that evidence a certain degree of participation from regions (see Text Box 1), usually include a number of subnational governments in Latin America and the EU that is significantly lower than the average in networks where local governments are a majority.

#### Cuadro 1 | List of networks made up by members from EU-LA that count on the participation of regions

America-Europe Regions and Cities Association (Asociación América-Europa de Regiones y Ciudades) ([www.aeryc.org](http://www.aeryc.org))  
Metropolis ([www.metropolis.org](http://www.metropolis.org))  
Local Authorities for the Information Society Network (Red de Autoridades Locales para la Sociedad de la Información) ([www.it4allregions.org](http://www.it4allregions.org))  
Regional Governments for Sustainable Development Network (Red de Gobiernos Regionales por el Desarrollo Sostenible-nrg4SD) ([www.nrg4sd.net](http://www.nrg4sd.net))  
IberoAmerican Network of Digital Cities (Red Iberoamericana de Ciudades Digitales) ([www.iberomunicipios.org](http://www.iberomunicipios.org))

Despite the fact that, in general, regions don't seem to have found a preferred space for the relations between the EU and LA, there are, nevertheless, some initiatives that are beginning to change this tendency. Particularly, the networks shown in Text Box 1 stand out, since they are clearly geared towards the needs of regions in the “Local Authorities Network for the Information Society” and the “Regional Governments Network for Sustainable Development-nrg4SD”, both led by the Basque Government (Spain).

In addition to this, a new global space called Foro Global de Asociaciones de Regiones (FOGAR) (Global Forum of Region Associations),<sup>7</sup> is being created. It was founded in Capetown (South Africa) in August 2007. This Forum brings together region networks that are mainly in Latin America and the EU – including the two networks mentioned in the previous paragraph, and it intends to be a world reference that speaks on behalf of regions.

### 4. EU—LA bilateral partnerships of regions

Bilateral partnerships or BLRs are the most active spaces for relations between

subnational governments in LA-EU. Indeed, the number of region participations in BLRs is over 250, a figure that is significantly different from the number of participations in networks, which merely add up to 100. Also, we need to remark it is qualitatively more important to participate in bilateral relations than in other forms of relations, given the depth of the relations established in this way, compared to those created by regions when they become members of a network.

The ODC has identified 189 BLRs. These relations can be exclusively established between regions or can also include partnerships between regions and local administrations. We could define the latter as “unequal” partnerships are more often found when partnerships include European regions, and they usually indicate significant differences in terms of the nature of decentralised cooperation between Latin America and EU. The figures collected eventually provide a global panorama and reveal important behavioural differences between Latin America and EU that we will thoroughly analyse in this section.

<sup>5</sup> | Aldecoa, Francisco y Michael Keating (1999). *Paradiplomacy in Action: The Foreign Relations of Subnational Governments*. Londres: Frank Cass.

<sup>6</sup> | By means of example, this is reflected on the description of concerning decentralised cooperation included in the “Atlas de Acción Exterior” (“Foreign Action Atlas”), available at the Chilean decentralised cooperation website ([www.cooperacion-descentralizada.gov.cl](http://www.cooperacion-descentralizada.gov.cl))

<sup>7</sup> | For more information about the URB-AL programme, refer to the article by Rómulo Caballeros in Yearbook 2006 published by the ODC.

<sup>8</sup> | See the Minutes of FOGAR's 1st Executive Committee meeting at: [http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/155\\_pr-cape\\_town-es.pdf](http://www.crpm.org/pub/docs/155_pr-cape_town-es.pdf)

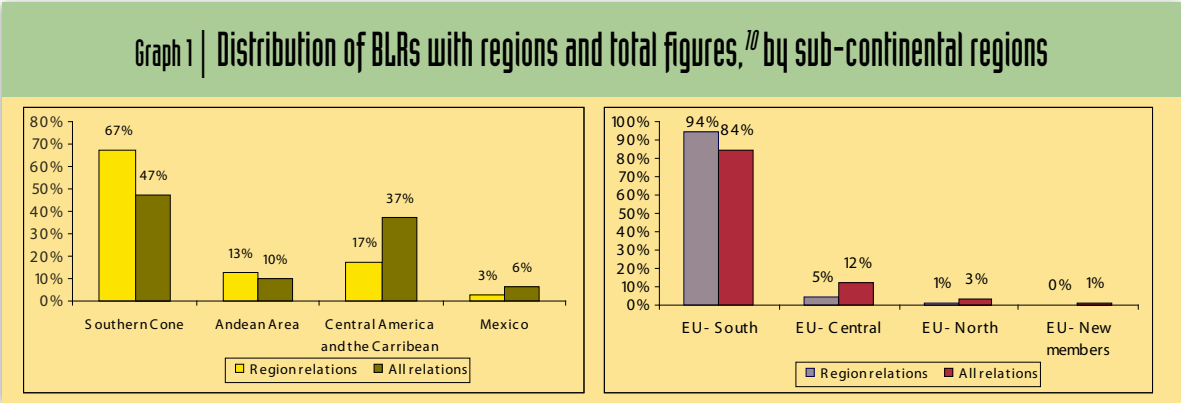
<sup>9</sup> | In this article, Continental Sub-regions include the following countries: Andean Zone: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela;  
Central America + Cuba: Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panamá;  
South of Europe: Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal;  
Central Europe: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg and Netherlands;  
North of Europe: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, United Kingdom and Sweden;  
New incorporations EU (NI): Czech Republic, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Poland.

#### 4.1. General panorama of the BLRs that include the participation of regions

The geographical distribution of all 189 relations that include the participation of regions shows the phenomenon does not entirely cover all continental sub-regions in Latin America and the EU.<sup>8</sup> In fact, just like Graph 1 shows, the most active regions in Latin America and the EU are all concentrated in the Southern Cone and in the South of

pean regions to find counterparts with which to establish relations.

Table 1 shows the geographical distribution by countries. In Latin America, Argentina stands out, and it is followed by Chile, Brazil and Uruguay, while in Europe we could say that Spain and Italy are the most active countries, followed by France. With regards to partnerships involving the above mentioned countries, again, the same concentration clearly appears. Indeed, in most



Europe respectively. The same chart presents a comparison between the figures corresponding to all 1,139 relations the ODC has identified until now. In the case of Europe, this comparison clearly shows that concentration in the South of the EU reflects the prevailing reality (although it might be slightly stressed) of BLRs in that area. In the case of LA, the concentration of BLRs that include regions, in the Southern Cone is a lot more relevant than in all BLRs identified by the ODC. This phenomenon is mainly caused by the fact that in Central America there are no regional administrative levels capable of establishing relations, which in turn makes it hard for Euro-

cases, partnerships are established with institutions from a couple of countries in the other geographical area, be it Latin America or the EU. Spain might be the only exception, since most of its relations are distributed among a larger number of countries in LA.

If we compare this with all the BLRs identified by the ODC, we find that the volume of activities carried out by Spain and Italy that is presented in Table 1 is very similar. This fact reflects the great importance of decentralised cooperation in the Italian regions, when compared to the municipalities in that same country. In LA, the intense activity seen in Chile and Uruguay is worth mentioning. In

<sup>10</sup> | Percentages of relations including regions that are presented in the graph, for each geographical area, are based on the 189 BLRs that include regions, identified by the Observatory. The percentage appearing under the column "All relations" represents all 1,136 BLRs of subnational governments identified by the ODC.

Table 1   Matrix of relations that include regions								
Countries EU/LA	Spain	Italy	France	Germany	Belgium	Sweden	Austria	TOTAL
Argentina	23	29	3	3	1		1	60
Chile	14	8	4			2		28
Brazil		10	16		1			27
Uruguay	7	4			1			12
Colombia	5	4						9
El Salvador	9							9
Nicaragua	5	4						9
Cuba	3	4			1			8
Ecuador	6							6
México	2		2	2				6
Perú	1	2	2					5
Bolivia	1	1						2
Guatemala	1	1						2
Honduras	2							2
Panamá	2							2
Venezuela		2						2
TOTAL	81	69	27	5	4	2	1	189

the case of Uruguay, it is interesting to stress the capability shown by municipal governments (especially that of Montevideo) to establish relations with regions, and thus, with administrative levels that are different from their own. Last, we need to mention that Portugal does not take part in relations that include regions considering that, when it comes to establishing relations at the municipal level, it shows intense activity with Brazil.

If we analyse the 84 relations where both partners are regions, the main and logical difference with Table 1 lies on the fact that all the countries that lack regional levels are not even present (countries in Central America, Cuba and Uruguay). It might be possible that in the case of LA, federal states like Venezuela, or those which have regions, like Peru, do not

seem to be too active in terms of PDC with their European counterparts.

As to the regions that show the highest degree of participation, behaviour clearly matches the information in Table 1. The Observatory has identified 91 regions (48 in Latin America and 43 in the EU) that participate in the 189 bilateral relations identified. Figures 2a and 2b present the number of regions by country in LA, that are present in these relations, accompanied by the percentages they represent, compared to all the regions in each country. These figures clearly show that Italy and Spain, in the EU and Argentina and Chile, in Latin America are the countries that stand out, both in terms of the number of regions involved and, above all, in percentages compared to all the regions involved. This fi-



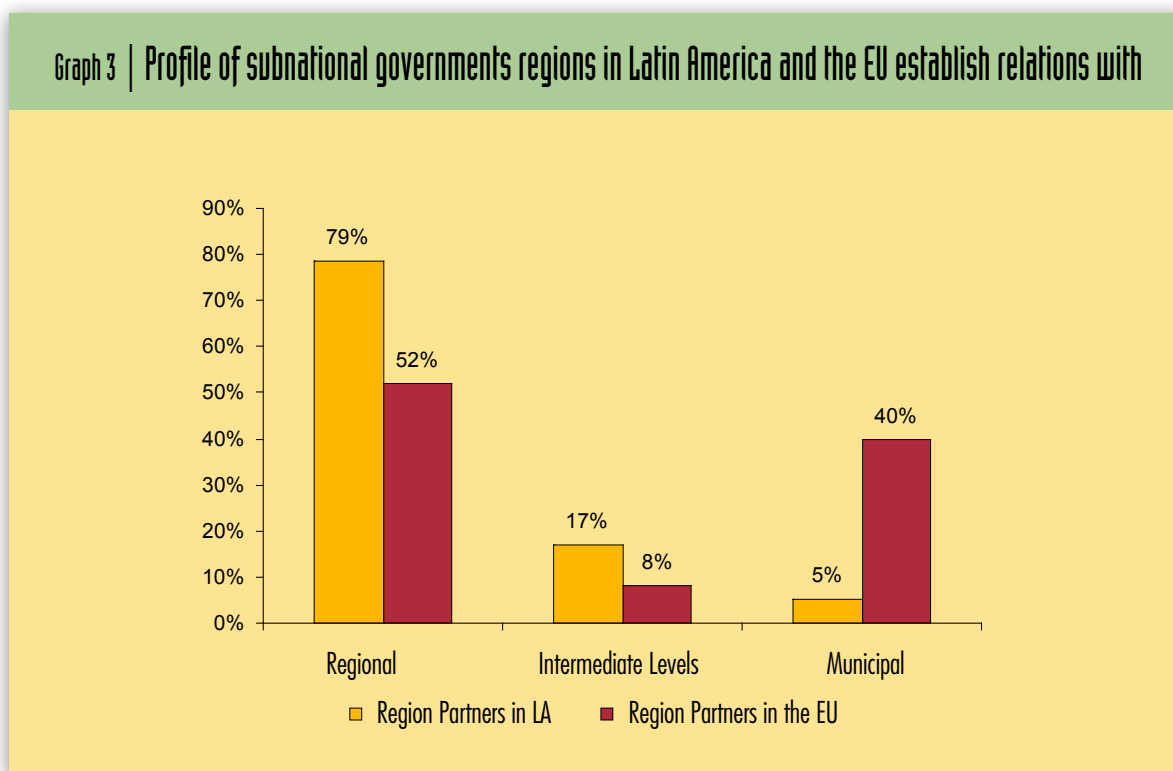
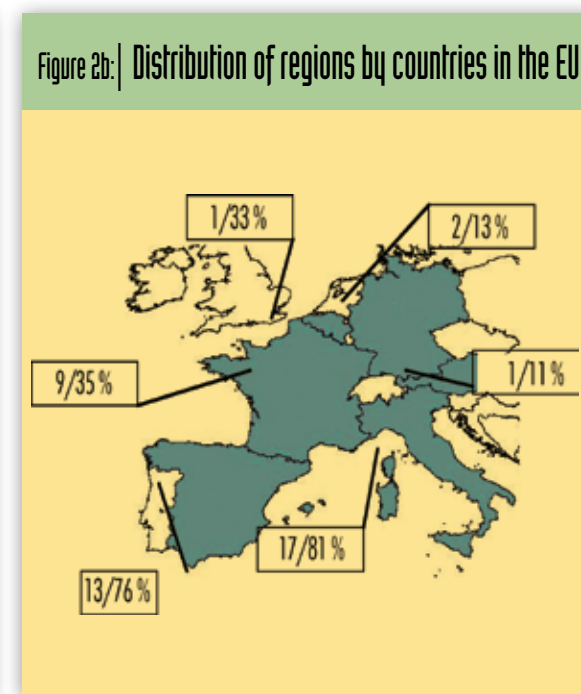
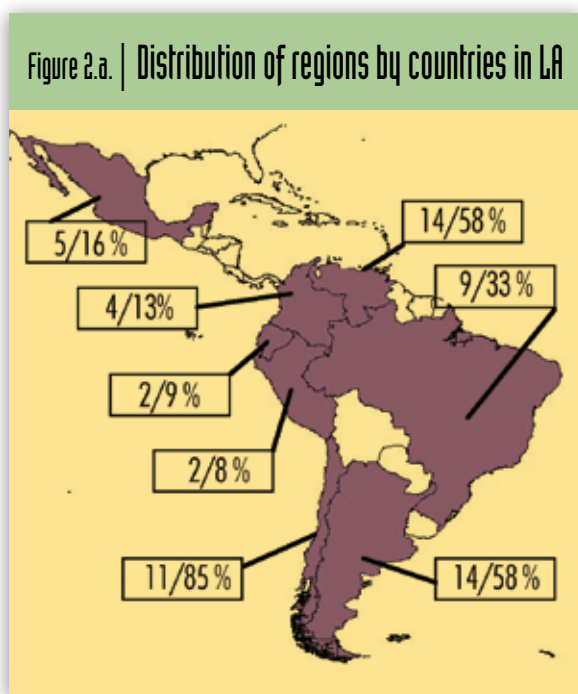


figure is especially relevant in the case of Chile, which did not stand out in the field of bilateral relations identified by the ODC, including those established by its municipalities.

## 4.2. Behavioural differences between Latin America and the EU

Regions in Latin America and the EU evidence significant differences when it comes to looking for partners in decentralised cooperation. This is shown by the different types of sub-national governments with whom regions from different geographical areas establish relations. (See Graph No. 3). Besides, there are times when regions establish relations with associations of municipalities, a practice that is becoming more frequent in Europe than in Latin America. Hence, these differences cause European regions to be more active in terms of their establishing relations with subnational governments in Latin America – out of 189 relations identified, 107 BLRs (85%), have European regions as partners, and 161 (57%) have regions in Latin America as partners.

The most significant factors that cause subnational governments to have different profiles are to do with the different roles they taken on in Latin America and the EU, when

it comes to establishing cooperation relations, and also with whether or not there are regions in the different countries.

### 4.2.1. Potential *partners* for European regions

Regions in Europe, upon establishing relations with subnational governments in Latin America, take on a role that ranges from providers of assistance (whether financial or technical) to partners in cultural, economic, technical or political exchanges. Occasionally these roles merge, just like Stochiero and Izzo stated when they referred to relations established by Italian regions in the 2006 Yearbook published by the ODC: “in actual fact, decentralised cooperation appears to be each day closer to, or even complement paradiplomacy and the economic interests of Italian regions”. However, it also happens that these roles end up segregated even in the different countries within a single institution. By way of example, we can mention the case of the different Spanish Autonomous Communities (Comunidades Autónomas Españolas), where international relations departments and cooperation for development do not need to act jointly. Indeed, in most cases these departments belong to different areas: international relations lies within the

Table 2   Posibilidades de perfil de partners sub-nacionales de RL para las regiones UE		
Role adopted by the EU region	Latin America country with no regions	Latin America country with regions
<i>Partner in reciprocal exchanges</i>	<i>Big cities</i> <i>Intermediate levels</i>	<i>Regions</i> <i>Intermediate levels</i> <i>Big cities</i>
<i>Technical or financial aid donor</i>	<i>Municipalities (including big cities)</i> <i>Intermediate levels</i> <i>Associations of municipalities</i>	<i>Regions</i> <i>Intermediate levels</i> <i>Municipalities (including big cities)</i>

scope of authority of the presidency, and cooperation for development lies in the area of social policies.<sup>8</sup> According to this role and depending on the fact whether there are regions or not in the Latin American countries they cooperate with, the partner's profile varies. Table 2 presents a hypothetical diagram of the different possibilities.

When we analyse the regions' possibilities to establish relations according to the Latin America partner's profile in Table 2, we see that, at the municipal level, there are more chances to establish relations with larger cities than with medium size or small cities. The reason for this is that in the case or large cities, it is possible to establish exchanges as well as to act as donors, whilst with the latter, it is more likely that they can only act as providers of assistance. This hypothesis is somehow proved since out of 57 cases in which regions in the EU establish relations with municipalities, 30 involve large cities (52%), and 28 of them belong to cities in the Southern Cone.

Likewise, regions in the EU do not always find it easy to establish relations with municipalities, given the differences between the regional reality in the EU and the municipal reality in LA. When regions in the EU seek to establish relations with subnational governments in Latin American governments where there are no regional divisions, they can find that associations or groups of municipalities represent a good choice/ally. Among the advantages of these kinds of partnerships we find a greater territorial scope of influence for supporting international cooperation interventions, or a better understand-

ing with local governments, when it comes to defining plans for municipal institutional strengthening. Besides, they constitute an interesting alternative in order to work directly with NGODs in Latin America, given the institutional nature (and thus political) of the members of these associations, and at the same time they are conveniently closer to the territory and the local institutional problems concerning relations with national governments. However, regions in the EU will rarely find partners among these associations, in order to establish relations between equals, due to the significant differences between the roles of both institutions. This kind of partnership could currently be regarded as one that is merely arising, given the few cases that were identified by the ODC up until today (four relations of European regions with associations of municipalities in Central American countries). However, the wide development of the figure of MANCOMUNIDADES/GROUPS that is currently taking place in Latin America may imply a future increase in the relations between regions in the EU and associations of municipalities in LA.<sup>9</sup>

Some Latin American countries evidence intermediate levels within public administration that are higher than the municipal level, although they are lower than that in unitary or federal states in terms of their competent authority and institutionality. By way of example we can mention the Asambleas Provinciales Cubanas (Cuban Assembly of Provinces) or the Alcaldías Provinciales Peruanas (Peruvian Province City Councils). In any case, the information gathered by the ODC shows these kinds of relations are still unusual. (13 cases).

#### 4.2.2. Potential partners for Latin American regions

Unlike European regions, Latin-American regions establish partnerships with a reduced variety of institutional profiles, in terms of the European governments they relate with (as shown in Figure 2, only 21% of the cases fail to establish any relations with European regions). This is due to the role they adopt within the LA-EU bilateral partnerships, and also because the most active European countries in Latin America (Spain, France and Portugal) are all divided into regions.

As to the role they play within a certain bilateral partnership, as expected, Latin American regions' behaviour is similar to that of European regions when they become exchange partners. However, when it comes to relations that are based on inequalities, they act as receptors of technical or financial aid. In both cases partnerships require similar/equivalent institutions of political relevance, with skills that can be applied to exchanges or some kind of support, or institutions that can afford actions of a much broader scope than the one a municipality in any kind of assistance might need. Consequently, establishing relations with a European municipality will be difficult since the financing capacity for activities is rather low (except in the case of large cities), and these relations are not useful for learning purposes. The situation becomes even more difficult since European municipalities will tend to support their equivalent/similar institutions, instead of those belonging to higher administrative levels. The foregoing facts may explain why the ODC only identified four cases of relations between regions in Latin America and municipalities in the EU.

Last, we need to stress that Latin American regions can always establish relations with administrative intermediate levels in Europe.

Although this kind of relations is rather unusual (17 cases), it offers a number of possibilities, due to the fact that, in certain cases, they share competences. Such is the case of support to municipalities in both territories. Exchanges in this field in particular, may also take place, since regions in certain countries in Latin America share roles with Spanish or Italian provinces.

#### 4.3. Involvement of national governments in regions' PDC relations

Relations established between regions in the EU and Latin America may also be accompanied by certain links between the national governments in both geographical areas. Below we will present different situations by means of examples identified by the ODC.

Relations between municipalities in Latin America and regions in the EU imply important disparities in terms of competences or political relevance. It also happens that the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and the population of some European regions can equal or surpass that in certain countries in LA, especially in Central America. In these cases, it may happen that the role of Latin American national governments gains importance when their municipalities receive the assistance of European regions. This may well be the case of the support provided by the Junta de Andalucía in order to further urbanise as well as encourage production-oriented infrastructures in the municipality of Chirilagua (El Salvador), as a response to the catastrophe caused by Hurricane Mitch (1998). On that occasion the Junta de Andalucía (Andalusian government) provided over 6.5 million € and the government of El Salvador was obviously involved in the assistance. In this case, the Junta de Andalucía is an institution with political capacity to establish relations with national governments in Central America, as it arises from the meeting held in Seville, in

<sup>11</sup> | According to information collected by the ODC, nine Autonomous Communities have a division of cooperation for development that reports to the Social Affairs Department, while in the remaining eight cases, it is a part of the Presidency and/or the Foreign Relations

<sup>12</sup> | Refer to the article by Nicolás Moret in this Yearbook.

October 2005, when the president of Andalusia received the presidents of the above mentioned geographical area and offered support in these countries' integration processes.

Other times, bilateral relations between two countries provide a framework to hold relations between regional governments in Latin America and the EU in agreement with the corresponding national governments. This is the case of the agreement between the Italian regions of The Marche, Umbria, Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna with the government of Brazil, which constitutes the grounds to establish relations with certain Brazilian states. The participation of the Italian government in this agreement was essential, and it was followed by a further agreement, this time a bilateral one, between the two national governments, in order to foster decentralised cooperation relations between both countries.<sup>13</sup> By means of example, we could also cite the case of the co-development initiative currently operating between the Provincial Government of Cañar (Ecuador) and the Region of Murcia (Spain). In this case, Murcia's involvement originated through its connection with the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI) (Spanish Agency for International Cooperation). A similar third example could be the technical support provided by the Institut d'Estratègia Turística (INESTUR) of the Balear Government in order to carry out a market research, and to promote and develop tourism in the Municipality of Armenia. These activities originated in an agreement signed in 2006, between that Spanish region and the Presidential Agency for Social Action and International Cooperation of the Republic of Colombia.

<sup>13</sup> | See Gildo Baraldi's article in this Yearbook.

## 5. Conclusions

As we have demonstrated throughout this article, regions in Latin America and the EU provide relevant singularities when PDC relations are compared to practices at other institutional levels. These singularities depend not only on the financial and technical capacity they are able to offer in their foreign relations, but also on the political power gained by widely managing and representing large territories, which are highly populated and economically active. As we have seen in this article, this same capacity may lead them to serve as interlocutors of, or act as a focal point for, national governments.

The first thing we have noticed is the need for further efforts to be made so that regions can benefit from the possibilities offered by the networks as spaces for establishing relations between multiple actors. Although a few initiatives are arising in this field, they are still scarce and far from getting municipalities to use these possibilities to their full potential. In this respect, we suggest reading of the article by Rainer Rothfus in this Yearbook, where he demonstrates that the effort to coordinate a network may be similar or even lower than that needed to invest in the improvement of specific territories.

Bilateral relations provide a more privileged space for relations than those mentioned before. The great concentration of relations between countries in the Southern Cone in Latin America and the so called Arco Latino in Europe are some of its most important characteristics. Consequently, there is still an important number of regional governments that have not started or completed a certain global-

ization process, and thus still have not profited from its benefits. This group of countries are found in both regions in Latin America and the EU.

Besides, we have seen regions are also having contacts with the national governments of the countries they establish partnerships with. We suggest reading the article by Jean Bossuyt in this Yearbook, to learn about proposals for guidelines for the relations between both government levels.

Last, we would like to point that, apart from the multiple benefits that relations exclusively established between regions may pro-

vide, there are also interesting possibilities for establishing partnerships at other administrative levels. For instance, European regions may find that associations or groups of municipalities can be partners with which to establish institutional relations that improve their programmes to support local governments or to provide wider territorial frameworks (especially in rural areas) than those relations with a single municipality can offer. Likewise, regions in Latin America may find that intermediate levels of administration in Europe, can be partners to exchange common problems, policies for the support of municipalities in their territory, something Spanish and Italian provinces are excellent at.

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# *Policies and instruments from eu member states and the commission in support of decentralised cooperation: a comparative analysis*

Jean Bossuyt \*

### KEY WORDS

Inter-municipalism |  
Mancommunities |  
Decentralization |  
Territorial development |  
Decentralised co-operation |

*LD*ecentralised cooperation between sub-national levels of governments is an expanding phenomenon.. A wide variety of motivations push local governments to establish bilateral relations or to engage in networks. The resulting partnerships take different forms, reflecting diverging levels of ambition and capacity.

Whether the full potential of decentralised cooperation can be tapped will primarily depend on the participating municipalities. They have the main responsibility to show that this approach has an added value and can deliver concrete outcomes. However, decentralised cooperation is not operating in a vacuum. Other players can influence (positively or negatively) its shape and evolution. This holds particularly true for national governments from the EU, many of whom have recently launched specific programmes in support of decentralised cooperation.

This article seeks to better understand how national governments from the UE influence or relate to the decentralised cooperation initiatives of their local/regional governments in Latin America. The purpose is to shed light on the ‘multilevel relations’ that exist between both set of actors; on the policies and instruments used; and on future challenges to be addressed in order to ensure that national governments support rather than hamper autonomous forms of decentralised co-operation\*.

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### 1. Introduction

Over the past decade, local governments have emerged as ‘actors’ in development. Fuelled by democratisation and decentralisation processes, new space has been created for local governments to participate in policy processes -as institutions with a distinct identity as well as specific roles and responsibilities. Their contribution to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, for instance, is now widely recognised.

Local governments across the world are struggling to occupy the new space; to enhance their legitimacy (as democratic institutions) and to demonstrate their added value (compared to central governments, civil society organisations or the private sector). Many of them have also sought to develop their own international co-operation policies. This is reflected, amongst others, in the growing popularity of decentralised-cooperation activities. The phenomenon of ‘decentralised co-operation’ (DC), understood as the co-operation between sub-national levels of government, is rapidly gaining momentum. Data collected by Sarraute Sainz (2007) show that DC between municipalities from the European Union (UE) and Latin America (LA) represents a rich tapestry of relations, woven around political, economic, technical and cultural exchanges and involving growing levels of funding.

The appearance of a new set of (decentralised) government actors has challenged traditional ways of doing international co-operation (usually reserved to central governments). Partly

as a result of effective advocacy work by representative local government structures, official parties have (timidly) started to integrate local governments into their overall co-operation policies. Opportunities for dialogue with local governments are gradually expanding at various levels (national, regional and global). International co-operation agreements have created openings for local governments to participate in dialogue processes and to access funding for activities in which they have a comparative advantage<sup>1</sup>. This integration process into mainstream co-operation is still ongoing and far from being completed<sup>2</sup>.

The emergence of local governments in international cooperation has led several EU Member States to engage with these new actors<sup>3</sup>, including through support schemes specifically designed to encourage decentralised cooperation between autonomous municipalities.

This article focuses on these policy initiatives in favour of DC, emanating from national governments. The purpose is to examine the various policies and instruments through which national governments from the UE influence or relate to the DC programmes of their local/regional governments in Latin America. This analysis may help to shed some light on the type of ‘multilevel relations’ that exist between both set of actors.

The paper is structured as follows. The next section will briefly consider the ‘demand-side’ for DC, i.e. the extent to which municipalities from the EU and Latin America have articulated a clear vision on DC towards their respective national

<sup>1</sup> | This is the case, for instance, with the revised Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries (2005), at this stage the most advanced cooperation framework with regard to local governments.

<sup>2</sup> | Current international cooperation strategies emphasise the critical importance of the “local level” in the development process. In practice, however, much remains to be done to recognize the central position of local governments in local development processes. It is equally not clear how best to integrate local governments in new aid delivery mechanisms such as budget support or in the ongoing process of aid harmonization in the framework of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

<sup>3</sup> | Besides support for DC (to be implemented by local governments), national governments from the EU are also increasingly investing in various capacity building programmes related to decentralisation and local governments (to be implemented by bilateral aid agencies). These support programmes are not considered in this article.



governments. Section 3 will provide a comparative analysis of the ‘supply-side’, i.e. the current response strategies by a selected group of EU national governments. It will focus in particular on the various policies and instruments put in place by EU Member States and the EC in support of direct DC activities between European and Latin American municipalities. Section 4 will reflect on the adequacy of these support strategies in terms of helping to achieve the full potential of DC and identify some key challenges for strengthening the multilevel relations between central and local government actors in DC.

## 2. The demand-side with regard to decentralised co-operation

Before looking at the response strategies from EU Member states (i.e. “what support are donor agencies willing to provide in support of DC?”) it is useful to briefly examine the concept of DC displayed by local governments from the EU and LA when engaging with international aid agencies (i.e. “what type of DC programmes have local governments sought to promote?”).

This is important because the quality of the demand side from local governments with regard to DC is likely to affect the response strategies of national governments from the EU<sup>4</sup>. In front of a solid DC concept one may expect greater leniency from official aid agencies to respect the specific nature and modus operandi of municipal international cooperation programmes.

The focus on the demand-side leads us to consider following questions:

- To what extent have local governments from the EU and LA articulated a clear and consistent vision on DC as an innovative tool for international co-operation?

- To what extent have local governments been able to demonstrate that DC produces a real added value (compared to aid channelled through central governments or civil society organisations)?

- To what extent have local governments been successful in pleading for appropriate support modalities that are consistent with the specific needs of decentralised cooperation processes?

There are no easy answers to these questions, partly because DC is still a relatively young and rapidly evolving phenomenon, whose dynamics, multiple manifestations and modalities have not yet been properly documented let alone analysed in depth. Some caution is therefore required when assessing a “moving target” like DC between European and Latin American municipalities.

Despite these limitations some broad observations can be made with regard to the ‘demand side’ for DC. They may help to better understand the broader context in which response strategies from EU national governments with regard to DC are shaped and evolve over time.

### 2.1. Articulating a clear vision on DC as an innovative tool

Cooperation between sub-national governments has gained momentum in recent years. This holds true in the context of EU-

LA relations as well. The Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (ODC, 2006) has identified 980 bilateral relations between sub-national governments from the EU and LA, involving a total amount of 1.136 public institutions.

A wide variety of motivations push local governments to engage in this type of partnerships. The search for cooperation may originate from historic and human ties (e.g. linked to migration from the EU to LA). Most often municipal partnerships are driven by development objectives, expressing ties of solidarity in the fight against poverty. Or they can reflect the internationalisation agenda of regions and cities (a form of DC often limited to larger cities). In addition to this, local governments increasingly participate in multi-actor DC networks (or “redes”) with a view to share knowledge and good practices on how to manage territories and promote social cohesion.

In the field, DC adopts a multiplicity of forms, reflecting diverging levels of ambition, maturity and capacity among participating municipalities. Under the concept of ‘decentralised cooperation’ one can find a huge diversity of practices, including DC programmes that concentrate on providing funding for civil society projects<sup>5</sup> as well as examples of ‘direct’ DC, whereby local governments develop a full-fledged policy for external action in the framework of their own competencies.

The latter form of ‘direct’ DC between sub-national levels of government, acting as autonomous agents, is particularly relevant for our analysis. The main characteristic of this type of co-operation is that local authorities

play the lead role in the programming and implementation of activities, without being dependent on agendas/instructions from central governments or donor agencies.

The concept of DC, used in these new-style programmes, goes far beyond the traditional concept of twinning arrangements that long characterised co-operation between municipalities with their focus on project aid, funding and ad hoc exchanges. Direct DC emphasises the need to construct more egalitarian, long-term partnerships between municipalities with a view to tackling common agendas through structured, reciprocal exchanges. The main features of this DC approach are summarised in Box 1 below.

Presented like this, DC constitutes an attractive instrument with important development potential. It focuses on enabling and empowering local governments to assume their core responsibilities in managing territories and ensuring social cohesion. It also claims that collaboration between municipalities can be a powerful and effective way to build institutional capacity.

This broader vision on DC should also appeal to multilateral and bilateral agencies that are keen to invest substantial resources in decentralisation, local governance and local development. The success of these programmes will depend, to a large extent, on the existence of democratic, strong, effective and participatory local governments on the ground. This is where DC comes in. If properly supported, DC could be an effective cooperation tool to enable local governments to become the motor of local development processes.

<sup>4</sup>| *Pretty much the same happened with the European NGO-community when they tried to carve out space for civil society action in European development policy during the late 1970s. All along the process the NGOs fiercely defended, with varying levels of success, the principle of autonomy (from central government) and related right to receive support for their ‘own initiatives’.*

<sup>5</sup>| *According to Malé (2006) it is estimated that 78% of the cooperation promoted by the autonomous regions in Spain consists of subsidies for NGOs to carry out local development projects.*



### Box 1 : | The main building blocks of direct decentralised cooperation

- *Local governments as protagonists:* DC is all about co-operation between decentralised public authorities, representing elected institutions, embedded in the locality and responsible for a set of public functions in a given territory.
- *Shared local agendas:* DC starts from the premise that in an increasingly globalising world, local governments from the EU and Latin America share similar challenges in terms of socio-economic development of their territories. This ‘community of interests’ makes it possible to develop reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships over a longer period, based on exchanges of competencies and know-how. This is the real added value of direct DC (as opposed to the mere transfer of resources).
- *Catalyst role:* DC goes beyond the implementation of a set of development projects. Its value and specificity lies in its capacity to act as a catalyst of local development processes, orchestrated by local governments acting as ‘motor’ and bringing together the various public and private actors in a given territory.
- *Institutional agenda:* the primary aim of DC is to strengthen the democratic governance and institutional capacity of local governments. This includes enhancing local government capacity to deliver municipal services; to foster social cohesion in the territory; to broaden the resource base; and to promote active citizenship.<sup>6</sup>
- *Building alliances:* local governments in both the EU and LA face the common challenge of ensuring that their voice is heard at national, regional and global levels. This, in turn, puts a premium on networking among municipalities with a view to ensuring that local interests can be adequately defended in the broader framework of regionalisation and globalisation processes.

## 2.2. Major gap between policy discourse and practice

Expressing a clear vision is a necessary yet not sufficient condition to promote DC. Local governments also need to show that this approach can deliver concrete outcomes with a clear added value compared to other actors and channels for aid delivery.

However, demonstrating the added value of DC approaches has proven to be a rather difficult job. The move from ad hoc twinning approaches to reciprocal DC partnerships represents a bold step forward. It entails a profound transformation of the nature of DC, a new management culture as well as innovative implementation modalities. Not

surprisingly, local governments in both regions have still a long way to go before this new vision on DC is effectively translated into practice.

According to Husson (2007) only a limited number of DC relations are currently based on a more egalitarian approach and seek to embrace the broader political and institutional agenda of building responsive and effective local governments. Most of the DC partnerships still remain strongly focused on promoting (ad hoc) human contacts, facilitating intercultural exchanges or supporting local development projects (following a traditional donor-recipient relationship)<sup>7</sup>.

This gap between discourse and practice should not be surprising. First, old habits die hard.

<sup>6</sup>| *The direct involvement of European municipalities in projects and partnerships can be a mobilising factor at home (of people, expertise and funding) while broadening the political support base for international cooperation as well as promoting active citizenship.*

<sup>7</sup>| *This is a risky path to follow as experience suggests that this type of project-related cooperation generally produces limited added value and is often less effective than similar projects carried out by professional development organizations like CSOs. It also ties local governments from the south in aid-dependent relations.*

The heritage of traditional twinning arrangements will not disappear overnight. On both sides, the ‘aid syndrome’ remains dominant in policies, practices and attitudes. For LA governments DC is often perceived as a ‘financial window’<sup>8</sup>.

Time, experimentation and ongoing learning are required for municipalities to gradually make the shift to more structured forms of DC, focused on institutional development (rather than simply funding a set of projects) and a genuine reciprocal exchange (benefiting the two sides).

Second, there is still limited evidence of impact achieved with more structured direct DC initiatives. The Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation has made valuable conceptual contributions related to the potential impact of DC programmes. Malé (2006) argues that (direct) DC programmes can have a beneficial impact on (i) the quality of local policies; (ii) the agendas of national and regional authorities (e.g. national decentralisation policies); (iii) global changes (e.g. with regard to the role of municipalities in global governance or the active involvement of citizens).

Yet the challenge in the years to come will be to produce hard evidence on “what works and what doesn’t work” in DC with regard to the key features that constitute its added-value.<sup>9</sup> Demonstrating impact in areas of comparative advantage is crucial for promoting DC as an “indispensable instrument” to be integrated in mainstream EU-LA cooperation processes<sup>10</sup>.

## 2.3. Claiming space for direct DC processes

The international cooperation system is a relatively closed shop, with its own rules, working methods and procedures. It is a field occupied by a multitude of players and specialised organisations that are often in competition for roles and access to funding. Initially, it was not evident at all for ‘newcomers’ such as public decentralised authorities –with a limited exposure to and expertise in development matters- to move into this arena and to find a ‘niche’ guaranteeing a meaningful participation. If anything, local governments were seen as ‘intruders’ with an uncertain status (squeezed between central governments and civil society organisations) and an unclear added value.

In order to clarify their role and place in this multi-actor cooperation system, local governments from across the EU sought to engage in dialogue processes with their national governments. Generally spearheaded by national associations, the aim of the dialogue was to agree on ways and means for a smooth and effective integration of local governments in the existing cooperation system. In the process, a clear demand was formulated for putting in place a funding mechanism for supporting (direct) DC activities between municipalities.

Experiences of local governments with the organisation of such a dialogue vary across the EU. In most cases, however, this proved a rather bumpy ride. Part of the problem in several EU countries is the lack of tradition of working together. Several EU donor agencies

<sup>8</sup>| *This narrow vision of DC is well captured in the perception that links the performance of mayors to the number of municipal international cooperation agreements they have been able to conclude.*

<sup>9</sup>| *In terms of promoting (i) institutional change processes within local governments; (ii) reciprocal exchanges on core municipal competencies; (iii) the involvement of a wide variety of actors and stakeholders from both sides; (iv) long-term partnership (beyond projects).*

<sup>10</sup>| *See the Declaration of Guatemala, adopted at the IIe Annual Conference of the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation UE-LA, point 16.*



display limited familiarity with the specific world of local governments while the latter struggle to get acquainted with the intricacies, technical requirements and accountability demands of the cooperation system.

More fundamentally, the debate in the various EU countries tends to gravitate on the level of autonomy to be granted to local authorities when engaging in municipal international cooperation. From the perspective of EU local government associations, a primary concern has been to claim space for the development and consolidation of genuine direct DC processes, thus allowing municipalities to construct over time partnerships with a clear added value.

This brief analysis of the ‘demand-side’ for direct DC reveals that local governments are increasingly doing their homework by (i) articulating a clear vision on direct DC as a specific cooperation approach with a clear added value; (ii) acknowledging the challenges that local governments themselves need to address in order to tap the full potential of DC; (iii) making concrete proposals for organising the multilevel relations with national governments from the EU.

### 3. The policies and instruments of national governments of the EU

This section considers the overall response strategies of EU national governments and the EC with regard to the DC processes in which European municipalities engage (in particular with their Latin American counterparts). It addresses questions such as: How have national governments reacted to the emergence of decentralised public authorities as ‘new actors’ in cooperation processes? To what extent do they recognize the specific value of ‘direct’ cooperation between municipalities? What efforts were made to support, complement and strengthen the DC initiatives between local governments in the EU and LA? What

policies and instruments were put in place to that effect? To what extent have they sought to mobilise local government capacities for achieving their own official development objectives?

#### 3.1. A diverse and evolving set of response strategies

The autonomous action of local governments as new players in international cooperation has gradually acquired greater visibility and legitimacy. As a result, most EU national governments recognised –albeit at different speeds and levels of intensity– the right of local governments to develop an external action.

Various European countries have sought to orient, encourage and/or coordinate the policies of DC activities of their sub-national authorities. EU Member States such as Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the UK have set up funding mechanisms in support of DC. Multilateral agencies also provided incentives to foster direct DC. Relevant examples include ‘horizontal’ programmes such as the EU-supported URB-AL initiative or the Cities Alliances launched by the World Bank. Both schemes focus on promoting effective exchange and networking among municipalities.

At this stage, the programmes established by EU Member States in support of direct DC mobilise relatively modest amounts of funding<sup>11</sup>. Yet they are of strategic importance for three main reasons. First, these support programmes make it possible to establish a formal ‘connection’ between the autonomous DC initiatives of local governments and the official cooperation system. Second, they represent the point of departure for organising the multilevel relations between national governments and sub-national authorities involved in decentralised cooperation.

The nature of this relationship, the role division between both set of players and the modalities of collaboration are still subject to debate. These support programmes provide a ‘laboratory’ to test out innovative modalities of direct DC which make it possible to realise the full potential of the instrument. Third, national programmes in support to DC can be a trigger to gradually mainstream local government participation in the overall cooperation processes supported by national governments (e.g. in the formulation of development strategies; in social sectors; in governance programmes; in budget support schemes). At present, this articulation is still very weak, including at the level of the EC.

Diversity characterises the situation in various EU countries with regard to DC. If we look at both the maturity of local governments in DC matters and the intensity of response strategies from national governments, we can broadly distinguish four types of situations:

- Countries which combine a long-standing tradition of direct DC (emanating from local authorities) with relatively solid response strategies from national governments (e.g. France).
- Countries (of a federal nature) with regions that have developed a dynamic set of DC activities involving substantial resources (e.g. Italy, Spain) but where the scope of national programmes in support of DC is limited.
- Countries where setting-up DC activities in the South is a relative novelty for both local governments and official agencies (e.g. the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Sweden)
- Countries with restrictive policies towards local governments willing to engage in international cooperation (e.g. Luxemburg)

However, this is not a static process: the response strategies of EU national governments towards DC tend to evolve over time and develop into more solid, comprehensive and multi-dimensional schemes.

A basic pattern can thus be observed in the evolutionary path of DC programmes. The ‘first generation’ of national programmes in support of DC, which saw the daylight in the 1990s, generally had limited objectives; a rather restricted focus; a preference for project approaches; and a quite rigid monitoring and accountability system (inherited from the traditional aid system). This reflected the need for experimentation and learning at this initial stage –as well as some mistrust of central bureaucracies towards the implementation capacities of local governments.

The ‘second generation’ of national support programmes tends to have more ambitious institutional development objectives; a broader scope of activities (e.g. by adding the possibility for networking); a preference for ‘process approaches’; some greater degree of flexibility in implementation modalities; as well as a growing institutionalisation of the dialogue between the parties involved.

The approaches of national governments towards DC are in a constant flux. This, in turn, puts an additional premium on exploring in greater detail the policies and instruments by which national governments seek to influence or relate to the DC initiatives undertaken by their sub-national authorities.

#### 3.2. The key policy features of national programmes in support of DC

The first task at hand is to have a closer look at the various policy frameworks devel-

<sup>11</sup> | Certainly in comparison with the resources mobilized by local/regional governments themselves in some EU Member States (e.g. Spain and Italy).

oped by national governments to support DC. A possible approach to assess the adequacy of these national policies is to use an analytical framework, based on a limited number of generic criteria (covering key dimensions of DC) with a set of indicators for each criterion.

Seven criteria are proposed to look more closely at national DC policies and programmes:

***Criterion 1:  
Existence of a clear legal  
and institutional framework***

This constitutes a first parameter to assess the solidity of national policies in support of DC. It indicates the degree of recognition of the principle of local autonomy with regard to developing an external action. It may also help to understand why national governments are interested in supporting DC. Four indicators seem relevant in this context:

- The right of local governments to engage autonomously in international cooperation activities is legally recognised
- The specific role and added value of local governments has been defined and integrated in the national laws that regulate the international cooperation policies of the country
- The rationale for government support to DC is clearly expressed (e.g. is the motivation primarily linked to development objectives? or embedded in broader foreign policy considerations? linked to commercial interests?)
- There is a structured dialogue between central government agencies and local governments on the role and place of DC in the overall external action and cooperation policies of the country.

***Criterion 2:  
What are the objectives pursued  
in DC-supported activities?***

The issue here is to understand what national programmes in support of DC seek to achieve. Has the programme a rather narrow focus (e.g. limited to financing aid projects as an expression of north-south solidarity). Or, on the contrary, is the ambition to activate the full potential of the DC approach as a specific tool, driven by local governments and providing a distinct added value compared to other cooperation instruments?

Possible indicators include the relative importance attached to the following (mix of) objectives in DC initiatives:

- Contribution to key development objectives (such as the direct fight against poverty)
- Institutional development and empowerment of local governments from the south
- Promotion of local governance (including a strong focus on ensuring the effective participation of civil society)
- Institutional development and empowerment of local governments from the north (EU) to help them defining progressive international cooperation policies and promoting active global citizenship

***Criterion 3:  
What is the underlying cooperation model?***

This criterion is closely linked to the previous parameter of DC objectives. It aims at looking at the fundamental cooperation philosophy that underpins the action of national governments in support of DC.

Three indicators may help to grasp (and distinguish) the underlying models used by national governments:

- Extent to which the programme sees local governments as autonomous actors

- Extent to which the programme follows an ‘aid logic’ based on donor-recipient relations or rather seeks to promote reciprocal relations among peer institutions confronted with similar challenges

- Extent to which the programme adopts a ‘top-down’ approach (with national governments largely in command) or a ‘bottom-up approach’ (by supporting spontaneous dynamics emanating from local governments themselves)

- Extent to which the programme allows DC partnerships to be ‘constructed’ over time (based on a proper diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities; broad-based dialogue processes; the joint definition of common agendas and realistic action plans, etc.)

***Criterion 4:  
What modalities of DC are prioritised?***

The issue at stake in this fourth criterion is the extent to which the national funding schemes respect the specificity of direct DC. In practice, this means two things. First, it implies targeting support to those areas where the DC instrument has a unique added value. Second, it requires support to be provided through appropriate modalities that are consistent with the DC processes one seeks to stimulate.

Experience suggests that DC has clear limitations when it comes to tackling major development problems of a structural nature that require action at the national level or the mobilisation of vast resources (e.g. the fight against poverty reduction). The comparative advantage of DC rather lies in the consolidation of democratic governance at local level and the related empowerment of local governments –as sovereign political institutions with legally enshrined responsibilities. Hence, rather than focusing the DC support on broad objec-

tives such as poverty reduction, a case can be made to orient DC support rather to strengthening municipal capacity and promoting local governance.

This, in turn, has major implications for the modalities of DC to be prioritised in national programmes. There is no need to simply replicate the traditional aid modalities used in official cooperation processes (e.g. such as the instrument of the call for proposals). The task at hand is rather to create space for innovative modalities that facilitate a full and flexible integration of DC activities into the organic functioning of local governments. These can include partnership agreements; long-term twinning agreements; establishment of (multi-actor) networks; a cooperation agreement focusing on exchanges without a formal project attached to it, etc.

Building on this logic, the following indicators seem relevant:

- Degree of alignment of DC modalities with the political, institutional and budgetary processes of local governments
- Adequacy of DC procedures attached to the subsidies (i.e. to what extent are the conditions to obtain funds as well as the monitoring, evaluation, reporting and accountability requirements adapted to needs and capacities of local governments?)
- Space available for developing/testing out innovative DC modalities

***Criterion 5:  
Degree of preservation of local autonomy***

Direct decentralisation cooperation hinges on the principle of safeguarding (and reinforcing) the principle of local autonomy. Whether national support programmes are

in line with this fundamental tenet can be checked by looking at indicators such as:

- Extent to which the choice of partners can be done autonomously

- Extent to which geographic limitations are imposed

- Extent to which thematic limitations are imposed

- Extent to which conditions and limitations are imposed on the use of resources<sup>12</sup>

**Criterion 6:**  
*Incentives provided to engage in genuine DC processes*

This criterion raises the issue of the role to be played by national governments in the promotion of direct DC. Different options are possible. National governments can limit their involvement to the creation of a funding mechanism and to ensuring its effective administration according to the rules, methods and procedures of the aid system. Or they can adopt a more pro-active approach and create incentives for local governments to engage in genuine DC processes.

Possible indicators for pro-active approaches to supporting DC include:

- Extent to which the national programme provides strategic orientations and incentives for an integrated ('holistic') DC approach

- Extent to which efforts are made to create synergies/coordinate DC initiatives

- Extent to which space is created for the development -by local governments themselves- of adequate instruments and management tools

- Extent to which smart systems for quality control and joint learning are put in place

- Extent to which national associations are supported to facilitate the involvement (and capacity building) of participating municipalities

**Criterion 7:**  
*Opportunities to create linkages with overall cooperation processes*

While it is important to recognise the specificity of direct DC, it is also critical to ensure that this instrument is not operating in splendid isolation from mainstream cooperation processes. Ideally, national policies in support of DC make it possible to create linkages/coordination with other instruments and allow for a cross-fertilisation of experiences and practices.

Hence, the following indicators could be considered:

- Extent to which the national programme provides incentives to local governments to link up or join forces with other municipalities and public/private actors

- Extent to which the expertise of local governments, obtained through DC, is mobilised/used in other relevant processes (e.g. in bilateral or multilateral support programmes to national decentralisation processes).

- Extent to which space is created for local governments to participate more meaningfully in the formulation and implementation of national and sectoral development strategies

It is not possible in the scope of this article to apply this analytical framework to all EU Member States. Hence, a selection will be made on the basis of two key elements: (i) the existence of an interesting policy framework towards DC; (ii) the possibility of funding DC partnerships in Latin America<sup>13</sup>. On this basis, it is proposed to examine more closely the policy frameworks of Belgium, France, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, and Sweden. This analysis will be complemented with the DC support provided by the EC as a supranational agency through the URB-AL programme.

The comparative analysis will focus on the most salient features of the various policies and programmes developed by these national governments in response to the myriad of DC initiatives undertaken by their various sub-national authorities.

**Belgium**

Belgian municipalities are legally entitled to engage in external action. However, the interest of the federal government to support DC is fairly recent and primarily grounded in (rather narrowly defined) development objectives. Mainly as a result of pressures from local governments and their associations, a first programme in support of municipal international cooperation was initiated in 2000. It was typically a DC programme of the 'first generation' reflecting the lack of familiarity of all actors with this type of instruments. Conceived

as an annual programme with a limited budget, the focus was primarily on supporting municipalities in the south with training and small investment projects. The underlying cooperation model was strongly embedded in the aid logic, geared towards poverty reduction and based on a donor-recipient relation. Management was decentralised to the associations yet these had to operate within the framework of traditional aid methodologies and procedures, resulting in a lack of flexibility, bureaucracy and huge efforts for participating municipalities. Initial evaluations clearly demonstrated the limited added value of this type of ad hoc, project-related interventions.

Timidly, a dialogue was started with the various associations to explore more promising avenues to support DC initiatives. This finally led to the development of a new, multi-annual facility for municipal international cooperation (2008-2012). It includes DC programmes in several Latin American countries (e.g. Nicaragua, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala, Haïti, Suriname). In several ways, the new programme represents a qualitative jump focusing on a more result-oriented approach. The programme creates more space (i) to focus primarily on the governance and institutional development objectives underlying direct DC; (ii) to adopt a 'bottom-up' approach, starting from the needs of local governments while promoting the construction of reciprocal DC partnerships over time; (iii) to create synergies between DC initiatives and promote coordination, especially in partner countries; (iv) to support national associations in managing the scheme in a qualitative manner.

However, much progress still remains to be done on other dimensions of the proposed analytical model. There is clearly a need to institutionalise a more solid policy dialogue allow-

<sup>12</sup>| For a concrete illustration one can refer to a point of discussion in the Belgian municipal cooperation programme: should all the resources be used for local government strengthening or should partners be allowed to allocate part of the subsidy to ensuring civil society participation in the municipal partnership with a view to foster local governance?

<sup>13</sup>| The Finnish government has been developing a policy framework in support of DC. However, it imposes a geographic concentration of municipal partnerships on Africa.



ing for joint learning and policy development. There is a tendency to confine DC to local government capacity building and to exclude investments in local civil society with a view to improve ‘local governance’. There is no room in the federal programme<sup>14</sup> for institutional development on matters of international cooperation in Belgian municipalities. The scope for integrated process approaches to DC remains rather limited. The pressure to strictly follow rather rigid aid tools (e.g. logic frameworks largely based on outputs) and reporting models reduces the scope for flexible programming and process-oriented output. There are important limitations on local autonomy, resulting from instructions with regard to geographic and thematic concentration as well as limitations in the use of the subsidy. Opportunities to link DC with other cooperation processes are limited and/or not yet optimally explored.

For the participating associations the main expectation is to use this new programme to gradually expand the scope for genuine, reciprocal DC processes and to develop a much more solid partnership with the national government on how to fully exploit the potential of direct DC in the overall cooperation process.

## France

From the various EU countries considered in this article, France undoubtedly has the longest tradition and experience with engaging in DC. Since the 1970s, French local and regional authorities have been developing DC activities with their counterparts in the South, based on the idea of direct cooperation between municipalities and territories. This long history of DC involvement is interesting. It makes it possible to follow the evolution of the instrument over time and to make comparisons with

the trajectories followed by EU Member States with a more recent involvement in DC.

In many ways, France can be considered as a precursor in DC. Like in other EU countries, DC started with traditional (aid-oriented) twinning arrangements (e.g. the programmes aimed at providing aid to Sahelian municipalities during the food crisis). Over time, they evolved into more structured partnerships of direct ‘institutional cooperation’ between municipalities. These focused on the transfer/exchange of competences and were developed in various regions of the world (including Latin America).

The national government gradually took interest in these ‘bottom-up’ DC activities. A legal framework for the external action of municipalities was put in place in 1992 and refined in 2007. Several national programmes in support of DC succeeded each other. Their financial resources are relatively modest compared to the demands and the funds generated by French local and regional authorities themselves. However, a peculiarity of the French system is the high degree of political mobilisation around DC and, closely related to this, the fairly sophisticated institutional framework put in place to ensure dialogue between the various stakeholders involved. This includes a ‘Commission Nationale de la Coopération Décentralisée’ (CNCD), acting as a multi-actor policy forum. The local government world is equally well-structured and supported by professional associations (e.g. Cités Unies France) that seek to promote coordinated action (especially at country level). Users-friendly guides on DC are available and regularly updated.

This institutional set-up allows for an ongoing debate on how to improve the

quality of DC interventions. It also facilitates the integration of DC in the overall French cooperation system. This may help to explain why the new programme in support of DC for the period 2007-2009 (endowed with a budget of 17 million euro) contains a number of interesting innovations. The programme will be managed through various calls for institutional development projects. The subsidies have been calculated in function of priority criteria which seek (i) to privilege projects carried out by several local governments; (ii) to ensure an optimal ‘trigger’ effect of the subsidy; (iii) to encourage the participation of the youth in the activities; (iv) to foster linkages with other donor agencies. The programme focuses on themes where DC is seen to have a comparative advantage (institutional development; local governance; sustainable development). The quality requirements of the scheme are likely to exclude many ‘non-professional’ DC actors – all the more as actions in social sectors are not considered unless they constitute an action of institutional capacity building). There is also a search to establish partnerships (based on contractual relations) between the State and the local governments.

The system put in place by the French government fits rather well in the analytical framework above. It reflects the relative maturity of both decentralised public authorities and French DC support policies. It also illustrates how DC is gradually becoming part and parcel of the overall foreign and cooperation policy of the government. This is not always evident, as many French local authorities are very keen to safeguard their autonomy and somehow reluctant to be integrated in French cooperation policy. On the other hand, a city receiving subsidies from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now obliged to declare how much resources they put in the balance. These figures are added to French development aid.

## Italy

Decentralised cooperation is a dynamic reality in Italy, actively promoted by a variety of sub-national authorities (regions, provinces and local governments). In recent years, the phenomenon has been evolving both in quantitative and qualitative terms. Particularly the regions have become key players. They express a keen interest to engage in DC partnerships with Latin America (the third priority region after the Balkans and the Mediterranean). According to Izzo and Stocchiero (2007) one can observe a broadening of the objectives underlying the engagement in DC activities. The initial aim to contribute to the fight against poverty has been superseded by broader motivations. These include the desire (particularly from the regions) to “internationalise the territory” and to conduct activities of “para-diplomacy”. As a result, DC is increasingly embedded in the external policy of sub-national entities. This may create new opportunities to activate the various dimensions of DC (e.g. institutional development; local economic development; social cohesion) and to better mobilise the range of actors that may have a stake in DC at different levels. The Achilles heel of the Italian DC system is the huge fragmentation of interventions. The focus on local autonomy has led to DC approaches which tend to be self-centred. Levels of horizontal coordination between the various DC players remain very weak.

For a long time, the national government has been following the DC processes of sub-national governments in a fundamentally ‘reactive’ way (Izzo and Stocchiero). In recent years, however, there is evidence of a growing involvement on the side of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A key concern thereby is to better articulate the official cooperation provided through bilateral and

<sup>14</sup> | There is also a Flemish programme in support of DC which does include a window in support of building capacity of Flemish municipalities to develop a full-fledged municipal cooperation policy supported by the citizens.

multilateral channels with DC activities undertaken autonomously by regional and local authorities. This objective stands central in these parts of the world where the national government has clear foreign policy interests (e.g. the Balkans and the Mediterranean). Such a drive is obviously less visible in LA, as the region does not have the same weight in foreign policy terms.

Another important feature of the Italian policy is the involvement of decentralised public authorities in the implementation of government programmes. This can be done by entrusting certain cooperation initiatives to sub-national governments (on the basis of specific conventions) or by providing indirect co-financing through framework programmes (to be executed by the government or delegated to international organisations). There is also a growing tendency to match government programmes with financial interventions of sub-national authorities.

It is not evident to apply the analytical framework proposed in this article to the Italian DC policy as there is limited direct support to DC initiatives. The exception is probably the explicit policy objective of the national government to promoting more coordinated approaches at the level of DC activities and ensuring synergies with government initiatives. The system of ‘co-opting’ sub-national authorities to participate in the implementation of government programmes is not to be compared with approaches seeking to promote ‘direct’ cooperation between municipalities.

### **[the] Netherlands**

Municipal international cooperation developed momentum in the 1990s. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Association of Municipalities (VNG) started

collaboration in 1991 and agreed on a first national support programme dedicated to DC in developing countries. The programme would be managed by a VNG International Unit, a special entity created in 1993 and fully integrated within VNG since 2001. The programme had two major objectives: strengthening local governance and broadening the support base for international cooperation in the Netherlands (i.e. promoting ‘global citizenship’). More than hundred Dutch municipalities were involved in the process, including through linkages with Latin American municipalities.

In 2001, an independent evaluation was carried out of this programme. The resulting report, published in 2004, sheds an interesting light on the strengths and weaknesses of ‘first generation’ type of programmes. Five findings are particularly relevant for our analysis. First, effective programme implementation was hampered by a lack of common vision on the essential goals of DC initiatives between the Dutch government, the municipalities and the coordinating agency (VNG International). As a result, the dimension “broadening support in the Netherlands” was largely neglected in an initial phase. Second, while most DC activities were seen to be relevant and had some form of an impact on local governance, the overall effectiveness of the programme suffered from too broad a thematic and geographic coverage. Third, the mobilisation and use of technical expertise (both Dutch civil servants/experts and local/regional sources of knowledge) was less than optimal. Fourth, while all parties were keen to manage the programme in a result-oriented manner, there was no efficient dialogue mechanism to monitor outcomes (according to jointly agreed criteria). Fifth, the specific niche and role of the DC programme in relation to other cooperation instruments (targeting similar objectives) was not clear

Building on these lessons, a new-style DC programme ‘LOGO SOUTH’ was negotiated and agreed upon. The programme started in 2005 and will now run till 2010 with three major components targeted at: (i) municipal international cooperation in a relatively limited set of countries (including in Nicaragua and Suriname) and thematic programmes (on HIV/AIDs, water, waste, citizen participation in local governance); (ii) Association Capacity Building; and (iii) ‘Policy Development’ (geared at stock-taking, learning and innovation).

While the key priority is still improving local governance as a condition for poverty reduction, the operational modalities have been thoroughly reviewed in LOGO SOUTH. The primary aim is to build partnerships between municipalities in the Netherlands and the South, based on a community of interests between actors/experts sharing similar challenges (“colleague to colleague approach”). There is a strong focus on human capacity building, therefore the target groups are local governors (politicians and decision makers) and civil servants (policy-makers and implementers). The programme also seeks to promote south-south exchanges. The new approach is clearly more in line with the ‘direct’ decentralisation cooperation approach. It also fits nicely with several criteria of the proposed analytical model. Particularly interesting is the tool of country programmes, elaborated in a participatory manner and conceived as a framework to ensure focus, coordination and coherence of the various DC initiatives in a given partner country. The geographic and thematic limitations are seen by the Dutch government as a pre-requisite for effectiveness and sustainability.

### **Spain**

In terms of municipal partnerships with Latin America, Spain clearly tops the list. Like

in other EU countries, this type of cooperation initially took the form of twinning arrangements, articulated around ties of political solidarity, cultural cooperation and, incidentally, a transfer of resources. In the early 1990s Spain saw the rise of a broad citizenship movement pushing for the achievement of the UN target of 0.7% of GDP for developing countries. Local and regional governments responded to the call and started to put aside funds for international cooperation. Confronted with their lack of experience in development matters, sub-national governments massively used NGOs to channel these resources to the South. In this DC approach, the role of local governments is limited to dispatch an aid envelope and control the use of funds. This, understandably, did not provide incentives to develop a full-fledged municipal policy for external action.

However, in the mid-1990s cities started to invest in direct forms of DC. These activities were no longer primarily concerned with providing funding but sought to exchange experiences, transfer know-how or build capacity. Particularly in Spain, this process was positively influenced by support programmes initiated by international agencies such as the EU (URBAL) and the World Bank (Cities Alliances).

Over the years, Spanish decentralised cooperation from regional and local authorities has become very dynamic, representing a substantial amount of resources. In this context, it is surprising to note with Fernandez de Losada (2004) the scarcity of linkages are between official cooperation, exercised by the State, and the DC initiatives, undertaken by sub-national authorities. This is even more surprising in the light of the priority given in official Spanish cooperation to institutional development of democratic structures, governance and participation. In practice, the Spanish cooperation agency has tended to develop its own programmes in support to local governance

(through its own experts and procedures). The cooperation with and support to regional and local governments has been “sporadic” at best, despite obvious complementarities, concludes Fernandez de Losada.

Things may be moving, though, with the launch of a new programme called “Municipia” in 2007. The overall purpose of the programme (endowed with 5 million Euro for 2007) is to act as an instrument to ensuring greater coordination and coherence in the efforts made by the various actors involved in municipal cooperation. The programme is still in a design phase so it is difficult to make an assessment of its operational relevance from a DC perspective. Municipia will be managed by staff of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI) in close collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP). Efforts to better integrate sub-national authorities in mainstream external action and cooperation processes of the central government are also undertaken at other levels<sup>15</sup>.

## Sweden

Sweden has a long tradition of local self-government. Local authorities enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy, including for engaging in external action, as reflected in a successful history of twinning arrangements in Central and Eastern Europe. In 1999 the government launched through SIDA a new type of twinning funding for countries in the South, to be administered by SALA-IDA, a specialised agency forming part of the Swedish Association of Local Governments and Regions

(SALAR). This was a pilot project, as Swedish municipalities had very limited exposure to cooperating with counterparts in developing countries. The programme sought to combine the promotion of twinning arrangements with development projects targeting urban poor in a limited set of countries (including Ecuador).

In 2003 the programme was evaluated<sup>16</sup>. Valuable generic lessons can be derived with regard to the multilevel relations between national governments and DC actors. First, the absence of prior twinning arrangements in the South reduced the overall effectiveness of the programme. Time is required to construct municipal partnerships. In the absence of a solid local demand, the development projects were found to be resting on a fragile ownership foundation. The evaluation concluded that the SIDA scheme has “become neither a successful development program nor a good basis for twinning”. Second, the thematic concentration, imposed by the programme, proved inefficient as Swedish municipalities lacked experience of working in slums. Third, the various programmes generally failed to mobilise the inputs from development experts to complement the know-how brought by SALA-IDA and Swedish municipalities. Fourth, there was a major lack of strategic guidance from SIDA—despite the experimental nature of the programme.

As a result of this evaluation a new “Municipal Partnership North-South” was launched in 2005. While it still displays a strong development orientation (on poverty reduction), the programme focuses specifically on (i) creating value-adding cooperation

between local government structures working together as “equal partners”; (ii) establishing long-term relations between society in Sweden and partner countries. This new philosophy is consistent with several criteria of the above mentioned analytical framework. It combines objectives in the South and the North; it seeks to support the construction of long-term partnerships; it relaxes the thematic restrictions to let municipalities identify relevant areas for organising peer exchanges and provides incentives. However, the scheme is strict on geographic concentration (only 10 countries, with Ecuador as sole LA country). It also imposes certain bureaucratic conditions (e.g. one-year grants) which seem incompatible with nurturing long-term processes of institutional change. There is limited evidence that the new programme promotes coordination and cross-fertilisation with other cooperation instruments.

### *URB-AL : An innovative EU programme in support of DC*

It is widely recognised that the EC has been a pioneer in promoting direct DC between European and Latin American municipalities. The main instrument for this has been the URB-AL programme. Initiated in 1995, it functioned for 10 years and involved a wide range of municipalities from LA and the EU (particularly from Spain, Italy and France).

URB-AL proved innovative in many ways. Two features were particularly useful to give a boost to the development of direct DC relations between the two continents. First, the programme sought to respond to the real core challenges shared by municipalities from both the EU and LA in relation to promoting growth, effective service delivery, social

cohesion and participatory approaches within their respective territories. The whole set-up was very demand-driven and decentralised. Second, URB-AL refrained from funding a multitude of traditional DC projects between partner municipalities. Instead, it sought to promote “thematic networks” (or “redes”) involving a multitude of local government actors with a view to exchanging technical expertise and good practices on a broad range of critical issues related to the management of cities and territories. It also allowed for reciprocal relations between municipalities from both continents (e.g. on innovative experiences with promoting local development in LA that could be a source of inspiration for European municipalities).

Independent evaluations and critical reviews confirmed the relevance and positive impact of the programme.<sup>17</sup> A successor programme is currently in the pipeline and may become operational in 2008.

### **3.3. The instruments used in the various programmes**

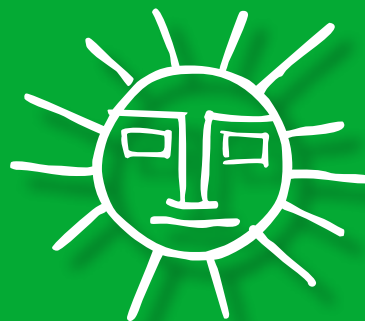
The above (selective) survey clearly shows a growing interest at the level of EU national governments as well as the EC for DC approaches. This resulted in the establishment of several support programmes (at both national and Community level), all of which claimed to be geared at promoting direct DC (or municipal cooperation) in one way or another.

In an initial phase, a wide range of approaches were usually included under the label ‘DC’, including projects executed by NGOs. In recent years, however, most of these support programmes sought to link up more directly with local governments. This suggests that official agencies increasingly ac-

<sup>15</sup> | *There is, for instance, a growing dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces, on ways and means to associate local governments in major dialogue processes such between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean or the “Alliance of Civilisations”, initiated by the government.*

<sup>16</sup> | *Bo Andréasson and Lennart Konigson. SIDA’s Program Twinning Cooperation between Municipalities in Sweden and Countries in the South., 2003*

<sup>17</sup> | *For instance by R. Caballeros Otero. URB-AL : Un caso de cooperacion descentralizada. OCD. Anuario 2006.*





knowledge the specific added value that direct forms of DC can bring to their own cooperation objectives.

This overall policy trend towards direct support to local governments is to be welcomed. However, it may be instructive to also look at the instruments through which these various national DC policies and programmes are put into practice. To what extent is there also a convergence in the instruments used by these different schemes? Such an analysis may help to produce a basic typology of DC programmes according to the ‘menu’ of instruments put at the disposal of local governments.

One possible way to carry out such an instrumental analysis of national policies and programmes in favour of DC is to make a distinction between three types of instruments:

**A|** Traditional DC instruments, i.e. those tools generally associated to the ‘first generation’ of DC programmes, which tend to be largely shaped by development objectives and by the modalities and procedures of the official aid system.

**B|** Innovative DC instruments, i.e. those tools that are emerging in the ‘second generation’ of DC programmes, which focus much more on direct DC between municipalities and seek to put in place new cooperation modalities, better attuned to the needs of municipalities..

**C|** Integration DC instruments, i.e. those tools that seek to incorporate DC actors and approaches in mainstream cooperation processes of national governments. These instruments are not necessarily linked to specific DC programmes but reflect a clear political commitment to associate local governments in the formulation and implementation of the overall external action of a given EU Member State

The table below provides an elaboration of these various instruments while providing some observations and examples

Based on this table it is possible to identify three basic categories of DC programmes, reflecting different ways to organise the ‘multi-level relations’ between national governments and decentralised public authorities.

**Development-oriented DC programmes.** These support programmes increasingly target cooperation between municipalities. Yet they are still firmly embedded in the prevailing aid paradigm (i.e. unilateral transfer of resources or know how). They push forward agendas that are not necessarily shared by municipalities and focus on producing a set of (short-term and measurable) development outcomes. The approaches, working methods and procedures used largely come from the official aid system. All this tends to limit both the scope of the DC activities and the flexibility in implementation. In this scheme, the multi-level relationship between national governments and municipalities is primarily a donor-beneficiary relationship, with limited reciprocity.

**Direct DC programmes** based on a “whole of local government” approach. This type of DC programmes starts from the principle of local autonomy and the related responsibilities for local governments to be the ‘motor’ of local development processes in broad range of policy areas. This includes developing an external action. The primary objective of this category of DC programmes is not achieving project-related development outcomes but to invest in long-term processes of institution building. Local agendas, in all diversity, are supposed to provide the framework for DC activities. Efforts are made to adapt approaches, working methods and procedures used to the specific realities and needs of local governments in various geographic contexts.

In these DC programmes, the role of national governments shifts from an ‘aid manager’ to a ‘partner’. The multi-level relations are more balanced and allow space for dialogue, learning and joint policy development.

**Integrated DC programmes.** These programmes exist when a national government develops both a direct DC programme and a broader policy framework to integrate DC actors in the overall external action and cooperation of the country. In this type of DC programmes, the multi-level relations are likely to be based on a more strategic partnership between national governments and municipalities that goes beyond collaboration in the framework of DC programmes.

Clearly, this is not a watertight categorisation. In practice, one may find hybrid forms of DC programmes. For instance, the ‘development-oriented DC programmes’ may be in the process of testing out some innovative DC instruments, thus preparing the ground for a more ambitious approach when conditions allow.. In a similar vein, national governments may still be tempted to use control-oriented management approaches in ‘direct DC programmes. This reflects the highly dynamic nature of DC policies and related support programmes.

It is equally important to see these different models in the light of prevailing conditions in the countries involved in DC. Some EU Member States may prefer to opt, in an initial phase, for a rather traditional ‘development-oriented’ DC approach. This could be the case when there is very little tradition and expertise of getting involved in DC overseas, both at the level of the administration and the local governments (as in Belgium and Sweden at the start of the programme). The more familiar entry point of aid activities can then be used for setting up pilot projects of DC while

ensuring ‘learning on the job’. As experience is gained, a transition can be made to more sophisticated models of DC support.

#### 4. Challenges for the future

This paper has sought to provide a brief overview of the policies and programmes in support of DC of a selected group of EU Member States as well as the EC. The focus was particularly on the ways in which these institutional actors influence or relate to DC initiatives, undertaken by sub-national authorities. Understanding these dynamics is important as they determine to a large extent the nature of the multi-level relations between the two set of actors.

It proved not evident to produce a reliable snapshot of these relationships. DC takes a multitude of forms and shapes across the EU and LA. Moreover, it is a ‘moving target’ as DC actors, their partners in LA as well as national governments are constantly evolving. Despite these limitations, a few generic challenges can be mentioned by way of conclusion.

First, DC actors themselves have moved a long way in recent years. Admittedly, there are still many examples of DC partnerships based on unilateral donor-recipient relationships. At the same time, sub-national authorities in the EU and in LA are increasingly assuming a protagonist role in DC processes. They are building horizontal relations between key local governance institutions facing similar challenges of managing territories in a globalising world. Slowly but steadily, the concept of ‘direct DC’ is making headway. However, major challenges remain in terms of demonstrating that this type of DC can deliver relevant outcomes and therefore

merits to be considered as an ‘indispensable’ cooperation instrument.

Second, the brief survey in this article shows that both national governments from the EU and multilateral agencies are responding positively to these new trends. They have come to realise the crucial role that local governments may play in attaining key development objectives. In the process, they show a growing interest for supporting direct DC. This type of horizontal cooperation is increasingly seen to have a clear added value in strengthening local governments to assume their new roles in the development process. The positive attitude is reflected in a new set of DC support programmes. Although there

are important variations to be observed in the policies and instruments underpinning these programmes, there is a clear trend towards supporting ‘direct DC’ and developing innovative implementation approaches and tools.

However, the battle is not yet won. Much work remains to be done by all actors involved to further adapt the focus and operation of these DC programmes so that they become more compatible with the real needs of local governments (from both the EU and LA). In this context, it will be important to further clarify the multi-level relationships and related role division between national governments and sub-national entities. This

Instruments	Observations	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• development projects (‘hardware’ investments)</li><li>• capacity building projects (‘software’ investments)</li><li>• local governance projects (possibly involving civil society)</li><li>• municipal partnerships linked to projects</li><li>• support to sensibilisation activities in the North</li></ul>	<p>National programmes that rely primarily on these instruments generally display the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong influence of the ‘aid logic’</li><li>• Tendency to impose top-down conditions or restrictions on scope DC activities</li><li>• Control-oriented management approaches</li><li>• Limited flexibility in the use of instruments geared at institutional development and local governance</li><li>• Limited scope to involve a wide range of actors (on both sides)</li><li>• Timid openings to funding structural activities in the North</li></ul>	<p>Belgian support MIC programme</p> <p>Swedish support MIC programme</p>

Instruments	Observations	Examples
<p>b) Innovative instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• long-term municipal partnerships based on reciprocity</li><li>• funding exchanges without formalisation of projects</li><li>• funding for common projects (joint action)</li><li>• funding for supporting other relevant DC actors (e.g. national associations)</li><li>• participatory country programme frameworks</li><li>• coordination mechanisms</li><li>• participation in thematic networks or policy fora</li><li>• south-south exchanges</li><li>• mechanisms for multi-actor dialogue, learning and policy development on DC</li><li>• support to developing a municipal policy for international cooperation in the North</li></ul>	<p>National programmes that seek to apply these instruments generally display the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institutional development of local governments and governance are put at the core of DC</li><li>• Focus on collaboration “from territory to territory”</li><li>• Holistic approach towards challenges facing local government (as motor of local development process)</li><li>• Greater flexibility to take into account specific needs local governments</li><li>• Integration DC in ongoing political, institutional and budgetary processes of the municipality</li><li>• Search for linkages with relevant national/regional processes</li><li>• Scope for multi-actor approaches</li><li>• Role national government shifts towards providing incentives and ensuring quality control</li><li>• Strong emphasis on dialogue and joint learning</li><li>• Attempts to use experiences gained in DC to influence other cooperation programmes</li></ul>	<p>Dutch Logo South programme</p> <p>Programme URB-AL</p> <p>French DC programme</p>

<sup>4</sup>| See recent French initiatives to organize the “Rencontres de la coopération franco-brésilienne” in Brasil (2006) or to ensure an effective participation of sub-national authorities in the Forum of local governments preceding the Summit between the EU and LA/Caribbean (November 2007).

Instruments	Observations	Examples
<p><b>c) Integration instruments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mechanisms for associating DC actors to the formulation of national cooperation strategies</li><li>• Mechanisms for associating DC actors to key dialogue processes at various levels</li><li>• Mechanisms to mobilise the expertise and know-how of DC actors in official aid programmes (including in sector programmes)</li><li>• Mechanisms and tools to strengthen coherence (including data bases and monitoring systems)</li><li>• Accounting of contribution DC actors to ODA (DAC)</li><li>• Partnership agreements between central government agencies and DC entities (task division on the basis of comparative advantages)</li><li>• Delegation of DC actors for particular works/services ('contractualisation')</li></ul>	<p><i>These instruments reflect a broader national policy to engage with DC actors in the overall cooperation process</i></p> <p><i>They can complement existing DC support programmes or can apply even without a full-fledged DC programme</i></p>	<p><i>French policy to mainstream participation of DC and other actors.<sup>8</sup></i></p> <p><i>Italy's efforts to (i)ensure coherence between its own government programmes and autonomous DC initiatives</i></p> <p><i>(ii) use the expertise of sub-national authorities in the implementation of its own aid programmes</i></p>

<sup>8</sup> | A good summary of this ambition is provided in B. Quincy. Pour une politique étrangère plus partenariale. Ong, collectivités territoriales, syndicats, entreprises. Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Juillet 2007.

means, amongst others, ensuring that the programmes set-up by national governments in support of DC respect a number of key principles such as:

- the political nature of local government institutions, reflected amongst others in the organisation of electoral processes at regular intervals, or in the existence of formal decision-making processes at local level, all of which are likely to affect DC activities;
- the specific role of local governments in development processes, not to be equated with the roles traditionally displayed by (specialised) civil society organisations;
- the need to see decentralised cooperation initiatives as part and parcel of the external action of municipalities, as pursued in the framework of their local competencies;
- the focus of DC on supporting ‘processes’ of integrated institutional development

and empowerment of local governments (as motor of local development coalitions);

- the need for adequate and flexible support modalities and procedures, aligned to the ‘real world’ in which local governments operate.

The ultimate aim should be to establish a ‘win-win’ partnership based on respect for each others legitimate role and added value in cooperation processes.

Third, while the position of ‘direct DC’ as a full-fledged cooperation instrument needs further strengthening in the near future, one should avoid attempts to construct a ‘shield’ around DC and to isolate it from the other instruments. On the contrary, the DC approach should be fully integrated in mainstream co-operation processes. The voice of properly enabled DC actors (both in the EU and LA) should be systematically heard in the formulation and implementation of international co-operation strategies.



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# Social cohesion and poverty reduction

*As widely stated at different forums throughout 2007, such as the Urb-Al conference which took place in Rosario and the EU-LAC Forum of Local Government Representatives which took place in Paris, decentralised co-operation constitutes a tool that can help local policies aimed at poverty reduction and (in a wider sense) furthering social cohesion.*

*It is precisely the municipalities and regions that must face new challenges in the building of local societies that are more integrated and cohered in order to overcome the difficulties that arise from, as yet, a scarce awareness of the role they play, both in terms of their authority and in the distribution of resources among the different levels of public administration. From this point of view, even though decentralised co-operation does not provide enough resources to mitigate structural shortages of local ministries of economy in Latin-American countries, it can be an important tool for encouraging exchanges and for initiating mutual actions that help the planning and implementation of public policies that can improve the current local situation.*

*In this Yearbook 2007 we have attempted to describe in detail how the Latin-American reality affects the chances of local governments there to take action in furthering social cohesion. In this respect, Víctori Godínez, a member of the Observatory's Advisory Committee provides a study showing how local action within this field is possible from economic growth, the labour market and tax systems in different Latin-American countries.*

*Within the general parameters of social cohesion, migratory movements are of special interest to the ODC since decentralised co-operation constitutes a great tool to help local governments face this phenomenon. With the purpose of visualizing this potential, we have tried to include an article that studies the effects of this phenomenon in local policies, starting out with a general view on the current migration movements that have the highest impact in Latin American and the EU. Mireia Belil and Albert Serra analyse the realities around these movements focusing particularly on the role played by local governments in the handling of this issue, on the underlying models they apply to approach this reality and on the possibilities provided by decentralised co-operation to boost any actions within this field.*



Introduction





# Local policies for social cohesion and its limitations: discussion notes on the latin american case

Víctor M. Godínez\*

### KEY WORDS

Social cohesion |  
Public policies coordination |  
National and local economic growth |  
Employment and job market |  
Taxation and fiscal pressure |

*The promotion of social cohesion is a responsibility for all sectors of society. At the first level, local governments are responsible for guaranteeing social cohesion, though social rights are eventually guaranteed by the State. This is its main duty, and it may not be exercised by any other actor or at the instance of society. Therefore, public policies need to be coordinated at both government levels. This degree of coordination remains very low in Latin American states, hindering the efficacy and efficiency of resources assigned for social cohesion policies. In this respect, the state of national development and central government policies creates an “environment” that frequently hampers and even limits the capacity of local bodies to carry out social cohesion policies and practices in the territories. This paper introduces some considerations concerning three factors: the general environment for growth, the labour environment and the fiscal environment (inseparable from a central issue of local development, that of decentralisation).*

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### 1. Introduction and general approach

Although the promotion of social cohesion is the responsibility of all sectors of society, it must be first guaranteed by local governments, not only because they are the closest institutional channel to the community but because they hold the territorial power, they have control over certain redistributive mechanisms that directly and instantly have an impact on citizens, and have the authority to carry out comprehensive and coherent local development policies.

The above does not contradict another equally true fact: social rights are eventually guaranteed by the State. This is its main duty, and it may not be exercised by any other actor or at the instance of society. Furthermore: only when these rights are in line with the juridical-legal institutionality of the State may they become universal.

There is no contradiction because local bodies of the government are a fundamental part of the organic order of the State. Actually, there is a clear need for coordinating interactions between local and national levels. Formally, participation of local governments in the design and instrumentation of public policies for social cohesion is often provided for in the regulatory-juridical order of the democratic States. In practice, however, there are evident and significant differences as to the capacity of each territory to make formal institutionality effective.

In fact, we all know that the general context of development is a factor that determines both content and scope of social po-

licies at local scale. In general, the design of local government social agendas and programmes take into account governing the specific needs of the community, participation, the fight against poverty, exclusion and inequality, assistance to highly vulnerable groups and the promotion of citizenship. Actions and policies derived from such agendas coexist with social programmes designed and executed by central governments.

It would be desirable that both types of programmes operate with high levels of coordination, but this is quite infrequent at least in Latin America. As a rule, social programmes of Latin American central governments are drafted and executed to fight against areas of extreme poverty and destitution by means of transfers, independently from long term comprehensive economic and social development programmes. Accordingly, its net impact on the fundamental vectors of social cohesion is often low and hardly sustainable. By contrast, the social agenda of the communities and the programmes they implement usually respond to priorities set by the community itself, having a strong idiosyncratic content and, in some cases, tending to operate and be executed within a transversal axis of public policies.<sup>1</sup>

This lack of harmony between local and national policies reduces the efficacy and efficiency of economic and institutional resources used in social programmes both at local and national levels. This deficient utilization of the already scant resources adds to the structural restrictions caused by the different levels of development in the nation that unavoidably determine and limit the possibilities and scopes of local policies in favour of social cohesion.

<sup>1</sup> | The transversal approach is generally determined by the needs resulting from the lack of resources faced by the local governments but also by, as mentioned, the proximity to the social realities of the community.

This all entails a clear contextual contrast with regard to localities in the European Union.<sup>2</sup> The institutional and development framework of the latter is comparatively more conducive to the instrumentation of local public policies capable of influencing the basic vectors of social cohesion. While, in a socioeconomic context, the basic needs of individuals are somewhat met, the social cohesion strategies of European localities face other priorities and demands, and, as a result, their agendas and programmes also face complications and different challenges. In addition to guaranteeing basic social protection, the European central governments have mechanisms that counter social exclusion which produce higher coverage rates and social expenditure levels than the Latin American averages. On the other hand, the European Union has undertaken to directly counter social exclusion through its cohesion policy which includes a whole set of community instruments and own financing. In this way, local strategies of social cohesion are developed in the European Union within a national and supranational context, which, in general, involves a relatively significant series of transfers and programmes. Although they are exogenously decided and fixed, their impact is far from being irrelevant for the community.

The environment in which localities of Latin America execute programmes committed to the promotion of social cohesion is completely different. These programmes are based on structural backgrounds that are well-known to involve scarce fiscal resources in all those countries, added to the low level of institutionality in central government social policies, even if considered within their most restricted definition, i.e., solely as policies to fight poverty. Likewise, it is essential that these contextual differences be taken

into account when comparing local and regional policies that influence the constitutive vectors of social cohesion in European and Latin American countries. It is clear that, in many ways, these policies influence and determine the scope and content of social agendas of the communities in each region. The environment in which communities design and implement their development strategies is important, and it is necessary to establish complementary components with centralized sectorial bodies in order to better equip institutions for social cohesion.

The purpose of this paper is to define and measure the main factors that make up this environment in Latin America. Aside from the undoubtedly relevant peculiarities of each case, action of local governments in the region is limited, on the one hand, by the specific demands for goods and public services by the inhabitants of that territory and, on the other, by the effective provision of administrative, institutional, material and economic resources required to fulfil their obligations and meet citizen demands. The national environment affects the configuration of this action in multiple ways, broadening or, more often, restricting the field of action of local governments.

The localities where governments have undertaken explicit objectives of social cohesion are particularly sensitive to the “determining effect” of the national environment, the impact of which is directly evidenced in the different areas of municipal policy committed to generating sustainable dynamics of inclusion, legitimacy, recognition, equality, participation and a sense of belonging by individuals and groups that integrate the community or the territory. What follows is more of an invitation to join a discussion rather

than an attempt to perform a deep analysis on what is (in my view) a local policy on development, so what follows is an exploration of the three fields where the national context (or the “environment”) and central government policies condition and even limit the capacity of local bodies to carry out policies and practices of social cohesion in the territories. These three fields are: the general environment for growth, the labour environment and the fiscal environment (inseparable from a central issue of local development: decentralisation).

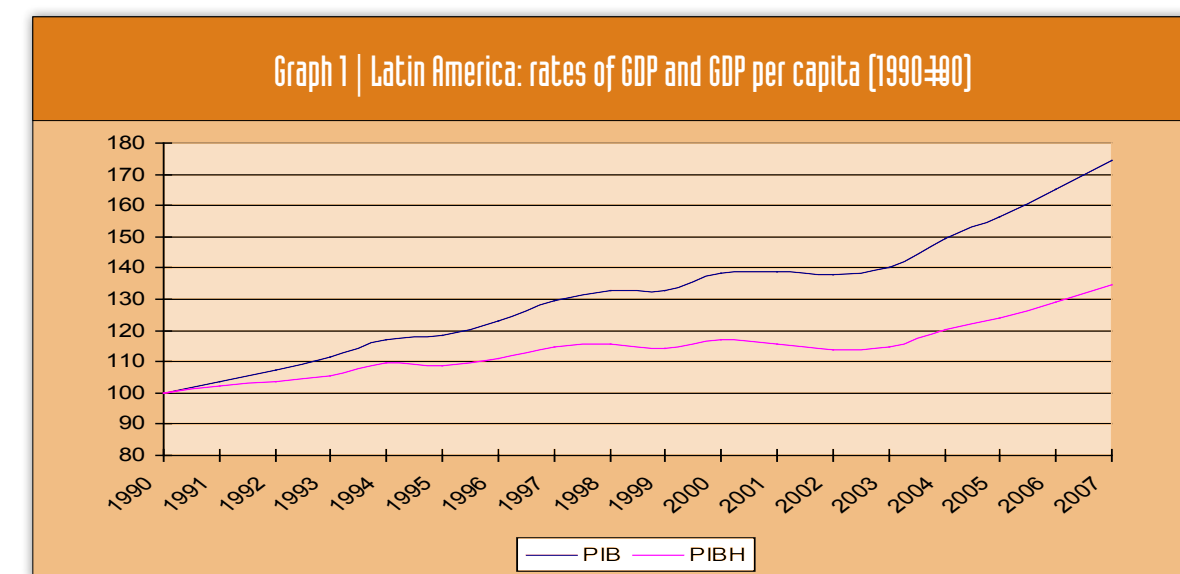
## 2. Economic growth

The first factor to be considered is the general process of economic growth. The Latin American region as a whole is an area of low growth. In 2007, the actual value of Latin American gross domestic product (GDP) was 75% higher than in 1990; considering the population increase, it represents an absolute rise of 35% in GDP per capita over the same

period (Graph 1). It remains clear that during this period of almost 20 years the region recuperated its growth potential, by contrast with the so-called lost decade of the eighties.

However, this rise in the regional GDP is insufficient in many ways, not only because the growth in Latin America over the last decades is markedly lower if compared to other regions and countries (Asia Pacific, China, India, Spain, Ireland or Finland, for example), but mainly because the rate of growth registered is not sufficient to achieve an increase in the rates considered necessary to progressively and effectively revert the general rates of inequality and poverty in the different countries of the region, as indicated in several technical studies such as the one carried out by Machinea, Bárcena and León (2005).

In fact, these regional averages reflect a variety of specific situations of growth, as shown in Chart 1, below, which indicates average GDP and GDP per capita growth rates for the region as well as seventeen countries over the last three decades.



Source: Our own based on CEPAL data (1999 and 2007).

<sup>2</sup> I reintroduce the relevant approach detailed in Godínez (2007).

Chart 1: Latin America: Annual average growth rates in GDP and GDP per capita over the last three decades						
	1981-1990		1991-1999		2000-2007	
	GDP	GDP per capita	GDP	GDP per capita	GDP	GDP per capita
ALC (1)	1.0	-1.0	3.2	1.4	3.5	2.1
Argentina	-0.7	-2.1	4.7	3.2	3.5	2.5
Bolivia	0.2	-1.9	3.9	1.4	3.3	1.0
Brazil	1.3	-0.7	2.5	1.0	3.4	1.9
Chile	3.0	1.3	6.0	4.4	4.4	3.2
Colombia	3.7	1.6	2.5	0.5	4.2	2.7
Costa Rica	2.2	-0.6	4.1	1.2	4.7	2.7
Ecuador	1.7	-0.9	1.9	-0.2	4.6	3.1
El Salvador	-0.4	-1.4	4.4	2.3	2.8	1.0
Guatemala	0.9	-1.6	4.2	1.5	3.2	1.1
Honduras	2.4	-0.8	3.1	0.2	4.4	2.4
México	1.8	-0.3	3.1	1.3	3.0	1.3
Nicaragua	-1.5	-3.9	3.2	0.3	3.3	2.0
Panamá	1.4	-0.7	4.7	2.8	5.3	3.5
Paraguay	3.0	0.0	2.1	-0.6	2.4	0.4
Perú	-1.2	-3.3	4.7	2.9	5.0	3.7
Uruguay	0.0	-0.6	3.2	2.4	2.4	2.3
Venezuela	-0.7	-3.2	1.9	-0.3	4.7	2.9

Source: Our own based on CEPAL information (1999 and 2007).  
(1) Latin America and the Caribbean; Cuba excluded.

This data shows that nearly all Latin American economies have, in different degrees, experienced a lack of long-term dynamics in their economic activity. For a third of the countries in Chart 1, average growth rates in GDP per capita in the present decade have fallen when compared to the rates in the 90s. This group includes Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. In Mexico this indicator has remained at a significantly low average since 1990. In Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela the growth in GDP per capita has seen an upward trend in 2000, but only after two decades of stagnation and retraction, as the case may be. Due to the risk of recession expected in 2008 in the main industrialised countries, it is likely that current Latin American growth

averages will continue their downward trend for the rest of the decade, in most of the cases. It should be noted that, as a general rule in the past 30 years, most of the international downward trends were, in all countries, offset through procyclic strategies (expense constraint) that magnify the negative impacts on the GDP growth.

The contractive results of this strategy have become a prevailing trait in the development methods applied in Latin American economies, in line with main economic policy. The procyclic turn of economic policy is one of the factors explaining the existence of another component in the area that negatively affects the performance of territorial spheres as they try to carry out social cohe-

sion policies: that other component is volatility of growth. This characteristic evidences the difficulties encountered by most national economies to maintain long lasting growth cycles in which economic and social agents may experience cumulative processes of development and welfare.

There is an open and intense discussion about the factors that explain the disappointing trends of Latin American economic growth. This is not an ideal place to refer to the points in this discussion; however, it is interesting to underline the territorial consequences of this low and volatile economic growth environment, which is characteristic of the development style prevailing in the region for at least 20 years. Several studies indicate that even the slightest upturn in the dynamics of broad economic activity could increase the dispersion of growth both in interregional and intraregional areas of these countries. The information available on most national cases evidences the interruption of regional convergence processes – however incipient – existing prior to the critical decade of the 80s, as well as the deepening of “distance” or dynamics of territorial polarisation.<sup>3</sup>

A statistical example of the dynamics of territorial inequality referred to above is shown in Chart 2, which presents the relation between the lowest and highest product per inhabitant by national jurisdiction - for a group of countries with comparable information available. It can be observed that, except for Uruguay that has the best equality index, the gap between poor and rich territorial jurisdictions is quite significant in all countries. As stated by Cetrángolo (2006), this information demonstrates the general complexity

of the strategic objective to improve social cohesion, and particularly, to implement it by means of decentralised policies.

In fact, the regional development experience over the past two decades suggests that the possibility of territorial convergence movements – essential for the successful performance of social cohesion policies – is closely related to the existence of a strong and sustainable environment for growth in each country. The foregoing ratifies the concept that the poorest territorial entities are less capable of withstanding the series of factors that changed the general conditions of economic growth in each Latin American country since the eighties, such as: recurrent economic recessions, monetary and financial shocks, changes in the institutional and legislative framework, modification of the incentive system, and signs influencing the decision of agents (especially, commercial opening and economic liberalisation).

The general conditions produced in each country by these series of factors favoured the deployment of new sectorregional combinations and the deepening of existing ones. In general, this style of development tended to revalue metropolitan areas. Latin American cities gained considerable predominance within the new open economy over the last two decades for being relatively the largest contributor of infrastructure and qualified human resources. By contrast, the relevance of rural areas decreased, both regarding their productive use of resources and the construction of a new infrastructure, causing a negative and downward vicious circle in which development resources and, therefore, growth tend to concentrate on mayor metropolitan areas of the region. This process is the basis of the

<sup>3</sup>| See an illustration of this fact in Central American and Caribbean countries and Mexico in my study for CEPAL (2004 a).



Chart 2: Relation of product per inhabitant between the wealthiest and the poorest jurisdictions in *circa* 2005 selected countries

Country	Government level	Relation
Argentina	Provinces	8.6
Brazil	States	6.5
Chile	Regions	4.1
Guatemala	Departaments	6.4
México	States	6.2
Perú	Departaments	7.7
Uruguay	Municipalities	2.4

Source: Cetrángolo (2006).

uncontrollable urban hypertrophy (and all the undesirable consequences derived from it in terms of welfare and social progress) suffered by various Latin American countries.

The lack of economic dynamics and the volatility of growth are significant obstacles to social progress in Latin America; their persistence over a prolonged period of time has greatly hindered the reduction of poverty and its root: inequality.<sup>4</sup> The lower economic growth of this period is inseparable from the rebuilding of wealth and income at a social, factorial and territorial scale, and also from the operation of labour markets and their reduced capacity to absorb labour force, as well as from the fiscal fragility of almost all countries and their local administrations.

### 3. Labour market

Employment is the most elementary and concurrently the most effective mecha-

nism of social inclusion. Individual and social costs of unemployment are well known. It does not only involve material and economic costs, but rather the symbolic costs of this situation in terms of self-esteem, recognition and the actual exercise of rights and citizenship.

As it was mentioned before, the labour market in Latin American countries is –in different degrees that vary from case to case – characterised by a low rate of absorption of the economically active population. This is evidenced by comparatively high rates of open unemployment, generalised sub-employment of the masses (or occupation of labour force in activities of low or zero productivity and scant remuneration) and, in a large number of countries, by an increasing international migratory flow in search of job opportunities and better remunerations.

Persistence is the main characteristic of open unemployment in Latin America. Graph 2 shows how, over almost three five-year pe-

<sup>4</sup> Here, it is worth mentioning that Latin America is not an intrinsically poor region. According to World Bank criteria, almost all countries in the region integrate the medium-income group and some of them, even, the group immediately above (medium-high income). One of the most basic structural causes of poverty suffered by large sectors of population in all countries is distributive inequality (involving wealth concentration, income and –obviously– power). Rather than a poor region in the strict sense of the word, Latin America is a region of extreme inequality.

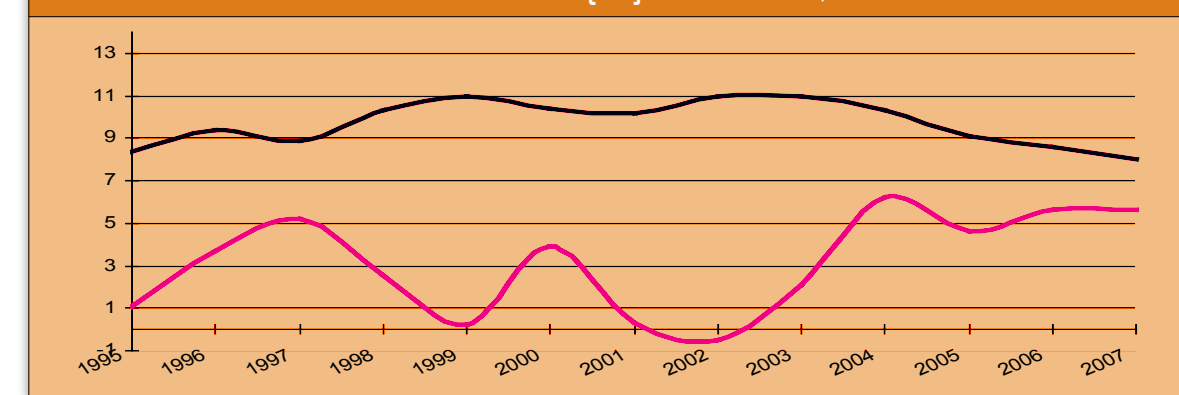
riods (1995-2007), the regional rate of urban open unemployment always fluctuated over 8%, achieving rates slightly higher than 10% between 1998 and 2004. Its level has partly remained in this range of values as a result of the strong volatility in regional economic growth, as reflected in the Graph.

Important as it is, open unemployment alone does not suggest an underlying problem in the way labour markets operate in Latin American countries. Despite its importance as an economic and social indicator, it can be stated that open unemployment is just a pale reflection of the region’s labour reality. In accordance with the mutations registered in the development model, the region’s labour dynamics in recent years is characterised by the functional interrelation of two large sectors. The first sector is related to the formal economy, with scarce inclusion capacity. The second sector is related to the informal economy, constituting a real stronghold of both contingents of the

population not absorbed by the first sector in its entirety and those excluded or expelled periodically, vulnerable to the volatility of economic growth.

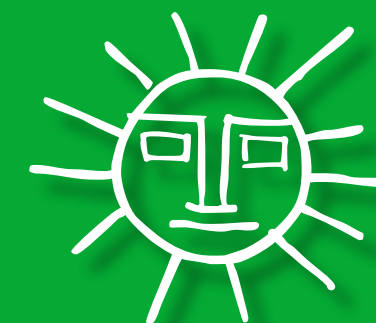
This second labour sector is far from remaining static and its numerous members deploy survival strategies which, as a whole and due to their growing numbers, represent an actual “mass self-employment” phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> In Latin American economies, only a part of the population is really integrated to the economy under the logic of accumulation, while the remaining part is subject to two typical issues of social and economic exclusion: the lack of job opportunities in dynamic activities and poverty. In order to face these problems they are forced to engage in a series of economic activities outside the formally constituted market, with the purpose of generating the income necessary to cover their immediate survival needs. Therefore, it is a practice of survival rather than one of accumulation.

Graph 2: Urban Open Unemployment Rate and Economic Growth (GDP) in Latin America, 1995-2007



Source: Our own based on CEPAL (2004 and 2007).

<sup>5</sup> Here, the concept of informality is used to designate a mass survival practice in which the agents have scarce or no possibilities for accumulation and growth, or to expand their economic operations. In addition to this basic definition we can point out that those engaged in informal activities and their families are totally excluded from the protection of institutional networks.



This logic of survival is inherent to the surplus part of the labour force, in other words, that part of the population at working age which is not employed in the formal economy. This logic is, by its very nature, a product of unemployment, and its dimension is directly proportional to the dimension of unemployment. Hence, as in the case of this region, in a situation of high informal employment and low unemployment rates, the representativity of the latter is somehow restricted to reflect this important aspect of occupational reality in most Latin American economies. This was probably the case of the past three years when urban open unemployment average rate showed a downward trend, as observed in the 1998-2004 period.

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL/ECLAC), in the nineties seven in ten people employed in the region were employed in the informal sector. This sector is estimated to provide employment to around 47% of the Latin American and Caribbean labour force (CEPAL, 2007).

For the purposes of these notes, it is advisable to distinguish three different ways individuals integrate into logics of survival of the informal economy. First there is the domestic (household) service, which, in the countries of the region, involves a fraction of the urban economically active population (EAP) representing around 6%, ranging from 11.1% in Paraguay to 1.9% in Venezuela. Although figures in Chart 3 (informal sector data) correspond to 2005, the relative level for this sector in all cases has remained stable over the years.

The two remaining categories (“self-employed workers” and “micro-enterprises”) represent altogether an important portion of the employed labour force, “self-employed

workers” -including “unremunerated family members”- being the most extensive. This source of informal employment involves 29% of the urban EAP - regional average - achieving a maximum of 44% in Bolivia and a minimum of 16% in Chile. The second category employs an average of 13% of the urban EAP of the region, with a maximum of almost 17% in Bolivia and a minimum of 7.1% in Chile.

There are significant differences between these two categories of informal employment that can be summed up in two main aspects. Firstly, the owners of micro-enterprises perform a series of management functions, mainly the hiring of human resources that may be wage-earners or not, occasional workers or permanent employees, for whom they are responsible. Secondly, the micro-enterprise is an economic unit and, as such, it has stable physical resources that self-employed workers lack most of the time. In addition, the informal micro-enterprise differs from formal enterprises as it operates with a simple reproduction logic rather than with an accumulation one: it has a low capital-work relation, and a non-qualified labour intensive force, it has low and many times nonexistent levels of productivity, the income generated by it is devoted to the immediate consumption; it does not keep records of its activity; its technological level is in general rudimentary and its relationships with the supplies and products market are minimum (see WTO, 2001).

An analysis of the information contained in Chart 3 reflects a severe situation in the operation of labour markets in Latin America: over the last two and a half decades, occupation in the non-agricultural sector of the economy became widely informal. At present, on average, 47% of the people working in urban areas of the region are employed under informal conditions. In Bolivia, Ecuador,

Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Peru, more than half of the urban EAP is employed in informal activities.

It can be stated that informality is no longer a mere anomaly of the economic and production system in the region, and has become a characteristic of its performance. With few exceptions -Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico- informal work extends to all other countries but mainly in the self-employment capacity, covering between one to two fifths of the region’s total non-agricultural occupation.

The “labour environment” of Latin American economies is marked by the expan-

sion of informal work. This trend is consubstantial to the bias of social and productive exclusion implicit in the current development style of the region, though it is not an exclusive resulting from it. At the beginning of the eighties, the weight of informal work was already very high in most economies of the region in accordance with international standards. It is a structural distortion inherited from the old development model -the import substitution model- conceived and developed in it, and which was directly and indirectly deepened rather than stopped or mitigated by the new economic strategy in the terms of the dilemma between macroeconomic stability and steady and sustainable growth. Such dilemma is permanently solved in favour of

Chart 3: Percentages of Urban Economically Active Population employed in the informal sector, by gender and sector type into which incorporated   circa 2005												
Country	Business establishments of up to 5 people ("micro-enterprises")			Domestic Services			Self-employment and non-remunerated relatives			Total Percentages		
	Total	Male	Fem.	Total	Masc.	Fem.	Total	Masc.	Fem.	Total	Masc.	Fem.
Argentina	13.2	16.4	8.9	7.2	0.7	16.1	16.7	19.0	13.6	37.1	36.1	38.6
Bolivia	16.7	23.0	8.6	4.6	0.2	10.0	44.1	33.5	57.0	65.4	56.7	75.6
Brazil	9.4	10.7	7.7	8.5	0.8	18.7	22.6	23.8	20.9	40.5	35.3	47.6
Chile	7.1	7.6	6.4	6.5	0.2	16.3	14.9	17.8	10.5	28.5	25.6	33.2
Colombia	...	...	...	5.1	0.3	11.1	37.5	38.1	36.8	42.6	38.4	47.9
Costa Rica	11.4	12.6	9.4	4.9	0.4	12.0	16.1	15.0	17.9	32.4	28.0	39.3
Ecuador	15.1	18.6	10.0	5.2	0.9	11.5	31.6	27.8	37.3	51.9	47.3	58.8
El Salvador	13.2	17.6	8.4	3.9	0.5	7.7	32.5	23.1	43.0	49.6	41.2	59.1
Guatemala	13.1	16.3	8.8	4.0	0.1	4.2	34.5	27.6	43.9	51.6	44.0	61.9
Honduras	13.4	18.0	7.5	4.1	0.5	8.7	36.8	33.1	41.6	54.3	51.6	57.8
México	15.5	17.9	12.0	4.5	0.7	10.1	18.8	15.9	23.3	38.8	34.5	45.4
Nicaragua	15.8	21.5	8.0	4.4	0.1	10.3	35.3	28.6	44.5	55.5	50.2	62.8
Panamá	8.7	9.9	6.9	6.8	1.2	14.9	21.5	23.4	18.8	37.0	34.5	40.6
Paraguay	15.2	21.6	7.2	11.1	1.5	23.0	29.4	26.3	33.3	55.7	49.4	63.5
Perú	12.4	15.9	8.1	5.6	0.8	11.5	42.0	35.8	49.7	60.0	52.5	69.3
Uruguay	13.7	13.3	14.1	7.2	1.1	14.8	20.3	23.0	16.8	41.2	37.4	45.7
Venezuela	10.2	12.8	6.1	1.9	0.1	5.0	35.3	34.5	36.6	47.4	47.4	47.7

Source: Our own based on CEPAL data (2006).



stability by using production and employment as the adjustment variable.

Within this structural context, local governments implement their employment promotion policies which are a key and indispensable component of social cohesion. No matter how effective and efficient these policies may be (there are several examples in the region in this respect), their scope is quite limited. We know that employment depends on a series of actions and circumstances: creation of basic structures, corporate density and development, innovation, education, labour force qualification, competitive investment financing, among others. It is also common knowledge that the jurisdiction and effectiveness of local and regional government bodies in these matters are, in general terms, limited as well as differentiated.

In any case, employment is a predominant concern in the agendas of local and regional government administrations, being the closest and the most involved in this matter. This is not a fortuitous concern. As expressed above, social implications of unemployment and informal occupation are many; their material and symbolic burden in terms of social exclusion is very high, and their specific expressions are materialised at the territorial level, especially affecting -without exception- the most vulnerable sectors. Data in Chart 3 thus illustrate it: in all countries, the percentage of working age women restricted to informal work is higher than the percentage for men. This is particularly the case of domestic service, probably one of the most precarious and worst remunerated informal occupations in the region, which employs at least one in ten women belonging to the female urban EAP of Latin America (this proportion reaches its highest levels in Paraguay, with 23% of total female EAP, in Brazil with 19%, Chile with 16% and Uruguay with 15%).

The international emigration of the labour force is another structural problem in Latin-American employment, directly affecting the social dynamics of localities in a high number of countries. The degradation of general living conditions and the obliteration of any expectations to integrate into a dynamic and productive economic process all provided the right conditions for this emigration phenomenon to deepen and acquire new quantitative and qualitative dimensions throughout the region.

Identification of demographic components and their interaction with the dynamics of employment, the analysis of institutional factors, social and economic inequality that influence labour migration, as well as the study of mechanisms which guarantee access and connection to the labour markets in the countries of destination, are also aspects that are beyond the scope of this article. Needless to say that some of the main expulsion forces that drove off manual labour to the international market were, the rupture of the fragile stability achieved in employment and salaries in the region before the crisis of the eighties, and the narrow and rigid-labour-relations style of development that followed. On the other hand, the expectations that emigrant workers have of progressing to higher standards of living and the definite way that labour markets have of operating in the countries of destination, all serve as attraction forces there.

In general, these are the elements that make up the expulsion and attraction forces behind the large migratory flows of labour which, in differing modes, intensities and implications, are found in the region.<sup>6</sup> In many cases the migratory flow of emigrants has historical roots, although the flow has gained new dimensions not only in terms of increases in traditional levels of cross-border labour movements but mostly in terms of the

flow's economic and social significance in the shaping of the current regional development style. In the territorial field, the occurrence of international labour migration has several consequences on public policy for local governments, including the loss of a significant part of the locality's human capital at times, and the social consequences of breaking up families brought about by migration or by phenomena such as the "feminization" of family structures, among others that have an impact on the dynamics of community social cohesion.

#### 4. Taxation and decentralisation

The decentralisation process in Latin America, understood as an actual territorial redistribution of political power, runs the risk of being trapped in an impasse. Reassignment of responsibilities and resources on local sub-national governments is unequal, ambiguous and insufficient in most of the cases, thereby generating political tensions and disputes within the territorial units and between these and central governments. Despite the evident advances made in the decentralization process, local administrations in almost the whole Latin American region are still claiming for the full and clear acknowledgement of their levels of competence to act autonomously with respect to other government levels

We should admit, as many experts and some original promoters of the process do, that for the past few years a centralist concept of decentralization has paradoxically prevailed, and being so inert it will not be capable

of reaction without the institutional strengthening of territorial units.

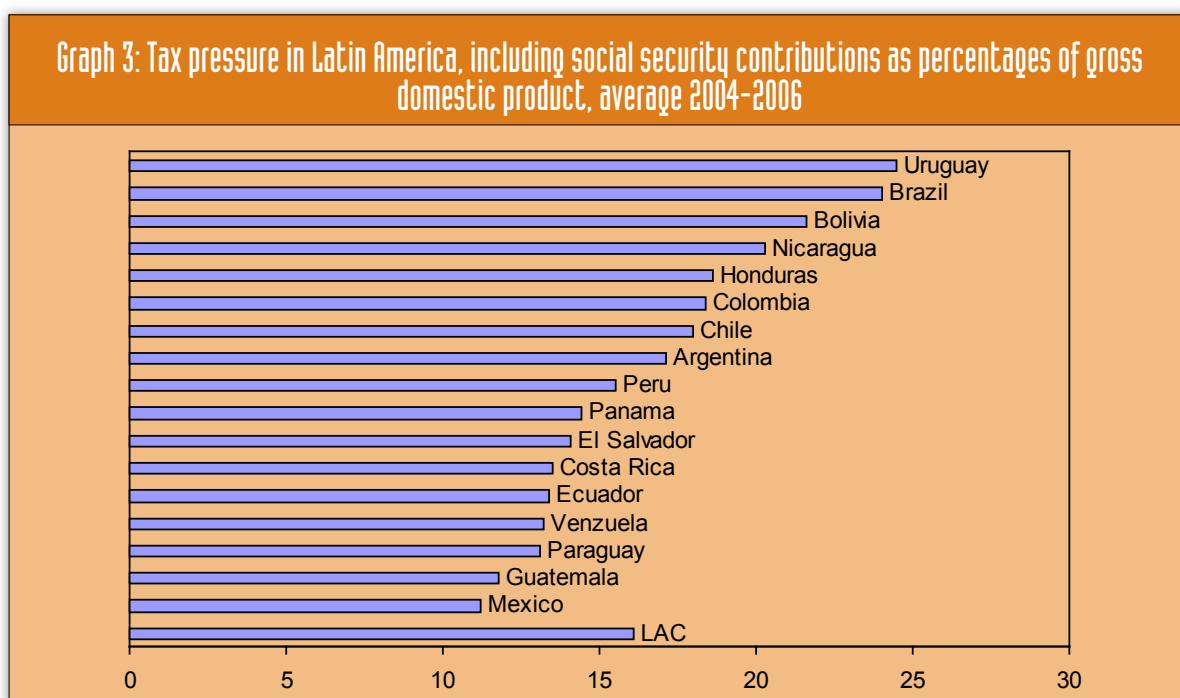
One of the pivotal aspects around which the decentralisation process revolves, contributing to its strengths or weaknesses, is taxation. Indeed, decentralisation of fiscal resources is a very significant issue in the political discussion between central and local governments of the region as, on the one hand, decentralisation transfers a set of new responsibilities to local governments, and on the other, these new responsibilities do not always match the fiscal resources transferred (including the effective human and institutional resources of local administrations). This gap between responsibilities and resources has many analytical ramifications, but, undoubtedly, it constitutes an environment in itself: the fiscal environment of decentralization, which also determines in many ways the local governments' capacity to carry out their general policies, and, particularly, their social cohesion policies.

The following general considerations start from an elemental but necessary premise. The governments' social policy (regardless of the territorial scale) demands certain public expenditure capacity, and, in turn, this capacity involves effective and sustainable financing mechanisms. In other words, a solid tax base is crucial for the sustainability of social cohesion public policies.

It is well known that fragility is one of the characteristics of the Latin American fiscal system, which is evidenced by tax pressure (Graph 3). The region as a whole and each of the countries in particular, has a scarce capacity for the collection of taxes.

<sup>6</sup> | There are intraregional flows: the flow of Nicaraguan people to Costa Rica, the Haitians to the Dominican Republic, Bolivians and Peruvians to Chile, Paraguayans to Argentina, Guatemalan and Central Americans to Mexico; and extra-regional flows of Mexican, Central American and Caribbean people to the United States, or from the Andean countries to Spain.





Source: Our own based on CEPAL data (2006).

Considering that the regional tax pressure reached an average of 16.1% of GDP between 2004 and 2006 and that national averages ranged from a maximum of 24.5% in Uruguay and a minimum of 11.2% in Mexico, it remains clear that the tax burden in Latin America is not only lower than that of other countries and regions with similar development levels, but that it is one of the lowest in the world.

This situation indicates a clear expenditure limitation for local administrations, thus restricting the financing of programmes, indispensable for the promotion of social cohesion. As Cetrángolo (2006) stated, in addition to restricting the fiscal policy, this situation also limits the level of the expenditure intended to support decentralisation processes, (which, in part, explains the procyclic strategy of this policy when economies are confronted with external shocks).

Chart 4 shows the most recent information available about the trends in social public expenditure in the region. The information refers to the per capita level of this expenditure. In addition to the huge disparities registered from one country to another by this indicator and given the economic level of the region (which is unfair and unequal rather than being poor), it is clear that it is insufficient to support social cohesion policies in the long term.

As regards education -essential for the economic growth and for guaranteeing social inclusion and developing an individual's sense of belonging- the countries with higher level of public expenditure (Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela) spend less than USD 0.80 a day per person. In countries in the opposite situation, i.e. with a lower level of public expenditure (Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Bolivia, and Honduras)

daily expenditure does not exceed USD 0.20 per person.

It is difficult to imagine the existence of future fundamental advances made in public programmes for the promotion of social cohesion in Latin American countries without a thorough transformation of the tax system. In almost all countries, the most representative economic and social agents tend to agree that a comprehensive fiscal and tax reform is necessary, but which in practice, has not yet materialised as it entails an inevitable alteration in the economic and political power

structure. In this regard, the tax reform is inseparable from the State Reform, the course of which has been equally slow ever since the process of democratisation in the eighties and nineties was completed in the region. There is a strong interaction between taxation and social cohesion, which, in the current stage of development in Latin America, requires the construction of new social and political arrangements to overcome the risk of an impasse affecting several public processes and programmes, the continuity and efficiency of which are crucial for development, decentralisation and social public expenditure.

**Chart 4: Social public expenditure and its components circa 2003 (Dollars of 2000)**

Country and coverage (1)	Total	Education	Health	Social Security
Argentina (NFPS) (2)	1283	279	291	642
Bolivia (CG)	136	66	16	51
Brazil (NFPS consolidated) (3)	676	128	102	444
Chile (CG)	676	209	155	390
Colombia (NFPS)	293	104	72	87
Costa Rica (NFPS consolidated)	774	235	236	232
Ecuador (CG) (4)	76	36	15	23
El Salvador (CG)	149	67	34	29
Guatemala (CG)	109	44	17	20
Honduras (CG)	126	70	34	5
Mexico (CG)	600	233	136	144
Nicaragua (CG)	68	32	24	...
Panama (NFPS)	683	185	236	218
Paraguay (CG budgetary)	114	55	16	38
Peru (CG budgetary)	170	50	...	65
Uruguay (CG)	1071	173	125	754
Venezuela (CG budgetary)	488	213	67	170

Source: Our own based on CEPAL data (2006).

(1) NFPS: non financial public sector; GG: general government, CG: central government.

(2) Includes the expenditure of the national government, of provincial governments, of the city of Buenos Aires and of municipal governments.

(3) Estimate of consolidated expenditure including federal, state and municipal expenditure.

(4) Includes the expenditure of the Instituto Ecuatoriano de Seguridad Social, not included in the budget of the central government.

Given the main factors that make up the “fiscal environment” which provides the framework in which actions may be taken by local administrations in Latin American (they themselves very fragile and with many tax restrictions), it isn’t difficult to perceive the difficult limitations they have to face when trying to implement sustainable programmes of social cohesion. Once again the

examples we have amply serve to illustrate this matter from two angles: on the one hand, as an example of social dynamics and synergies that local citizen participation and democratic governance may generate when resources are scarce; and on the other as an example of the vulnerability and relatively reduced scopes social policies have at the local level.

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# Local governments and migrations in Latin America and the European Union

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## KEY WORDS

Human movements |  
Social diversification |  
Local governments |  
Inter-cultural democracy |  
Bi-directional international cooperation |

*Migratory flows represent one of the mayor hurdles to be overcome before social cohesion can be guaranteed in local spheres. Both source and receiving cities find population movements to impact directly on their social and demographic structures, as well as on the demand for local public services. In this regard, the local government plays a key role in creating conditions of coexistence and social cohesion. This article is framed in that context. By situating the status and evolution of the event in different areas of the world, it displays the potential roles and models used by local governments to face such event. It also introduces international cooperation among local governments of source and destination societies as a tool capable of facilitating the search for solutions and to efficiently tackle the hurdles posed by migration. Throughout this article we will show that diversity management models result from day-to-day construction work, from the daily effort to ensure coexistence, from solving and assimilating conflict as a part of urban life, and from respecting the basic values of democratic coexistence. This article is a version of the work document prepared for the seminar on “Local Governments and Migrations in Latin America”, a meeting of Mayors in preparation of the Latin American Summit held in Montevideo on 26-27th October 2006.*

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*We can be different and live together and we can learn the art of living with the difference, respecting it, preserving self-difference and accepting the difference of others. This learning may be achieved from day to day, imperceptibly, in the city. (Zygmunt Bauman).*

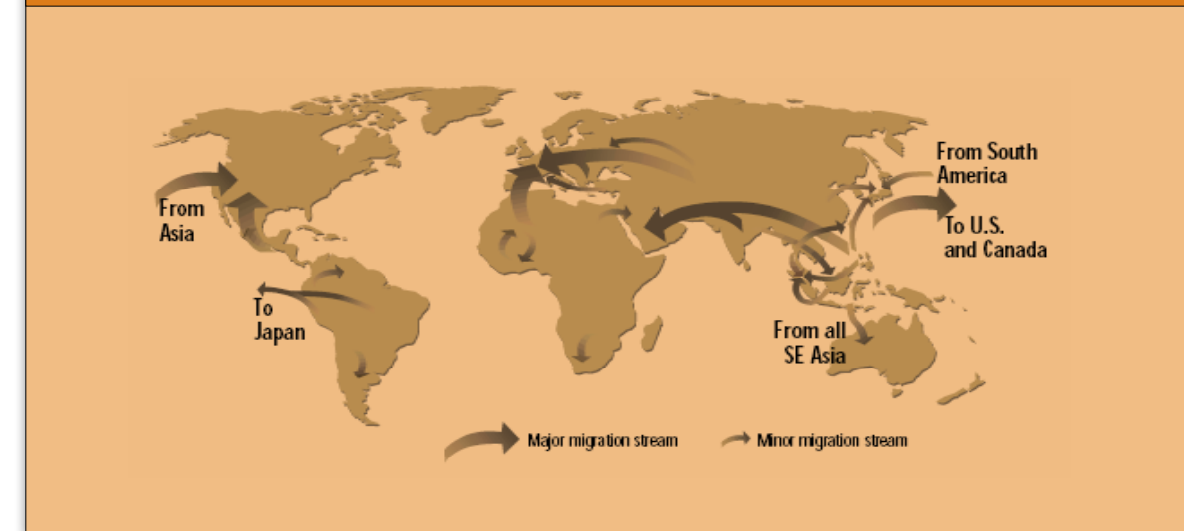
## 1. Global Demographic Mobility

Population movements are not a new phenomenon of this century. The history of humanity is explained by massive movements of population which, in running away from hunger, wars, poverty, or in search for better living conditions, have settled in new lands and societies. These people's contribution to the development of entire continents is widely known. So, why is there so much con-

cern about migratory movements of the XXI century? First, the rhythm and volume of these movements; second, their universalization; and third, the way they concentrate in urban areas and, within them, in some quite specific neighbourhoods. A more interconnected world offers opportunities that people expect to take advantage of: thus, international migration is a reality today and will still be tomorrow.

Between 1960 and 2005, the number of international immigrant people in the world has not only doubled but passed from an estimate of 75 million in 1960 to 191 million in 2005, representing an increase of 121 million over 45 years. Three percent of the world population is immigrant (2005). In the past few years there has been a clear feminisation of migrations, whether on account of family reunification or because of the new labour demands related to people-care, domestic service, and hotel and restoration businesses. Almost half of international migrants, around 95 million, are women.

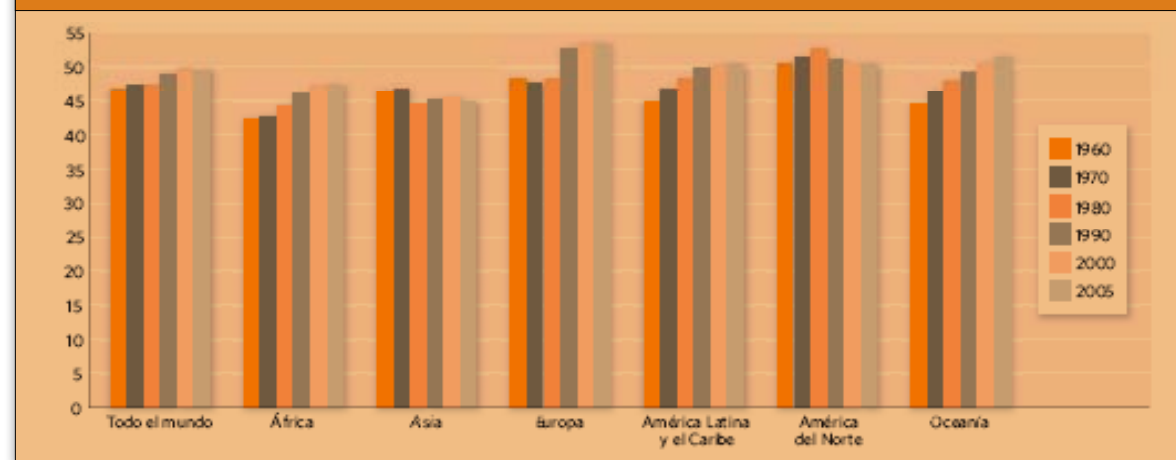
Image 1 | Major international migration patterns (early 1990)



Source: PRB, “International Migration: A Global Challenge,” *Population Bulletin*, April 1996



Image 2 | The percentage of women in international migrants



Source: División of population of United Nations 2006

In 2005, Europe had the highest number of international immigrants (64 million) followed by Asia (53 million), North America (44 million), Africa (17 million), Latin America and The Caribbean (almost 7 million) and Oceania (5 million). Proportionately to the total population, international immigrants constitute a higher percentage in Oceania (15%) and in North America (13%). In Europe, immigrants represent almost 9 percent of the entire population. On the contrary, international immigrants represent only 2 percent of the population in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

The number of host countries has increased in the last years, whether as destination or as transit countries. In 1960, 30 countries took in over 500,000 immigrants each; this number has increased to 64 in 2005. United States is the main receiving country with 38 million of migrated people, followed by the Russian Federation (12 million), Germany (10 million), and Ukraine, France and Saudi Arabia (with over 6 million each).

A relatively small number of countries take in a significant part of the world immigrant population. In 1990, the 30 countries took in 75 percent of the whole; in 2005, 28 countries took in that same proportion. United States leads the ranking in 1990 -15%- and in 2005 with a rise of up to 20%. Over this period, United States has increased its immigrant population in 15 million, followed by Germany and Spain, who have had an increase of 4 million each. There are a number of reasons that cause human beings to move, including the growth of inequalities, environment catastrophes, wars, violation of human rights, etc. which have added to the huge imbalance among regions in terms of population growth to boost these movements favoured by the new technologies and transportation improvements.

Most international movements of population take place in developing countries towards OECD countries, and the majority settles in big cities or their surroundings.

Image 3 | Net migration [1996|2007]

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
UE (27 países)	583.547	421.361	523.746	975.559	716.874	1.154.233	1.851.878	2.032.035	1.872.081	1.660.588		1.647.677 <sup>(a)</sup>
UE (25 países)	607.017	443.808	534.256	983.588	726.927	1.372.155	1.852.586	2.039.441	1.882.176	1.667.822		1.781.449 <sup>(a)</sup>
Alemania	281.493	93.433	46.980	202.050	167.863	274.835	218.807	142.216	81.827	81.578	25.814	37.012 <sup>(a)</sup>
Austria	3.880	1.537	8.451	19.787	17.272	43.509	34.761	38.212	61.726	56.400	29.379	28.091 <sup>(a)</sup>
Bélgica	15.012	9.676	11.606	16.737	12.932	35.758	40.661	35.516	35.759	51.009	53.357	57.505 <sup>(a)</sup>
Bulgaria	1.089	0	0	1	0	-241.185	864	0	0	0	0	-33.772 <sup>(a)</sup>
Chipre	5.300	4.800	4.200	4.200	3.960	4.650	6.883	12.342	15.724	14.416	8.666	14.574 <sup>(a)</sup>
Dinamarca	17.499	11.989	10.996	9.379	10.094	12.022	9.614	7.025	4.962	6.734	10.118	24.500 <sup>(a)</sup>
Eslovenia	-3.445	-1.303	-5.406	10.773	2.747	4.963	2.207	3.530	1.719	6.436	6.267	11.741 <sup>(a)</sup>
Eslovaquia	2.255	1.731	1.306	1.454	-22.301	1.012	901	1.409	2.874	3.403	3.854	5.600 <sup>(a)</sup>
España	83.328	94.436	158.757	237.853	389.774	441.272	649.230	624.587	610.036	641.199	606.546	684.883 <sup>(a)</sup>
Estonia	-13.418	-6.927	-6.559	-1.144	224	167	157	140	134	140	164	-2.000 <sup>(a)</sup>
Finlandia	3.938	4.808	4.451	3.427	2.410	6.147	5.257	5.803	6.721	9.152	10.600	9.252 <sup>(a)</sup>
Francia	:	:	-1.407	150.273	158.266	172.701	184.182	188.736	105.128	86.090	90.879	100.000 <sup>(a)</sup>
Grecia	70.975	61.409	54.818	45.016	29.401	37.779	38.015	35.382	41.388	39.974	39.995	40.490 <sup>(a)</sup>
Holanda	21.258	30.425	44.107	43.767	57.033	55.984	27.559	7.099	-9.960	-22.824	-25.903	-5.813 <sup>(a)</sup>
Hungría	17.876	17.561	17.261	16.793	16.658	9.691	3.538	15.556	18.162	17.268	21.309	16.980 <sup>(a)</sup>
Irlanda	15.958	17.433	16.213	24.246	31.812	39.261	32.667	31.361	47.620	66.245	68.867	62.227 <sup>(a)</sup>
Italia	56.392	50.428	55.775	34.914	49.526	49.874	344.797	612.009	556.582	324.211	377.458	454.485 <sup>(a)</sup>
Letonia	-10.081	-9.420	-5.751	-4.085	-5.504	-5.159	-1.834	-846	-1.079	-564	-2.451	-1.933 <sup>(a)</sup>
Lituania	-23.369	-22.421	-22.122	-20.739	-20.306	-2.559	-1.975	-6.304	-9.612	-8.762	-4.857	-5.733 <sup>(a)</sup>
Luxemburgo	3.456	3.624	3.815	4.461	3.431	3.310	2.649	2.050	1.526	12.336	5.353	4.298 <sup>(a)</sup>
Malta	264	572	353	359	9.763	2.173	1.743	1.667	1.920	1.612	2.135	1.875 <sup>(a)</sup>
Polonia	-12.765	-11.796	-13.261	-14.011	-409.924	-16.743	-17.945	-13.765	-9.382	-12.878	-36.164	-138.129 <sup>(a)</sup>
Portugal	25.880	28.886	31.874	38.000	47.000	65.000	70.000	63.500	47.282	38.400	26.044	34.460 <sup>(a)</sup>
Reino Unido	47.867	58.407	97.371	137.647	143.871	150.956	157.568	177.741	227.158	193.314	213.764	247.007 <sup>(a)</sup>
República Checa	10.129	12.075	9.488	8.774	6.539	-43.070	12.290	25.789	18.635	36.229	34.720	47.550 <sup>(a)</sup>
Rumanía	-24.559	-22.447	-10.510	-8.030	-10.053	-3.737	-1.572	-7.406	-10.095	-7.234	-6.483	-100.000 <sup>(a)</sup>
Suecia	5.839	5.950	10.940	13.657	24.386	28.622	30.854	28.686	25.326	26.724	50.769	52.529 <sup>(a)</sup>
Croacia	36.294	263	-4.107	-30.376	-46.390	15.207	8.575	12.507	11.532	8.299	7.286	5.813 <sup>(a)</sup>
Macedonia, antigua												
República	4.371	-1.940	-2.009	-1.636	-2.521	-2.552	-24.796	-2.767	-113	-758	-528	-5.311 <sup>(a)</sup>
Turquía	93.044	101.014	98.888	78.862	58.156	2.488	-1.043	-3.017	1.000	-1.035	-2.999	0
Islandia	-534	200	974	1.138	1.825	848	-322	-217	597	3.872	5.267	4.046 <sup>(a)</sup>
Liechtenstein	45	-28	503	217	256	481	158	301	132	139	123	212 <sup>(a)</sup>
Noruega	5.690	9.679	13.490	19.040	9.707	7.915	17.217	11.225	13.155	18.332	23.623	35.945 <sup>(a)</sup>
Suiza	-1.378	-2.626	10.692	25.002	23.681	40.531	47.596	41.517	38.052	32.247	36.523	39.689 <sup>(a)</sup>

Source: Eurostat. EUROPE IN FIGURES. Eurostat Yearbook 2006-07

## 2. Immigration: a global fact with local impact.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the global and national extent of the above-mentioned movements, immigration does not take place in a void space but over territory. Migratory movements are a global phenomenon with a clear local impact.

The main solutions for daily managing migration changes are found at local level; this is the most immediate sphere for managing migrations.

Where do most of these international immigrants go? The majority settle in cities, places of arrival and departure, places with

<sup>1</sup> Source: Belil, M and Serra, A. La ciudad diversa: inmigración y convivencia.



Chart 1 | Foreign population in some European cities

Cities	Year	Total	Foreigners	%
Zurich	2005	366.809	110.892	30,2
Franckfurt	2005	630.423	168.146	26,7
Munich	31/12/2005	1.288.307	300.129	23,3
Berne	2004	127.352	27.235	21,4
Vienna	2005	1.651.437	309.184	18,7
Madrid	1/01/2005	3.155.359	447.345	14,2
Copenhagen	2005	502.362	69.869	13,9
Barcelona	1/1/2005	1.593.075	219.941	13,8
Berlin	31/12/2005	3.155.359	460.555	13,6
Valencia	1/01/2005.	796.549	82.013	10,3
Oslo	1/01/2006	538.411	55.335	10,3
Stockholm	31/12/2005	771.039	68.672	8,9
Goteburg	31/12/2004	481.410	40.572	8,4
Milán	31/12/2004	1.229.448	143.125	11,0
Rome	2004	2.823.201	223.879	7,9
Bolonia	31/12/2005	373.743	28.112	7,5
Helsinki	1/01/2006	560.905	30.770	5,5
Genoa	30/04/2005	620.316	32.848	5,3
Seville	1/01/2005	704.154	20.722	2,9

Departament d'Estadística. Municipality of Barcelona.  
Source: Statistical institutes and city councils of different cities

a dynamic economy which facilitates labour –both formal and informal-, places offering a space to stay, places with hiding spaces and places where other immigrants – relatives or fellow country people – are already settled.

This concentration of people is evident. In the 15 countries that integrated the European Union in 2006, 3.6 percent of the population comes from non-European coun-

tries, while this percentage rises up to almost 7 percent in the big European cities.

Cities are not a mere mechanism for wealth creation or a utilitarian organisation system. Cities are the preferred habitat for the world population and have become the environment, habitat and catalyst of cultural diversity, and a place for interaction as well as for day-to-day conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> | The last report of the United Nations for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) on the “State of the World’s Cities” sets out that by 2007 half of the world’s population will live in urban environments. According to the document, there are currently 3,170 million people living in cities, out of a total of 6,450 million. Should the present tendencies continue it is expected that, by 2030, the proportion of urban population will reach 5,000 million, out of a total of 8,100 estimated for that time

In an increasingly smaller and accelerated world whose boundaries are coming to sight, cities must be able to provide inhabitants with the means to earn their living, to shape the economic systems, social relations and Urbanization according to their collective projects, aspirations and needs.

Current tendencies reveal that cities are gathering a growing number of complex processes of political, cultural and social diversification; populations multiply and lines of identification are fragmenting.

More and more people are citizens of one country but live in another, belong to a community and spend most of their lives in another, keep intense relationships with their communities of origin and build a multiple sense of belonging based on different places.

Cities play a progressively relevant role in terms of the essential elements of citizen-

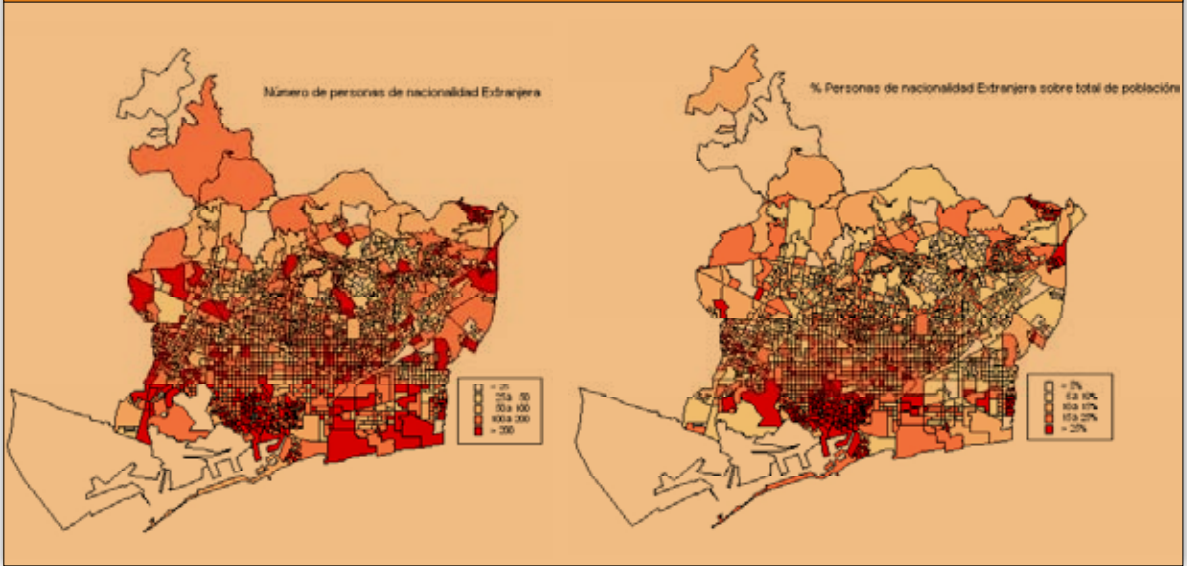
ship. They provide the social and material conditions to train the people to function with a certain degree of autonomy, to draw up political ideas, social projects... and to execute them. These conditions are structured at different levels, but are experienced quite directly at the local sphere.

At the beginning of the XXI century cities are confronted with new challenges which can be summed up in terms of some clear tendencies: the arrival of new populations and their growing diversity, the variations in social structures -at demographic and social level- connected to the changes in social demands and needs, and the new socio-cultural environments.

2.1. Global and local

These challenges have an impact on the whole society and on all public administrations, but they ultimately have a strong bea-

Image 4 | Foreign population by districts. Barcelona, 2006





ring on the local field. As stated above, the rise in the mobility of populations and migratory flows is directly linked to globalisation, so that all government levels are fully involved.

At the same time, however, this is one of the areas in which the link between what is global and local is more clearly reflected. Finally, a mobilised and displaced population settles in a specific spot of a given town or city, in a given neighbourhood, in a house –if any- and in a job which is not at all global, but absolutely local. All problems associated with mobility in general and migration in particular end up territorialising in a specific place, with certain specific forms that unavoidably alter and change the existing status quo. Population social and ethnic characteristics are transformed, and the urban, cultural and social dynamics are diversified. New forms of life appear implying different types of homes, families and social habits. This situation gives rise to different social demands and needs which have to be mainly addressed by the local government which generally lacks the technical capacity or legal power to face them.

Currently, in the developed world, it is impossible to conceive economically and socially strong cities and urban areas without significant contingents of population coming from developing countries as well as from other “advanced” societies. At least, so it appears in the simplest statistics in Europe, America and in all OECD countries. Social, demographic and productive structures in these urban areas call for these human resources. Attraction of investors, talents, tourists and labour to cover the new needs or activities rejected by local population are a part of most urban strategies.

The arrival of immigrants to our municipalities does not constitute a problem. The challenges, conflicts and tensions arise around issues such as how many are arriving, at what

rate, how will their settlement process develop, how they relate with and/or join the social fabric, how and what type of social fabric they create, and how are they taken in and integrated by natives. These issues are obviously quite complicated; therefore it is crucial to find formulas that facilitate the process of integrating new effective citizens.

Cities need to realistically manage the diversification of their culture and their resident population, avoiding utopias of a “multi-everything coexistence” without conflicts, suggesting collective coexistence projects to be reviewed and adjusted to the emerging new needs, facilitating tactical commitments and strategic constructions.

As we all know changes cause fear, and so does the unknown. This social dynamics, or at least a significant part of it, may only be managed and turned into an acceptable – and even positive - change if it comes from proximity and from local leadership, although it needs to be framed in certain general coordinates guaranteeing the maintenance and day-to-day reinforcement of social cohesion and coexistence of the entire receiving society.

This situation leaves local governments two possible lines of action. First, they may take refuge in the lack of legal jurisdiction and try to transfer the responsibility of managing this complex process of social change to the authorities of other administrative and governmental levels; and second, they may face in all its complexity the challenge arising in their territory –though originated in other countries and continents-, and undertake to lead the social change that takes place in their domain.

As the closest representatives of the people, local governments are in the best position for managing a global affair locally

because: they are at the frontline; they are accountable for the quality of life of the people living in their territory; and they are politically –though not jurisdictionally- responsible for the wellbeing of their citizens. Hence, they are essential in the management of the cultural and social diversification process, as cities and towns are the recipients of new populations: it is at the local level where the main impact of the arrival of new residents takes place.

## 2.2. Local government in the management of immigration

The increasing diversity and population mobility –as well as the uncertain environments- makes it really difficult to construct collective identities and to commit to common projects favouring the more cohesive and higher quality urban environments.

How to **generate collective projects** in an increasingly mobile, temporary and diverse environment? What can urban environments and, specifically, local governments do to generate this sense of belonging which promotes the generation of safe social and urban environments,<sup>3</sup> so that people may advance as individuals and as collective beings? How can we manage to share values, expectations and a future in a progressively diverse environment?

As it frequently happens, all kinds of resources and capacities –including jurisdictional- that local governments have to face the challenges posed by immigration are virtually nonexistent. Local governments aim at integrating economic growth with social cohesion and coexistence in the municipality. This goal entails the management of the two major challenges identified above:

- The process of **reception and settlement of new populations** coming from

cultures, ethnic groups and traditions different from the native ones and –in the case of immigrants from developing countries- with serious economic troubles

- The process of **differentiation and diversification of local social, cultural and ethnic structure**, which calls for reconsidering the current relationship and coexistence models by managing new social practices in all areas of life, from the ideological, cultural, religious or familiar to food, business, labour, public spaces and others.

The **intensity and quality of integration** of the newly arrived population basically depend on the local environment. Local authorities play a key role in managing migratory processes, although they may lack the resources and jurisdictional capacities, as well as the experience to manage it correctly. Hence, in order to achieve the social, cultural, political and economical integration of all citizens, municipal proceedings need to aim at:

- Defining a **clear, unequivocal attitude** for the integration and recognition of the newly arrived populations, in the framework of respect for the democratic principles and values. It will contribute to the **construction of a new model of coexistence** in which natives and the newly arrived may find the way to share the same social and physical space, which can guarantee cohesion, social peace and the construction of a diverse and integrated society respecting the rights recognized in our own legality.

- **Normalize the rendering of services** to all citizens, **adjusting the collective functioning** and the organisational

<sup>3</sup>| *Environments where people may develop their personal, social and economic potential, as well as their collective development.*

structure of society for a higher diversity of cultures, religious choices, behaviour and life habits, individual and collective values and vital needs, as well as **creating methodologies and work scenarios** where the daily management of these challenges are possible.

The issue of immigration and its relevance as an element and symptom of social change demands a strategic framework, providing all involved agents the access to a global background of scenarios, possibilities and limitations on which to establish a process of building a social model of coexistence capable of managing diversity and preserving cohesion, with the strongest possible leadership in government and local administration. This leadership does not exclusively involve the jurisdictional level but mainly the political and ideological levels, where one must remember that jurisdictional boundaries do not exist.

This strategic framework has certain **key functions** in the immigration management system, which includes:

- To facilitate the **positioning** of the local government and to define a clear insight of the adopted model of community and coexistence.
- To facilitate the development of **consistent and concrete** policies, and to provide a reference to forge the design of these policies within a delimited scenario.
- To facilitate concrete **decision-making**, the resolution of conflicts and contradictions and the generation of consensus scenarios insofar as the boundaries of the global model be reasonably established.
- To facilitate a **homogeneous action, duly aligned** with the global strategy of the entire municipal organisation

and with all the agents committed to the consensus for the strategic frame of reference.

- To facilitate the **prioritization of fields of action** and orientation of specific actions to be performed by each unit of the municipal organisation. To help direct the construction of the city council's portfolio of services and procedures.

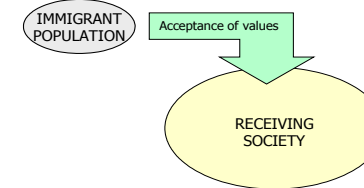
- To facilitate the **positioning of the city council before third parties**, both within its scope of responsibility and with regard to other governmental, institutional, social, economical agents.

### 2.2.1. Immigration integration models

Cities and towns have to define –within the legislative and constitutional framework they follow- the model for integrating new populations in their territory. This model constitutes the framework which will allow the consistent development of actions and services.

In this respect, the developments of different processes and models for managing diversity have been tried, which have been defined and connected to each of these fundamental guidelines. It is advisable to identify complexity in the definition of a political model of integration. Positioning leads to the definition of a model for the strategic direction of the process, while the development of policies is embodied in the government model of action, and management and operation are reflected in the organisational model.

Quite often, cities follow the model prevailing in the State they belong to, as it provides the legal conditions of the fundamental rights and obligations. There are currently four different prevailing models for the management of

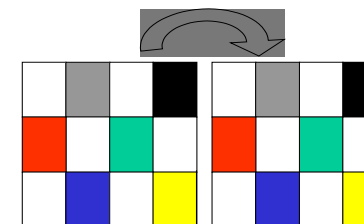
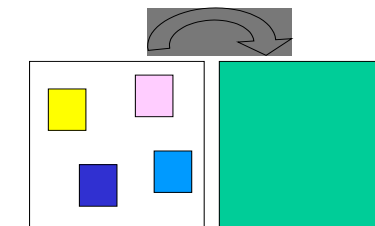


#### Assimilationist model

The system of values and laws pre-existing in the host society has a universal value, and needs to be undertaken by all, although it is desirable to preserve self-identity insofar as it does not contradict the universal model and mutual enrichment and interaction.

#### Intercultural model

Built on more or less egalitarian contributions from the different migratory waves, is based on the assumption that all contributions may be integrated on an equal footing in one single common culture.

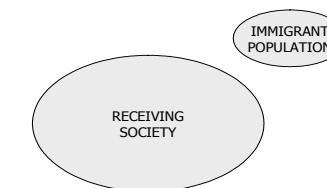


#### Multicultural model

In the “chequered model” each community remains self-cohesioned, and the set of communities share certain spaces with the same rules of the game.

#### Segregationist model

Considers the issue of immigration as a temporary reality with a purely economic base. It recommends isolating the immigrant population from the receiving community, and its return to its place of origin



immigrant populations, although none of them is deployed in pure form:

Unquestionably, the material conditions represent one of the most conclusive elements in defining the integration scenarios. No positive and enriching integration may exist if the treatment received by those integrated is based on exploitation, on marginalisation from the customary items available to the receiving society, on discrimination or, directly, xenophobia. If the answer is unsolidarity and contempt, the social model will be that of conflict and rupture. And so it will also be if the receiving society accepts the mimetic reproduction of the living and social conditions –by the integrated groups- existing in their place of origin, as this may only be literally possible by means of a total social rupture.

### 2.2.2 Constructing coexistence: intercultural democracy

The integration pattern includes a set of principles of action constituted by a variety of possibilities, wills, inertias and social and

cultural determinants. Immigration typology sets out the choices and possibilities which will, in no case, reflect a pure model. Their definition must take into account the type of settlement of the newly arrived population, its structure, the degrees of cultural differences between native population and the newly arrived (language, religion, ethnic group...) and the degree of integration and settlement.

In a first approach to the different integration models, it seems that the degree of consolidation of a welfare and democratic social model, respectful of human rights, achieved by the countries of the Iberian Peninsula not so many years ago and with a lot of effort,<sup>4</sup> leads one to think that the model that best adjusts to the receiving society (having in itself significant diversity elements: diverse historical nationalities, multilingualism, migratory tradition, relative interculturality, diverse origins...) would be placed at an intermediate distance between the assimilationist model –supporter of certain universal principles- and the intercultural model, regarded as a tendency towards a miscegenation of variable geometry. In addition to the above, the right of immigrant populations to

preserve their roots and, therefore, a certain –often demagogical- tendency towards multiculturalism, also represents a highly relevant value in our society.

Here is a temporary name for a reference proposal which encompasses the last reflections, that of **intercultural democracy**.

The proposed model of coexistence advocates for a core of non-negotiable **democratic** values such as the equality of people before the law, equality of men and women, freedom of expression, movement and association, or the fundamental rights. The people who live in this society must accept these values, and put them into practice.

Certain contradictions may appear between the desire to respect the difference and the core frames of the model. In some cases, these contradictions may appear at the heart of democratic values and principles, such as in the case of the non-denominational of the public system. In fact, some of these contradictions exist prior to the migratory issue, which cause its appearance. In the Spanish case, it is particularly critical to find a democratic solution to the exceptionally favourable treatment bestowed by a non-denominational State to a specific religion.

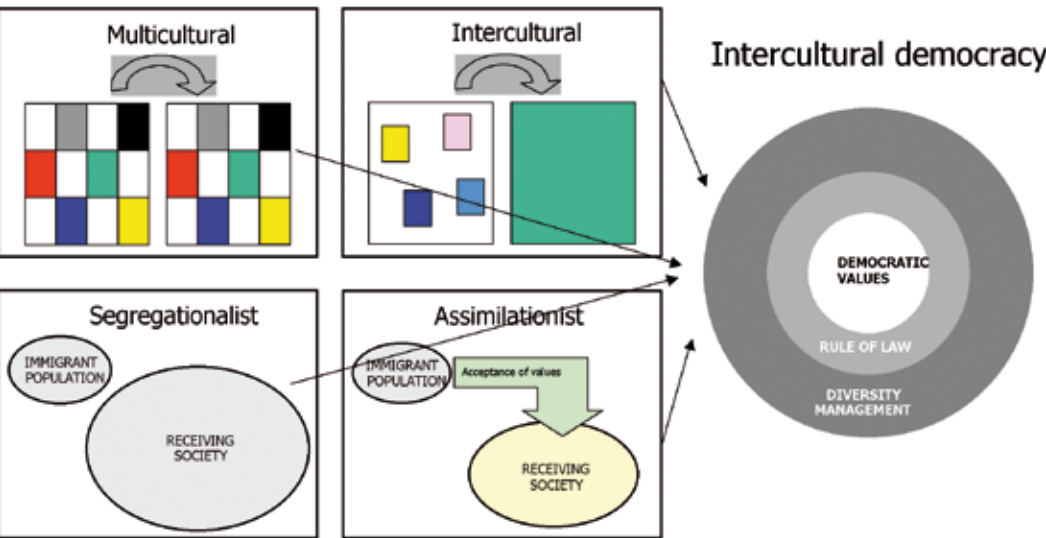
Coexistence also entails the acceptance of the **rule of law** and its laws, which are not immovable and may be modified provided that established democratic procedures are followed. Everyone must be equal before the law, and our society has mechanisms to modify these laws in the event that they do not meet the will of the population or the needs and characteristics of society. If core values may be considered the heart that may solely be modified by extension, this second element may be deemed negotiable by following the procedures set out by the democratic society.

Also in this scenario, it may be difficult to find legal solutions to contradictions among respect, quality and functionality.

Finally, there is the so-called **intercultural society** level, where day-to-day conflicts actually take place. This is a space where all kinds of habits and customs -interrelating or otherwise- may coexist, provided that the democratic values and the rule of law are respected. This is the scenario of the actual cultural diversity; the place where the **capacity of regulations is not applicable** and where **only consensus, agreement**, appreciation of differences, respect for the sensibilities of others, non-imposition of one's own convictions and habits are some of the instruments for the construction of coexistence and the preservation of a cohesioned and integrated society. It is the sphere of options. Conflict may be permanent, and is part of the coexistence construction process. It is the most complex scenario, in which the only possible rule is the **construction and reconstruction of continuous agreements**. This is precisely the scenario that coincides with the local scenario, with the scenario of day-to-day life, of school, public space, trade, worship, party and culture. A scenario in which few things may be resolved through laws, where conflicts are passionately felt, and where any each and every person speaking up publicly in defence of its cause will be given wide press coverage.

The following are the components which would initially make this model consistent:

- Respect for human rights by all social groups.
- Defence of basic values and practices of formal democracy.
- Respect for the Law and the Rule of Law and its operation procedures.



<sup>4</sup> In the 70s, both Spain and Portugal lived under dictatorships.



- Defence of the city's social cohesion, beyond specific collective interests.
- Promotion of cooperative and shared management among various social groups.
- Respecting differences.
- Integration and coexistence of the different cultural contributions in the frame of preserving the main cultural elements of the receiving society.

- Promotion of interaction and construction of the sense of identity and belonging to a city for everyone.

This model of coexistence lies in these shared values of relationships which are based on respect, equality and freedom for men and women; values constructed from the contributions made by different cultures. At the same time, it seeks to guarantee a space for the existence, development and interaction of the different cultures, languages, religions and ethnic groups.

After considering all these characteristics, let us take a look at a model of integration that includes –in the framework of a proposal of **intercultural democracy** - a hybrid based on mixing different elements from assimilationism,<sup>5</sup> interculturality<sup>6</sup> and multiculturalism,<sup>7</sup> and none from segregation.<sup>8</sup>

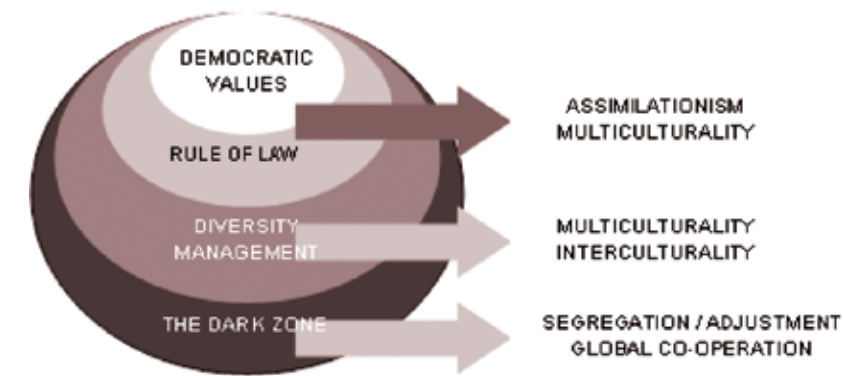
It is certainly quite difficult to construct

this hybrid model, but it would surely be more complicated to try to adopt a purist position that would probably end up being unacceptable for all. A rigorous management of the inalienable rights at the core of the democratic model of coexistence may be perfectly compatible with the addition of new identity elements contributed by immigrants and incorporated by citizens; respecting and preserving own religious beliefs, mother tongues, habits and customs, which may be equally legitimate and inalienable.

### 2.2.3. Managing the "dark zone"

The conception so far presented does not take into account a dynamic element intensely affecting the migratory process and providing it with its characteristic dramatic and confrontational character: the component of legal "irregularity" which, to a certain extent, accompanies the migratory process. A significant part of migratory flows tends to be irregular, leading to the so-called "dark zone", with two definite characteristics which are that it can not be eliminated and it can not be rapidly and immediately regularized. Here, the Rule of Law is irremediably caught between the Law and the human rights and values.

This does not prevent the unavoidable need for managing this reality. Own and foreign experiences seems to point out that there are two parallel and contradictory lines of work necessary to manage this "dark zone":



structural management, based on the Law, and contingent and informal management, based on solidarity and respect.

The management of irregular migrant people, and thus of a significant part of the flow of immigrants, is the most difficult aspect to manage and requires a major effort to enforce the legislation that governs access into the European socio-economic area which will unavoidably be accompanied by mitigating policies in the event of breach of this same legislation.

This contradiction stems from the incoherence of a legislation that recognizes the equality of all men and women but provided that they hold the corresponding passport. This contradiction may only give rise to another –surely avoidable- contradiction: it is necessary to find the way to give "humanitarian" treatment to those who should by law be expelled from the country.

The "dark zone" represents the main obstacle in managing the immigration process and the central focus of insecurity, social conflict, defensive reaction of native population who feels threatened by an uncontrolled invasion, as well as the main weakness of the receiving society who has to abandon some of its universal and democratic principles in favour of preserving its cohesion as a welfare society.

However, it is this zone that facilitates the development and implementation of networks and dynamics that help many individuals and groups to finalize their cultural, economic and social integration into a new society. The city is the privileged territory to maintain anonymity and to set out the basis for a new life. The dark zone of immigration consists largely of urban neighbourhoods. The challenge lies in letting the city fulfil its socializing mission while avoiding its conversion into a ghetto and the chronic segregation of its new citizens. How to achieve this urban miracle in embedded in a new process which we are initiating just now.

### 2.3. Local specificity: proximity management

The need to build up a good coexistence stands as the final target, as it will facilitate the economic and social welfare of the municipality and its area of influence. This approach suggests it is necessary to build a new society with the participation of all men and women. There are at least three different but clearly interrelated stages in the construction of this coexistence which are: knowledge of the different cultures, debate and idea-sharing and reprocessing of cultures and regulations. These processes may only be

<sup>5</sup> Elements of assimilationism: inalienable elements of the receiving society, in line with democratic principles and values and with the current legislation (individual rights, human rights, Rule of Law, language, basic habits, non-confessionality of public life...).

<sup>6</sup> Cultural interaction, integration of common identity elements, cultural and social miscegenation...

<sup>7</sup> Elements of multiculturalism: respect and acceptance of difference, preservation of identity features not contradicting basic values, compatibility of differentiated cultural histories and traditions...

<sup>8</sup> It is not at all desirable that the existence of multicultural situations giving rise to differentiated areas of cultural articulation (in space or in certain fields of social and cultural activity) leads to segregation, not even on the initiative of immigrants themselves.



successful with citizen participation, and this requires:

- The construction of bridges among communities.
- The acknowledgement of valid representatives.
- The establishment of a code of common dialogue
- The strengthening of civil society as a governance mechanism.
- The reinforcement of the facilitating/catalyzing role of local government and administration.

Besides the political postures, the diversification of a city's social body demands it **adjusts its portfolio of services** both in the sense of adapting the existing services to diversity and of creating new services which were not needed before, including the new demands of the new populations as well as the new services linked to the changes emerging in the receiving society and territory.

An increasingly diversified social body requires progressively sophisticated systems for detecting its needs, managing social demands, designing policies, decision-making (structuring of actions and services) and for management models and techniques. In this context the offer of municipal services within an environment that changes based on different dynamics -including the migratory process- may be structured as follows:

- **Humanitarian support** policy: basically refers to providing assistance to the newly arrived in emergency and crisis situa-

tions. These are extraordinary services geared towards avoiding social and humanitarian crises.

- **Reception-settlement** policy: includes actions designed to secure the settlement in the local environment; these services are temporary or transitional (linguistic training, knowledge of the environment ...). During the first periods, networks and associations of already established communities must support, guide and assist social networks, and contribute to the settlement of populations.

- **Inclusion and cohesion** policies: include guarantee of access to all men and women to the public services system,<sup>9</sup> reappraisal of the offer according to the needs and demands of the new social mix, and new conceptualizations of those services which fail to meet the new social situation and the user profiles.

- Social change policies for coexistence, constituted by those actions intended to foster coexistence within a diverse ethnic, cultural and social framework aimed at the entire population.

To implement this kind of policy, the diversity and coexistence management model demands some principles which include local leadership, citizen commitment and initiative, citizen participation, inter-administrative cooperation, equal opportunities and obligations, guarantee to preserve rights and equality, normalised access to resources and transversal and sectorial municipal action.

Local management of immigration impacts requires **the development of transversality as a work methodology to guarantee the**

**success of actions.** Implementation of transversality as a working method and to solve conflicts is a step forward in enhancing the management of public administrations. Diversity management calls for a multi-dimensional perspective to include and integrate all the city council's areas of activity: social services areas, urbanization and housing, besides sectors devoted to participation, communication, information, economic promotion and others. Transversality requires local cooperation, as well as a new approach for solving the problems which involves the ability to generate synergies additional to sectorial work and, above all, prevents the appearance of contradictory actions neutralizing or obstructing the sectorial activity.

## 2.4. Key management areas

Adaptation of the public services system –and its funding-<sup>10</sup> needs to guarantee the availability of adequate instruments and resources to secure that new populations be comprehensively integrated to the receiving urban society, avoiding segregation and “dualisation”, and preserving the achieved levels of welfare and healthcare, always bearing in mind that the immigrant population helps support the current socio-economic model.

These fundamental guidelines serve as the basis for developing a set of activities which may be generically grouped in the following lines of action:

- Improve access to public services for all citizens.
- Enhance working capacity of public service professionals in a background of diversity.

- Guarantee the proper use of collective and public services and spaces.

- To encourage all social and economic agents –the media, particularly- to take responsibility for the improvement of coexistence.

Managing the impact of migratory processes is to manage diversity and social and cultural change. The following are the working areas where intervention is necessary to guarantee a better transversal interaction among them, maximum inter-administrative cooperation and a good partnership with social organisations:

- Information and records
- Social services
- Promotion of women
- Housing
- Health, public health and consumption
- Education
- Economic and employment stimulation
- Urbanization and public space
- Associative structuring and participation
- Socio-cultural and community services
- Public safety and justice
- Local support services
- Education for coexistence

Local governments have the challenge to achieve, develop and consolidate the capacities for managing social cohesion in the growing heterogeneity, and to manage equality in diversity. This management includes both the realities we encounter (poverty, discriminations, inequalities, incomprehension ...) and those we expect and imagine.

<sup>9</sup>| *Regardless their nationality, ethnic group, gender or religion, avoiding any kind of discriminations, loss of service quality and unfairness.*

<sup>10</sup>| *Funding of quantity and quality changes in public services necessary to preserve social cohesion and integrate immigrant populations must be posed as an inter-administrative agreement..*

It is worth mentioning some elements regarding these areas of management. First, there is the role of established social networks, which are crucial in basic day-to-day living issues, and which provides resources and aid. Informal or social capital created by networks of acquaintances and family in the access to information and services, and the construction of cultural, economic and social life practices and behaviours are quite relevant. This contributes to integrate immigrant populations and to regularise access to services.

Secondly, let us make some comments on the urban space. City life is reflected on its streets, and the quality and use of public spaces reveal the quality of coexistence in the city. Public spaces are an environment for social interrelation, for economic and commercial activity, for leisure and for identity and cultural expression. Social and cultural diversity of the cities poses a lot of pressure on public spaces, which are spaces in which people can congregate. City councils need to try to avoid the construction of public spaces with a strong monocultural character, to prevent the generation of ghettos which may turn the city into a chequered board of ethnic groups. The way in which immigration ends up territorializing in an urban background and the relationships established are highly conditioned by city councils' diversity management policies. Despite the need to avoid areas from becoming ghettos, there are significant operational issues (mutual assistance social network) in these urban concentrations that newly arrived migrants must face, which under no circumstances, should mean that public services will possibly be disrupted.

Third, there is the way in which some of the management areas mentioned above such as health, education and even safety are affected by religion. Societies defend the so-

cial role of religions; as to migrations, religion becomes a neuralgic point of reference both to create a community and to overcome the traumas caused by abandoning a family or a familiar environment. Religious institutions play the role of support and reception. Religion becomes a vehicle through which immigrants can be and feel empowered, as it serves as space for expressing unrecognized rights, and facilitates the organisation of collective actions for change. Similarly, religion becomes a personal point of support. It is, evidently, an essential element in the construction of educational services for coexistence, community services and participation processes. Immigrants -though many have their rights unrecognized- use different informal political spaces that have an impact on the political agenda. Promotion of these various alternative public spheres (parties, demonstrations, journals, media, associations ...) allows the interconnection between the different actors of these public spaces.

### 3. Bidirectionality of the integration model: an opportunity for local international cooperation

The cross-analysis between typologies and integration models lead us to recognise a crucially relevant fact: the decision on the coexistence and integration model is not only an option for the receiving society, but also a right and a capacity -whether recognised as a right or otherwise- of the immigrant population. The level of social integration, the shape this integration may adopt, the scenarios in which it takes place, may be designed and established mainly by the receiving society; however, immigrant populations may have other choices left than the mere acceptance of this proposal. Immigrant population -with or without recognized political rights - is and acts like an

informal political actor that impacts on the city council's political agenda.

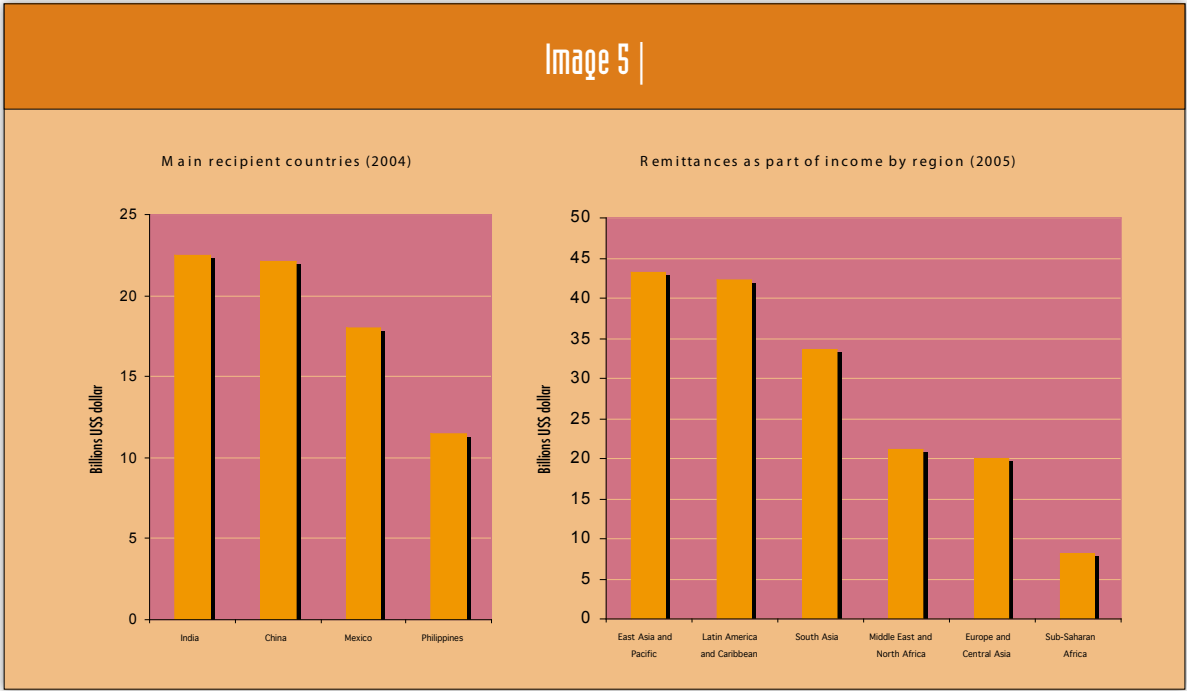
In fact, the situation that may represent a higher risk of social rupture appears when the integrating conditions for the immigrant population are not acceptable or, even if the receiving society believes they are, the immigrant populations, or a part of it, find that such conditions are not desirable. At this stage, it is necessary to create spaces for consensus in which the main challenge will be to set out scenarios of integration which will guarantee the stability of the receiving society; scenarios that are desirable and acceptable by the groups of immigrants.

The need to build up new social configurations characterized by cultural plurality opens many opportunities to structure processes of international cooperation that favour integration and development in both the sending and the receiving societies. In-

tegration and respect are a material part of the bidirectional process in which rights and duties, laws and values are basic elements of a shared social system.

There are a number of issues handled at state level, such as the management of flows, security issues, rights and nationalities, but there are many other areas which allow local cooperation as a way to promote co-development for the countries of origin and the better integration for the receiving societies. The creation of bridges between origin and destination may lead to different development processes, but development will not necessarily stop immigration, as migration contributes towards development.

Immigrants may act as agents for development for their countries of origin, on the basis of the transfer of remittances, knowledge and experience achieved as professionals



Source: Global Economic Prospects 2006. World Bank.



and agents in the receiving country. Flows of money constitute the most visible advantage, and they are especially relevant when applied to family consumption, improving nutrition, family health, and education and improving housing.

But most importantly, migration enable groups of immigrants to generate a social capital that comes from the education received, from international experience and work experience, as well as from the social networks established in the country of destination: the brain gain. This knowledge, in addition to money, may generate innovative and aggressive investment processes that can contribute to the boosting of the economy.

The increasing weight of circular movements on migration movements favours this round trip of human and financial resources. In this way, part of the brain drain may somehow be compensated by reinvestment.

Development may also be promoted by communities in the Diaspora by making investments, establishing commercial exchange links and by transferring practical and theoretical knowledge and technology. As shown by a survey on the Dominican Republic, almost 100% of the women repatriated from Spain had established their own companies.

Transnational family relationships also bring about the so-called care drain, resulting in separated families, new ways of co-existence and relationship. Global Diasporas entail significant tensions for families, especially for women. Women play a key role in the development of their communities of origin as –besides the resources issue- they are generally responsible for transmitting

the value of education and of good health-care and hygiene practices.

As a rule, transnational relationships create bridges which accelerate progressive social changes in the countries of origin. Receiving cities may actively contribute through the effort and professionalisation of some of the currently-existing processes, but also through specific issues such as:

- Assigning Local Development Agents to the task of investing the remittances in family businesses, shops, etc. in the best possible way.
- Transferring social organisation knowledge, community and public services
- Creation of centres of information on the host community
- Creation of transnational businesses and contacting people interested in compatible businesses

#### 4. As a final reflection

Migration management at local level demands not only creative thinking, but also international cooperation. Beyond safety, flows, etc, there are cities in which thousands and millions of international migrants settle and find a way to achieve their dreams.

UNESCO has defined cities as vectors of economic development and social evolution, and as significant centres of communication, culture, innovation and cultural exchanges. Throughout history, cities have been cradles of civilisation and labs for intercultural dialogue, and are a fundamental link

between the individual and the State, between the civic spirit and democracy.

Only through education and knowledge will we learn to live in diversity. It is necessary to recognize the dynamic character of social configurations and the great handicap that the lack of shared and well-known

strategies represents to live together and contribute to the quality of life.

Cities –as diversity labs- where “the clash of civilisations translates into the alienation from neighbours”, are a privileged space for future players to develop these abilities.

## Social cohesion and poverty reduction



### | *Final Declaration* | | *1st Forum of Local Governments from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean* |

## *Social cohesion and decentralised cooperation (Paris, 29th and 30th November 2007)*

*We, the mayors and representatives of local governments, gathered in Paris for the 1st Forum of Local Governments from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean on 29th and 30th November 2007:*

• *As the closest level of government to the urban and rural populations we represent, local governments are fundamental actors in the promotion of social cohesion, itself an essential factor in ensuring democracy, equality and participative life for citizens;*

• *The nature of social cohesion should be noted and strengthened since it is integral to various sectors of local public policy including local economic development, social inclusion, the building of a citizen awareness, balanced integration in the locality and environmental protection;*

• *It is important to reiterate the central role of states in introducing social cohesion policies. Strategies aiming to implement social cohesion can only progress with the involvement of national governments in partnership with local governments. Only in this way can the basic rights of citizens be guaranteed;*

• *Culture and its expression must be respected in pursuit of social cohesion since they play an important role in ensuring inclusion. In this regard, Latin Americans and Europeans should encourage cultural exchanges;*

• *Democracy, decentralisation, and local governance are the component elements of social cohesion. As such, the principle of subsidiarity, which states that decisions should be taken at the level of government as close as possible to the citizen, needs to be strengthened;*

• *To ensure an adequate roll out of local public policies on social cohesion, it is vital to strengthen local governments institutionally by harnessing resources, including financial ones, to promote the creation of skills enabling the development a strategic vision for the local government;*

• *In order to launch joint actions of mutual interest, experience exchanges and knowledge-sharing, it is appropriate to encourage, support and stimulate relations based on decentralised cooperation as well as bilateral or multilateral relations between local governments of the two regions.*

• *It is opportune to both improve the quality of and to heighten the impact of actions of decentralised cooperation between local governments by drawing greater attention to the complementarity and the coordination with other levels of government and international organisations;*



- *It is astute to determine the necessary processes to ensure the agenda of local governments from the two regions is synchronised with the agenda of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean in order to have an influence on their talks;*

- *It is appropriate to mention and highlight the importance of local government associations from the two regions, as much at the national as the regional level (FLACMA and CMRE), and the networks of cities (Mercociudades, Red Andina de Ciudades, Eurocities among others) and in particular their considerable contribution in promoting the political debate and defending the interests of local governments.*

#### **We commit ourselves to:**

- *Strengthening the values of democracy and liberty by promoting a society offering better integration, whilst remaining true to accomplishing our task as the first tier of government, but above all by ensuring our local governments are increasingly underpinned by justice and social cohesion;*

- *Urging national governments to put in place or strengthen without further delay the necessary processes to democratise, decentralise and develop local governance, given that these are vital elements for achieving social cohesion. They must also be the guarantors of solidarity between local governments;*

- *Supporting the work of organisations representing local governments at the national, regional and international level in order that they guarantee the respect of democracy, local autonomy and the principle of subsidiarity, facilitate the decentralisation process, and pursue efforts to obtain adequate local government funding;*

- *Developing the public policies so integral to social cohesion, particularly in the fields of stimulating economic activity, addressing fundamental social needs, and building a awareness of citizen and regional cohesion;*

- *Reinforcing cooperation between local governments of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance the quality of the cooperation as well as its impact. Promoting and creating venues for exchange and knowledge-sharing in the area of social cohesion, encouraging and backing city networks and promoting the synergies between numerous existing projects, notably in the field of strategic planning, citizen participation, territory management, sustainable development, institutional reinforcement and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.*

#### **We propose:**

- *Establishing the Forum of Local Governments of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean as a permanent venue and instrument for dialogue and political consultation of the local governments of these regions, existing in parallel with and recognised within the system of Summits of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. With this in mind, the second and third Forums were confirmed and are scheduled to be held in Latin America in 2009 and Europe in 2011 respectively;*

- *Initiating a period of reflection to define in a consensual manner the mechanisms which will enable the functioning, participation and funding of this venue. With this in mind, the steering committee of the first Forum will be responsible for undertaking this reflection. It will bear in mind the efforts already made by local governments in the framework of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG and its commissions) in organising their regional and inter-regional political representation in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the existing networks;*

- *Consulting the States and the European Union for support to this initiative, notably in identifying precise lines of funding for all instruments which support cooperation between local governments of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean. In particular, the continuation of the URB-AL programme as a reference frame for the development of projects encouraging and backing social cohesion is vital.*

- *Promoting and highlighting the value of the instruments capable of gathering, systemising and disseminating the testimonies of cooperation between local governments of the two regions, by multiplying the results and benefits of this cooperation and by generating knowledge and capabilities. In this area, it is apt to mention the work done by the Observatory of Decentralised Cooperation between the European Union and Latin America, supported by the European Commission;*

- *Raising awareness among Heads of State and Government such that they view the conclusions of this Forum as a contribution to the direction of the agenda in future relations between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean;*

- *Working with the associations and networks of cities and local governments to designate a delegation of European and Latin American local authorities who will be accorded responsibility for presenting the Forum's conclusions at the 5th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean which will be held in Lima (Peru) in May 2008.*

Paris, 30th November 2007











## Governance and institutional strengthening

*The third section of the Yearbook examines the extent to which decentralised co-operation has had a material impact on improving the capacities of local institutions and, on a wider scale, on the technical and political strengthening of local and regional governments.*

*Firstly, we have tried to highlight how decentralised co-operation relations can be of sufficient importance to merit their inclusion on local agendas where they are frequently not given priority. In this respect, Elisabeth Maluquer and Laia Franco demonstrate the degree of influence projects can have on broadening institutional attitudes towards gender issues such as those projects arising from the “Woman and city” network (previously called: “Promotion of Women’s participation in local decisions” within the framework of the URBAL programme).*

*Secondly, we have focused on the interest shown by association of municipalities or “intermunicipalities” due to their great potential to improve their local actions, as well as to provide effective decentralised co-operation relations. In this respect, Nicolás Moret’s article describes the current state of affairs of this mechanism for local co-operation between the European Union and Latin America and presents information as to how it behaves when it comes to forming decentralised co-operation partnerships.*

Introduction





# European union - latin america decentralised co-operation capacity to innovate in public policies: the gender dimension

Laia Franco Ortiz. \*

Elisabeth Maluquer Margalef. \*\*

*This article reflects on the contributions made towards the development of gender policies by the European Union and Latin America through Public Decentralised Co-operation (PDC), as well as on the institutionalization of the gender perspective in local governments.*

### KEY WORDS

Gender transversality |  
Gender perspective |  
Reciprocity |  
Decentralised co-operation projects |  
Institutional strengthening |

*Taking the experiences of the URB-AL Network and its 18 projects as a starting point, an attempt will be made to show the similarities and differences with other spheres of action, acknowledging the key role of women's organisations in the process of incorporating actions and work methods that fight inequalities.*

*PDC in the gender dimension depends on there being certain funds. This is why it is necessary to keep up the political pressure to prevent other priorities from overshadowing the still urgent need to support the progress of women in all spheres of life for the purpose of achieving equality.*

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## 1. Introduction

This article reveals the capacity decentralised co-operation has for promoting the institutionalization of gender policies in local governments.

Decentralised co-operation is based on the premise that network relations between local entities helps technical and political processes that other methods of international co-operation do not allow, given their inherent characteristics and operating mechanisms. As stated by Malé (2007), decentralised co-operation fosters "progressive strengthening of the autonomy of local governments", who represent the ultimate political institutions that are closest to citizens.

This proximity to citizens, the numerous actors who participate in the definition of the needs and interests to be protected by local public institutions, the mutual exchange and learning relationships and putting issues on the political agenda that are not recognised from the geopolitical logic of other forms of co-operations are but a few of the intrinsic elements of decentralised co-operation.

On the other hand, the fight against gender inequalities, after decades of work and reflection particularly in civil society, requires the boosting of government responsibility in the development of public policies that have gender equality as an institutional goal. This responsibility is made evident through:

- Clear political commitments.
- Making budgets in which investing in

specific policies for women as well as in the so-called transversality in gender, are made more visible and differentiated<sup>1</sup>

- The creation of technical or political organisations or entities responsible for planning and executing gender policies, with the necessary authority and recognition to influence -in a true transversal manner- on all institutions and policies.

- Constant communication with women's organisations from different social sectors, not only as policy recipients, given their specific needs, but as a civil society organization participating in the defence of their rights.

- Promotion of an active citizen participation (of women particularly, but also in general) with true influence capacity on political decisions.

The article focuses on the URB-AL Network 12, a decentralised co-operation programme promoted and co-financed by the European Commission. This Network and the projects it developed (see Table 1) work on the basis of recognising the structural roots of gender inequalities and place themselves in a level of equality and mutual recognition with local entities of the North and South.

An example of this complicity is evident in the proximity of initiatives developed by local governments who take part in the Network in order to lessen gender inequalities. Facts like low political participation of women, the need to effectively incorporate budgets with a gender perspective in municipal proceedings or the subjects that configure gender equality plans in European and Latin American municipalities are some specific examples of common elements in the Euro-Latin American sphere.

<sup>1</sup> | Transversality in gender issues is a strategy that seeks to integrate the gender perspective as a work approach in the most diverse spheres. The transversality principle was coined in the IV Conference on Women in Beijing (1995).





The philosophy and work approach in PDC networks question other forms of co-operation based on welfarism, very much seen in the international co-operation environment, and particularly in the work with and for women. Funding organisations usually work from the perspective of women as poor social sectors (though not impoverished), with no capacities of their own or survival and struggling strategies.

This is the reason why, from this framework, and taking as example the initiatives and projects developed in the URB-AL Network 12 for the promotion of women in local decision areas of work, the intention is to analyse the ability of decentralised co-operation of adding new issues of public policy to the agenda.

## 2. General reference framework

The link between decentralised co-operation (DC) and gender, despite its characteristics, is situated in the paradigm of development, in the practice of international co-operation and in the defence of women's rights. For this reason, to analyse the relationship between DC and the introduction of local gender policies, we have to take the creation of development theories into account and how these have been influenced by political, social and intellectual movements that are in aid of gender equality and women's rights.

We can describe this link with the following elements:

- Feminist movements and the gender theory, composed by academic women, leading institutions, professionals, rank and file members who have had an influence in different ways, have been the main promoters of the discussions that have led to the establishing

of women's rights as a political problem with a collective responsibility; the understanding of gender inequalities and how it evolves in different contexts; the development of strategies and tools that view gender inequality and the configuration of a cultural image in which women and men have the same rights and abilities (at least formally).

- The development environment, which includes financial institutions, universities, non-governmental organisations, has gone through a parallel process (not always in unison) with feminist thought and that of centres that study gender issues, incorporating "the need for promoting gender equality in the eradication of poverty and as a development goal" (López 2005), transforming women's claims into regulations, commitments and actions on an international, regional, national and local scale.

In this respect we can highlight the United Nations Conferences on Women, which in 1975 was responsible for the start of the institutionalization of "woman-gender issues" at an international level, as well as the Development Conferences of the '90s and the Millennium Development Goals, in which specifically, gender equality has been present as an end in itself and also as a tool for development.

It is within this framework that women's groups (organised in networks at different levels) stand out as promoters of these policies, ever watchful of the compliance of commitments, of the logic of laws and actions developed and of the impact institutional and social machinery actually has on the reality of gender relations.

In summary, we may highlight the basic elements of the approach (called Gender in Development – GED for its initials in Spanish) which, from the start of women's movements

Table 1 | URB-AL Network 12 projects co-funded by the URB-AL Programme

Project	Coordination	WEB
<i>Woman's Self-Determination through employment</i>	<i>Municipality of Independencia (Pe)</i>	<i>www.mujerempleo.info</i>
<i>Intercontinental Observatory on local employment policies for women</i>	<i>Irún Town Hall (Sp)</i>	<i>www.bidasoa-activa.com/ealnet/es/index.asp</i>
<i>Building Inclusive Cities. Promotion of Gender Equity in Local Management</i>	<i>Quito City Council (Ec)</i>	<i>www.quito.gov.ec/ciudades_incluyentes/objetivos.htm</i>
<i>Participative strategies with a gender perspective of social labour integration for women</i>	<i>Rosario City Council (Ar)</i>	-
<i>Citizen Empowerment and Participation processes in women</i>	<i>TajoSalor Commonwealth (Sp)</i>	<i>www.tajosalar.es</i>
<i>Political training and education of women</i>	<i>Sant Boi de Llobregat Town Hall (Sp)</i>	<i>www.yopolitica.com</i>
<i>Immigrant women and/or from ethnic minorities; equality, participation and leadership in the local sphere</i>	<i>Consell Comarcal Alt Empordà (Sp)</i>	<i>www.urbal12mujerimmigrada.org</i>
<i>Local/International Council of Young Women</i>	<i>Municipality of Graz (Au)</i>	<i>www.consejomujeresjovenes.net</i>
<i>Lideral, Intercontinental Observatory on women's leadership in the local sphere</i>	<i>Malaga Provincial Council (Sp)</i>	<i>www.lideral.com</i>
<i>Promotion of gender equality in the Local Sphere – "PRO-EQUAL"</i>	<i>Huelva Provincial Council (Sp)</i>	<i>http://proigual.sigadel.com</i>
<i>Microloans Methods as an instrument for the promotion of economic emancipation and social integration of women</i>	<i>Municipal Prefectures of Guarulhos (Br)</i>	<i>www.guarulhos.sp.gov.br/destaques/programa_urbal/index.html</i>
<i>Strategies for the Transversalisation of the Gender Perspective in Public Policies</i>	<i>Government of the City of Buenos Aires (Ar)</i>	-
<i>Observatoire International pour les droits et les opportunités des Femmes Célibataires Chefs de Famille</i>	<i>Comune di Latina (It)</i>	<i>www.osiria.eu</i>
<i>Orçamento participativo como instrumento de fortalecimento das Mulheres na Toma de Decisão</i>	<i>Prefecture of Recife (Br)</i>	-
<i>Gender Budgeting – The view of Gender in Public expenditure planning</i>	<i>Pescara Province (It)</i>	<i>www.urbal-genderbudgeting.eu</i>
<i>Women transform Cities: Municipal Assistance Services for women</i>	<i>Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito (Ec)</i>	-
<i>Political Training Centre "Women and the City"</i>	<i>Barcelona Provincial Council (Sp)</i>	<i>urbal.diba.cat/mujeresyciudad</i>
<i>Local Governments promote self-determination of Women through Labour Inclusion</i>	<i>Municipality of Independencia (Pe)</i>	-



(academic and political), have entered the world of development co-operation and have led towards gender institutionalization.<sup>2</sup> This is the approach that decentralised co-operation has to follow in order to achieve a true process of gender institutionalization:

- It is indispensable to modify the gender relations system. It is not about developing actions that treat women as objects, as vulnerable beings without autonomy, or for them to participate in social, economic, political and cultural institutions in the manner that they are established. In order to perform true transformations, these institutions have to be reviewed and their structures transformed.

- Political, international, regional, national and local institutions also develop androcentric policies, often with counterproductive consequences for women.

- Policies for women are not the equivalent of gender policies. Gender policies include positive actions to assist women's specific needs but are based on a much broader view.

- Not all actions in which women are involved may be counted as gender policies.

- Gender transversality requires sensitising and a technical and political training process in which all people involved should participate.

- Equitable participation of women and men in development is a question of justice and efficiency, as stated in the Millennium Goals Declaration. Gender equality and women's empowerment are indispensable to fight poverty, famine, disease and to stimulate a true sustainable development (De la Cruz 2007).

Lastly, the creation of mechanisms for women in local government is one of the great achievements obtained from the application of regional and international regulations, many of which have come about thanks to the pressure of women's movements which have managed to achieved recognition over the need to institutionalize administrative, technical and political instruments arising after decades of reflection and political lobbying. The need to assign economic and technical resources, the carrying out of affirmative actions for women in a first stage and the subsequent creation of the transversality strategy are three of the main achievements.

### 3. Public Decentralised Co-operation in the gender dimension

By Public Decentralised Co-operation (PDC) we understand the co-operation between sub-national public institutions (regional, provincial, county, municipal) of Europe and Latin America, following the definition by the European Union - Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (ODC), (Malé 2006).

Decentralised co-operation is a political phenomenon closely linked to democratisation and decentralisation processes of states, both in the European Union and in Latin America. It is a co-operation method between state and non-governmental co-operation, relatively recent, not always well known, but which is showing a great capacity for making outstanding contributions to the field of co-operation, particularly in the gender dimension, despite that the added value brought by PDC not being sufficiently visible.

An analysis of the whole of decentra-

lised co-operation relations, carried out by running a query on ODC's database, shows that the gender topic is not a work priority area. Although the gender perspective is a progressively at the intersection point in the guidelines for development co-operation, both at a national level and at international organisations, there are almost no spontaneous projects of decentralised co-operation activities focused on the gender subject.

The vast majority of projects that we know about that have worked with a central focus on gender issues are linked to Network 12 of the URB-AL Programme, a thematic network for the empowerment of women in local decision-making spheres.

The reasons behind the low level of decentralised co-operation development as regards gender deserve to be investigated in depth. Meanwhile, some explanatory hypotheses may be mentioned. First, gender policies do not rank high, neither in European countries, nor in Latin American ones. It must be noted that the realistic possibilities for developing social and local policies in Latin America are low (Romero 2007), this is because the existing legal framework in many of them continue to give the State jurisdiction in these matters, and because the financial resources that are within the reach local governments. The case is different in many countries of the European Union where gender policies have recently been promoted thanks to Community initiatives. Thus, being policies that are not of key importance to local government, not much should be expected from them in the field of co-operation. Other fields perceived as more strategic are those prioritised by PDC.

Second, the lack of prioritisation of gender policies in the framework of decentralised co-operation may also correspond to a secondary position of women at decision-making levels of local communities.<sup>3</sup> Given that nowadays women are the ones who put gender issues on institutional agendas, both in the European Union and in Latin America, this explanation becomes more acceptable. To confirm this hypothesis, it should be observed whether the advance in parity also implies a greater presence of gender issues and perspectives in PDC.

Currently, the mass of PDC in the gender dimension takes place within institutional programmes, like the European Commission's URB-AL Programme. This programme, in its Phase II, launched a gender specific network: Network 12. Thus, the relevance of political decisions that funding institutions may come to make, since they have the capacity of including gender issues on the agenda of co-operation policies, promoting in that way their inclusion or enhancement in Latin American municipalities.

Next, we shall see, in more detail, what items decentralised co-operation in the gender dimension takes care of, and which are ignored. To do this, we have followed the scheme produced by Malé (2007) for the whole of PDC, establishing some sort of dialogue between this general systematisation and the subject we are studying. Malé points out five large centres of action in PDC:

- Welfare and humanitarian help,
- Support of local public development policies,

<sup>2</sup>| This introduction has been basically theoretical, since in practice, the own power structures of institutions that promote them sometimes hinder their true application.

<sup>3</sup>| According to data of the Gender Observatory of CGLU (2002), female Mayors account for 10.5% in Europe, and 5.5% in Latin America, while the percentage of female city counselors in local governments is 23.9% in Europe and 26.1% in Latin America. In all cases the situation is far from parity.

- Support of institutional strengthening of local governments,

- Municipal political pressure,

- Cultural change and relationships with citizens.

For each of the centres of action we present a brief description of the execution of gender projects, illustrated with some specific examples of interest, and with a final comment or recommendations.

### 3.1. Welfare and humanitarian help

At all social strata, women are at a disadvantage to men as regards the labour market and access to resources. Thus, when the question of poverty is approached, women-specific programmes are often presented, since they are a more vulnerable group, with their own characteristics, with specific needs and demands (of health, security, education, etc.).

Initiatives of spontaneous decentralised co-operation stand out in this centre of action,<sup>4</sup> which, within the gender dimension, is the one that gives priority to the attention of more vulnerable people, in particular to women who are victims of gender violence, who are at the poverty line (immigrant women, adolescent mothers, women heads of household) contributing financial resources to provide services for women, specialised maternal health care centres, day-care centres, etc.

This type of support may come accompanied by community projects where many opportunities for self-organisation and growth are offered to women. Sometimes however,

for women, community work implies a work overload without financial compensation, which has brought criticism from women's organisations.

Another issue to consider in this type of project is the participation of associations and DNGOs (Development Non-Government Organisations). Usually, European local governments provide this assistance support through indirect co-operation (European DNGOs with local counterparts) and to a lesser extent, directly through Latin American municipalities. This trend has been criticised by official organisations of the recipient society since, if indirect co-operation is given priority, those organisations may be left outside projects carried out in their own territory. In that respect, even though it seems quite appropriate that specialised institutions of the civil society are who provide services, given their greater efficiency and experience, it is also important that Latin American government institutions, at least local ones, get involved and support projects, since it is vital for their sustainability.

While welfare assistance recognises women as their recipients, sometimes, humanitarian help is blind to gender, assuming that emergencies affect populations without distinctions. However, it isn't always this way, and the needs and response capacities of the population are not always the same. One could question whether a higher active participation of women in many of these situations could be obtained, if the response of co-operation took them more into account. A challenge faced by humanitarian assistance today in the gender field, which has still not gained noteworthy results, concerns the murder of women.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.2. Support of local public development policies

Economic development policies in the European Union already have a long tradition. Despite being planned for the whole of the population, they usually include actions, projects and sometimes programmes specifically for women. Without going into any further depth, these policies have successfully tackled the integration of some sectors of the women population into the labour force.

This process has also taken place as regards development policies in the countries of the South; suffice it to say that the success of the micro-loan programmes for women are a very good example of local development policy generated in the South and which were later adopted in the North.

In this centre of action we find multiple experiences of public decentralised co-operation, where technical assistance is provided or knowledge and strategies are shared to promote women's participation in the economy and their social inclusion by local governments.

In URB-AL Network 12, various projects have aimed to get local governments to adopt policies of social and labour inclusion of women as their main goal.<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that the Network's objective was clearly the political participation of women, these projects had a great appeal and those who carried them out sensibly argued that participation in the labour market was a key condition for women's autonomy and social integration as citizens.

Other projects of the URB-AL Network 12 have focused in social cohesion, seeking the incorporation -by local governments- of integration policies, i.e. of specific groups of women more vulnerable to exclusion, such as immigrant women or women heads of household, to which we shall dedicate a brief comment.

The "Immigrant Woman" project, led by the Consell Comarcal de L'Alt Empordà (L'Alt Empordà Local Council) (Spain) had the participation of municipalities from Sabandia (Peru), Sicasica (Bolivia), Escazú (Costa Rica), Mar del Plata (Argentina), the Savona Province (Italy) and as external partner, the European New Towns Platform (Belgium). The project allowed showing that the majority of partner entities were at the same time issuers and recipients of migrating people. It allowed municipal services to become aware of the needs of people in transnational homes, establishing direct contacts with immigrant women and providing them with meeting spaces, and immigrant women forums. It implied becoming aware of being a group and, in some cases, the creation of associations of immigrant women. This project, given its subjects and approach, managed to place all participant local entities at the same level and it was one of the projects with a higher reciprocity level. Since this phenomenon was present in all local communities, shared knowledge and strategies were generated to promote active participation as citizens from women of all the different groups.

The Osiria project, lead by the Comune de Latina (Italy) has resulted in the creation of an International Observatory of

<sup>4</sup> | Spontaneous co-operation is that which emerges from local communities in a voluntary manner; it usually has to do with bilateral relations that take place thanks to the progressive internationalisation of local spheres.

<sup>5</sup> | <http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/LGAMVLV.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> | The projects are: "Woman-Employment", lead by Independencia (Peru); the EAL.NET Observatory of women employment policies, lead by Irún (Spain); "Participative insertion strategies", lead by Rosario (Argentina); "Microloan methods", lead by Guarulhos (Brazil).





the rights and opportunities of single, heads of household women, together with the municipalities of Ariccia (Italy), Independencia (Peru), San Joaquín (Chile), El Bosque (Chile), São Bernardo do Campo (Brazil), 3 de Febrero (Argentina), Feria de Santana (Brazil) and the European entities, ENVAR and ENAIP. The objective of this project was to contribute to granting value to women, who sometimes are not visible in social programmes, and to boost actions in order to achieve their full participation and social insertion. The results of the project are positive: through education, changes in the perception of this group by municipalities' staff have been achieved. The work has been done jointly with women's associations from all partner entities. Diagnosis have been made to measure this group of women heads of household in all partner entities, and action plans have been created, which have been adopted by the local governments of the partner entities. These action plans are local commitments of modification or complementing the services and assistance for women heads of household groups.

PDC projects as regards local development policies that have been reviewed, contributed a specific added value that meant an improvement, and eventually a broadening of the response capacity of local governments to the needs of the female population. In some cases, even, the incorporation of a new public policy has been possible. This was a positive impact of the participation of local groups in URB-AL Network 12.

However, the great difficulty of these projects at the time of achieving a broader impact of the gender perspective in their mu-

nicipalities becomes evident, transcending the Women's Department or the Employment Promotion Department, which in most cases have been in charge of leading URB-AL 12 projects.

A recommendation gathered from the review of the impact of Network 12 projects is that in general, there is a lack of political drive and also greater technological development in order to transverse the gender perspective in territorial development plans. Positive actions are necessary but not enough to break the "glass ceiling".<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3 Support of institutional strengthening of local governments

This centre of action is, beyond comparison, the field of public decentralised co-operation. In the gender dimension specifically, the objectives are: achieving the highest possible level of institutionalisation not only of policies addressed to women but also of the gender perspective, and achieving parity in government and management.

The institution becomes stronger, since it becomes more democratic at incorporating the interests and needs of 50% of the population. However, not everybody sees this transformation as desirable. For the majority of institutions, it is still something lacked and wanted.

Institutional strengthening implies influencing the technical and political system. The experience of URB-AL Network 12 shows us that the technical sector is more accessible and willing to introduce changes. Adding to

this sector are the policies that support the projects. Usually, it is those who are responsible for social policies and, in some cases, for international co-operation or for international relations. But this political involvement does not always have the same significance. Although always, all URB-AL projects require a formal political commitment, the truth is that repercussions on the whole municipality are not always achieved, being limited to influencing only one department.

Projects that most involve political women are those more directly aimed at the parity objective, those which seek to involve women in the environment of local politics, i.e. through training.<sup>8</sup>

In a few cases, projects that pursue the incorporation of the gender perspective in local governments have also achieved a significant political influence. For example, the "Inclusive cities" project, led by Quito (Ecuador), which managed to involve women as political representatives of local governments, as well as women leaders of the civil society and technical staff, causing a significant structural impact that will be discussed later on. This

project was considered by the URB-AL Programme as one of the 30 best practices out of all URB-AL projects.

Both projects, led by Quito, are a good example of institutionalisation of the gender perspective, and they contribute methods and technical-political strategies for its implementation.

We have examples of bilateral decentralised co-operation projects in which the European entity has provided the Latin American entity with technical assistance, like the devising of the equality plan, which involved the Barcelona Provincial Council and the Montevideo Municipal Government.

Training usually appears as the most recurrent proposal when the issue is institutional strengthening. Thus, projects that seek to improve public management also almost always include a training module aimed at staff in public administration, in case they are not specifically focused on training. Subjects are varied: gender transversality, participative budgets, gender perspective budgets, service management for women, etc.

*"We, women, transform Cities. Municipal Assistance Services for Women 2006-2008" is an URB-AL project that continues the "Inclusive Cities" project.*

*The project, coordinated by the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito, has two European partners: the Town Hall of Gijón (Spain) and the Municipalité de Saint-Dennis (France), and three Latin American partners: the Montevideo Municipal Government (Uruguay), the Municipality of Escazú (Costa Rica) and the Town Hall of Santa Tecla (El Salvador).*

*The project works on a triple strategy to promote gender equality in urban local policies: firstly, strengthening public services that care for women's specific issues, given their gender position; secondly, integrating the gender perspective in a transversal manner through institutional work with technical and political staff, and, thirdly, strengthening citizen participation channels in local management, all of which permit the inclusion of the gender perspective on the municipal political agenda.*

<sup>7</sup> | In gender studies, the term "glass ceiling" refers to the invisible limit that hinders women's vertical mobility in the labour and professional fields. It is invisible, given that there are no laws or explicit social mechanisms that prevent the moving up of women, but it may be proved statistically that there are hardly any women in high positions.

<sup>8</sup> | The Euro-Latin American Political Training Centre – "Women and the City", lead by the Barcelona Provincial Council; "Yo, política" ("I, a woman politician"), led by Sant Boi (Spain).

A review of the themes in technical exchanges shows the recurrence of the reciprocity issue in decentralised co-operation relations in the gender dimension. That is to say, technical teams do exchange; the contributions of a group are relevant for others, and the dichotomy between donors and receivers, between North and South, so common in many co-operation projects, is not present. Thus, for example, they all adopt the notion of gender transversality (which intends to convey the English expression gender mainstreaming into Spanish), a contribution from the North, and also the devising of participative budgets, a contribution from the South.

The mentioned projects are innovative, maybe cutting-edge, they have generated protocols, manuals, and they have systematized and formed experiences. Their true challenge is to achieve being adopted by institutions, and the great significance of political influence also lies in that achievement.

A recommendation regarding institutional strengthening from a gender perspective is the creation of information systems that are separated by sex, which allows knowing not only the number of beneficiaries -men and women- that each local government action has, but also who these beneficiaries are. This

simple action is at the basis of any attempt at transversalisation, and it is a prerequisite for the materialisation of gender budgets.

### 3.4. Political pressure

In the gender dimension, institutional strengthening implies change. The adoption of a new work perspective requires the creation of new tools and their dissemination through training, their monitoring, etc. First of all, the institution's transformation must overcome internal resistance to change, in order for the work in decentralised co-operation to have an effective impact on the institution.

In this sense, political pressure is exerted, in the first place, towards the inside of the institution. In order for this to happen, internal alliances with other city councillors -men and women- of the government team will not be enough, but rather, external support will have to be pursued: on one side the support by civil society (women's associations, university entities, etc.) and on the other, by higher rank institutions (national institutes for women, international organisations, etc.).

That is why, if this process is carried out within the framework of PDC, the fact of

working in a network with other local entities -with renowned external partners-, grants more legitimacy to those who promote gender policies, as well as favouring the incorporation of the gender perspective in the way the institution is managed.

All of this gives great value to the network, and is the reason why despite its weaknesses and the lack of resources, the proliferation of networks in which local governments can work the gender dimension is outstanding. As examples, we can mention the Gender Unit of the Mercocities Network, the Metropolis Network, Cities and Local Governments United (CGLU) or the "Women and the City" network, promoted by the Barcelona Provincial Council (Spain) and which continues the work of URB-AL Network 129

These Networks speak of the advances of the institutionalisation of the gender perspective. They facilitate contact between women that work in institutions of different countries and other networks of women who are professionals, university graduates, members of social movements, political parties, etc.

However, many of these networks have difficulties at maintaining a permanent lobbying activity within the general spaces where they are located -municipal networks, for example- and also with national and international authorities to which they would address proposals arising in local spheres.

Also, general networks suffer -just as institutions do-, a lack of gender transversality. Therefore, only in specific thematic spaces are gender issues approached, without much discussion with the rest of the organisation.

### 3.5. Cultural change and relationships with citizens

Introducing the gender perspective in local government implies a change in the organisations' culture. That is why we can talk about cultural change in any of the PDC's centres of action in the gender dimension. However, only when change is the central objective of the project, it may be considered the core of PDC.

The significance of cultural change is unquestionable, since if it is not achieved, the sustainability of interventions in the gender dimension cannot be guaranteed. Advances cannot depend on individual intentions, but rather on an administration that is sensitive to gender and that has achieved its institutionalisation.

We have already pointed out the importance of having external alliances to make changes within the institution, and also, as stated in the introduction above, how institutional changes are achieved through influence and pressure exerted by organised civil society, when it claims representation spaces for women, answers to their demands, and institutional support for women's groups in order that they may carry out actions and develop.

This active civil society seeks the involvement of administrations to bring about change of its citizens. This means multiple actions for the administration: sensitising campaigns against physical abuse, campaigns to promote participation of women in all spheres of social life, co-responsibility of men in the tasks involved in caring for dependents, domestic chores, etc.

*The "Women and the City" Network wishes to continue the decentralised co-operation experience of URB-AL Network 12, incorporating all partner entities of the Network and opening itself to the participation of new entities of the civil society.*

*The mission of the "Women and the City" Network is to promote the advance of women at local decision levels in a framework of Euro-Latin American decentralised co-operation.*

*The operational objectives of the "Women and the City" Network are:*

- boosting co-operation projects between partner entities,*
- generating knowledge through research, analysis and dissemination of good practices,*
- promoting associations between women leaders in the local sphere and the creation of lobbies of women, particularly consisting of young women and minorities,*
- promoting the training of women with political and ruling responsibilities in the local sphere,*
- promoting collaboration between the "Women and the City" Network and other networks and international institutions that share similar objectives.*

<sup>9</sup>| For more information on the "Women and the City" Network, visit <http://www.diba.es/urba12/>

*The “Lideral” project was coordinated by the Malaga Provincial Council (Spain), with the participation of the municipalities of Sicasica (Bolivia), San Jeronimo-Cuzco (Peru), Mar del Plata (Argentina), San Carlos (Costa Rica), San Joaquin (Chile), Campinas (Brasil), the Trento province (Italia) and as external partners, the University Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco (Mexico) and Stiftelsen Kvinnoforum (Sweden).*

*The objective of the “Lideral” project is to enhance women’s leadership and empowerment in the local sphere. Actions performed have led to:*

- improvement of knowledge on the reality of the participation of women citizens in the local sphere,*
- detecting hindrances that prevent women’s leadership in the local sphere.*
- creation of spaces for opinion and debate at a local level on the possible solutions-strategies for the capacities of women which may boost their active participation as leaders.*
- raise local conclusions to a intercontinental level to offer a globalised view of women in local environments,*
- design of specific projects that shift and generate attitudes towards establishing proposed strategies (Strategies Catalog).*
- training of technical staff in relation to the project that promotes the creation of a “Intercontinental Network of Agents for Women’s Leadership”.*

Decentralised co-operation has made it possible to support local governments in projects that have forged a closer relationship with citizens, support the creation of networks with social entities and support strategies that sensitize. We highlight some projects of the URB-AL Network 12 that have sensitized large groups, such as the “Pro-Equal” project, which has provided training to 9,800 people; the “Council of Young Women”, which promotes participation of young women.

What these have in common is, having enhanced the participation of civil society, the empowerment of women and the alliances between local institutions and citizens which created favourable conditions for a new way of governing: a gender-sensitive government that has the closest relational administration to citizens.

The struggle for cultural change must face different forms of resistance. This has

been discussed in the “Lideral” project, where operational proposals were presented to fight the obstacles women face in the empowerment process. This is a significant challenge that must be very well known to those responsible for boosting institutionalisation of the gender perspective and parity.

#### 4. Impacts of decentralised co-operation in the gender dimension

Experiences of decentralised co-operation projects in the gender dimension are still incipient and there has not been much reflection and assessment of the impacts they have had on local spheres.

However, the URB-AL Network 12 experience lets us define how, through decentralised co-operation; the fight for gender equality carries within itself a way of modifying cultures, ways of thought and actions, as well as institution structures.

#### 4.1. Impact on the culture of organisations

As previously mentioned, for work on gender equality to have any real impact it must consider the dimension of symbols. This dimension is very significant, since changes in the institutions’ imagery and in their ways of doing relations and operations are required as a previous step to other, more administrative, structural and functional types of changes.

The culture of organisations refers to collective imageries shared by people who are part of them. They are norms, opinions, thoughts that are essential in the operating dynamics of an organisation and in the type of work it performs. It also integrates the knowledge the organisation and those who constitute it have, what individual and professional capacities are promoted and valued. Lastly, it refers to ways of working, participation, management and inter-organisational decision-making mechanisms, as well as ways in which people and entities communicate or exchange information.

As a general rule, cultural changes in institutions precede great structural changes; they establish the basis for their materialisation and their acceptance by the whole of the institution. The flood of the gender dimension onto institutions is usually joined by new concepts (gender relations, gender democracy, gender planning, etc.), new alliances with civil society (women’s movements, associations, informal groups, women experts, etc.) and new methods, also usually very participative.

That is why making an impact on this organisational culture, modifying thinking structures, is indispensable in a subject such as gender inequalities, in which technical and theoretical knowledge, but above

all, the sensitiveness level can be key to the success of a certain policy or specific action. Gender transversality requires sharing knowledge, actions, strategic and political objectives, human resources and expertise.

Work in public institutions is usually compartmentalized, not very collaborative and thus not helpful nor beneficial for the true application of gender policies. This means that gender and efficiency would go hand in hand towards the improvement of public policies in this case.

This process generates what we call cultural change, a permanent change which is added to many other changes that take place within institutions and that logically, has to face all kinds of resistance. Approaching this conflict in a democratic manner and favouring the right changes in order to establish the gender perspective in institutions brings about institutional strengthening.

Transformations at a cultural level require training and education processes. This strategy or instrument is used regularly by women’s organisations and DNGOs, on the grounds that without education on “gender issues”, no institutional processes are possible. On the other hand, decentralised co-operation provides the systematisation of working in networks, the exchange of experiences and reflections, and mutual learning. That complement is very significant for the improvement of the quality and recognition of the relevance of these processes.

These trainings are diverse and include theoretical subjects (gender theory, feminist theory, theoretical perspectives of working with and for women), always underlying the need for political commitment so that these processes and the transformations they produce actually take place.



Data of the URB-AL Network 12 assessment prove this significance: 81% of the projects focused on learning. That means 8,300 people improved their abilities.

This training sometimes is delivered in the framework of broader projects, like the “Local/International Council of Young Women” project, where training is an activity prior to the actual development of the councils for participation of young women. In other cases, like the Euro-Latin American Political Training Centre “Women and the City”, training is the project’s cornerstone.

#### 4.2. Institutional impact

This mainly refers to the transformation in the structures of institutions, of their operating and organisation manners, the improvement in the development of public policies and the efficiency of local governments at achieving their political goals as a strengthening element.

The experience of the URB-AL Network 12 has shown that the introduction of gender equality in local political agendas has to be done with own local resources (technical, financial and human resources) and with a commitment to develop different strategies.

Local entities that participate in the URB-AL Network 12 generally start from two situations as regards the gender institutionalisation process. On one hand, some municipalities have already developed some policy or administrative and/or technical mechanism within the structure that is responsible for specific actions for women, or the so called “gender issues”. It is important, however, to take into account in which political and technical hierarchical position this mechanism is positioned, what authority it is

given within the institution, and also, whether it is linked to networks or other local, national and international authorities.

On the other hand, local entities that are just starting out and do not have any specific technical or political mechanisms are in the opposite position.

In many cases, decentralised co-operation in the gender dimension has promoted the creation of administrative mechanisms responsible for the implementation of actions linked to gender policies at a local level. These administrative mechanisms may be a department, an area or service, with management, have a specific technical and administrative staff, a budget and a physical space within the municipality or within autonomous entities linked to the municipality. But the experience of the URB-AL Network 12 tells us that, in Latin American municipalities, this situation does not take place at the beginning of the action, but rather at its end.

In URB-AL Network 12, the creation and strengthening of these kinds of structures has taken place in 30 cases. The “Inclusive Cities” project launched six local work teams. In Quito –the project coordinator-, the Development and Social Equity Secretariat was created, and in the Municipality of Santa Tecla (El Salvador), a Gender Department was established. Within the framework of the “Yo Política” project, the Municipality of Torino (Italy), from its participation as a partner in the project, created its Equal Opportunities Department.<sup>10</sup>

There is a tendency for an unrecognised cell lacking a specific function within a municipal’s organization to, with political support, participate in a decentralised co-operation project and gradually become

more recognised in terms of fulfilling a specific administrative procedure/function at different levels, according to the case, during the entire length of the project’s term. The appearance of the people in charge of these procedures on the international stage has a very positive impact on the improvement of their capacities but also, and at the same level of importance, on the visibility and recognition of their work, a fact that at the institution’s internal level implies an increase of their authority and internal influence capacity.

This happens in Latin America as well as in some European local entities, as in the Saint-Dennis (France) case, since its participation in the “Inclusive Cities” project.

In URB-AL Network 12 projects, up to 30 local entities have created specific departments to carry out gender policies. The most common ones are Departments for Women. The capacity of decentralised co-operation to include new subjects of public policies in the gender dimension’s agenda is materialised with the creation of these structures within institutions, and also with the increase of their own resources (human, financial, logistic) which allow the consolidation of structures that already existed before the project.

When communities start off from a situation in which there is an administrative authority dedicated to gender issues, with a shorter or longer history, their participation in a decentralised co-operation project is usually motivated by the local government’s effort to achieve the improvement and deepening of policies. One of their objectives may

be to overcome the perspective of policies aimed at women as a particularly vulnerable group, starting a more transversal and politically committed work by the institution, as well as establishing exchange relations with other European or Latin American entities with which to share learning.

The ultimate strategy -used to institutionalise the gender perspective- is transversality, which influences the work of the whole institution towards the same objective, in this case, gender equality. In the experience of URB-AL Network 12, 65% of the projects opted for this transversality as an objective, which influenced different sections and departments to become responsible and include gender policies as their own.

Despite this approach, cultural change does not always lead to structural changes. The latter show that institutions have gone for a role, a new level of competence, they have supplied resources for it and have given it a position within the institution. From a gender perspective, desirable changes at a structural level would go in a twofold direction: on one hand, the consolidation of a space of its own with recognition, in which to develop specific policies for equality, and on the other, transversalising the gender perspective across the institution. This is what has been called a dual strategy.

Lastly, an objective often implicit of co-operation projects in the gender dimension, is the achievement of parity. On this matter, we lack statistical data that would allow us to assess to what extent projects aimed at training, sensitising or supporting women in decision-making posts are achieving

<sup>10</sup> Other examples are: “Immigrant Woman” project, on which the launching of an Information and Assistance Service for Women was based, in the Consell Comarcal de l’Alt Empordà (Spain), the “Lideral” project, from which the creation of a Women’s Department in the Municipality of San Carlos, in Costa Rica, emerged.

ving their goals. We have isolated reports of some women who have been promoted to technical and political managerial posts. A recommendation for these types of projects is to be investigated, through a systematic log of the evolution of women who are beneficiaries of the progress of action taken.

### 4.3. Impact on networks

#### 4.3.1. In relation to associative networking

The construction of a social partnership that is solid, authentic, a social reference and that serves as representative before local administrations is a requirement for the modern relational administration. Some projects have promoted the creation of women's associations, in some cases with the administration's support. Thus, in the Municipality of Guatemala, the "Pro-Equal" project, lead by the Huelva Delegation, has generated a Network of Women for Gender Equality.<sup>11</sup>

Given the participation of decentralised co-operation projects in the gender dimension, entities and administrations become closer, which sometimes leads to the creation of the stable participation of organisations: consultative councils, advisors, etc. This implies the recognition of women's organisations as social actors and appropriate representatives at the moment of planning, implementation and assessment of public policy, and their inclusion in participative processes. A good example is the "Young Women's Council", which has been able to create eight participation councils in partner entities. In these councils, young women –having first received basic training and then advanced training in organizations - have become agents with an awareness of citizens and rights. This has allowed them to establish

their own methods of communication with local institutions which have recognised them as active citizens.

At a more informal –but not less important- level, decentralised co-operation projects have also facilitated the recognition and strengthening of relations between women from different political and social sectors as well as from diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds. Political training projects such as "Yo, política" and the Euro-Latin American Centre of Political Training "Women and the City" are examples of this. As a result of these informal networks emerged from the participation in international training courses (either through in-person or distance modes) also comes the strengthening of the institutions to which the beneficiaries belong. The increase and improvement of their abilities, as well as knowing other experiences has been an example, in many cases, for them to put in practice within their organisations.

Lastly, the strengthening of associative networking also has to do with the role that women's associations play in relation with local administrations. The increase of relations between both sectors strengthens the capacity of these organisations to exert influence on the definition of policies to be developed by institutions, recognising their progress in the defence of women's rights. This strengthening gives them, on the other hand, the ability of watching for the processes of incorporation of real gender policies and generators of change.

#### 4.3.2 In the creation of external alliances

The creation of institutional and professional relationships with other local entities implies, unquestionably, the participation

of local entities in decentralised co-operation projects. For example, the URB-AL programme has encourage the framework of relationships created through thematic networks be transferred to other networks first, and then afterwards, these relations are being used for multiple lobbying activities, as well as in other co-operation programmes (i.e. Eurosocal).

It is often hard to trace these alliances between cities, since they are not always formalised by the time the URB-AL project is completed.

There are cases of specific collaborations between networks, for example, between the "Women and the City" network, coordinated by the Barcelona Provincial Council, and URB-AL Network 14 for Public Safety, coordinated by Valparaíso (Chile).<sup>12</sup> Exchanges on how to incorporate the gender perspective in urban policies and how to create indicators which include the gender dimension in studies on public safety perception emerged from the connection between both these networks.

In this sense, as a general rule, local entities that lead projects are the ones who are strengthened by the number of relations and their intensity, since their nodular role within the projects permits it.

These relations allow cities and regions to internationalize their plans and also the establishment of alliances at an international level which convert into networks and a capacity to exert political pressure or influence. An example of this is the support, through the "Microloan

methods" project,<sup>13</sup> of a network of Latin American countries with experience in the development of programmes of transfers of income and resources to vulnerable groups of people, with the purpose of developing tools of financial services.

The result from this international impact is decentralised co-operation in the gender dimension, and offers new opportunities for cities to participate in international networks and for making their achievements, action and even their innovation capacity, visible. All of this serves to further legitimize institutions and motivate the specialists.

This "institutional marketing" is also important at a citizen's level, since the internationalisation of institutions gives them value and prestige, and legitimizes them in civil society.

## 5. Conclusions

The environment for gender policies, and as mentioned in the introduction, women's movements and positive actions encouraged by international organisations through their discourse, their demands and proposals, have evidently had an influence on institutions. Within this context, the genuine collaboration that decentralised co-operation has started to make is the introduction, and/or consolidation of gender policies in local institutions and of the gender perspective in institutional logic. It goes without saying that it is a long term proposal, but we can say that in many cases, the foundations are already established.

<sup>12</sup> | See programme "More women and more democracy" Seminar of the "Women and the City" Network, Quito, 18-20 July 2007, and *Mujeres y Ciudad* magazine (being edited), at <http://www.diba.es/urbal12/>

<sup>13</sup> | Project lead by Guarulhos (Brazil), [http://www.guarulhos.sp.gov.br/destaques/programa\\_urbal/index.html](http://www.guarulhos.sp.gov.br/destaques/programa_urbal/index.html)

<sup>11</sup> | For more information visit: <http://proigual.sigadel.com>



From the experience gained by URB-AL Network 12, and afterwards, by its successor, the Women and the City Network, it is noticeable that there is great development potential for gender policies in both continents through decentralised co-operation. Even though it is not a spontaneously priority subject, it is evident that the calls of the second phase of URB-AL have had a very good response. An average of 100 active participants (per meeting) attended the network's meetings, and 50 projects of Network 12, with 170 entities involved responded to official announcements. There is still more: the wide involvement of professionals and politicians in the projects shows a great level of commitment with values of equality and human rights that are inherent to gender policies.

Projects focused on gender issues have been able to innovate through a great variety of accomplishments that, to a greater or lesser extent, have helped local institutions of both continents to make progress in the incorporation of the gender perspective in institutions, as well as progress in women as first class actors in the local political arena. The different methods of managing public services, of planning and assessing public policies of partner entities of a project are shared and discussed to enable them to improve their capacities and to learn from each other in relation to the common objective of institutionalising the gender perspective in the local sphere.

The training and exchange element of these projects is very motivating, not only for technical staff but also for people with ruling and political responsibilities. Motivation is essential for the improvement and the necessary transformation of public administrations in our countries.

A typical feature of the gender dimension, already been mentioned in the article, is reciprocity. This reciprocity distinguishes the gender dimension from other dimensions in decentralised co-operation. This means that there is a greater simultaneous capacity of giving and receiving, that is, those local and civil society entities, in European and in Latin American, show that they have learned a great deal thanks to having participated in Network 12 projects.

We have also been able to establish that European local entities have directly benefited with their participation in these projects; this has implied significant internal changes for them, and they have not been mere "donors", as is usual in development co-operation projects.

It is important not to forget the role of funding organisations. In the case of URB-AL, only at Phase II was there a clear commitment to encourage the progress of women in the local sphere. At Phase III, the option has been transversality, that is, gender will have to be present in projects but will not be the core of any centre of action. The results and impacts of these projects will have to be analysed in order to know to what extent this strategy has helped overcoming inequalities and the progress of the gender perspective in Latin American institutions.

In this sense, we believe that in PDC programmes, a third option should be considered, just as some administrations do: the dual strategy, which combines transversalisation of the gender perspective with actions specifically aimed at improving the situation and conditions of women.

We started this article acknowledging the role of civil society entities in the pro-

motion of gender issues at all levels of administration, and particularly in local spheres. At first, their role in the formulation of strategies, and above all, in the use of community resources and the implementation of actions is essential. Afterwards, their collaboration should still be taken

into account not only as partners of some local governments that already have gender policies, but also as a lobby that promotes improvements, proposes innovations and carries out a follow-up of accounts rendered in order to prevent the gender perspective from vanishing.



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# Inter-municipalism and decentralised co-operation

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*Each territory invents the answers for today's great questions that anticipate the global solutions of tomorrow.<sup>1</sup> \**

### KEY WORDS

Inter-municipalism |  
Mancommunities |  
Decentralization |  
Territorial development |  
Decentralised co-operation |

*This article stresses the importance of municipalism as a relevant method for the development of territories today, when many local governments need to take charge of their management and look for resources of their own.*

*It analyses the experiences of European countries, especially France, a country with over 100 years experience in developing public structures that favour inter-municipal co-operation. More recently, similar experiences also took place in Latin American countries, both in the case of federal and unitary states, all of which faced decentralization and regionalization processes. Our aim will be to understand the initial motivations, contexts and different forms that these experiences emerged from. In this respect, the key question will be: what were the contributions and limitations of this form of relationship for local governments and the territories they represent, both in Europe and Latin America?*

*Municipalism practices often resemble those of decentralised co-operation (DC). Therefore, we will analyse the specificity of DC as managed by inter-municipal structures, but also as a beneficial practice for inter-municipal dynamics.*

*Consequently, we will present some experiences of DC carried out by French inter-municipal organizations, especially in relation to Latin America, in order to gain a better understanding of the challenges, doubts and contributions that are inherent to this specific form of co-operation.*

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## 1. Inter-municipalities and mancommunities <sup>1</sup>

*“Legally speaking, mancommunity refers to the free association of municipalities, within a national legal framework, which constitutes a higher local entity and to which the associated municipalities delegate a part of the functions or competences attributed to them by law, with the purpose of rendering a joint service to all of its members.*

*In order to come into being, mancommunities generally require that municipalities share a geographical border, that they have clear objectives, that they have their own budget, and that they also have their own managing bodies, separate from those of the participants.*

*Mancommunities are legal entities in order to fulfil their objectives; they may have no maturity date, or they may be created specifically for a certain period and for the implementation of one or more particular activities.*

*In some countries the creation of mancommunities can be mandatory for providing certain services when so provided by law”<sup>2</sup>*

This definition covers the entire range of public structures adopted for inter-municipal co-operation in the various countries where it is applied.

In a recent survey,<sup>3</sup> the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) was able to demonstrate that inter-municipal

co-operation is present in all European countries, albeit in different forms. In Luxembourg, a unitary country with a single level of local government, municipalities (118 in total) may delegate services provided by councils to an inter-municipal association, as in the case of waste collection or the distribution of drinking water. In Finland, another unitary state with a single level of local government, there are 20 regional councils (Maakunnan Liito), inter-municipal authorities, responsible for land management in the country.

Belgium and Austria, which are federal States, also have inter-municipal structures to carry out activities concerning local governments. In the case of Belgium, for instance, the distribution of gas, electricity, water and economic development. In Austria, the law even provides for the creation of inter-municipalities to deal with various competences.

In Spain inter-municipalism is regarded as a relevant tool for territorial development. Mancommunities, voluntary associations of municipalities for the joint management of certain municipal services, are distinct from regions, which are local administrative subdivisions created by the Autonomous Community to manage these same services. At the moment, a Bill to reform the basic law for local governments, provides for the use of an inter-municipal model in order to guarantee both a territorial distribution of power, co-operation between administrations, and the appropriate distribution of services for all citizens.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> | Even though these two words have different origins, this article, which is not intended to describe technical details about inter-municipal structures, will deal with the terms inter-municipalism, “intercommunality” (relations between communes) or mancommunity interchangeably.

<sup>2</sup> | Wikipedia published by the online Wikipedia encyclopedia (<http://es.wikipedia.org>)

<sup>3</sup> | 30/09/2005, Séminaire coopération intercommunale. [http://www.ccre.org/communiqués\\_de\\_presse](http://www.ccre.org/communiqués_de_presse)

<sup>4</sup> | Ley Básica del Gobierno y la Administración Local. (Government and Local Administration Basic Act) <http://www.map.es>



### 1.1. Local governments with greater responsibilities.

Therefore, it is evident that in most European countries, co-operation between municipalities is gaining importance, since this model is needed in order to respond to the realities faced by territorial entities. In France, a country that recently underwent a decentralization process, inter-municipalism was promoted as the most appropriate form of territorial development. Likewise, the recent declaration by the CEMR on the European Territorial Agenda, proposes inter-municipalism as the most legitimate way of providing services for citizens.

Decentralization processes that are currently taking place, or that have already been used in Europe and Latin America in the last decades, have resulted in an increase in the delegation of responsibilities to local governments. In this way they are conferred new competences, previously the exclusive responsibility of national governments. In addition, these internationalization processes lead territories to internal competition, forcing them to create strategies for the future in order to ensure a worldwide positioning, the responsibility devolving upon local governments. These processes imply a certain mutation in the role of these governments, who become the promoters of their own economic and social development.

The responsibilities assumed by local governments on territorial development vary from country to country. However, beyond the standards established for competences to be delegated, in all cases it is the local entities

that are first in line to take the consequences of development, whether successful or not. Hence, their involvement in managing local development processes is inevitable, for example, by enabling access of citizens to new services (transport, access to TICs,<sup>5</sup> energy supply, providing education and training), promoting the local economy (territorial enhancement policies, planning and management of land, structural investments), protecting the integration and social dynamics of their inhabitants (social cohesion and inclusion policies) and achieving successful integration, at present and in the future, in an ever changing world.

In this respect, local governments need to develop competences which often surpass their own institutional capabilities, in order to respond appropriately to new expectations and demands. This is especially relevant in rural territories, where population is scarce, or in the case of municipal governments in small towns with few resources. The same applies to those cities with rapid growth that lack the necessary experience and capabilities to face their speedy transformations.

During the recent First International Convention for a Territorial Approach to Development, held in Marseille in March, 2007,<sup>6</sup> participants representing local governments from different continents of the planet, stressed precisely this “mutation in the role territorial entities used to play, implying new challenges in terms of the capability of entities and their agents to respond, in due form, to new expectations and needs.”

In facing the dispersal of endeavours in territories that are too segmented, the participants tried to find territorial scales that would

allow the diagnosis of problems and the achievement of solutions to these problems. They requested a “structuring of coherent territories in order to minimize dispersal of endeavours (...) and a strengthening of the regional scale as an intermediate economic, social and environmental scale”.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.2. Inter-municipalism as a form of development

One might say that in its primary form, inter-municipal co-operation allows the socialization and maximization of existing resources, both human and material, thus enabling the creation of large economies of scale.

One of the first and most common forms of municipal co-operation is, for instance, the joint purchase of supplies and equipment, thus obtaining better prices and dividing the cost between the associated members. For this reason, certain basic services that involve municipalities - such as the collection and treatment of waste, the supply of drinking water, or school transport services in small and neighbouring municipalities – are to be addressed jointly. In these cases, the need to define common infrastructure and services responds to a logical economical use of resources. However, it also involves co-ordination and planning between the associated members.

The creation of an environment for joint management also favours the emergence of a space for exchanges and the search for solutions to common problems. The exchange of experiences allows learning from successful experiences as well as from errors to be avoided, thus producing very often a strengthening of

management by local governments. The common use of human and material resources also results in beneficial synergies.

There is also a deeper level of inter-municipal co-operation which consists of the preparation of a common regional agenda that unifies interests and allows planning for the development of the territory in the medium and long term. In this case we are talking specifically about economic planning: to develop a certain territorial policy to attract business, to foster structural investments and generate positive dynamics that allow for the activation of regions undergoing processes of economic conversion. Although it also includes social policies: attention to social exclusion, strengthening of the social network, equipping cultural and sports infrastructure, etc.

This kind of agenda can often be managed with the support or backing of the State, which co-finance the development project. This is the case in France, where, for example, the State can co-finance a project presented by an inter-municipality.

In other cases, inter-municipal associations were promoted by the State with the specific purpose of creating these dynamics. This occurred in Argentina, where productive transport corridors were created to join several municipalities with similar or complementary geographical and economic characteristics, thus seeking spaces that would favour endogenous economic development.

Based on the French model, we will analyse below how the various forms of inter-municipal co-operation were structured and evolved.

<sup>5</sup> | *New information and communication technologies.*

<sup>6</sup> | *First International Convention for a Territorial Approach to Development, Marseilles, 5-7 March 2007. Synthesis : [http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/262\\_synthesecateliers-es.pdf](http://www.crpm.org/pub/agenda/262_synthesecateliers-es.pdf)*

<sup>7</sup> | *The First International Convention for a Territorial Approach to Development, held in Marseilles, in 5-7 March, 2007*



### 1.3. The French model

France is probably the country where inter-municipality as a form of co-operation has developed the most. This country, which comprises over 36,000 communes,<sup>1</sup> of which more than two thirds have less than 4,000 inhabitants, acknowledged early on the need to resort to inter-municipal co-operation, in order to cover their basic needs, such as the collection and treatment of waste, local transport, sanitation, etc. Providing these services is very costly for the smallest communes, especially those in rural areas.

On the other hand, attempts to merge the municipalities failed, due to the strong attachment the French have to this type of structure, which represents a sense of belonging and of being rooted to a particular local area.

The first inter-municipal co-operation practices legally recognised appeared in the late 19th Century. They subsequently developed according to the needs and realities faced by local governments on a day-to-day basis, to include increasing numbers of competences. After World War II (1955) we have two organizations representing the simplest forms of inter-municipal co-operation: the SIVUs (Sindicatos con Vocación Única) or the SIVOMs (Vocación Múltiple), with different responsibilities delegated by local governments. These are bodies created by local governments to jointly fulfil one or several competences within the scope of competent of authority of the local governments, especially for the territories they form part of. For this purpose, they have their own budget, which receives the contributions of each one of the member municipalities.

The SIVUs, which rarely include more than ten communes, usually deal with the municipal water supplies, school transport and sanitation services. On the other hand, SIVOMs usually include between ten and twenty communes and they deal with services such as the administration of roads/highways, waste collection, sanitation, school transport, tourism, public equipment, and infrastructure in areas of economic activities.

These two forms have prevailed over several decades as the only forms of co-operation, and even today, they continue to meet the needs of a large number of communes, especially in rural areas.

However, more recent changes undergone by the territories have introduced new needs in terms of inter-municipal co-operation. The country's significant decentralization process fostered inter-municipalism as the most appropriate form of territorial development and organization. These forms also evolved according to the different needs and contexts, always adopting more important competences and greater levels of integration. Inter-municipal co-operation developed particularly intensely in the cities, where traditional municipal functions could no longer cope with the rapid population expansion. Therefore, specific legal entities were created to enable the association of communes to form a significant metropolitan area.

Today, we note the existence of different forms of Etablissement Public de Coopération Intercommunale (Public Institutions of Inter-communal Co-operation) corresponding to different territorial realities (rural territories and small towns, medium-

sized cities and metropoli), and to different levels of integration. Each institutional form comprises mandatory competences provided by the law, and other competences that the municipalities themselves can select. Therefore, each transferred competence, may no longer be performed by the municipalities that have delegated them.

the statute of a territorial community, in the same way as municipalities or departmental or regional governments, and therefore, they are not regarded as government bodies. The president of an inter-municipality is chosen by the representatives of each one of the member municipalities. The president carries out the policies approved by the debating assemblies,

#### Box 1 | Establishments of inter-municipal cooperation in France

WITHOUT OWN TAXATION	WITH OWN TAXATION
SIVU SIVOM Joint Unions	Urban Communities Municipality Communities Agglomeration Communities Unions of New Agglomerations (SAN))

Among these structures, inter-municipalities for “management” are worth mentioning. Their main aim is to cover certain basic needs, and they are different from the inter-municipalities for “projects”, which aim to plan and implement certain actions in the medium and long term. The latter, which could also be called second generation inter-municipalities, enjoy a broader scope of competent authority and integration of the municipalities. These structures are the real means for planning and organizing territories in the long term.

In all cases, these structures originate from the free association of the municipalities involved, and they can withdraw if they wish to do so. They may have a specific duration, although general evolution demonstrates that these associations tend to become permanent and create increasingly greater levels of integration.

We ought to point out that in France, inter-municipal structures do not have

although in no way can an inter-municipality substitute the local government it represents.

As seen on the diagram, there are two patterns of finance. Firstly, we find inter-municipalities that are mainly financed by the contributions of the member municipalities (as is the case of SIVUs and SIVOMs), and inter-municipalities that have their own collection of taxes, hence they are capable of levying duties of their own. This is the most recent form of inter-municipal co-operation and, today, it is the most widely developed model in France. Besides, inter-municipalities may receive state, regional or departmental subsidies, or charge for the services they provide such as transport, access to sporting or cultural events, etc.

### 2. Experiences of Inter-municipalism in Latin America

In Latin America inter-municipalism is a rather recent phenomenon, with low levels of development and integration that are

<sup>81</sup> The commune, a smaller local government structure, was created during the French Revolution, when medieval parishes became free communes. It is therefore the equivalent of a municipality. Thus, in the case of France, we also talk about “intercommunes”.

not very widespread. Despite the existence of inter-municipal co-operation experiences in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Mexico and Uruguay, not all countries have laws that provide for the creation of specific structures to foster and channel negotiations and co-operation between local entities.

We must not confuse inter-municipalism with certain associations of municipalities that exist in most countries, and which are more like the national representation of municipal interests. Even though mancommunities can have a significant political role as spokesmen for local claims, this is not their main role, which is basically concerned with economic development and access to public services.

Moreover, mancommunities are not social organizations, in the way that NGOs, local associations or native communities can be. They are public bodies, governed by national jurisdictions, that function within the social network of a national territorial organization. They are legal entities with technical staff and working plans. Inter-municipal co-operation has proved to take different shapes, depending on the context it originates from, both within federal or unitary states.

Generally speaking, municipal autonomy vis-a-vis provincial and national powers is a very recent concept, and it arises together with decentralization and regionalization processes. Therefore, the inter-municipal phenomenon cannot be understood unless it is analysed within the context of these recent processes.

The history of decentralization varies according to the country, although in the

nineties these processes became widespread throughout the continent. In that decade neo-liberal theories prevailed, promoting the non-intervention of the State in the handling of economic and social affairs. In most cases, decentralization of competences towards local governments responds to the State's withdrawal from its main functions as regards economic and social development. After several decades of strong state intervention, it simply became a manager of public affairs, relying on the private sector to manage economic development and delegating the management of public issues to local governments. Likewise, this transfer of competences is generally not accompanied by its equivalent resources, due to the low revenues of the central government.

Thus, inter-municipalism often appears as a necessity when it comes to transferring competences from the State towards local entities. The associations of municipalities arise from the need to generate resources and capabilities, as well as optimum levels of development, both in rural and urban areas.

In Bolivia, for instance, the People's Participation Act promoted inter-municipalities as a privileged means to obtain access to decentralised resources. Although it had been included in the Act several decades earlier, it underwent significant development with the decentralization process. In 2003, 269 (85%) of the 316 municipalities participated in 76 mancommunities in the country.<sup>9</sup>

A further contextual factor to be borne in mind is the opening up of national markets, which exposed local economies to intense competitiveness. Even though it

speeded up the process of integration into regional blocs, it also favoured local regionalization processes. Such is the case of Argentina, where transport corridors were created for productive development in the province of Buenos Aires. The State, by providing substantial financial aid, promoted the creation of regions, by associating municipalities with similar and complementary characteristics, strengthening local economies and generating important positive synergies.

## 2.1. Urban and rural territories

In view of the rapid growth of the urban areas that surpass the existing administrative limitations, inter-municipalism appears to be an interesting solution. It is common to find that the capital's jurisdiction concentrates most of the infrastructure, while larger sectors of the urban population live on the outskirts where public services such as transport, sanitation, and waste treatment and collection, are scarce. These issues, along with economic development, need to be collectively addressed by local authorities.

In this way, for instance, Montevideo Municipal Government is preparing a Metropolitan Agenda, together with its neighbouring provinces of San José and Canelones, in order to share the management of the transport system, the treatment of waste, and the preservation of the natural resources they have in common. In a similar way, the Municipal Government of Asunción joined its neighbouring provinces to create a consortium for the joint management of waste storage and treatment.

The needs of rural areas are different: the long distances to the decision-making centres, the poor state of roads, or the absence of public services are the greatest difficulties these territories need to face.

In Bolivia, for instance, most mancommunities have been founded with the purpose of improving roads, access to health care services or basic education. Municipalities that are part of CODENOBA, an inter-municipal consortium in the province of Buenos Aires, first got together to exert pressure on central government to find a solution for the repeated floods that devastated crops in this rural area.

Subsequently, once they had formed a suitable body for inter-municipal management, they were able to develop inter-municipal projects in the fields of health, economic development, as well as culture, tourism and sports. Thus, they have jointly been able to define a strategic plan for regional development that covers the entire territory, promoting its culture and its regional tourism.

## 2.2. Specific contributions

There are many examples in rural and urban areas. All of them constitute a response to the need to find solutions to shared problems, encouraging municipalities to work together, to develop specific competences and to achieve common solutions. The municipalities that decide to work jointly on inter-municipal management benefit from this by achieving better negotiating conditions with third parties, by strengthening their reciprocal governments through the exchange of local experiences, and by obtaining access to new information.

Within an economic plan, a coordinated action is always of benefit since it generates economies of scale, it achieves higher levels of production and consequently of productivity, and in this way leads to agreed strategies of interest to the territory. "In this respect, associations constitute a creative challenge that is contributing to the inter-

<sup>9</sup> | "Municipalization: A decade of diagnosis. Thirty investigations on people's participation and decentralisation". Volume 1. Bolivia: Ed. Plural."

relation of economic participants and to strategic planning for development”.<sup>10</sup> Within a social plan, coordinated actions can also be applied to the education and training of local participants, to favour access to the labour market, thus building links between the different sectors and giving rise to social cohesion.

Inter-municipalism also encourages the improvement of governance, as Carlos Frías Coronado explains: “it represents a method some local governments use to understand development in terms of alliances and the efficient management of territory and local resources; it shows that municipalities are not only service providers but also promoters of local development, and they must encourage the coordination of the different participants involved. Besides, from a wider perspective, inter-municipalism demonstrates the emergence of new local capabilities, new identities and a reassessment of and concern for local issues in a globalized and homogeneous scenario, where the territorial dimension is re-evaluated”.<sup>11</sup>

It is interesting to note that the different political affiliations amongst municipalities of the same consortium rarely cause any functional problems for this structure, since the general interest prevails over individual ones. This has been observed both in Europe and Latin America.

We also find cross-border inter-municipal co-operation experiences which include municipalities from different countries wor-

king on important every day issues on both sides of national borders. In general, the objectives of these specific forms of inter-municipal co-operation are to find joint management solutions to common problems that are normally hampered by these borders. In European countries they are favoured by the creation of common regulations and ambitious programmes for inter-regional co-operation.

However, Latin American legal systems are not adapted to this kind of situation and can vary greatly from one country to another. The Open Frontiers Programme, promoted by the IILA (Italian-Latin American Institute) and the CESPI (International Politics Studies Centre)), with the collabo-

### Box 2 | Cross-border Cooperation

*A recent example of a cross-border mancommunity was confirmed in Central America, where 12 adjacent municipalities from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador legally established a mancommunity to work on common sustainable development projects and to protect the Lempa River basin; six of them are from Guatemala, four from Honduras and two from El Salvador. The Lempa River Trinational Border Mancommunity is focused on protecting and preserving the Lempa River basin, a region with a significant biodiversity and a population of around 700,000 people.*

*<http://www.latribuna.hn/news/45/ARTICLE/10169/2007-05-25.html>*

ration of OICS (Inter-Regional Observatory on Development Co-operation for Development - Italy) and with Italian co-operation, is extremely interesting since it promotes the exchange between European and Latin American regions, mainly in the field of cross-border integration.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.3. Limitations

However, there are still some difficulties in the establishment of these experiences. Firstly, there are external limitations imposed on local governments, such as the absence of a national legal framework that supports the creation of inter-municipal entities. Unlike certain countries like Brazil or Bolivia, that have designed regulatory frameworks that are almost all-encompassing, in most countries the structures have had to adopt methods that are often just outside the rule of law, for instance, when they need to approve a common budget, receive funds or establish international co-operation relationships. Municipalities see the Court of Auditors as an obstacle for the activities they wish to carry out, and they need to look for alternative solutions to limit the institutionalization capabilities of consortia. A possible solution could be to create a non-profit organization which would act on behalf of the associated municipalities throughout the territory.

In Argentina, a federal country where each province has its own constitution, the situation is rather varied. Most provinces provide for the possibility of creating inter-municipal co-operation bodies. Few of them, however, are authorized to sign co-operation agreements with international entities or foreign local governments. The Constitution of the Province of Chubut is somehow leading the way in this field, since it provides for

“municipalities to enter into inter-municipal agreements in order to jointly provide services, carry out public works, exchange technical and financial co-operation and organize activities of common interest that are within their scope of competent authority. Municipalities may sign agreements with the Provincial or Federal State in order to coordinate the performance of common activities, as well as with national or international bodies or municipalities in other provinces” (art. 237).

Likewise, only a few countries allow for inter-municipal bodies to collect their own taxes, and to distribute them within the inter-municipal structures. Therefore, municipalities can only count on their own resources, which are seldom sufficient.

Generally speaking, Latin American inter-municipalities have limited levels of institutionalization. In many cases they tend to be venues for co-ordination or vindication activities, rather than means for regional development. Inter-municipal projects are very dependent on political changes, therefore a large number of projects are abandoned when majorities change. The lack of permanent staff hinders the continuity of the projects, and represents a significant energy drain, since it often results in commencing projects all over again.

As part of a significant effort to systematize inter-municipalism experiences in Latin America, Grupo Chorlavi initiated a study of this issue and stressed the limitations that are common to many inter-municipal associations.<sup>13</sup>

However, there are also less formal problems related to the working methods that are specific to municipalism and territorial cultu-

<sup>10</sup> | Frías Coronado, Carlos. “Municipal associations as a form of institutional innovation and strategy for democratic governance and the coordinated planning of development in rural areas: experiences in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia”. *Perú: Practical Solutions-ITDG, Regional Office for Latin America*, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> | *Op. Cit.*, p.4.

<sup>12</sup> | IILA: Instituto Italo Latino-Americano; CeSPI: Centro de Estudios de Política Internacional; OICS: Observatorio Interregional de Cooperación para el Desarrollo, presentation of the project in the Third National Conference Italy – Latin America and the Caribbean, October 2007. <http://www.conferenzaitaliaamericalatina.org/es/seminari.asp>

<sup>13</sup> | [www.grupochorlavi.org](http://www.grupochorlavi.org)



re. The creation of an inter-municipality is a long process, and involves, above all, a significant change in municipal working methods, opening up the territory beyond its traditional administrative borders, in order to create a wider vision of regional realities. It also involves learning from joint, horizontal work and generating mutual trust. It must achieve a definition of a long-term territorial project, agreed and shared by all members. Therefore, it needs to rely on the capacity of its members to listen, discuss, negotiate and agree: "Associationism is a process of organizational development that, as such, involves commitment, basic levels of trust, leadership, working with networks, vision, strategies, projects, among other elements".<sup>14</sup>

The experiences show that the first difficulty consists of learning to work together, to co-operate, to share information of regional interest, to develop trusting relationships, to learn to offer time and resources. One could say that this is the most difficult stage in building territorial dynamics. Generally speaking, since there is no territorial culture at either an administrative or a grass-roots level, it is difficult to think of a territory that goes beyond the traditional administrative borders.

Therefore, the most significant contributions of inter-municipal co-operation are: the horizontal working methods, the necessary opening up of territories to neighbouring realities, the practice of sharing experiences, and learning from others and from one's own errors. These relationships involve exchange, reciprocity, networking, and the ability to listen and reach agreements.

This practice is very similar to the one prevailing in decentralised co-operation relationships. For this reason, DC performed by inter-municipalities is very advantageous.

We will see below that a large number of the co-operation projects carried out by inter-municipal bodies consist, initially, of technical support for the administrative management. This is basically the strengthening of the capabilities of the inter-municipal structures being created.

### 3. Decentralised co-operation from the inter-municipalities

There are few countries where mancommunities get involved in Decentralised Co-operation (DC). Let us remember that, for many local governments, DC is still a practice that tends towards innovation, so it is only natural that development within the field of public structures of inter-municipal co-operation is merely incipient.

In Spain, mancommunities seldom exercise DC directly, since it is often the Regional Funds for Co-operation that manage the official assistance for development on behalf of local governments (Town Halls, Provincial Governments, Mancommunities and Autonomous Governments). Nevertheless, we will see how certain mancommunities have developed specific areas of co-operation.

In Italy DC is mainly carried out by large cities and regions. These aim to create joint co-operation activities by local communities.

France is the country that has the highest number of DC experiences carried out by inter-municipal entities. Since 1992, French law recognizes outside activities by local governments and their associations, including inter-municipalities.<sup>15</sup>

### 3.1. Priorities by Issues

The law regards DC by local governments as a method for them to exercise their competences, therefore the choice of issues for co-operation is related to the priorities defined by municipalities, such as waste disposal, territorial planning and economic development, both urban and rural.

On the other hand, certain functions that require significant investment (such as important urban projects), are usually excluded from the sphere of co-operation, since they would involve sums that are too high for local governments.

Therefore, we note that so far, co-ope-

ration has been mainly of a technical nature, involving the exchange of experiences in specific spheres of competence.

Among these, support for the creation, development or optimization of municipal co-operation structures occupies an outstanding place among the different decentralised co-operation experiences carried out by the French inter-municipalities together with their Latin American counterparts, as well as with Central Europe, Africa or Asia.

These experiences of co-operation usually result in missions by expert consultants or visits by delegations of town councillors and technical staff, aimed at learning about the operation of European mancommunities and their working methods. Governments organize seminars to raise awareness, or for training purposes.

In this respect, it is important to stress the role of regional governments or of the State, through its co-operation services or

#### Box 3 | Example of cooperation among the Urban Community of Bordeaux and the communities of Laquillas, Maracaibo and El Tigre in Venezuela.

*The Bordeaux Urban Community develops DC actions with various local governments of Venezuela in the area of urban management (transportation, collective equipment, waste, water). For this purpose, it offers these communities technical personnel, provides them with technical training in France and transfers knowledge on the execution of major infrastructure projects (for example, for pier planning)).*

*However, certain actions intended to contribute to financial management or to support intermunicipalism have been necessary for partnership development. Therefore, the UC often organizes conferences in Venezuela, gathering around a hundred attendees to discuss topics such as budget drafting, financial resources management, and the advantages and methods of intermunicipal association.*

*Hence, this type of cooperation involves technical, administrative or financial components conceived with a vision of reciprocity\**

\* | Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France): *Vade Mecum - Intercommunalités et coopération décentralisée*. December 2004.

<sup>14</sup> | Subdere-Chile.

<sup>15</sup> | See Massiah's article about the French Decentralized Co-operation system (Yearbook 2005, Observatory on Decentralized Co-operation EU-LA).

its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to support the development of these programmes.

Both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in France, and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional have offered support for programmes to strengthen local governments, through which inter-municipalism is promoted as an interesting form of development for local governments in Latin America. This has involved on several occasions the visit of Latin American town councillors to European mancommunities, or the organization of workshops and seminars for the dissemination of these practices.

For instance, in the last five years the Ile de France region (France) financed the visit of some 47 officials from countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Costa Rica and Argentina, to attend technical training courses on issues such as inter-municipalism, introduction of professionalism in territorial public function or local democracy.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2. Generating venues for exchange

In this regard it is also worth highlighting the series of seminars organized by Cités Unies France y Local,<sup>17</sup> with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to promote and strengthen inter-municipalism in countries of the Southern Cone of Latin America. First held in the city of Rosario (Argentina) in 2005, later

in Montevideo and Canelones (Uruguay 2006), and subsequently in Chiloé (Chile 2007), these seminars were based on the exchange of experiences between French and Latin American inter-municipal co-operation structures.

Amongst its members were representatives of local governments from France and the five countries of the sub-region (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil). By taking part in workshops and discussion groups, participants analysed the different forms of inter-municipal co-operation in France (small rural municipalities, medium-sized cities and large urban areas) and in the countries of the Southern Cone, by means of their achievements as well as their difficulties.

The purpose of these sessions was to learn from previous errors and from the difficulties encountered and resolved, rather than by imitating successful solutions.

It is worth mentioning that most of the issues discussed referred to joint management of transport, local development and the environment. These seminars also focused particularly on the institutional building of the French inter-municipal structures, as well as on training of territorial public officials.

These seminars allowed the creation of a venue for exchange and learning that contributed to the strengthening of local

governments in the Southern Cone and to the establishment of co-operation agreements, “thus proving that, despite the differences between municipalities in France and countries of the Southern Cone due to their historical and political contexts, they shared similar problems in terms of management of transport, local development and the environment”.<sup>18</sup>

### 3.3. Institutional support

Apart from these seminars, the educational visits organized for municipal technicians and the expertise provided by specialists in the field and trainees working within these structures, definitely contributed to the strengthening of inter-municipal structures in the Southern Cone. Every year, the programme “Expert Volunteers”, created by the Fondo Extremeño de Cooperación al Desarrollo” (Fund for Co-operation for Development from the Extremadura Region) sends professionals from the local and autonomous administrations and from various mancommunities to provide assistance to Latin American Mancommunities in Bolivia, Ecuador and Uruguay.

Therefore, institutional support appears to be the favoured method of channelling co-operation from the European inter-municipalities towards their Latin American counterparts. It can be regarded as the first stage required to consolidate the bases of common projects in the future, both from an institutional perspective (partnerships that share the same institutional methods), and in terms of actual work (learning how to manage common problems at an inter-municipal level). As to the latter, it is very interesting to see that the practice of inter-municipalism can favour experiences of DC.

As we have pointed out before, learning about horizontal and inclusive working

methods, based on an exchange of experiences and on finding common ground in individual problems in the search for shared solutions for the future, clearly resembles the prevailing principles in DC practice.

In this respect, studying inter-municipalism may favour the development of DC partnerships. Similarly, we can prove that the development of DC activities has been able to promote the development of inter-municipal experiences.

### 3.4. Contributions of decentralized co-operation to the development of inter-municipalities.

In general, the co-operation from inter-municipalities is not very different from

#### Box 4 | The search for synergies at local level

*The Cergy Pontoise agglomeration community, which gathers different communities from the Northwest periphery of Paris, has recently opened an international relations office, one of the main tasks of which was to map the relationships linking the territory with the rest of the world. As a result, it consolidated bonds with a school of engineers specialized in tropical farming systems, facilitating a new set of exchanges of experiences with mutual benefits. Based on a sanitation improvement project in Porto Novo (Benin), it involved its own sanitations services in finding solutions in radically different situations. It also worked with associations established in the territory, thus gaining efficiency in its methods of intervention and visibility and legitimacy in its own territory, as well as consolidating the coordination of its own municipal equipment.*

<sup>16</sup> | Strengthening local democracy in Latin America-Ile de France. Co-operation from the Ile de France region for the introduction of professionalism in local governments in Latin America. Ile de France Region, LOCAL, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> | CUF- Cités Unies France, This association co-ordinates international action from French local governments. It belongs to the CGLU.- Observatory on Changes in Latin America, an association created by the Instituto de Altos Estudios de América

<sup>18</sup> | Synthesis of the “France-Southern Cone. Inter-municipalism and Decentralised Co-operation Seminar, Montevideo Canelones, September 2006.

the co-operation from any other kind of local government. However, co-operation from inter-municipalities possesses certain unique characteristics that are worth mentioning. Based on the fact that EPCIs themselves arise from a process of inter-municipal co-operation,<sup>19</sup> they possess valuable experience regarding the establishment of specific examples of co-operation with other local governments. We will see here how EPCIs can promote the opening up of their member territories to the international sphere.

We have witnessed how the creation of inter-municipal structures provides an op-

portunity to develop new competences that are not usually considered to be part of the traditional functions of local governments. For instance, such is the case of territorial planning, or policies for promoting a certain territory. The international opening up of a territory through co-operation agreements, the search for financial and technical resources or for new markets, are all part of these new functions that are easy to carry out within inter-municipal structures and that can benefit all members, not requiring large investments for local governments, in terms of human resources. This is particularly interesting for municipalities with scarce resources,

since the inter-municipal structure allows them to achieve global visibility.

On the other hand, inter-municipalism leads to greater harmonization and significance of co-operation activities which are more efficient and visible due to the fact that they were performed with increased infrastructure and resources. In the case of associations created more recently, both local governments and associations seek to take advantage of previously established links, especially when they are aimed at immigrant communities in the territory, at universities offering exchange programmes for students and professors, etc.

In this respect, a Decentralised Co-operation Project carried out by an EPCI can favour co-ordination with other participants who do not belong to local governments, creating spaces for horizontal negotiation and exchange. Therefore, we find

that local governance is more inclusive and participative.

An experience of DC can also strengthen an inter-municipal structure, since it consolidates the local sense of belonging and identity. As an example, when municipal officials travel, they sometimes face realities that are very different from their own, and this enables them to become aware of how much they have in common on local issues. This is relevant if we bear in mind that it takes time to become identified with a territorial space within a mancommunity, that has a short shared history. Many councillors believe that developing a decentralised co-operation project has the objective of bringing the different participants of a territory together around a common structuring project.

For this purpose it is very valuable to create a specific venue for the coordination of the co-operation project, not within the inter-municipal structure but fostered by it.

**Cuadro 5 | A Metropolitan Council of Development Cooperation**

*The Mancommunity of Municipalities of the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB) gathers 31 towns and cities which share a common, densely populated territory. Its jurisdiction includes acting in the public space by participating in the development of road infrastructures, squares, social and sports equipment, in the preservation of the environment and in the management of public transportation. Therefore, the Mancommunity created three specific entities: the Mancommunity of Municipalities, the Metropolitan Transport Entity and the Metropolitan Environment Entity.*

*In 1996, the AMB established a Metropolitan Council for Development Cooperation, formed by representatives of metropolitan political groups, the Catalan Fund for Development Cooperation and the Catalan Federation of NGOs for development, as well as by the group of workers of the AMB “O’7 i més”. The budget of this council is distributed as follows: 25% for AMB projects; 30% for the projects of the municipalities integrating the AMB; 30% for NGOs’ projects; 10% for information and sensitizing campaigns, and 5% for emergency situations.*

*The AMB only intervenes in its corresponding fields of operation: territory and infrastructures, environment, water and waste management, mobility and transportation, and local development strategies.*

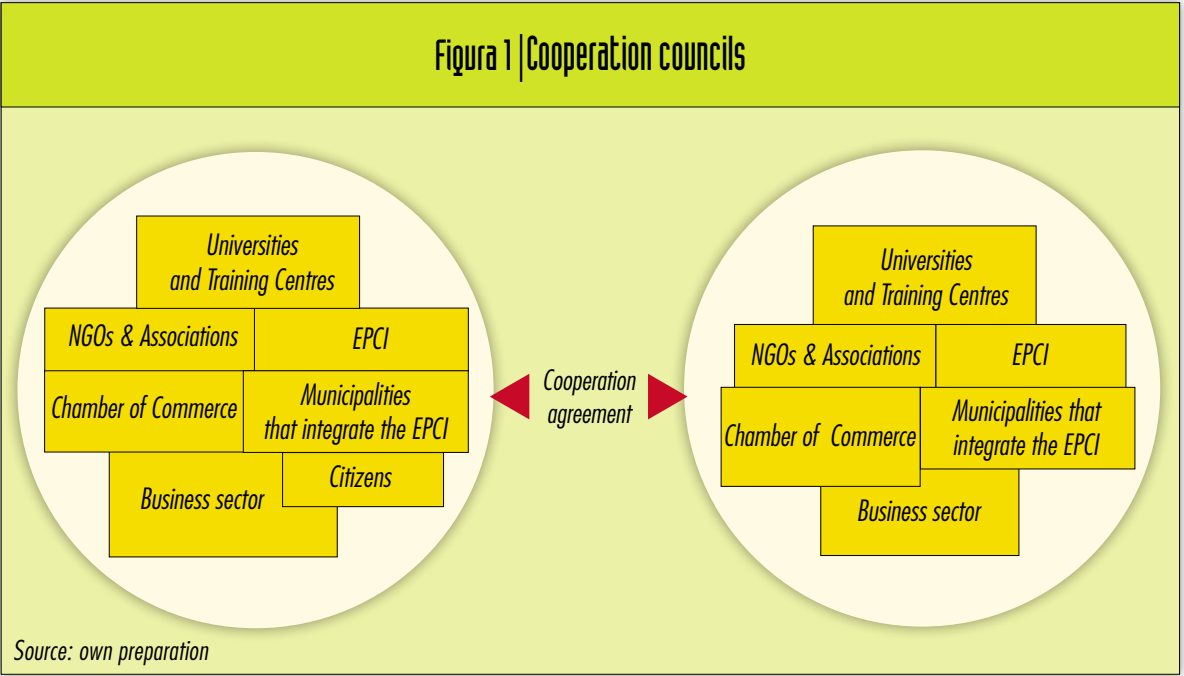
*Each of the entities included in the AMB may develop its own cooperation projects, in coordination with the Cooperation Council.*

*The Metropolitan Environment Entity -aside from integrating several international networks of cities around environmental programmes- offers technical support for those metropolitan –and municipal- projects which try to support the improvement of environmental management in other Southern countries, by contributing its knowledge, management and know-how in this field. This is how it currently helps the Mancommunity of the North East of Guatemala to design the Comprehensive Urban Waste Management Plan (PIGRUM).*

<http://www.ema-amb.com/es/activitat/cooperacio/index.html>

<sup>19</sup> | EPCI: Establecimiento Público de Cooperación Intermunicipal.

**Figura 1 | Cooperation councils**





Whether we call it a council for joint development or joint co-operation, such a structure allows for the different participants in a territory to get together in a flexible and open space. This new institution allows a greater openness towards the different participants of a territory, such as universities and research and training centres, schools and high schools, chambers of commerce and the business sector, associations and NGOs, municipalities that form part of the EPCI. As a means of participation, of agreement, and also of dissemination of information, these councils can bring the EPCIs closer to the participants in the territory and adapt their international activities to the specifics of the territory as expressed by the participants themselves.

Local capabilities are also strengthened since they are faced with very different practices and methods. This is not peculiar to this form of co-operation, but it also allows for a strengthening of the experience and joint work of technical municipal teams.

### 3.5. 3.5. Limitations to be considered

However, we find that co-operation between inter-municipalities stresses the technical aspect of exchange rather than developing values such as fraternity and promoting socio-cultural exchange, as is the case with local government co-operation arising from town-twinning agreements. Unlike municipalities, which have a history of several decades of joint efforts, inter-municipal structures fail to foster tighter personal links, and thus, exchanges lack a stronger socio-cultural content. However, the process of deepening this new form of relationship may eventually solve this point. Inter-municipal structures are often new structures that need to establish their visibility in their territories by generating links with as-

sociations, NGOs (especially those which carry out projects with foreign communities), and citizens (immigrant communities).

We also need to bear in mind the existing limitations in the transfer of administrative models that reflect legal forms belonging to societies that underwent specific historical development. The temptation to transfer formulae which have possibly been successful in certain contexts to similar, but different, realities, always involves a risk of failure as they are not applicable to the local situation.

In any case, it is worth remembering that this is not a question of imitating a certain model, and this applies to all areas of DC. On the contrary, the idea is to learn from it, seeking its relevance with regard to the reality it is to be applied to.

With regard to co-operation relationships between European and Latin American entities, the above mentioned risk or gap is smaller, due to a significant socio-cultural proximity. This proximity, as well as the differing evolutions that separate both continents, results in the richness of this particular kind of exchange.

## 4. Conclusions

Even though DC by inter-municipalities is still not widespread, we see a major opportunity for local governments to put it into practice on both continents. This is because these two different forms of co-operation (inter-municipalism and DC) share common interests. The need to establish links beyond territorial boundaries forces territories to promote their own development. These relationships can be established with direct neighbours in order to form

regional entities with greater political, economic and popular power, or else by means of partnerships at an international level, as evidenced by decentralised co-operation.

DC, given its horizontal nature, and based on mutual learning and reciprocity, on equality and a search for consensus through inter-municipal dialogue and exchange of ideas at a local level, comprises a number of characteristics that can favour co-operation processes locally. Inter-municipalism appears daily as a need for territories to achieve their development goals, rather than as an interesting experiment.

The need to develop coordinated co-operation activities on a scale appropriate to current living spaces is increasingly evident both in European and Latin American countries. Decentralised co-operation can, in turn, favour these processes by an

exchange of experiences and the training of councillors and municipal officials. Similarly, the supra-local jurisdictions such as the regions, the autonomous communities, the provinces, the State, or supra-national jurisdictions, can apply their greater resources and venues to accompany this development. This is possible through funding, providing logistical or technical support (sending experts, volunteers and trainees), etc.

Inter-municipal structures are privileged participants in the field of DC as they include internal practices of co-operation and coordination that favour approaches to foreign partnerships. Nevertheless, decentralised co-operation can provide the opportunity to strengthen the links between the different participants of a particular territory. The achievement of this synergy is the challenge faced by that adaptation and constitutes its main benefit.

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Acronyms

CUF: Cités Unies France. Association that coordinates international action by French local governments. It belongs to the CGLU. [www.cites-unies-france.org/](http://www.cites-unies-france.org/)

LOCAL: Observatory on changes in Latin America, an association created at the Instituto de Altos Estudios de América Latina. [http://www.credal.univ-paris3.fr/article.php3?id\\_article=524](http://www.credal.univ-paris3.fr/article.php3?id_article=524)

OCD: ODC Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation EU-LA, with its two antennas Diputación de Barcelona (España) and Montevideo Municipal Government (Uruguay) <http://www.observ-ocd.org/>

EPCI: Establecimiento Público de Cooperación Intermunicipal. Denominación común utilizada en Francia para designar globalmente a las diferentes formas institucionales de cooperación intermunicipal.

CNCD: La Commission Nationale de la Coopération Décentralisée. Depende del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de Francia. <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>

IILA: Instituto Italo Latino-Americano <http://www.iila.org>

CESPI: Centro de Estudios de Política Internacional [www.cespi.it/](http://www.cespi.it/)

OICS: Observatorio Interregional de Cooperación para el Desarrollo [www.oics.it/](http://www.oics.it/)

AMB: Área Metropolitana de Barcelona <http://www.amb.cat>

Subdere: Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional y Administrativo (Ministerio del Interior, Chile) [www.subdere.gov.cl/](http://www.subdere.gov.cl/)





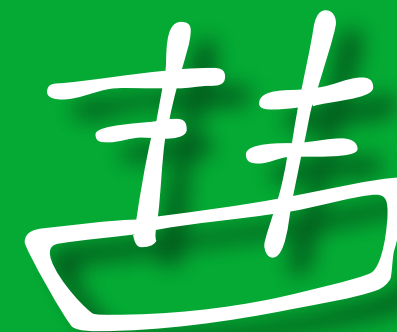


## Regional integration processes and globalization of local governments

*The participation of local and regional governments in the international arena is having multiple effects. The Observatory wished to highlight the strengthening of regional integration processes, for it is a phenomenon that implies new management practices in the supranational sphere. However, other phenomena are also important, as is the case of cross-border co-operation or the impact of local events on issues that are addressed by multilateral institutions.*

*The Observatory has published several articles and a case study on regional integration which have gone towards making the main integration initiatives carried out in the Europe - Latin America context more widely known. Once these initiatives have been identified, we now aim to carry out annual follow-ups of the effective capacity of organizations created by local governments with the purpose of having an impact on the management of regional integration in Latin America and the European Union. For this purpose, Javier Sánchez, a member of the ODC Advisory Board studies in detail the effects local issues have on EU decision-making authorities and he provides a common analytical matrix to assess the effects these issues can have on Mercocities and the Andean Network of Cities in their respective processes of regional integration. Furthermore, he provides a diagnosis on the current state of affairs of this issue, prepared with the collaboration of the technical secretaries to the above mentioned municipal networks.*

*Networks play a role of paramount importance in the dynamics of local government globalization. The reason for this is mainly due to the fact that it enables institutional strengthening among its members and it also influences national governments with multilateral entities. Therefore the Observatory believes in the importance of encouraging these kinds of initiatives within local and regional governments. In actual fact, creating and sustaining networks may be an interesting option to decentralised co-operation activities that are based on bilateral relations (city to city, or region to region). In this respect, Rainer Rothfuss, consultant for the "Cities for Mobility" network has compiled interesting information on four network examples. This enables him to assess the benefits of networks both for the entities that coordinate them and for their members, as well as to study the feasibility of a local government to create or maintain a network.*



Introduction





## *Sub-state networks and regional integration in the european union and latin america.\**

Javier Sánchez.\*\*

### KEY WORDS

Decentralised co-operation |  
Networks |  
Latin America |  
Local development |  
Regional integration |  
Political entrepreneurship |

*The article looks at the function of networks and territorial associations in the strategies and methods of sub-state participation in regional integration programmes from two angles: on the one hand it considers networks as tools for political entrepreneurship and on the other as tools for a territorial and strategic approach on development. The European case goes to show how, after a long period in which this sub-state participation strived to achieve higher levels of formalisation and institutionalisation (with the key creation of the Committee of the Regions), the territories are now showing more diversified interests mainly through work networks, which also benefit from incentive spaces mostly established by the European Commission in the field of governance. The comparison of the MERCOSUR and Andean Zone cases reveals the variable significance networks have as catalysts for the promotion of institutionality, as well as revealing very similar agendas that local authorities of different regions have on integration matters.*

\*\* | This text has had the contribution of Gina Cleaves, International, National and Regional Integration Director of the District Planning Department, Major Town Hall of Bogotá DC and responsible for the Permanent Technical Department of the Network of Andean Cities, and of Jorge Rodríguez, General Coordinator of the International Relations and Co-operation Section of the Montevideo Municipal Government and responsible for the Mercocities' Permanent Technical Department. They have respectively answered the questionnaires about the Andean and Mercosur areas on which the fifth chapter of this article is based.

\* | Director of European Union Policy, Department for the European Union of the Generalitat (Autonomous Government) of Catalonia. He was formerly General Secretary of the Ibero-American Centre of Urban Strategic Development and has held different postings at the Municipality of Barcelona. Holds a Bachelor's Degree in Arts and Politics, and a PhD in International Relations, he has lectured on International Relations in the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Cidob Foundation. He is the author of various publications on subjects such as international security, disarmament and the United Nations. He's currently researching the role of local authorities as international actors. He is a member of the ODC's Advisory Committee.

### 1. Introduction

The first fact to be ascertained arising from the analysis of the projects carried out so far by the Observatory on Local Decentralised Co-operation (ODC) is that, behind the idea of decentralised co-operation, there are two major current trends in the international system: one is the increasing activity of local and regional authorities, and the other is the territorialisation of development approaches. These two major vectors are part of the perceptions, attitudes and practices of the diverse actors involved in promoting local development, among which the institutions responsible for regional integration in Europe and Latin America are the most prominent.

The changing and dynamic nature of decentralised co-operation (DC) is easily understood if we examine the dynamics of the relationships and what the actors in this relationship perceive, particularly in the sphere of regional integration. The latter has a decisive impact on the two underlying vectors of decentralised co-operation. Indeed, participation in integration processes is one of the great factors that drive sub-state authorities, which in turn are stimulated to organise and get resources, establish technical and political co-operation programmes and display individual and collective strategies, frequently coordinated with associations and networks.

The same happens with the other basic component of DC: the territorialisation of development strategies, clearly present in the approaches and doctrines used by regional integration systems. These are the approaches that will encourage territorial functions that are: strategic, participative, harmonised, multi-actor, transnational, and able to encourage the creation of local networks.

In previous editions of this Yearbook and in other ODC publications, we find valuable works that have contributed towards clarifying this sphere of reflection with original contributions and key topics such as: the participation of sub-state actors in European, South American and Central American integration processes; the experiences of regional and municipal co-operation in connection to regional integration processes; territorial co-operation, particularly cross-border co-operation. The presence of co-operation associations and networks is constant in those works. Networks like Mercocities are elements of recognition, political influence and creation of institutionality in Mercosur's space (Zarza 2005; Padrón 2006), they are part of the possibilities of participation in the regional integration process (Fernández de Losada 2005), they are actors of territorial co-operation (Romero 2007) and even are regional integration elements in themselves ("Análisis de experiencias de integración regional", in ODC's 2006 Yearbook).

The variety of these networks in the field of integration is not unusual if we look at their dual-purpose: serving as a political influence and serving to make territorial development strategies. Though these functions are distinguished, they are far from being clear. Quite the opposite: the local/regional involvement through associations, the creation of technical co-operation networks (which can –or cannot– reach some kind of continuous presence) and the implications all of this has on the processes of decentralised co-operation (through which to share lessons learned from realities external from the own regional reality towards common development) mutually strengthen, condition and promote each other.

The above is an overview of the complex problem which is the subject of this study. To start the study, we must set two goals: to



review the role of local and regional involvement through associations, as an instrument for participation in the European integration process in relation to the set of mechanisms for sub-state participation in order to detect trends and critical points. Then, to analyze some of these critical points more widely and to do it by incorporating a comparative view of the European Union, Mercosur and the Andean Region, attempting to test in this way the basis of a comparative analysis between the different integration systems that focus the ODC's interest with regard to the problems encountered. Information about the two mentioned Latin American regions will come out as a result of a questionnaire created from observations in Europe, which will have been carried out by experts on the activities of Mercocities and the Andean Network of Cities<sup>1</sup>

The starting point of our analysis is the conceptual and practical developments of previous works fostered by the Observatory, specifically through three assumptions:

- If regional integration promotes the creation of networks and international mobilisation and interaction of sub-state authorities, then these are directly related with decentralised co-operation. It is for this reason that in order to understand and keep track of DC, the analysis of the impact of integration processes is critical.

- It is appropriate to absorb trends of processes that, although at different development stages, they tend to advance as well as to influence each other. Specifically, the European integration process may -despite being at a more mature stage- be compared and offer useful conclusions in relation to Latin

American processes, particularly regarding the participation of local and regional authorities and their associations.

- Municipalities, cities, provinces, regions, and federal states...the diversity of sub-state administrative realities is huge and this variety will have very significant impacts on problems noted regarding regional integration, the possibilities of formal participation, as well as the turn to associations' mobilisation.

Summarising: we know that local and regional authorities will keep at their efforts towards affecting a key element of their governability: regional integration processes. In order to do so, apart from other ways of influence and participation, they will join together in co-operation networks. Networks that will favour political alliance and technical exchange, and in any case will be useful in what is a main objective of local and regional international activism: improving the inter-communication ability and obtaining more institutional recognition for sub-state authorities. However, the needs and formal position of the different sub-state political actors will also impose different strategies, and the role of involvement through associations will vary accordingly.

Since the tendency is for these effects to keep taking place both in the European and the Latin American spheres, it should be appropriate to carry out a systematic and comparative observation of the employment of local and regional associations as a political instrument facing the integration process, its relation with other participation mechanisms and its exchange with integration institutions, particularly those of sub-state representation.

We shall structure this work in five sections. After illustrating the impact of the European dimension on territorial governability, we review the forms of sub-state participation in the European Union's political system, paying attention both to the creation of specific representation spaces and the operation of other less formal structures, and devoting attention to the role of associations and networks in both dynamics. After analysing critical points and tendencies regarding that role in the European sphere, we tackle the cases of the Southern Cone and the Andean Region.

## 2. The territorial dimension of the European construction

We do not need to reiterate here that the European Union's political space and the increasing legislative capacity of its institutions have a clear impact on local and regional governability. This section examines in more detail some legal aspects of this relation and tries to characterise the basics of the different views that the European territorial political actors have on the Union.

### 2.1. The realities of the impact on the territory of EU dimensions

In the economic and productive areas it becomes more obvious every day, for cities and regions, that the Union constitutes the reference environment. A space in which to include one's own assets, measure one's own competitiveness that generates market and above all, opportunities and incentives. Implications on its legal and administrative aspects are not fewer: sub-state authorities are forced by Community Law with regard to a good number of subject matters: the transposition of European guidelines (general regulations that guide the meaning that state legislation must have with regard to a given subject and that usually will require transposition,

i.e. adaptation of state -and in their case regional and local- legislation); the Treaty's regulations with regard to the common market: prohibition of restrictions and discrimination regarding the freedom of movement of people, goods, capital and services. It particularly affects the activity of local authorities as employers and the contracting of goods and services: it limits their capability of choosing, for example, national suppliers, while they are obliged to equity and information conditions in public procurement. Various regulations, i.e. environmental, sanitary or those related to construction products or gender equality can have a significant impact on the activity of local and regional authorities.

However, the Union is neutral as regards internal division of each member State competencies, to the extent that in fact, centralised political systems do co-exist in the EU, like the French with others of a clear federal type like the German or the Spanish, or decentralised unitary states like the Dutch. It is interesting to point out that this freedom of each State of deciding its own internal structure (and the decision of granting more or less political authority to their regional and local units) cannot go against the Union's legal prerogatives. Thus, the State's central government will be the one responsible (CE Art. 226) for the possible contraventions and infringements of Community law by local and regional authorities of the country: a position also difficult for the central government, whose real capacity of supervising regional and local governments' behaviour is limited, and for these latter ones whose dialogue with the Union, and particularly with the European Commission is interfered by the role of the State, despite the large scope of its responsibilities regarding Community law. A scope reinforced by EC Art. 10, which prescribes the principle of loyal co-operation in the relations between governments within the Union, and forces local and regional authorities to comply with Community law of prohibitions and obligations in a legal manner.

<sup>1</sup> | We thank again the valuable works of Jorge Rodríguez and Gina Cleves, without whose contributions this article could not have been completed.



According to the EU Court of Justice, the principle applies as strongly to central as well as to sub-state authorities of member states. Based on this doctrine, authors like Hessel (2006: 94) attribute consequences of great significance to this article: local and regional authorities may be forced to ignore national legislation that incorrectly applies a European guideline, and may even apply it directly in the benefit of citizens. That may happen when the guideline has not been transposed, or it has but in an inappropriate manner and the guideline's text is unclear and unconditional.

These specific examples show a repetitive situation: the Union creates a policy-making system, which includes the drawing up of agendas and creating and supervising regulations, which superimposes on the regular government action of the different administrative levels of the European State. Municipalities and regions share, in the EU territory, the eagerness to adapt and relate in the best possible ways with that new political dimension which affects them so widely. It is an issue observed not only by sub-state authorities themselves, but also by Community states and institutions, each of them, of course, with their own viewpoint, as we shall see.

## 2.2. Different local actors, different views of the EU

It would be a mistake to think that a community of interests and a single perception exists amongst the various sub-state authorities with regard to the EU:

In the EU, there are 74 regions with legislative capacity, which belong to federal

states or with advanced regional autonomy (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Spain, Italy) or partial regional autonomy (Finland, Portugal, United Kingdom). All these regions or federated states have the responsibility of transposing and implementing EU's legislation and policies, and in some cases, they participate in the works of the Council of Ministers and the European Commission through their state delegations. Some regions with legislative power must ratify or agree to the new EU treaties. Some of them cover one portion of the financial contributions that its member state gives to the EU budget (REGLEG 2007). For these regions, the need to participate politically in the Union's decisions is as high as the need to defend their own competencies, or, at least, to try to ensure that Community decisions take them into account. The defence of subsidiarity as a principle to be respected by Community legislation and institutions has been the workhorse of this effort (Kiefer 2007). An effort accompanied, in the domestic arena, by the claim to the State of higher possibilities of participation in the position-taking mechanisms in front of the EU, particularly in the Council of the European Union.

- A special case, among these already special regions, is those with strong nationalist movements/parties. The EU constitutes a dimension, often positive, which has to transcend dependence of the own state and allow integration into a political space that is beyond that logic. It is a vision of Europe that contributes to shaping the own national identity. An essential requirement is the construction of a Europe in which these regions find their place.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> | "A strong feeling of national identity is compatible with a European identity, and therefore it is not an obstacle to its construction. This is particularly true in the cases of Plaid Cymru (Wales) or the Scottish National Party, who employ their pro-European attitude in order to grow apart from British parties' Euro-scepticism. Surprisingly, not only civic (Plaid Cymru SNP) but also ethnic (Lega Nord, Northern League) nationalism join together as a positive attitude towards European integration". (Hoppe 2003: 27).

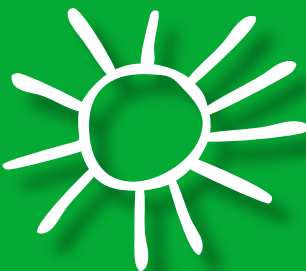
- The rest of European regions see themselves confronted with the role of executors of European regional policy, and in some cases, of the common agricultural policy. In general, regional capacity is to be found more in management than in decision-making; however, and with time, regions will find encouragement to improve these channels of influence, to maximise the efficiency of received support, and to negotiate with state and Community authorities about their orientation and volume. Incentives to participate, or facilitate local participation in research, mobility and environment protection programmes also increase. Regions must adapt their administrative structures to double negotiation (with the state and with Brussels), often opening regional representation offices, as well as making an effort towards legislative configuration in front of Community policies like the environmental and domestic market ones, whose regulatory effects descend to a regional level (Morata 2004a: 112).

- At a local level, incentives will not be the same. Although -as it's been discussed- European legislation is relevant for municipalities and provinces, the fact that they are given a lower executing role compared to that of the regions', has meant that their adaptation, in administrative and abilities' terms, is also lower. A study (Articus 2005) establishes an interests' typology for large German cities that we think may be applied more generally: these cities will build information systems about European opportunities, strengthen their institutional abilities in relation to the EU, position and increase their profile in front of competing cities and establish strategies for network co-operation. As much for cities as for the rest of municipalities, participation in programmes, and above all, the execution of part of the structural funds assigned to lo-

cal administration, strengthens their ability to negotiate with, and influence state -and above all- regional administrations.

- The EU opens new playing perspectives for second level local administrations (provinces, conseils généraux), as well as for other local entities (associations, metropolitan areas). Specifically, they can place themselves as facilitators for the creation of networks, as executors of structural resources for the local sphere, as a resource of access to European opportunities for municipalities with lower institutional capacities or of a smaller size, as guides in relation to territorial strategy, amongst other roles.

Not wishing to establish a conclusive order, but rather to supply a graphical image, we could say that sub-state authorities' interests may be represented in a continuum: on one side, the influence on political and administrative aspects, and on the other, participation in Community initiatives. It is a line that would go from the Union as legislative level to the European Union as a space of opportunity. One view and the other will prescribe different instruments of participation in the Union. On one side, legislative regions will pursue their own political status that will properly take into account the specific nature of their domestic regulatory position. On the other, municipalities will want to improve their participation in the multiple Community instruments, addressed to the administration (i.e. Equal, Leader, Interreg) as much as to the local population (investigation, mobility, equality of opportunities). Looking at the first side of the spectrum in first place, we will examine below the most ruled dimensions, institutional and legal, of sub-state participation in the Union's decision-making organisations.



### 3. Territorial power and European Union: looking for one's own space

Community institutions, states, local and regional authorities...they are all aware that European integration alters domestic governance systems, and above all, modifies the extent and conditions of the exercise of state, regional and local authority. However, the states of the Union are who decide the pace and deepness of this process, and who have more legislative authority, which they exert through their participation in the Council and through the guidance and sanctions of the Commission's proposals. In front of this great power, local and regional authorities have sought to create a specific, community authority, of sub-state representation; they have attempted to influence the European constitutional debate towards protecting and strengthening local and regional autonomy and the principle of subsidiarity, and they have influenced their own central governments, seeking to open to territorial participation, mechanisms of adoption of state positions as regards European Union.

#### 3.1 Limitations of the Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions (CoR), set up in 1994 under the Maastricht Treaty (Maastricht 1992), is without doubt an important landmark aimed at gaining recognition -at a Community level-, of the regions and cities that make up Europe. In relation to its operation, the different studies carried out on its first few years of existence have produced the same findings. The first of these findings shows that the Committee has not been the only channel nor the preferred one used, by the majority of its members, to exert influence on the Union. The second shows that the Com-

mittee has not known how, or not been able to gather enough support, to position itself in the European institutional scenario, and has thus remained half way between a deliberating assembly and an advisory body of the technical type. The third shows it has structural difficulties among its members, who are appointed by States, but who are from regions and municipalities of very different administrative competencies, as well as having different social, political and territorial conditions. Additionally, political representation is compulsory and does not admit a delegate, which does not help the assistance or the technical dimension of the committee's function (Ramon 2004).

As Cesáreo R Aguilera pointed out, the CoR is subject to two constraints: the constraint derived from the principles of efficiency versus democratic legitimacy, and the constraint arising between unity and diversity. Besides, "state governments do not wish the CoR to be an eventual counter-power (the wish of the sub-state nationalist parties of the "third chamber") (Rodríguez Aguilera 2006:64). A Committee, finally, that has still not been able to make itself indispensable, beyond the legal obligation of being consulted about perceptive subject matters.

Let's recall, likewise, that behind the impetus of the creation of the Committee itself there were different territorial interests and different institutional viewpoints. The German Länder, who already have access to the Council in matters in their competence, intended to use the Council as a subsidiarity control. Other regions and municipalities consider the Committee to be an instrument for strengthening regional policy or for promoting cohesion that, through instruments like the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), inject very significant amounts of

Community resources in regional and local finances. Likewise, some historical regions saw an embryonic stage of a third level of European government in it.

The fragmentation of territorial interests and the diversity of its political agenda, in the core of the CoR, would not stop increasing. The huge gap between the political/administrative agenda of the "special regions" (or regions with legislative capacity) and the rest of the actors can be particularly highlighted. The first ones base their approach on the need to ensure the exercise of the competencies they have been constitutionally assigned: How do we harmonise Catalonia's exclusive cultural competence with a Community legislative process in which this region is not present? It is all about a technical, administrative and legal agenda that sets up against the great variety of positions and interests expressed by the rest of the actors, not so interested in adapting to the EU's regulating system but rather in taking advantage of the opportunities generated by the Union itself.

The CoR's limitations have lead sub-state authorities to diversify their strategies of participation in the Union. On one hand, regions will seek direct contact with Community institutions, and other, regional actors through the establishment of representative offices in Brussels. An informal but effective representation, that in year 2000 amounted to a 9% of the total of interests offices present in the Community's capital city, and which has not stopped increasing: between 1984 and 2002 their number goes from 2 to 244 (Badiello 2004).

What do regional offices in Brussels do? A few years ago, Gary Marks and others produced an activities' classification whose importance was assessed by the regions themselves.

Likewise, regions will boost and make use of co-operation mechanisms with central governments as regards the EU. Over the years, indeed, some member states have established internal mechanisms of information and consensus-building in relation

Table 1 : Perceived importance of the regional office's activities

	Avg.	Deviation
Obtaining information on European legislation that is relevant for the region	4.4	1.0
Obtaining information on funding opportunities for their regions	4.7	0.8
Establishing links with other regional or local representations	3.9	0.9
Acting as a link between social groups of the region and EU institutions	4.2	1.0
Explain certain issues to EU decision-makers regarding the position of their region	4.1	1.0
Promoting the knowledge of their region in Brussels	3.8	1.0
Increasing the knowledge of the EU in their region	4.0	1.0
	4.4	0.9
Addressing information or assistance requirements from people of the region	4.0	1.2
Influencing the EU decision-making process in favour of the region	3.2	1.3
<i>Contribute to increasing general regions' influence on the political process</i>		
<i>Source: Marks/Haesly/Mbaye (2002: 2)</i>		

to the European Commission's legislative proposals, ranging from mixed coordination commissions to the creation of regional "observers" in the Missions before the EU or the inclusion of regional representatives in the Commission's consultative committees. However, the most important boost to regional participation in European affairs derives from Art. 203 (ex 146) of the Maastricht Treaty, which opens the door to the presence of regional delegates in the Council of Ministers as representatives of their own respective States (Morata and Ramón 2003). Since then, Germany, Austria, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and more recently Spain, have established mechanisms -very diverse in their form and scope- to make this participation possible.<sup>3</sup>

In the end, regions and cities will join together in order to have an influence on the fundamental debates of the Union, and especially on the Convention-Constitution, as we will see below.

### 3.2. Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) and the constitutional debate: the road to the Treaty of Lisbon

The European Convention was the instrument used by the EU to prepare a draft of the European Constitution, which would be the basis for the final text to be submitted for ratification by member states. The European Convention was made up of national parliamentarians, MEPs, the European Commission, representatives of aspiring members for a larger Union, and representatives of workers, businesses and NGOs. Between

February 2002 and July 2003, when their works ended, the Convention had 26 plenary sessions of two days each, with more than 1,800 contributions. Consensus was the decision-making method used. In October 2003, under the Italian Presidency, the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) was open for the EU Treaties' reform. A special IGC, however, since a procedure which gave entrance to different actors of member states' governments had been established for the first time, putting the draft Treaty produced by the European Convention as the base for negotiations.

Regions, and in general, sub-state entities, had received the call to attend the Convention with optimism and great expectations, as a great opportunity for claiming more presence in the European scene and consolidate a true participation in the processes of configuring the will of the Community. (Enguidanos 2005). In addition to the Committee of the Regions itself, sub-state actors in the form of regional and local associations, through the "Subsidiarity" work group and the "Network Group of Local and Regional entities" also participated. The consensus achieved was so high that the proposed text for the Constitution for Europe agreed at the end of the IGC would drift only a little away from that one proposed by the Convention. So, the debate about the position of regions and cities in the Union's institutional and legal network became an integral part of the long debate over the European Constitution. Needless to say, a Constitution that after being approved by all

EU leaders bumped into serious obstacles in its process of member state ratifications. The referendums of France and the Netherlands, both with negative results, plunged the whole process into a crisis from which it was only able to emerge at Lisbon in December 2007. The ability of the former German Presidency and the collective will developed to take the EU out from the long-lasting impasse in which it was immersed, have been essential to find a compromise which has been reflected in a reformed Treaty that keeps the essence of the Constitution project, but not the elements, like the name or the anthem, which attempted to symbolize a new phase in the construction of a politically united Europe.

The Lisbon outcomes, approved in December 2007, strengthens a series of significant principles for sub-state authorities such as: respect for the national identity of member states, including regional and local autonomy; recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity among the Union's objectives; acknowledgment of the territorial dimension of cohesion policy and of the extension of its area of application, as stated in Article 158 of the Treaty; regulations on participative and representative democracy, which may favour a better dialogue between the Union's institutions and regional associations; the incorporation of a protocol on services of general interest, which acknowledges the essential role of state, autonomous, regional and local authorities in the management of these services; and the new definition of the principle of subsidiarity, which recognises, for the first time, the regional and local dimension.

This subsidiarity principle is the most developed one in the text, through regulations which take the regions into account in the drafting of legislative proposals, as pro-

vided in the Protocol on the application of the subsidiarity and proportion principles; regarding the reinforcement of the rapid alert system, which will allow national and regional parliaments exercising a political control over the adaptation of legislative proposals to the subsidiarity principle; and regarding the ability of national parliaments (through their member state) and the Committee of the Regions to undertake legal actions when faced with the infringement of the subsidiarity principle.

We would like to point out, likewise, that other historical demands of regions and municipalities were left out, such as: those relative to the strengthening of the status of the Committee of the Regions; their recognition as a "European Union institution", the grant of the right of appeal before the Court of Justice of European Communities for the conservation of their prerogatives, the expansion of their functions in the new European architecture, and specifically, the right to address written and oral questions before the European Commission, as well as the obligation -of the Council and the European Commission- to regularly present a reasoned report on the steps taken in response to the reports issued by the CoR.

The possibility of a differential agreement for "special regions" is left out of the text: the direct access of regions with legislative powers to the Court of Justice of the EU, in defence of their rights and prerogatives, a regulation that allows member states to appoint some regions as "associate regions" of the Union, which would enjoy specific rights at a European level, since these regions have exclusive competencies and share responsibilities with their member states; or the guarantee of a wider use, in European institutions, of languages that are official in some EU regions.

<sup>3</sup> | The German case is the most advanced: due to the Bundesrat (German Territorial Chamber) right of veto in the ratification process of international treaties subscribed by the central government, the approval of the Maastricht Treaty (1994) entailed a federal reform based on which it is impossible to transfer transfers from the **Länder** without **Bundesrat** previous consent. At the same time, European policy has become one of the "common tasks" of the **Länder** and the Federation. From this reform, the Federal Government is forced to take into account the position of the majority of the federated States, expressed in the territorial chamber, when their interests are affected by a proposal of the Committee (Nagel 2004).



The advancements -which are significant-, incorporated by the Protocol about the application of the subsidiarity and proportionality principle will now have to be developed in a process in which legislative chambers, regional governments, state parliaments and community institutions should co-operate. A cooperation that is proving to become increasingly necessary to help regions and municipalities participate further in the Union's political system.

### 3.3. From the Europe of the regions to the Europe with the regions

Only a few years ago an idea that today seems hopelessly dismissed was held with significant vehemence: that which said that Europe was heading towards a regional configuration. The context was known and was this: some European states subject to the simultaneous pressures of globalisation (due to the globalisation of the economy, migrations, commercial competition...), Europeanisation (a non-stopping regional integration boosted by the needs of competitiveness and foreign influence, the formulation of great, shared economical strategies, and by some community institutions that have their own dynamics) and regionalisation (re-discovery of the territory as a space for economic development, political culture of participation, proximity and strategic management, appearance of nationalisms, regionalisms and a general claim for more authority for regional and local governments...). Facing these constraints, the areas of responsibilities of the states were in fact being reduced towards the top (Brussels) and at the bottom (territorial authorities).

If good domestic government imperatives required decentralisation and territorial dialogue, the future of a good European government had to do with the access to the heart of European institutions by territorial

authorities. And not through a mere representative or deliberative space but through a legitimate "third chamber" that would enable the harmonisation of these three great actors, the States of the Union, their territories, their shared institutions, towards an economic and social development that would be unattainable without that three-party engagement. A three-tier system that would additionally offer a place for the nationalist ambitions of some European regions, which could, at least in their leaders' rhetoric, avoid the state's mediation in order to relate directly with Europe.

Reality insists on denying the advancement towards the Europe of the Regions in its more institutionalised version. Let us see some of the factors which explain it:

The Union is a changing reality which has lately tackled essential matters. Its enlargement and constitution have marked an agenda of "high politics" where the significance of subject matters such as budget review (remember the laborious advancement of financial perspectives during the British Presidency, 2nd. semester of 2005), or the reform of great policies (agricultural, structural) of the Union has not been of less importance. It is not, therefore, surprising that the discussion has "re-nationalised" lately and that states have assumed a very preponderant role in these discussions. This re-nationalisation, probably inevitable, has been of great convenience for the less autonomous/regionalist states, frankly opposed to the increase of capabilities of the Union's regions.

This transformation reaches the EU's membership itself. If the decision-making process of a Council with 27 members is more complex than one with 12 or 15, it is easy to imagine what a territorial chamber, viable and with power, would be like. The enlargement raises the degree of the Union's

territorial diversity beyond what was envisaged under earlier schemes led by the activisms and initiatives of the Union's "older" regions and cities. The already diverse sub-national European reality is now farther from accomplishing spaces for ruled and community representation and participation, i.e., constitutionally guaranteed by a European regulation. We have seen that the new Treaty of Lisbon provides news regarding subsidiarity control, particularly for the regions, but not as to their status in the EU.

Lastly, it is relevant to remember that the Union is a juridical phenomenon, and its survival and viability depend on the enforcement of a series of principles (direct priority, effect and applicability of the Union's Law, as well as the responsibility for non-compliance), which have to be maintained. It is logical that being an intergovernmental organisation created from a multilateral treaty with the states as its main protagonists, the EU tends to strengthen the effectiveness of its regulations as much as it holds the states accountable for their compliance.

These difficulties in the institutionalisation and regulation, at Community level, of political participation of sub-state authorities in the decision-making processes of the EU, help to understand the surge of other less regulated mechanisms such as associations and territorial networks, which are examined below.

## 4. Networks and European construction

Behind the, albeit restrained, progress made in improving the possibilities of sub-national representation and participation in

the Union's political system, are the promotion and the coordinated efforts made by regional and local authorities whom are set on improving their position within this system. Networks and associations serve as exceptional instruments not only for these strategies of political influence in territorial matters, but also for the territorial development model advocated by the European Commission. Networks and integration thus maintain a dialectic relation that we address below.

### 4.1. Networks, political entrepreneurship and European construction

We choose the neologism "political entrepreneurship", since it is particularly appropriate to describe the interacted activity of European territorial leaders within the Union's system. Gómez Matarán (1999: 31) assists us in its clarification: "we define political entrepreneurs as both those actors who carry out actions as an attempt to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them by a particular institutional context, as well as those who undertake innovative actions addressed to alter the existent institutional framework, understanding that the desired context is a platform from which to obtain an improved participation in political processes." In the European case,<sup>4</sup> that institutional framework in constant mutation will be a preferred subject for some approaches configured in a network.

Political entrepreneurship is a role that territorial leaders may play from their own governments or from associations and networks, or, often, through a combination of both. The long process of creation of a Community authority that would represent European territorial authorities is a good example

<sup>4</sup> | *At the international level of the system, the notion of transnational norms entrepreneurs (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998) is also used to describe actions towards shaping the institutional and normative organisation of a larger environment, usually exporting the own norms.*

of entrepreneurship.<sup>5</sup> In 1986, the then president of the Commission, Jacques Delors, commissioned a project for the creation of an authentic consulting committee with two functions, one with local powers and another with regional powers, bearing in mind an approaching reform in structural funds. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) participated in the project, together with a new association created in 1984: the Council of the European Regions, which would later become the Assembly of Regions of Europe (ARE). The work finished with the creation, in 1988, of the Consulting Committee of Regional and Local entities, made up of 41 representatives from regions and local entities, which constituted the Committee's consulting authority in development and regional policy issues. The creation of the Council, even when it may be considered a first step toward the participation of sub-state entities in Community policy, was considered absolutely insufficient by the ARE, who called for the creation of a senate of the regions of Europe. Both CEMR and ARE played an essential role as promoters of the creation of the Committee of the Regions, and out of them came two Catalan political leaders: Mr Pasqual Maragall and Mr Jordi Pujol, CEMR and ARE presidents respectively. From then on, in the intergovernmental negotiations prior to the approval of the Treaty of Maastricht, two federal-type states, Germany and Spain, were to take up the cause of sub-state entities (Munõa 1999).

The extent in which these initiatives aim at modifying the current institutional order varies; in general, it is a function connected to opportunities and to the context of associations, whose day-to-day work is based on technical co-operation. Antoni Niubó (2007) calls these "spontaneous" initiatives of territorial co-operation (in order to distinguish them from those that belong to community initiatives) and organises them in three categories, according to their material environment: the spatial category (territory-based networks), the thematic category (sectorial co-operation) and the generic category (multi-sector or based on special features). Some of these initiatives should be highlighted here:

As regards territorial platforms, we would like to point out the Euroregions and Euroterritories. The former's role is to promote cross-border co-operation between neighbouring regions or other local entities from different countries. Their structure is stable and not ad hoc, with their own organisation and financial capabilities and their legal basis varies: community of interests with no legal status (like Elbe-Labe Euroregion), European interest groups (Transcanal), non-profit organisations (Saar-Lor-Lux Rhin), work communities with no legal status (Bayerischer Wald-Böhmerwald/Sumava) or public law entities (Rhin-Waal). Euroterritories do not have that border nature but they do have a geographic reality that leads their thematic interests. In the case of the "Arc Latin", which goes from Portugal to southern Italy, the objective is to create a space for po-

litical co-operation between second level administrations, to coordinate a consistent and common discourse in a Mediterranean space that has been very fragmented up to now, and for Europe not to stop looking south and fail to incorporate the Mediterranean and local perspectives in their policy-making.

Generic platforms are the main associations for European regional and local authorities, among which are: Eurocities, CEMR and ARE, and the Conference on Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPRM).

The same author highlights three types of methods in territorial co-operation, according to their conformation and presence. Thus, town-twinning is a bilateral relation method very much used in the post-war Europe in order to bring towns separated by war closer, and it is also very relevant in cross-border co-operation. Town-twinning between French, Polish and German municipalities can be mentioned. Secondly, work communities are operational structures created by a co-operation agreement, often cross-border, although they have their own decision structures, they are of a pure intergovernmental nature, neither having a secretary's office nor their own resources. A good example of this is the Working Community of the Pyrenees (CTP),<sup>6</sup> an interregional cross-border co-operation entity constituted on the basis of the signature, on 18 April 1983 in Bordeaux, of a Protocol between the Principality of Andorra, the Autonomous Communities of Aragon, Catalonia, the Basque Country,

Navarre and the French regions of Aquitaine, Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées.

The CTP experience has resulted in it being made responsible, during the current planning period, of managing the European programme for cross-border co-operation (Interreg IV) between Spain and France.

Lastly, networks and associations represent a well known formula for multilateral co-operation which has vastly benefited from the cross-border requirements of Community initiatives and programmes in territorial co-operation projects.

## 4.2. The Commission and the promotion of instruments for networked territorial co-operation

The fact that regional integration processes produce relatively complex dynamics is well known, and that they reach a great number of political and social actors, towards allowing the actors' participation and of the networks that group them in their discussions, decision-making and implementation processes within the EU territory. It is what some theorists and experts call governance: given the specificity of the Community "government" (its legal limitations, its large scope, its long times, its partnership, information and discussion needs, its needs in reaching the territories...), the Union's institutions, very particularly the Commission, will display formal and informal mechanisms for the participation of all actors within the European integration space.

<sup>5</sup> | In 1970, the Consulting Committee of local and regional Institutions of European Community member states was created, conformed by the Council of Municipalities of Europe (an authority created in 1951 in order to favour the participation of municipal entities in the European construction and which became, in 1984, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA). At the moment of its creation, this Consulting Committee had little regional presence. This presence then increased as from 1977, with the incorporation of a greater number of regions and with the participation of important regional associations, the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Powers (1961) amongst them. The Committee, however, was not officially recognised and its decisions could neither force the Commission nor the European Parliament.

<sup>6</sup> | The creation of the CTPD ended a process that had been started and boosted by the Council of Europe towards creating, in the Pyrenees, cross-border co-operation structures similar to those in the Alps since the '70s. The purpose of the CTP is to jointly mitigate the problems arising from conditions in mountainous regions, and very particularly, the physical barrier character of the Pyrenean massif. The recent creation of the CTP relationship between the Autonomous Communities and French neighbour regions, within the framework of the Treaty of Bayonne, currently allows the CTP to have a legal status of its own. The association has four work commissions, organized in the following thematic fields: Infrastructures and Communications, Training and Technological Development, Culture, Youth and Sports, and Sustainable Development.

Table 2   Main Community transnational initiatives	
Initiatives	Main Contents
ADAPT	Adaptation of workers to industrial transformations and improvement of the labour market
EQUAL	Transnational co-operation to promote new methods of fighting discrimination and inequalities of any kind as regards the labour market
EUROFORM	Building and the creation of Enterprises
HORIZON	Improving possibilities for society's more vulnerable groups, including the disabled -physical, mental, sensory and emotional, to access the labour market.
INTEGRA	Favour the integration into the labour market of disadvantaged groups with specific problems, such as immigrants and refugees, drug addicts, prisoners and ex-prisoners, ethnic minorities, the homeless and others in social exclusion situations.
LEADER	Rural development through co-operation between diverse territorial entities.
NOW	Promote equal employment opportunities for women, through professional training and support so as to access jobs with a future and managerial positions.
RECITE	Co-operation between local agents as regards local and regional development.
URBAN	Economic and social re-building of cities and neighbourhoods in crisis, in order to promote sustainable urban development.
YOUTHSTART	Integration of young people in the labour market.
Source: Niubó (2007: 53)	

Thus, the Commission has been one of the driving forces behind a greater involvement of the European territorial level in the dynamics of the Community, and very especially of the level of territorial associations, i.e. politically interacted cities and regions. The initiative or the receptivity of this institution has brought about important dynamics and achievements.

The Commission in the same way encourages the association between regional and local authorities through specific instruments, particularly in the cohesion policy. Interreg's initiative in this sense is important. It was established in 1989 with the objective of supporting actions in neighbouring regions, those which could more clearly be affected by the integration process under way, and which suffered, in many cases, problems related to their peripheral condition. Interreg, as a pure cross-border co-operation was then expanded to include transnational co-operation (which does not require the existence of a shared bor-

der) and interregional co-operation (devoted to the exchange of experiences and good practices). The Commission expands its support practically to any type of local and regional networks' creation, to the point that within the current budgetary framework, territorial co-operation is not a specific programme any more, but an objective shared by all the actions of economic, social and territorial cohesion policy (Fernández de Losada 2005: 268).

Together with these large programmes, the Commission also encourages other methods of promotion of the trans-European and transnational local action: pilot programmes, of decentralised co-operation (like Urb-Al itself), environmental. At this moment, local and regional authorities' networks are not excluded from practically any activity sector of the EU, ranging from the support to the R+D to foreign affairs. These initiatives are a significant support factor for sectorial co-operation associations.

The Commission's initiative of creating a new legal precept deserves a different chapter: the European Grouping of Territorial Co-operation, an entity already governed by EU Regulation, which gives the territorial co-operation platforms (Euro-rregions and Euroterritories) who decide to join, a European legal and common basis, while it facilitates their ability to access Community funding.

The Commission's initiatives, however, go beyond the creation of tools. We are thinking of the pre-legislative discussions this institution opens in order to observe key actors' opinion and the dialogue it has been maintaining with regional and local authorities, especially as regards cohesion policy. An outstanding moment of this dialogue took place during the works that lead to the adoption of the White Paper on European governance (2001). The context was complex: there was an increase of "public goods" claimed from the Union and its states by the citizens, the more traditional ways of doing politics was in the middle of a crisis of results, and Europe was emerging as an interesting but complex, distant, not responsible territory. The participation of regions and cities, and above all, of its associations was very considerable. Even though no conclusions at Community level were drawn about the way of involving local political actors in the domestic development of European regulations (states remained the main responsible actors), the need for territorialising the Union at an informative level was definitely clear; also clear was the importance of listening to citizens' claims in the European legislative process, and above all, the need for establishing a systematic dialogue with social representatives (amongst whom would be local authorities) in order to improve the efficiency of the governance of the Union. In 2004 the Commission decided to implement the Structured Dialogues' system, in order to stabilise and regularise their relation with local and regional authorities' associations. It is a recommendation found in a White Paper, which will provide this direct relation between networks and Commis-

sion with a semi-permanent space which the Committee of the Regions will be in charge of facilitating, as we will see below.

Tömmel (2004: 112) identifies a series of reasons that explain this facilitating position of the Commission:

- It is not possible for the Commission to deal with each decentralised region or actor in an individual manner; therefore it wishes to encourage representations of interest by promoting co-operation and relation through associations between regions and actors with similar interests.
- The Commission hopes that these associations or networks are capable of devising (on the basis of exchange of experiences) proposals that best adapt to the needs of the beneficiaries.
- The Commission attempts to decentralise parts of the political process, particularly the implementation of certain programmes to horizontal organisations in order to reduce management costs at a European level and obtain more effective programmes.
- The Commission wishes to organise a horizontal transfer of policies, particularly between more developed and less developed regions, with the aim of favouring innovation in their regional and structural policies.

### 4.3.The new profile of the Committee of the Regions

After the recommendations set out in the White Paper about European Governance, the Committee of the Regions has improved the structure of its relations with local and regional associations. In the words of the Committee itself, the logic and objectives of this process have been to improve the coordination of the respective activities in order to obtain



Table 3 | Consultation with regional and local associations in CoR's Report, July 2006-2007

Report's subject	Speaker, State, political group	Participating associations
electronic administration	Luciano Caveri (Italy, Democrats and Liberals Alliance for Europe)	ARE, European Regional Information Society Association (ERISA), European Association of Elected Representatives from Mountain Areas (AEM), CEMR
transparency	Per Bodker Andersen (Denmark, Party of European Socialists, PES)	Deutscher Städtetag, CEMR, ARE, AEBR, Association des Eco-Maires
regional economic strategies	Witold Kroshmal (Portugal, Union for Europe of the Nations, UEN-AE)	EARLALL, European Network of Mining Regions, CPRM
social services of general interest	Jean-Louis Destans (France, PES)	CEMR, Eurocities
equality of men and women	Claudette Abela Baldacchino (Malta, PES)	Network of European Cities and European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy (REVES), European Lobby of Women, CEMR
education for sustainable development	Marek Olszewski (Poland, UEN-EA)	All significant European associations were invited
Source: "Co-operation with European local and regional associations" paper, presented by the Secretary-General to the 102nd. CoR Bureau meeting, (R/CDR 150/2007) item 15 c) annex 1, 7 September 2007.		

a greater participation of the CoR's interlocutors in its institutional and political task. On the other hand, these different types of co-operation aim at improving the quality of the CoR's consulting tasks, while obtaining a more effective representation of local and regional interests at the European sphere. It is a line of action which is beginning to materialise as from the CoR's Meeting decision of 14 May 2002 on "Co-operation with European associations of regional and local representatives" (R/CDR 106/2002, item 11). The latter granted authority to the General Secretary to adopt a series of measures in order to intensify co-operation with associations. From then on, the Committee started a series of systematic actions toward strengthening its relation with regional and local authorities' networks, and positioning itself, by doing so, as the "entrance

door" or focal point of those associations in the EU system. That co-operation may be structured in four types of actions:

Firstly, we have the political relationship between the Committee and the associations, guaranteed by regular meetings (three per year) between associations' General Secretaries and the CoR's General Secretary, as well as by the attendance of the President of the Committee to the more important European associations' Annual General Meetings, and by the participation of associations' presidents or representatives as speakers at the seminars and conferences of the CoR.<sup>7</sup>

Secondly, the organisation of public activities and joint information has the Open

Days as its maximum exponent. In 2007, the fifth edition of this European Week of Regions and Cities' was held, organised by the CoR together with the Directorate-General (DG) for Regional Policy of the European Commission. This is an activity that has rapidly consolidated as the greatest shop-window for sub-state authorities and their European offices. The figures for 2007, which represented a 40% increase compared to those from the previous year, are as follows: 5,500 participants, 150 seminars in 34 different locations and 700 speakers. The CoR and territorial networks collaborate in other EU communication activities, especially within the framework of the Commission's D Plan (Democracy, Dialogue and Debate)

Technical co-operation is our third space and the one of greatest interest. Here we place the participation of experts from associations in specific work groups created by the CoR to support the work of the speakers and technical co-operation in two subjects: subsidiarity control and regional policy, territorial co-operation and Strategy of Lisbon. Thus, the following table shows, between July 2006 and July 2007, the consultation, by CoR's report speakers, to European associations.

The works of the CoR on subsidiarity and regional policy also benefited from the

associations' technical contributions, particularly as from the participation in the two platforms established by the Committee, to work on both issues: the Lisbon Monitoring Platform and the Subsidiarity Control Network. The latter is a tool for the information exchange between sub-state actors on proposals and political documents of the Commission that, once adopted, will have an impact at territorial level. The objective of the CoR in establishing this platform is to become the key facilitator, in Europe, of issues related to subsidiarity in two ways: increasing its expertise through external contributions and covering the gap between institutions and European territorial authorities. After a pilot phase in 2005/2006, this network is now fully operational, with 22 regional governments with legislative powers comprising the network and participating in current talks on liberalisation of gas and electricity markets, immigration and labour market, as well as health policy in the European Union. The network also receives the benefit of the support of the CoR's Interregional Group on subsidiarity, where two regional associations co-operate: those that group regions with legislative powers (REGLEG) and the Joint Parliamentary Assemblies (CALRE). The Network may be of great significance in the immediate future, given the new role assigned to the CoR by the Treaty of Lisbon as regards subsidiarity.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>| In the words of the CoR's President himself, Michel Delebarre, "It is true that the Committee keeps being...a committee; it does not become an EU institution in the legal sense of the term. However, it has new rights: the right to go directly to the Court of Justice of the European Communities in case of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity and to turn to the Court to defend their own prerogatives. Now, since active legitimization before the Court of Justice was up to now restricted exclusively to institutions, it is possible to consider, as Antonio Vitorino -former representative of the Commission in the Convention and current special Consultant of the Portuguese Presidency for the IGC- has recently done before the Round Table of the Committee of the Regions, that the CoR remains in fact assimilated to the institutions and represents more than a mere consulting entity. Lastly, the Protocol on the application of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles is included in the reform Treaty as Protocol nr.2, immediately after Protocol nr.1 on the mission of National Parliaments. Just as you point out in your statement project, the application of this protocol will guarantee a greater participation of local and regional entities in the devising, application and assessment of Community Policies. In this context, the process of subsidiarity control through the subsidiarity network established in the heart of the CoR opens new participation possibilities for the regional and local level in governance at various levels". Participation in the 8th. Summit of Presidents of Regions with Legislative Power of the European Union (REGLEG), Barcelona, 16 November 2007 (E/CDR 8122/2007 FR-EGR/ca).

<sup>7</sup>| As an example, the CoR's President participated in 2006 of the CPRM's General Meeting (Murcia, Spain, 26 and 27 October), of REGLEG (16 and 17 November 2006, Cardiff, United Kingdom), while the General Secretary participated in the Annual Conference of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR, 23 to 25 November, Pamplona, Spain).

In fourth and last place we find the role of the CoR as facilitator of structured dialogues between the European Commission and regional and local associations. The base of this line of action is constituted by the Communication of the European Commission on the “Dialogue with associations of territorial communities on the devising of European Union policies” (COM (2003) 811), where the CoR is requested to organise structured dialogue meetings between the Commission itself and these associations. Since then, the Committee has taken the initiative to continuously improve that activity. Thus, if in 2004 and 2005 the dialogue was confined to the presentation by the President of the Commission of the work programme for the coming year, at the end of 2005 thematic meetings started to be held between various Commissioners and representatives of territorial associations. Although the debate format is still limited,<sup>9</sup> this contact allows a regular exchange which is very much appreciated by both sides.

This co-operation is programmed and assessed through joint action plans with the main European associations. In 2007, action plans with the following associations were signed: AEBR, AEM, ARE, CALRE, CEMR, CPRM, EUROCITIES and REGLEG. The Secretary-General also signed a Declaration of common interest with a national association, the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, and two Declarations with regional associations. The Baltic Sea

States Sub-regional Cooperation (BSSSC) and Arc Latin.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.4. Governance and territorial political actors

The notion of Governance has been chosen to describe this game of interactions between the various actors (state and non-state, public and private) who took part in a space of poly-centric and free-flowing policy-making, with changing administrative relations and pointing to the devising of efficient and quality political decisions in an environment with a simultaneous movement of integration (upward) and devolution/decentralisation (downward). A way of thinking that blends the notion of “Europeanization”, understood as the transformation of state sovereignty in the Union: “Multi-level governance suggests a perspective (...) by which Europeanization derives in a transformation of the State, since it determines an increase in the inter-dependence between different government levels (European, State and sub-state), forced to share their respective resources in order to deal with changes imposed by the integration process. This tends to promote co-operative forms of governance which alter the principles of statehood, territoriality and sovereignty” (Morata 2004b).

Governance (with adjectives: multi-level, new...or plain) has worked as a talisman-concept, analytic and programmatic at the same time, which would help us understand the novel nature of the Union’s political system, while it allowed us to imagine new solutions

for questions we are discussing here: the participation of regional and local authorities in the Community’s decision-making processes. Authors like Michael Keating have echoed that confused and problematic nature of the concept, and consider it more like a descriptive metaphor rather than a useful analytical concept. As for us, although governance as an analytical concept that has been and continues to be a subject of debate that transcends the scope of this article, it does contain some problematic though interesting aspects, from the point of view of associations of territorial authorities.

First, it has been criticised that governance, at emphasising the poly-centric and scarcely hierarchical character of political relations, does not take appropriately into account the impact of the in fact existent hierarchy in terms of regulatory capacity, or of the institutions whose power counts at the time of defining the nodes of interaction. However, we should pay attention to these relations of power, understood as the capacity of giving shape to the system’s set of regulations, in order to understand the activity of regional and local authorities integrated in networks, and particularly their political entrepreneurship.

Second, for the EU’s governance system, capacity and effectiveness will be more relevant than the democratic legitimacy of the actors that take part. Presidents and mayors, as well as their associations will be received in Europe not only as elected representatives, but

above all, as territorial leaders. In that sense, a European region’s participation in the governance system may have more elements in common with that of a strong trade union than with the one of a small State. As we have seen, this recognition of the operational efficiency of local leadership will not have a comparable political recognition in terms of institutional character.

Third, governance is not neutral in terms of governmental culture, particularly in regional policy: here, through a coherent and constant strategy, the Commission has been able to favour regions as interlocutors (to the detriment of the position of the States) as well as to establish a series of operational principles (programming, co-financing, partnership, participation...) which entitles it to expand that dialogue to other local economic actors of its choice, and to guide not only the objectives but also the methodology of the political action of sub-state governments.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5. Networks and integration: critical points and comparative analysis

This is the end of our journey through the position of networks and associations as an instrument for sub-state participation in the European Union. We know that the scene in Latin America is different. We have various spheres of regional integration as consolidated processes: Mercosur, Andean Region and Central American System, plus Pan-American initiatives. They

<sup>9</sup> In this respect, the Secretary-General submitted to the Bureau a document for debate (102nd. meeting, 7 September 2007, item 9, “Development of Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and regional and local entities’ associations. Improvement proposals”, R/CDR 150/2007 pt. 9). In this document, after gathering the comments of the associations themselves, the Secretary-General introduced a series of improvements to the sessions’ format: separation of political debate from technical debate, co-presidency of associations, collaboration with associations to draw up the annual programme and the Structured Dialogue agendas, general dialogue meeting about the annual strategy of the Commission once published, etc.

<sup>10</sup> With regard to this and other aspects of the issue, see Note to the attention of the Bureau members of the CoR (R/CDR 150/2007 pt. 15 c.) of 9 August 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Some authors place the start of this strategy of the Commission in the White Paper on Governance: “But additionally, the White Paper positions itself in a view of essential defence of the Community’s method, understood as the constant and formalised “trialogue” between Parliament, Council and Commission. From this point of view, the White Paper neither proposes an essential alteration of the Union’s institutional system to give space -within it- to the regions, nor it considers a transformation to the essence of the Council and therefore to the States’ internal representation. The objective of the Paper is the strengthening of the Commission in the framework of an authentic networks’ Government. And in this sense the provisions of regional participation are always integrated in respect to the Commission, who hence becomes the central point of the whole procedure, with the ability -even- of resisting the States’ governments’ positions, from its contacts with its corresponding internal regions. It is inaugurated in this way, the line that (...) results as the most fruitful in the practice of regional participation: the more or less formalised, but never linking contact with the Commission.” (Ribó y Roig 2005: 11).



are younger processes that display few governance instruments, and where the voice of local and regional authorities has deserved unequal and incipient recognition, both in their dimensions of institutional representation and of the devising of the agenda: it is REMI (for its initials in Spanish), Mercosur Specialised Meeting of Municipalities and Mayoralties, together with the Consulting Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of Mercosur; and in the Andean Region, since 2005, the Andean Consulting Council of Municipal Authorities (CCAAM for its initials in Spanish).

Behind the establishment of these spaces for territorial representation are the pressures of sub-state authorities, which are politically interacting. The essential part is precisely that link between networks and integration processes: we are interested in analysing to what extent local and regional associations' activity is catalyzed by the existence of integration processes; it is organised in order to influence them, to be recognised and to have their own spaces for dialogue and activity; and it develops its projects in such spaces, in a wide sense: from programmes in which it participates, to more formal organisations.

Our hypothesis is that, despite these different stages, critical points detected in our European journey may be the basis for a comparative analysis.

These points would be about:

- The turn toward associations against individual participation: to what extent do local authorities turn to network interacting in their efforts to achieve greater institutional presence and influence on the political agenda of regional integration spaces? Are individual efforts the most usual? What kind of exchanges, relationships and benefits does belonging to these networks entail for member local authorities?

- Networks' features: which are the more active networks in the region? In addition to large generalist associations, are there other sectorial schemes of technical co-operation with an impact on regional integration schemes/plans? What is the political agenda that municipal networks attempt to embed in regional integration processes (institutional recognition, sector policies...)? As regards this agenda, what type of impacts and results are being obtained?

- Networks and formal representation spaces: how do they relate? We have discussed the current role of the EU's Committee of the Regions, what is the situation in other regions? Lastly, to what extent is it possible to talk about decentralised co-operation (DC) as an element for regional integration in itself?

These questions have constituted the basis for a questionnaire which, completed by experts of Mercosur's regions and the Andean Region, is useful for us to compare these diverse experiences, to which this last chapter is dedicated.

### 5.1. Individual participation versus networked participation

The efforts toward one or the other do not contradict each other, neither in the Mercosur area, nor in the Andean region, but individual and collective strategies mutually complement each other and they respond to the fact that when a local government decides to work in the international environment, it does so by using all the means available. The interest and participation of the cities of Mercosur in the integration process started quite early, with the constitution, in 1995, of the Mercocities (Mercocities) network,<sup>12</sup> four years after the signature of the Treaty of Asuncion which created Mercosur. Meanwhile, the Andean Cities Network (RAC, for its initials in Spanish)

is created in 2003, six years after the formal start of operations of the Andean Community of countries (CAN), in 1997, but in an environment with diverse institutions coordinated under the Andean Integration System (SAI),<sup>13</sup> which have been operating for a few years already. Cities' mobilisation factors within the networks have been stronger in Mercocities where the local and national governments have been of different political signs. This was basically observed in the first years in which local governments of the region participated in the international scene, and interacting in networks was one of the means that allowed them to show their own profile, different from that of the States to which they belonged, and often with a tendency of more activism at facing the risks of territorial globalisation. With each successive network expansion, this ideological activism will be diluted to some extent as will the real possibilities of participation close to formal institutions of territorial representation in the integration space- as we will see later, are encouraging factors for the participation of local authorities in Mercocities.

This ideological community is not present in the creation of RAC, but there are common problems and the will to find solutions that strengthen the territorial sphere of integration. However, a still relatively incipient typical structure of the network, as well as, above all, the inexistence of programmes and external subvention lines to support its institutionalisation and activities (despite the Andean institutional density, regional interaction scenarios for Andean local

authorities have been very scarce) will make the network's sustainment and promotion be based, essentially, on individual initiatives.<sup>14</sup>

### 5.2. Benefits of belonging to networks

For both regions, a good part of the benefits that come from belonging to networks has to do with the exchange of practices: identifying common problems among local actors with similar characteristics will help them determine the best solutions. These problems may refer to sector policies (i.e. inclusion, fight against poverty, food security, citizenship and democracy, cultural co-operation, academic and professional exchange...), but also to transversal issues, such as management models (decentralisation, citizen participation), dealing with local problems (good practice, and also not too successful practice), access to external financial sources, or relations between towns (academic, artistic, professional exchanges...). In general, the exchange is beneficial for the improvement of local planning and public management. Trust appears, meanwhile, as a requirement and a result of this co-operation: trust to strengthen the friendship bonds that promote technical exchange and to strengthen, likewise, political alliances.

The most mature institutional dimension of Mercosur will be visible as long as two additional benefits are mentioned: the greater institutional impact, at regional and global levels, as regards individual international acting, and, connected to this, the opportunity of increasing the quasi-diplomatic profile of

<sup>12</sup> Having started with 12 founder cities, the network has, at the moment, 181 members in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, Chile, Bolivia and Peru.

<sup>13</sup> These institutions are the Andean Presidential Council, the Andean Council of Foreign Affairs, the Commission (conformed by Trade Ministers), the Andean Parliament, the General Secretariat (of executive nature), the Andean Business Advisory Council, the Andean Labour Advisory Council, Andean Development Corporation (CAF), the Latin American Reserve Fund, the various Agreements signed by members and the Simón Bolívar University.

<sup>14</sup> Bogotá is an example of how the own efforts are forced to be harmonised with collective efforts: thus, its 2004-2008 Development Plan mentions Bogotá's participation in networks of cities as a strategy to decentralise development and ensure future viability of the city and the region, making interaction progress in networks of cities and municipalities.



the authority representing the network. Even though there are local governments that have an influence on the international scenario in themselves, appearing in a greater space as representative of a number of local governments -and additionally, doing it with a political agenda that is supported by the others- increases the prestige and reputation of that local government.

The consistence –in the Andean Area- between the various territorial and decentralised co-operation initiatives that could be integrated to the different networks and contribute projects and specific activities, is lower. There is a lack of coordination as regards the work of the different sub-networks, with few links amongst them despite thematic coincidences, and also the participation in those scenarios of one single only, which should be regulated and harmonised by a local planning or political coordination instance.

### 5.3. Network features

In Mercosur, aside or together with Mercocities, various sector technical co-operation schemes that have had an impact on regional integration operate. Among others, there are workers grouped in the CCSCS (Central Trade Unions' Coordinator of the Southern Cone), associations of members of cooperatives grouped in the Mercosur Specialised Meeting (RECM for its initials in Spanish), of women, in the Mercosur Women Specialised Meeting (REM) or the Universities' Association of the Montevideo Group (AUGM). The Social and Solidarity Mercosur Programme (PMSS) deserves a special place -a network of NGO's of Mercosur countries that integrates diverse social organisations which share their will for contributing

proposals to the regional integration process, as well as a critical view of it. This network has had great impact not only on formal spheres of integration, but also on its social actors, whose concerns the network has been able to address and redirect to political institutions. A proof of this is that many documents of Mercosur meetings address the questions raised by the PMSS, which is also an active promoter of Mercosur Social Summits, an initiative launched by Brazil during its presidency, aiming at broadening and strengthening citizens' participation in the regional integration process.

In the Andean Area, in addition to the RAC itself (the most global of all networks and the one that gives rise to greater expectations of its members), there are other spheres of technical co-operation that contribute to integration among regional actors, such as the Andean Technological Innovation Network, the Andean Network of Cultural Promoters, or the Andean Development Corporation itself. In a more municipal sector, there is the action of a series of associations that are not circumscribed to the regional sphere: the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), the American-European Movement of Regions and Cities (AERYC), Cities and Local Governments United (CGLU), the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) and the Ibero-American Centre for Urban Strategic Development (CIDEU), which generate great impact and activity for local authorities. Also, there are bi-lateral technical co-operation methods in the region, as a result of town-twinning or co-operation agreements between cities, although it must be pointed out that often, they only stay at stating their good intentions and do not give the opportunity for useful and productive relations to take place.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> | A recent exception would be the successful creation of the "Bogotá Emprende" ("Bogotá undertakes") centre, a result of the knowledge transfer of the "Barcelona Activa" ("Active Barcelona") local public office, and from the agreement between both cities.

### 5.4. Political agenda and main results obtained

As regards the political agenda, the road is different in the case of Mercocities and the Andean Cities Network. Mercocities have maintained a strategy which has been developed for a few years now, based on the consideration that the integration process could have positive consequences for the region's citizens, but only under some given conditions. First, we have the possibility of political participation of cities, in exercise of their full autonomy and with co-decision capabilities in issues of their competency.<sup>16</sup> Second, that this participation had to have an institutional reference which allowed a regulated local representation in Mercosur government spheres. Third, that the process would be oriented toward the satisfaction of people's needs, as they were seen by proximity governments, with an agenda that included issues such as the fight against poverty, the promotion of equality, citizen participation and social inclusion.

Having got past its initial stage, Mercocities is now working on a two way orientation: on one hand, supporting the generation of networks of different density but with such a structure that makes the process' reversion difficult, thinking that multiplying co-operation spheres and issues strengthens it, due to the dynamics and benefits generated by this co-operation when turned into the usual relation formula between the region's local actors. On the other hand, it refines its political agenda, which currently consists of three subject matters that mutually connect and strengthen each other: productive complementation, cross-border integration and the

construction of a regional citizenship. Complex processes but to whose realisation, local perspective and flexibility may contribute significantly, and which Mercocities will pursue in close alliance with other sectors and actors' organisations, as long as they share their transnational view. The objective is to claim greater transparency from integration institutions, as well as the creation of a clearly regional agenda, which reaches higher levels of integration, overcoming the logics and conflicts of States.

Meanwhile, the Andean Network of Cities has been relatively more modest in its position, which has been the attempt to place local and urban issues within the process of regional integration, rather than in the establishment of a global political agenda shared by all its members. Thus, the RAC has raised a number of thematic central points in which the main challenge is to define a regional agenda that helps aligning plans, programmes and projects of the group of local authorities: for example, a regional plan for the improvement of connectivity conditions between cities, their transport and communications systems. RAC puts this agenda on the table not so much allied with transnational local actors, but with their own productive sectors: micro-enterprises, small and medium businesses and shops, etc.

In RAC's political agenda, individual cities' leaderships are essential. For example, La Paz has undertaken a leading role in the regional Andean scene, with the call, in April 2007, of RAC's Third General Assembly. On that opportunity, a new thematic unit was created, dedicated to gender issues and promoted by the city of Calama, Chile. Likewise, the Declaration of La Paz was signed, where

<sup>16</sup> | In the Second Mercocities Summit statement (1996), it was stated already that "in the current context, the occurrence of an integration that contributes toward the strengthening of democracy, the fight against inequalities and social exclusion and the improvement of people's quality of life depends, in a decisive way, on the cities starting to play a leading role in the international arena. This requires full political, economic and managerial autonomy of local governments and the rejection of all types of discrimination that may restrain the services' abilities of municipalities".

Table 4:   Funding of FOCEM activities		
	non-refundable contributions	contributions to projects
Argentina	27%	10%
Brazil	70%	10%
Paraguay	1%	48%
Uruguay	2%	32%

the commitments to continue with the Regional Project of Risk Reduction in Andean Capital Cities were presented, and the city of La Paz was designated as its technical secretariat. Quito, an example of leadership in cultural issues, prepares the “Culture and Development Meeting” for February 2008. During this meeting, the creation of the “Node of Andean Cities for Culture” will take place, an idea that was born in the heart of the events in which Bogotá was appointed Ibero-American Capital City of Culture by UCCI. Bogotá is in turn responsible for the technical secretariat of the RAC, and likewise a leader of various projects. All together, a combination of individual, bilateral initiatives of RAC and other networks that, if working in a cooperative manner, they effectively contribute toward interacting the local work through networks, thus improving their expectations of institutional impact on the region.

However, at a results level, the clearest achievement is Mercosur, and it lies in the setting off of Mercosur Structural Agreement Funds (Fondos de Convergencia Estructural del Mercosur- FOCEM). These funds, allocated to projects of infrastructure, social inclusion in cross-border areas, productive complementation and integration institutionalisation, have the long-term objective of compensating those areas or towns affected by the impact of integration. The “Mercosur Structural Agreement Fund” was approved by Decision 45 of 2004 and completed by Decisions 18 and 24 of 2005, all of the Common Market Council (CMC). The creation of a fund

of this type was one of the main claims of Mercocities, because it considered the fund an essential incentive for the active participation of local authorities and agents, funded by the integration system itself, and oriented toward compensating the negative impacts of the process over the territory, i.e. at cross-border areas, or those affected by productive re-localisation. This role of redistribution, usual in European funds, is joined by the role of involving local actors, in pursuit of the development of territories, a scheme also shared by the EU’s governance system.

Funds are executed through various programmes that set objectives and action methods:

1 | *Structural Convergence Programme, which will have to contribute toward strengthening the development of the economies and less developed regions, including the improvement of cross-border integration systems and communication.*

2 | *Competitiveness Development Programme, which includes productive and labour restructuring plans in order to increase trade among Mercosur countries.*

3 | *Social Cohesion Programme, with particular attention to cross-border areas as regards human health, poverty and unemployment reduction.*

4| *Institutional Structure and Integration Process Strengthening Programme, which will have*

*to focus on strengthening Mercosur’s institutional structure.*

Interregional solidarity is FOCEM’s underlying concept. A concept that develops in various ways, on one hand, it re-stabilises the balances between Mercosur partners. On the other hand, it opens the door to contributions of third countries and international organisations, including repayable funding mechanisms. Thus, FOCEM’s projects are funded from non-repayable contributions of States (100 million US Dollars per year), and as a complement with a variable percentage, for each of the members of Mercosur.

### 5.5. Network relations with the formal representation spaces of territorial authorities.

The creation, in 2000, of the Specialised Meeting of Municipalities and Mayoralities of Mercosur (REMI) is to be owed to the role of Mercocities and its recognition of States and integration institutions as interlocutor carrying the local and regional integration voice. However, Mercocities assessed this achievement as insufficient, and therefore continued claiming an appropriate institutional space for elected local governments’ representative capacity. The continuation of this effort resulted in the creation of a new instance for local governments: the Consulting Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of Mercosur (FCCR), which substituted REMI.<sup>17</sup> The FCCR takes part not only at local representation, but also at regional representation through two Committees: the Municipalities’ Committee and the Governors’ Committee.

As in the European case, there is tension between the formal representation space and the represented territorial authorities. These tensions were present at the time each State’s representation was being configured at the FCCR, called “National Sections”. Each National Section is formed by up to ten Mayors (Intendente/Prefeito/Jefe de Gobierno) for the Committee of Municipalities, and up to ten Governors, or regional presidents, for the Committee with this name. Those appointed, who will have to be elected from local or regional governments, will be able to act as leaders of their governments or representing a territorial government’s association.

A specific conflict took place with the appointment of Governors, a new position that leads, for each National Section, the Municipalities’ and Governors’ Committees. While Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay appointed Chancery officers for that position, Uruguay and Venezuela appointed local governors elected. Mercocities had a victory here, achieving the creation of a new job posting: that of the FCCR Municipalities’ Committee Coordinator, which would be filled by the Mayor (Intendente/Prefeito/Jefe de Gobierno/Alcalde) in charge of the Mercocities Executive Secretariat. It is a new acknowledgement of the network’s working line, the only entity of regional nature that participates by its own right in the FCCR, and which in addition allows direct participation of a local authority and increases the incentives for members’ leadership.

As we can see, the creation of a local representation space in Mercosur’s structure has been laborious, but finally,

<sup>17</sup> | *In the Forum opening session, the acting Executive Secretary of Mercocities and Mayor of Morón, Mr Martín Sabbatella, recalled the promoting role of the network in the construction of the space that was being created, and in the common aim of constituting a “plural, inclusive, democratic, sympathetic us...and also a commitment: the commitment to fill that “us” of content, democracy and employment, in pursue of collaborating with and going more deeply into the integration process.”*



L Mercocities enjoys a high status in it. We could say that, in the Andean case, the situation has been the opposite. On 7 May 2004, a few months after the creation of RAC, the Andean Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, welcoming the initiative of the Mayors of the 30 Andean cities that had created the network, decides to create the Andean Consulting Council of Municipal Authorities (Decision 585), recognising and ratifying the principles and strategic central points raised by RAC in September 2003. As regards its line-up (Art. 2), the Consulting Council is formed by three representatives from each Member State, one of which will be the senior or metropolitan Mayor of the respective seat city of the State government, and the other two, elected amongst the enrolled mayoralties and those enrolled in the Andean Network of Cities. These representatives will have to be accredited by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each Member Country, and the two latter will exercise for a period of one year. According to Article 3, the Presidency of the Andean Consulting Council of Municipal Authorities will be held by one of the representatives of the Member State that holds the Presidency of the Andean Presidential Council.

Although the first CCAAM meeting took place in Lima in July 2005,<sup>18</sup> the initial good expectations have not become a reality in the continuation of the work of the Council, which has not held any more meetings. It must be said that the interaction between networks of cities and formal representation spaces and Andean intergovernmental institutions has been low.

<sup>18</sup> | The Presidency was held by the mentioned city's Mayor, Luis Castañeda, who acted as President of the Council. Mayors from Potosí, Oruro, Bogotá, Piura, Caracas-El Libertador and Maracaibo also participated, as well as representatives from the mayoralties of La Paz, Quito, Guayaquil and Cuenca. The General Secretariat of the Andean Community acted as the Council's Technical Secretariat, as indicated by Decision 585.

## 5.6. Local and regional associations as elements for regional integration

We are able to establish how the consistent, serious and full of proposals activity of Mercocities manages to consolidate the network as a regional actor, especially by the local governments themselves. This allows not only the growth in the association's membership but also the strengthening of Mercocities as the great communicator of the local voice in regional integration, thanks to which the institutional recognition we have discussed is generated. This leading role is up to now lower in the Andean Region, as is also the centrality of the network in relation to the set of decentralised co-operation initiatives and the network's local activism. This is the reason why a coordination agenda of these efforts is required here, in line with integration processes and regional consolidation, as well as the promotion -in the Andean cities' collective imagination- of the benefits for local governability that may be associated to a good management of internationalisation, regional integration and city-with-city co-operation.

In September 2007, in Caracas, a co-operation agreement between the Andean Network of Cities and the Mercocities Network was signed. The agreement acknowledges the importance of creating a shared discussion space that allows advancing toward common actions, establishing specific exchange mechanisms: mutual invitation to work meetings and gatherings of both organisations, establishing an apprenticeship system between both Permanent Secretariats and the

exchange of experiences between both spaces of formal representation, in each sphere of integration: the Andean Consulting Council of Municipal Authorities of the CAN (Andean Community of Countries) and the Municipalities Committee of the Consulting Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of Mercosur. There can be no doubt that it is a co-operation space that deserves close attention.

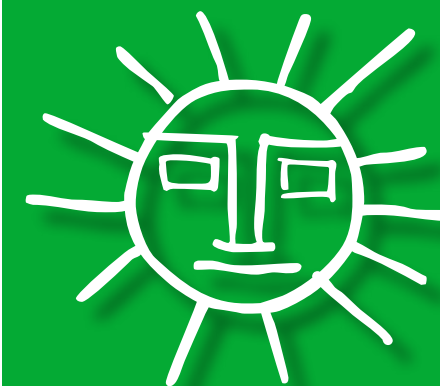
## 6. Conclusions

In Europe, the process of constructing the institutional character of local authorities has been long and has gone through advances and setbacks. At the moment there is a certain consensus over the difficulty in arranging an expression for the diversity of interests and needs of local and regional European administrations through a single representation system with enough decision-making capacity.

The current context is marked by that diversity of territorial interests which shifts its vision of Europe between a Europe as a space for opportunity and Europe as a legislative level, and which make sub-state actors look for different ways for influencing the EU. Regional participation strategies in the EU are diversified. Municipal aspects are expanding, and, in the view of the Commission, they may become confused with those merely local, including actors and issues. Subsidiarity and its control emerge in the new Treaty as the major advance made in regulations, an advance however, that will require an extensive intergovernmental interaction, given that it depends on negotiations between state and regional parliaments, and domestic mechanisms to regulate such co-operation.

Facing these trends, political activism through networks will play a significant role at all levels. Networks are leading actors in the diversification of regional and central strategies in municipal actions, they are essential in the Committee of the Regions' new strategy, but we may also forecast an increase of exchange of practices and political support for promoting participation through the State, and the display of new tools for subsidiarity control.

On the other hand, networks and local/regional strategic management are elements specifically adapted to the modern European governance: their operational principles of partnership, public-private coordination, and the creation of a shared perspective...place territorial authorities that adopt more modern ways of local government in a position of relative advantage within the system of the Union. In addition, their double nature as political actors (democratic legitimacy) and technical stakeholder (agent of knowledge, land policy developer, mediator...) allows them to use one or another strategy, depending on the needs. Thus, when they participate in the constitutional debate, sub-state authorities are, above all, government, raising claims about administrative procedures, the efficiency of regulations and subsidiarity control. On the other hand, they also know how to ally with other social actors and with non-governmental organisations and to offer arguments of a technical nature when it is more convenient. European dynamics not different from the one described, and even theorised about, in relation to the global level. Indeed, the international action of local authorities - politically interacted in global networks-, was able to obtain their own representation space in the United Nations' sphere, the United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities, created by UN-HABITAT, and even be able to strongly influence that





bureau's political agenda (Salomón y Sánchez Cano 2007).<sup>19</sup>

In this way, regional and local networks –which had already had a significant role in the institutional demand (creation of the Committee of the Regions) and in the participation in the EU's essential debates (governance, IGC, constitution) - appear as a highly appropriate tool as regards the current moment of European integration, at least in terms of both: activism of an international character and political entrepreneurship, and territorialising development. These are two very relevant dimensions with which to understand the peak of decentralised co-operation, in a free-flowing scenario in which cooperative strategies and alliances flexibility will prevail.

There is a formative relation between networks and integration: the transformation of the EU in a more and more supranational government instance makes municipal associations and networks develop, in a constant manner, a lobby action to increase spaces for relations with the Union and to improve their level of recognition as legitimate political actors. European integration is, then, an element in the creation of the identity of municipalism and regionalism, whereby claims for recognition and possibilities to influence are made. At the same time, the dynamics and streams that actually run through associations and networks are an important part of regional integration's reality. An integration that is at the same time subject of the territorial and facilitating lobby for its interaction, since the European governance model promotes the horizontal relation between local and regional authorities and

their associations, it favours their interaction in technical and political networks, and even its link with local realities from outside Europe, through programmes such as Urb-Al. Since municipal and regional networks, general or sectorial, effectively participate in a dialogue with the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions, they help configure a system of representation and negotiation close to the executive and legislative EU instances, based on a double legitimacy system: political representation and technical competency.

This more recent participation in the Committee of the Regions, through various technical co-operation platforms, and above all, through the Structured Dialogue System with territorial associations, should be highlighted. The strategic relationship with associations seems to be a significant factor in the position of the Committee, which goes from attempting to be a consultative authority for the Commission and the Council to being a catalyst for the creation of networks, as well as the meeting point for a wide range of territorial actors. A position that may be strengthened, from the more formal point of view, by the Committee's new powers as regards subsidiarity.

The first comparison with the processes of Mercosur and the Andean Area reveals that these two processes, given their lower depth, are not having such a direct impact on the operating conditions of local/regional governments in the regions. Territorial mobilisation, therefore, is not so much an answer to a concern about administrative efficiency, but more to do with the will to redesign and re-orientate the process' political priorities in one sense: fight

against poverty, citizenship and participation, local autonomy. That is why the leaders are municipalities rather than regions or provinces: because they have a base of legitimacy and have a more solid discourse at their disposal, linked to democratic legitimacy, their condition of being part of the State, and the proximity that best enables them to get to know problems and for generating solutions for what, for example, has been called “the real Mercosur”. Cities and municipalities benefit, in addition, from a group of interests (municipalities vary in their size, but internationally, they are a more homogeneous administrative category than are regions, federated states, provinces, etc.) that facilitates their interaction, the exchange of experiences, individual leaderships, etc. The perception of the benefits of “being in a network” are clear for all participants.

Mercosur and the Andean Area have spaces for territorial representation at their disposal: however, the situation of the respective territorial associations (Mercocities and the Andean Network of Cities) is very different. In the case of Mercocities the objecti-

ve of creating institutionality is there from the very start of its activity and it may be said, in a conclusive manner, that the representation spaces achieved (REMI and FCCR) owe their existence, to a large extent, to the network. At this moment, the capacity the locally elected have of making themselves heard in that space (even with their limitations, very much comparable to those suffered by the Committee of the Regions in the EU) is considerable, and even more so are the results achieved, in the form of Structural Convergence Funds, a solid support of the development model proposed by local authorities. The Andean case, with a very much recent network and a strong leading role of cities, shows that the creation of a space for local representation (an apparent rapid success) does not guarantee a connection with the efforts developed directly by local authorities or their associations. We may think that since Mercocities was already an autonomous platform, generator in itself of real integration, the future success of the RAC will depend on its capacity for consolidating itself as a reference for the real integration of the work of local actors and authorities in its territory.

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<sup>19</sup> Our study showed that this success of local authorities was due, to a great extent, to the ability of combining typical strategies of their condition of governmental actors with the turn to actions typical of non-state actors (such as alliances, technical and scientific ability, and, in general, the power of ideas and expert legitimization such as “soft power” (Keck and Sicking 1998). Cities, thus, took advantage of their “mixed actors” condition, as it has been described by authors like Hocking (1997), Paquin (2004) and Salomón & Nunes (2007), “sovereignty-bound” in part, and in part “sovereignty-free”, according to the typology established by Rosenau (1990).

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## *Transnational Networks of cities as tools for sustainable development and a fair globalisation*

Rainer Rothfuss. \*

*In recent years, local spheres of the economy, political science and society have gone through a significant transformation at a worldwide level due to the globalisation process. Also, sub-national governments have had to deal with new challenges and opportunities to which they respond with a considerable increase of their transnational exchange and co-operation activities. Given their typical features, networks of cities stand out as one of the tools of decentralised co-operation (DC). The theoretical and conceptual foundations of inter-municipal co-operation in networks are described in this article. Then, the different impacts, the efficiency, the effectiveness, as well as the organisational features of four networks of cities with partners from Europe, Latin America and other world regions, are analysed. Compared with other DC methods, networks of cities are distinguished by unique potentialities as regards the geographical scope of co-operation processes and the dissemination of good practices, and by having the possibilities to interact the interests of sub-national government before national and supranational entities. However, from their management point of view, networks of cities are a significant challenge for the cities that coordinate them.*

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### KEY WORDS

Decentralised co-operation |  
Networks of cities |  
Institutional capacity development |  
Public-private partnership |  
(inter-) regional integration |

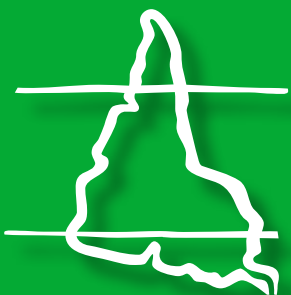
### 1. Networks of cities as an instrument for decentralised co-operation

This article's main objective is to analyse the potentialities of networks of cities as an instrument for decentralised co-operation. In order to do so, four examples of networks of cities will be reviewed, emphasising particularly the benefits that these spheres of relations contribute to the institutions that coordinate them and the effectiveness and viability of a network as a co-operation method. Benefits are understood in a wide range, considering the strengthening of sub-national governments' technical capacities in those issues approached by the network, the experiences obtained in the public management tasks that such coordination entails the international influence of the coordinating institution's territory, as well as its economic and social development. As regards effectiveness, the key question is to what extent networks serve as a method of co-operation that can bring improvements to its members, i.e. its capacity to take action on issues it handles or in the field of international co-operation in general. As regards viability, the question that attempts to be answered in this article is whether a network's coordination is a feasible alternative at an organisational and financial level for sub-national governments that plan to operate in the DC field. Previous to the mentioned study, it has been considered relevant to add a summary of the history of the emergence of relations between local governments that will be the framework for analyses and reflections later.

<sup>1</sup> | While the term "international" refers -in Political Sciences- to relations between national governments of different States, the term "transnational" also involves the various political levels and sectors of society.

Transnational co-operation between cities is usually shown in two main categories and manners: associations of municipalities and networks of cities.<sup>1</sup> While these associations primarily try to externalize the interests of entities they represent, networks of cities mainly aim at strengthening their partners through co-operation and exchange amongst their members. Transnational associations of cities are not a new phenomenon. Already in the Middle Ages, more than 300 Hanseatic cities, mostly situated on North Sea and Baltic coasts, had joined together in a very powerful transnational association that considerably dominated the European economic system at the time (Kern 2001). The first world association of local governments of the current era, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), was founded in 1913, but both World Wars destroyed these first transnational co-operation initiatives which had emerged from the local sphere. It was only after World War II that a new form of inter-municipal co-operation emerged. The thousands of town-twinning between cities of former enemies – Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and other European countries- started to build a solid foundation in European societies for the long process of regional integration which brought about the current European Union (UE, Derenbach 2006, Kern 2001, Paus 2003, ONU-Habitat 2001).

As regards North-South DC, a gradual change may be observed, but may be considered essential only as from the '90s, based on the creation of thematic networks of cities which seek horizontal co-operation and mutual exchange, resulting in a "transnational learning in networks" (Kern 2001). This change is complementary to town-twinning





and bilateral co-operations –often of one-sided attendance- and in most cases also involves or even depends on certain groups of the organised civil society on both sides of the partnership. This new trend allows the start of a strong geographical and thematic diversification of municipal relations. Among its features, we can highlight that the ties created are usually limited to technical work, are sustained only in the co-operation with certain local administration segments and in some cases are limited to a given period.

## 2. Analysis of four transnational networks of sub-national governments

In order to be able to analyse and illustrate the potentialities provided by network co-operation as a DC instrument, four networks of cities have been selected with the common feature of having, among their members, not only sub-national governments from Europe but also from Latin America. Whilst networks like “Cities for Mobility” and “Seguridad Ciudadana en la Ciudad” (“Public Safety in the Cities”), which emerged from the URB-AL programme<sup>2</sup>, are thematic networks that focus their work on certain sectors of urban policy, the network “Forum of the Peripheral Local Authorities” covers all issues of the urban policy of municipalities located in peripheral areas of big metropolis. The “Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development” may also be classified as a thematic network, but according to the wide concept of sustainable development, it also covers a great variety of subjects. The specific nature of the latter is that it hosts regional governments exclusively.

<sup>2</sup> | For more details on the operation and results of the URB-AL Programme, see Rómulo Caballero’s article in the 2006 Yearbook.

<sup>3</sup> | For more information, visit: [www.cities-for-mobility.org](http://www.cities-for-mobility.org)

In addition, the URB-AL network of “Public Safety in Cities” is one of the four networks analysed here and is coordinated by a Latin American city, while the others are coordinated by European local and regional governments. Ultimately, the selected networks attempt to cover a wide diversity of characteristics.

The development, organisational aspects and main activities of the four networks shall be described below. Moreover, the benefits for coordinating entities of networks and network members will be reviewed, as well as some of the main lessons they offer us.

### 2.1. The example of “Cities for Mobility” network

#### 2.1.1. Development and general description of “Cities for Mobility” Network

The “Cities for Mobility” thematic network of cities<sup>3</sup> exists in its global form since 2006. It emerged from the European-Latin American URB-AL network N° 8, “Urban Mobility Control”, which was established between 1999 and 2000 by the Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart, state capital of Baden-Württemberg, in southwest Germany. Since its foundation, it expanded itself as a thematic network that promotes the exchange of experiences and co-operation between local actors in the field of sustainable urban transport. The subjects that structure the network’s activities are individual transport, public transport, bicycle, pedestrians, commercial transport and mobility management during mega-events. Besides local administrations and a few regional ones, public transport enterprises, transport technology companies, consultancy firms, development research and co-operation institutions as well

as NGOs that promote sustainable transport in cities, take part in it. Between 1999 and 2003, the network experienced a considerable increase in the number of its members: during those four years, the number of local and regional governments increased from 77 to 181 (24% per year). The increase slowed down in the re-orientation phase, when the European Union subsidies for the network’s coordination had finished. However, since the re-launching of the network under the new name “Cities for Mobility”, and with a worldwide reach of the partnership, the increase in the number of members was again accelerated at a rate of 25% per year until reaching a total of 362 members from 57 countries and five continents in November 2007.

#### 2.1.2. Organisational aspects and activities of Cities for Mobility

The activities of URB-AL network N° 8, “Urban Mobility Control” initially focused on ten projects of exchange of experiences, dissemination of good practices and common development of innovative solutions for different specific problems of urban transport. As network coordinator, the Municipality of Stuttgart had established –in 2000-, a Coordinating Office with two permanent employees, the Coordinator and an Assistant Manager. This small team was completed by assistants from different European and Latin American countries. Stuttgart’s Mayoralty signed a subvention contract with the European Commission, who forecast a budget of 613,000 Euros for three years of coordination (co-financing rate of 57% instead of the 70% maximum allowed). After an extension of another half year, with the consequent increase in subventions, the network’s coordination finished by the end of 2003. At the start of this second period and due to fact that the Mayoralty of Stuttgart was going through a difficult phase of financial aus-

terity imposed on it by the Municipal Council, the coordination work could not be finished, not even with fewer staff.

By the end of 2004, when almost a year had gone by without any coordination activity, an intermediate solution was found to give continuity to the work of the network: its survival was ensured by the use of the Municipality of Stuttgart’s own resources through an external coordination contract. Thus, with a budget of only € 20,000 a year, at least the continuation of basic communication services –such as the publication of six “R8-News” yearly brochures and three digital issues per year of the Control de la Movilidad Urbana (Urban Mobility Control) magazine in Spanish, English and German- was achieved. Through these two means of communications, almost 500 people involved in the network were kept informed about the results of common projects that were still under development, good practices, URB-AL Programme events and other significant subjects for members. In addition, an on-line discussion forum for members was created.

In April 2006, the Municipal Council of Stuttgart unanimously approved the re-launching of the old URB-AL network with the new name “Cities for Mobility”. The budget allocated to the Coordination Office for the first year was of €60,000, to cover mainly the contracting of additional staff. The current team is composed of a permanent employee as executive coordinator, another two for strategic management and supervision, an assistant, and two sub-contracted experts for specific tasks and to take care of the web page. As from 2008 the team will be completed with a part-time assistant. In total, the amount of time these people dedicate to the coordination of “Cities for Mobility” should be added to that of three full-time employees. In addition to the initial budget for staff contracting, the other funds, resources, contributions in kind,

services and staff support that the Mayoralty of Stuttgart itself put at the disposal of the Coordinating Office and its activities, the total budget reached some €150,000 during the first year of the new network's operation. Entering the second year of coordination, the financial support coming from many transnational companies -the so called "Premium Partners", who at the beginning were only from the city of Stuttgart- had already reached an annual figure that would have allowed taking away the municipality's own financial contribution. However, and considering the high increase of "Cities for Mobility" activities and number of partners, it has been decided that the Coordinating Office keeps increasing its activity capacity and asking the Municipal Council for a budget of €80,000 a year for the next two years, to which an amount of €150,000 of voluntary contributions from "Premium Partners" would very likely be added.

In order to face up to coordination expenses, at the beginning of this last stage the idea of establishing a membership fee as from 2008 for all network partners emerged. The plan was to charge big cities and enterprises from industrialised countries €2,000 a year, with reduced rates of 50% for partners from developing countries and of 75% for partners from the 50 less developed countries in the world.<sup>4</sup> However, thanks to the financial contribution of "Premium Partners" since 2007, the decision could be made of not charging any fee at all. Even so, there are still financial barriers that hinder the participation in network conferences of those less economically favoured partners from Africa, Asia and Latin America, who, moreover, are the ones in more need of technical support to improve their transport systems. Hence, as from the next annual conference, the opportunity for participating in a

small fair occurring simultaneously with the event will be offered, particularly to enterprises. There are also plans for private partners to present -if they so wish- their products and services in commercial advertisements on the Cities for Mobility magazine. Earnings from both partners' promotion methods will go into a fund to subsidise travel costs of network members in greatest need.

A structural and organisational change that has been initiated with the creation of the new "Cities for Mobility" global network is the establishment of regional networks and working groups in order to decentralise co-operation activities. Many cities have already declared their interest in being regional coordinators in the framework of the global network: Mexico's Federal District (for the North American region), Cuautitlán Izcallí (Central America), Quito (Spanish-speaking Latin America), Porto Alegre (Brazil and all Portuguese-speaking countries in the world) and Kocaeli (Turkey and the Middle East). These regional co-ordinations and others in other regions of the world are negotiating to reach a geographically decentralised structure of the network, with a significant increase in the number of partners and countries represented. In addition, and in order to obtain a higher visibility and for network's activities to have a greater impact, alliances have been created with the Public Transport International Association (UITP for its initials in Spanish), Cities and Local Governments United (CGLU), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the German Technical Co-operation Agency (GTZ) and the World Bank. In the framework of "Cities for Mobility", these organisations that support the network in a non-financial manner play the role of "Patrons".

<sup>4</sup> Many transnational networks charge their partners around €10,000 a year, some of them without distinguishing the partner's economic capacities.

### 2.1.3. Benefits for "Cities for Mobility" coordinating city

Despite being only a medium-sized city, with a population of almost 600,000 and capital city of a metropolitan region of approximately three million people, Stuttgart is one of the strongest scientific and technological innovation centres in Europe. The expansion of Stuttgart's automobiles, electronics and mechanical engineering industries, with worldwide exports, has considerably benefited it from globalisation. As a result of this comes the motivation of the Municipality of Stuttgart of coordinating a network of cities that also includes developing regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the words of the Mayor, Dr Wolfgang Schuster, the primary motivation for coordinating the network is to positively contribute to the globalisation process in order to make it fairer and more just. This motivation is also reflected in the organisational structure of the network, with no membership fees which would prevent the participation of partners from economically less favoured countries.

Furthermore, it is obvious and it stands out that the coordination of a global network that deals with the issue of greatest significance for the economy of the Stuttgart region since many decades ago also has the potentiality of obtaining long-term economical contributions. According to the Mayor's belief, a medium-sized city like Stuttgart needs a very clear profile in order to be recognised as an attractive site for investment, in a globalised world in which great metropolis, in their role as global networks' main centres, concentrate and determine more and more the world's economical activities. Because of its history and economic structure, with companies of worldwide recognition such as Daimler, Porsche and Bosch, which are, amongst others,

"Premium Partners" of the network, it seems obvious for Stuttgart that the area of mobility is the one in which it may develop a profile as a competitive centre at world level. "Cities for Mobility" is beginning to demonstrate, in this sense, that networks of cities are not only a useful tool for the dissemination of innovations and best practices as regards local policy between local administrations. They are also useful to open new markets for business partners, who support, with their technology and services, the development and implementation of sustainable local management strategies.

Stuttgart, pioneering in Germany, has institutionalised its international relations management through the creation of a Department of European and International Relations. The coordination of the old URB-AL and of the current "Cities for Mobility" has significantly contributed to the improvement of the administrative capacities as regards transnational relations and the co-operation with private companies as indispensable partners for the continuation of the network without subsidies. Even more important seems the fact that, given the technical nature of the work of the network, these capacities to act in the international sphere have been able to be transferred to different technical departments in charge of urban mobility issues. Another positive effect of coordinating the network was that this demanding task, not only in its organisational aspects, but also as regards the technical management of sustainable urban mobility has generated a "Working Group on Mobility". This group, which at its start was directed towards the thematic work of the URB-AL network, is comprised by experts from municipalities who represent all technical departments and public enterprises that play a role in the management of mobility in Stuttgart, and it has already become a permanent institution. Today, this group al-

ready has the significant task of guiding and adjusting to mobility municipal policies, also advising the mayor in the formulation of the guidelines in such a decisive sector for the development of the city.

Although the Municipality of Stuttgart had established, during decades, one of the finest public transport systems in the world, it could benefit from some important initiatives of other network partners in the technical area of urban mobility. In fact Stuttgart is the German city with more daily traffic jam problems and air pollution, therefore it is obvious that the coordinating city of “Cities for Mobility” may still and must benefit a lot more from experiences and best practices developed by other partners to solve traffic problems. For example, an interesting lesson that the public transport company from Stuttgart learned from Latin American members is the flexible stop at the point determined by the need of the passenger. This offer is valid only as from 9:00 pm and outside downtown. While many Latin American cities strive for a greater standardisation and regularisation of their transport systems, also including the introduction of stops at fixed and compulsory points, Stuttgart learned that a greater flexibility of stops at night means an increase in comfort, appeal and even security for users in their way back home.

Also during the long process of transformation of Stuttgart from being a city designed for cars to one whose reference is the human being, the “transnational learning in networks” (Kern 2001) has fertilised the local transport policy. The municipal policy of promoting the bicycle received a great boost, not only technical, but above all political, through the active participation of the Mayoralty in two URB-AL projects on the subject. As a consequence

of the exchange between cities from different regions and development levels of systems that support the use of this means of transport, the Mayor of Stuttgart took as reference, in a benchmarking sense, the coordinating city of Utrecht, The Netherlands. He established as an official objective of the municipal policy of urban mobility the increase in the percentage of urban transport by bicycle from the current 7% to 12% in the medium term and to 20% in the long term. Although Utrecht and some other Dutch cities have already reached a level of over 30%, in a city like Stuttgart, with an extremely high population density and located in a valley with steep slopes surrounding it, this goal is a real challenge.

Through the “Cities for Mobility” network, the mayoralty only recently could familiarise –through many technical and public demonstrations- with a new technology that promises to contribute significantly to promoting the use of the bicycle in new segments of society. Recently, two German NGOs and European, North American and Asian producers of “Pedelects”,<sup>5</sup> became partners of the network in order to spread this means of transport which reduces energy costs considerably, and does not cause noise or emissions. “Pedelects” are electrical traction bicycles. This means of transport is complemented by electric motor-bikes that allow reaching another segment of the population which would probably never use a bicycle. With a range of up to 200 km for battery recharge, they are a real alternative for people who usually spend hours in traffic jams at Stuttgart’s metropolitan region every day. For the city of Stuttgart, with its serious fine dust air pollution problems, these two technological solutions will be part of a comprehensive strategy that the Mayoralty will promote and implement from now on, for the sake of the citizens’ mobility and health.

| “Pedelect” means “Pedal Electric Cycle”.

Maybe the benefit of greatest positive impact as regards the role and the global image of Stuttgart is that it has been granted the Presidency of the “Urban Mobility Committee”, in the framework of the world association of municipalities “Cities and Local Governments United”, CGLU. CGLU represents over 170,000 local governments and through them, more than half of the world’s population. Since its foundation in 2004, it is the most powerful representative of municipal interests at global level. It is very likely that the previous coordination of the bi-regional URB-AL network and then of “Cities for Mobility” global network, have contributed towards CGLU’s trusting the capacities of the Stuttgart’s City Hall to play such an important role in the political interaction of the world’s local governments in front of supra-national organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Bank or the EU in the field of urban mobility. In addition to the CGLU Committee presidency function, the function of coordinating the “Cities for Mobility” global network is added, thus making Stuttgart the most important centre for co-operation and interaction of municipal interests as regards sustainable urban transport on a worldwide scale. In short, thanks to the coordination of the old URB-AL network “Urban Mobility Control”, was that the city of Stuttgart could value its excellence as regards urban mobility management, positioning itself, in less than ten years, as a worldwide leader in this sphere of local management.

#### 2.1.4. Benefits for partners of Cities for Mobility: the example of Criciúma, Brazil

According to survey studies carried out in 2002 and 2005 (Rothfuss 2006b), partners of the network of cities see the opportunity of technical co-operation in the framework of common projects that emerge

from the network as the greatest benefit of being part of it. It is of great significance for participants to become acquainted with other cities’ good practices, to qualify in the urban mobility field and to accumulate experiences in the transnational co-operation sphere. At a personal level, participants of projects benefit, above all, by intercultural contacts with experts in the same field but from other urban realities, which broaden one’s own technical and personal horizons. This perception of partners of the benefits of working in networks may surely be made more widespread to all networks of cities whose main objective are the exchange and technical co-operation in certain issues of local policy. However, in order to better understand these benefits and for them to be recognised as real, they have to become evident in specific and tangible impacts at a local level. With that purpose, an empirical research on local processes induced by the network in a partner city was carried out.

In the framework of a case study carried out in the state of Santa Catarina, in the south of Brazil (Rothfuss 2006b), the operation and specific impacts of the URB-AL “Urban Mobility Control” network -today’s “Cities for Mobility”- were analysed. The partner city of Criciúma has a population of nearly 180,000. It was chosen as a case study due to the fact that it played a very active role in the network. Criciúma participated in six out of the ten common projects of this URB-AL network. Obviously, the study of one single case cannot be considered as representative. It rather constitutes an exemplary case which shows the learning and benefits potentialities that an active member may obtain through transnational co-operation in networks.

When Criciúma became a partner of the network, it was simultaneously going through a process of “municipalização do



trânsito”.<sup>6]</sup> Thus, in the initial planning and establishment of the public company of transport management CRICIUMATRANS as a basic structure to implement such municipalisation, the knowledge obtained through intensive discussions with experts from other countries from Latin America and Europe had a positive influence on the company’s basic design. In order to maximise the coherence and efficiency of the municipal management, for the first time in Brazil, transport management, control and planning competencies from six different secretariats were transferred to one relatively autonomous single public company. Another Criciúma project that benefited from transnational co-operation is “Criciúma circulando melhor” (“Better traffic for Criciúma”), an investment project on a large scale to restructure the city’s transport infrastructure. It was enhanced by the technical input of common projects and by informal discussions with international experts who participated in the work of the network. The influence of a project coordinated by the city of Graz, Austria, whose objective was to promote citizens’ awareness in preferring environmentally sustainable means of mobility, must be highlighted. As a result of this project, the boost for the construction of a bicycle lane from downtown Criciúma to the University emerged.

On the other hand, a project that aimed at promoting road safety and which was coordinated by Treviso, Italy, resulted in the carrying out of many measures of infrastructure, organisation and of raising public awareness. Criciúma tended, in a benchmarking sense, towards the example and good practices of other partner cities of the network which had already reached a

much better road safety situation. It benefited particularly from strategies developed in cities like Vara (Sweden), Treviso (Italy) and Santo André (Brazil). The municipal transport company received important recommendations to improve its accidents’ statistical system from the latter. These are the indispensable basis for taking correct measures at remodelling the infrastructure in order to reduce the number of accidents at certain critical points of the city. In addition, inspired by public transport organisations of European urban sprawls that are part of many municipalities surrounding a larger urban centre, Criciúma’s Prefecture started negotiations with neighbours’ communities of the “Região Carbonífera” (Coal industry region) in order to increase coordination of municipal transport policies and, in the long term, integrate transport management of the 11 municipalities.

### 2.1.5. Lessons of the “Cities for Mobility” example

Comparing the previous network, which was established and co-financed in the framework of the European Union’s URB-AL Programme, with the new global network started by the Mayoralty of Stuttgart and co-financed by companies of the transport sector, many similarities may be observed, but also significant differences. First, similarities to be pointed out are, for example, the basic organisational structure, with a small coordinating team. Regarding this, the main difference is that said team is no longer placed in a Technical Department of the Mayoralty, but rather closer to the centre of power, specifically in the Mayor’s Office. The other similarity has to do with partners’

co-operation activities. As it used to happen in the URB-AL networks, annual conferences are celebrated in order to gather the highest possible number of network partners.<sup>7]</sup> In these meetings, technical exchange between participants is encouraged and projects’ proposals take place at the workshops. Also, the same means of communication are used to inform all partners about results of projects, new co-operation initiatives, good practices and technical events in the field of sustainable urban transport.

The main difference in the current network’s coordination is that the coordinating team, political representatives, private companies and also some key partners need to be much more mobilised in order to open a network’s dynamic development perspective. In a way, the “Cities for Mobility” network has to compete in a decentralised co-operation “free market”: without having a framework programme and fixed subsidies, like used to be the case in URB—AL times. Therefore, the network has to offer tangible benefits to its partners for them to choose “Cities for Mobility” out of the large number and variety of networks of cities and other co-operation methods that are within their reach. In the framework of the new network, no project or co-operation initiative has a pre-established co-financing source like URB-AL was. Depending on the subject and the geographical origin of participants, in each case the Coordinating Office must look for individual co-financing sources, like for example, development co-operation, technological, scientific or of regional integration programmes. In other cases, the partners’ own resources and those of NGOs or private companies who have an interest in the promotion of certain solution or sus-

tainable urban transport technology, have to be resorted to.

In order to actively recruit new partners, also from new regions of “Cities for Mobility” in Eastern Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Australia, the network must be promoted in the respective conferences all around the world which are attended by technical and political representatives of the transport field and of the respective regions’ municipalities. On the other hand, the Municipal Council must be periodically persuaded of the added value that a transnational network of cities represents for the city of Stuttgart itself, in order to ensure coordination financing. The Mayor must use and take advantage of his contacts with leaders of private companies of the transport sector of the region, and in the future must also do it at an international level, to convince them of the worthiness of participating in this network and of supporting it financially.

## 2.2. URB-AL network No. 14, “Public Safety in the City”

### 2.2.1. Development and general description of URB-AL network No. 14

The “Public Safety in the City” network<sup>8]</sup> was established in 2002 and received subsidies from the URB-AL Programme between 2003 and 2007. The European Commission selected the Municipality of Valparaíso, in Chile, as coordinating city, with a population of around 300,000. Network No. 14 emerged, just like the previously described network, within the framework of the URB-AL Programme. The general objective of this network is to strengthen the management ca-

<sup>6]</sup> The “Brazilian Code of Traffic” of 23 September 1997 stipulates that, in the decentralisation process promoted by the national government since the ‘90s, prefectures have to restructure their urban mobility management in order to take on new competences transferred from the national to the federal state level.

<sup>7]</sup> 200 participants from 30 countries attended in 2007.

<sup>8]</sup> For more information, visit: [www.urbalvalparaiso.cl](http://www.urbalvalparaiso.cl)

pacities of European and Latin American local entities in the field of public safety through the exchange of experiences and the creation of documentation, spreading and application of good practices. In particular, it intends to support and strengthen municipalities in the development of appropriate strategies to face the challenge of public safety, also intensifying their collaboration with local organisations of civil society.

### **2.2.2. Organisational aspects and activities of URB-AL network No. 14**

Partners officially started their collaboration activities with the launching seminar that was celebrated in October 2003, with representatives from 81 cities and regions of Latin America and Europe. From its beginnings, the URB-AL network No. 14 has been increasing the number of its participants, reaching 189 partner cities. Out of them, 124 (66%) are from 18 Latin American countries and 65 (34%) from ten European countries. Besides, 24 observer cities and 45 associated organisations, i.e. universities, international organisations, associations of municipalities also participate. Associate members, 28 from Latin America and 17 from Europe, have established alliances with partner cities to carry out the formulation, management and execution of innovative projects. In the three annual meetings, participants developed almost 40 projects' proposals out of which 12 were approved by the European Commission. From a local perspective, the projects approach issues such as juvenile delinquency, citizen's perception of lack of safety, public safety participative policies, and the challenge of safe schools and the management of public spaces for a better social cohesion. Project type B, "Latin American Observatory of Public Safety", apart from its technical objectives,

must support the Municipality of Valparaíso in its efforts to give continuity to the thematic network of cities. These subsidies will, in future, maintain at least some out of the six people previously involved part-time in the Coordinating Office work. In April 2007 the URB-AL network No. 14 ceased to receive the European Commission's subvention for its central coordination. However, the Mayor of the Municipality of Valparaíso, Mr Aldo Cornejo, decided to continue the network's coordination. With this decision, the coordinating city acts according to what was expressed by 94% of those surveyed, in connection to the final assessment study of Network 14, and that they are ready to continue with transnational co-operation (Municipality of Valparaíso 2006).

### **2.2.3. Benefits for the coordinating city and partners of URB-AL network No. 14**

The interest of Valparaíso in the continuation of the network's activities lies on the coincidence between the latter's objectives and the local policy in the field of public safety. This is also a factor that legitimises transnational activities of the mayoralty in front of local population and the Municipal Council. In addition, the coordination of Network 14 has doubtlessly been for Valparaíso a unique opportunity for multiplying its international relations and its co-operation ties. Likewise, it has contributed to promote the image of the city itself, its reputation as pioneer in decentralised co-operation as regards urban safety. On the other hand, in the exchange of experiences in common projects, the Municipality of Valparaíso was continuously asked for assessment and support from other cities, to develop the field of public safety. In addition to this, the coordinating city benefited from the experiences and co-operation relations with a large number of partners from different socio-economical backgrounds and

cultural specificity. Thus, for example, it was able to use the experiences of various partner cities at devising the strategic plan for its new public safety unit, which is being currently prepared with the financial support of the International Development Bank (IDB).

In the network's final assessment study, co-operation in common projects was valued as being of great significance and benefit for partners involved (Municipality of Valparaíso 2006): "For partner cities, and particularly for those that took part of the selected common projects, their participation in Network 14 meant great benefits in the fight against violence and crime, through enabling the exchange of experiences, consolidating co-operation relations, the structuring of networks and the formulation of projects that face common problems. Given all of this, for these cities' authorities, the network has ended up being a beneficial experience and a very significant support at facing one of the most urgent issues of cities."

One of the most relevant facts of the operation of the network has been the realisation of contacts and ties generated between cities with different features, in the pursuit of materialising common objectives, generating in this way a bank of actions and good practices in participating cities, thus contributing to the increase of human quality and safety in the local sphere. The publishing and systematisation of the most significant results of the network, through the issuing of two books, has been of great advantage, especially for towns that did not have access to the international know-how and good practices in the field of public safety. In a survey carried out in the framework of the final assessment, the partners pointed out the following benefits they obtained from working in a network (in order of importance): interaction between partners, exchange of good practices, gene-

ration of common projects, strengthening of own institutional management, up-to-date information, training in security, access to financial resources (Municipality of Valparaíso 2006).

### **2.2.4. Lessons of the "URB-AL Network No. 14" example**

Despite the great potentialities offered by network co-operation to cities that coordinate them, specific problems of this DC instrument must also be considered. Indeed, URB-AL Network No. 14, "Public Safety in the City", just as the other URB-AL networks mainly in small municipalities, faces certain hindrances for transnational co-operation, resulting in their little participation in common projects and other network activities (Rothfuss 2006b, Ugarte & Vergara 2006).

Other common problems of transnational networks of sub-national governments are political changes that often mean technical staff rotation. These processes imply the loss of knowledge and of personal experiences accumulated through network co-operation. Also, for common projects and for the network coordinator, it implies a constant waste of time finding out who the new responsible actors are, and to refresh their contact data, as well as to introduce them to the project's subject and motivate them to continue the work of their predecessors, who usually are members of the opposition. Besides, the coordination of a transnational network of cities implies a financial challenge, once the economic subsidies of the European Union -either directly for network coordination or for a type B project- are terminated. In this sense, the example of the three networks of the first phase of the URB-AL Programme that were coordinated by Latin American cities is not too encouraging: none of them has been able to continue the activities, regardless of EU subventions.

### 2.3. Nrg4SD Network - "Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development"

#### 2.3.1. Development and general description of Nrg4SD Network

The Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (Nrg4SD) <sup>9</sup> was founded in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development celebrated in Johannesburg, South Africa, aiming at sharing information and experiences on sustainable development policies at Regional Governance level.<sup>10</sup> In the Gauteng Declaration (Nrg4SD 2002: Article 8) the 27 founder institutions of the network confirm that: "Individual Regional Governments have a great deal to learn from one another about the practice and implementation of sustainable development and could have many opportunities to collaborate and establish partnerships, both with near neighbours and with others in more distant parts of the world". They also express their "intention of establishing a global network in order to share information and experience on sustainable development at regional level and promote mutual collaboration." Finally, they consider the Nrg4SD Forum as a "base for co-operation projects or programmes that contribute towards this process of mutual learning." In general, participants designate the network as their representative of regional governments on a worldwide scale and responsible for promoting sustainable development at a regional level all around the world.

<sup>9</sup> | For more information, visit: [www.nrg4sd.net](http://www.nrg4sd.net)

<sup>10</sup> | Although it was created in 2002, the network was legally registered in Belgium in 2004 as a "non-lucrative international association".

<sup>11</sup> | Membership fees, ranging from 750 to 6,000 Euros per year, depend on the size of the population and of the Gross National Product per capita of the partner region. It is foreseen, in statutes, the possibility of also having associate members in the network such as, for example, NGOs, universities, academic institutes, trade unions or business associations who may express their opinions but do not have the right to vote.

#### 2.3.2. Organisational aspects and activities of the Nrg4SD Network

Up until the second Nrg4SD summit to be celebrated in 2008 in Saint-Malo – Brittany, this network is coordinated by two co-presidents, one from the Basque Country (Spain) and the other one from the Western Cape Province (South Africa). The Basque Government, through its Ministry of the Environment and Territorial Regulation provides the secretariat services for the global network free of charge, with four employees, two of them part-time. In an effort towards decentralising the network's management, "Continental Focal Points" have been stipulated in all of the world's regions. Currently, 29 regional governments from 15 countries in five continents, and three regional authorities' associations participate in the network.<sup>11</sup> The network's scope has broadened considerably due to the participation of over 500 regions from all continents, through their regional associations, at the Forum of Global Associations of Regions (FOGAR). This forum openly recognises that Nrg4SD represents their partners at global level in issues related to sustainable development. Continents more intensely involved in the network are Europe and Latin America, who have nine partners respectively, out of three represented countries. In 2004, the network's Euro-Latin American relations were institutionalised with an intent protocol between Nrg4SD and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The intention of this agreement was to establish a framework programme of collaboration in multilateral projects in order to promote sustainable development at a regional level in Latin America.

The Nrg4SD Network regularly celebrates summits, general meetings, conferences and internal seminars to facilitate the exchange of information, experiences and best practices amongst its members. According to the long-term 2005-2008 work plan, the main subjects of co-operation are air pollution, climate change, renewable energies and industrial development. As regards its transnational activities, the network pursues the following main objectives:

- 1| To represent regional governments at a worldwide level, emphasising the significant role they play in the implementation of sustainable development;
- 2| To act as a platform to share experiences and best practices;
- 3| To promote co-operation agreements between partner regions and other international institutions in the field of sustainable development.

Thanks to the joint efforts of all its partners, the network has already obtained the status of observer at different UN forums.<sup>12</sup> Also, it is currently in the process of obtaining the consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council. The Nrg4SD Network makes its contribution to all sustainable development's political strategies that are being internationally developed and discussed. It also participates in all negotiation processes in the sustainable development sphere programmed by international and supranational organisations. Also, the

<sup>12</sup> | Both at the Management Council/World Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme as well as at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

network contributes to international debates on sustainable development, participating actively in conferences, forums and international debates and offering the regional governments' perspective at an international level.

In order to complement lobbying activities for the recognition of regional governments in the global implementation of Governance for sustainable development, the Nrg4SD Network promotes a large number of agreements of bilateral co-operation between its partners. Thus, on one hand, transnational work in networks as a tool, acts as a framework that benefits the exchange and strengthens the position of regional governments as international actors. On the other hand, bilateral partnerships are another important tool of decentralised co-operation, allowing a greater specificity and consequently a greater intensification in technical co-operation processes.

#### 2.3.3. Benefits for the coordinating region and partners of the Nrg4SD Network

For the Basque Country's Government, co-president and headquarters of the Nrg4SD, the coordination of this worldwide network of regional governments has implied a significant strengthening of its capacities as regards international co-operation. Through the network, its relations with other regions of the world have increased, allowing management through co-operation agreements signed with Latin American regions and the participation in seminars of experts on clean production, local agendas 21, handling of river basins, supply and cleansing of waters, etc. For the Basque Government, the most significant potentialities offered by transnational work in networks, compared to bilateral co-operation, are the generation of synergies



thanks to the gathering of a large number of experts, with their specific experiences, which only allows for a transnational network.

Through co-operation with international and supranational organisations, Nrg4SD Network has been able to position itself as an influential representative of partner regions in the international political arena. If regional governments did not boost their political influence through networked co-operation, they would have never achieved such a strong position in the order of world powers by themselves.

#### 2.3.4. Lessons from the "Nrg4SD" example

As regards financing of co-operation projects amongst partners, the same difficulties of other networks are faced, with no fixed financial framework guaranteed by an international organisation, i.e. the URB-AL Programme for local and regional governments of the European Union and Latin America. Most projects carried out under the Nrg4SD are funded by its own partners. In specific cases, i.e. the partnership between the Tuscany Region and the Northern Province of Sumatra, in the framework of the EU-ASIA PRO ECO II B, partners are able to access international development co-operation funds.

One of the restrictions of the work in networks is that day-to-day problems of regional management result in many of the partners not being aware of the benefit that they may obtain out of this decentralised co-operation. It is evident that without a strong political and personal commitment from partners, they will hardly be mobilised and take advantage of all the potentialities of the work in networks.

<sup>13]</sup> Until 2006 the network was called "Cities from the Periphery and Participative Democracy". For more information, visit: [www.nanterre.net/falp](http://www.nanterre.net/falp)

## 2.4. The FALP Network, "Forum of Local Authorities of the Periphery"

### 2.4.1. Development and general description of the FALP Network

The network of cities from which the "Forum of Local Authorities of the Periphery" (FALP) emerged in 2006, was founded in 2003.<sup>13]</sup> The initiative was taken by many municipalities from peripheral areas of large metropolis in Latin America and Europe in the World Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion (FAL), organised under the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre in 2002. As from that year, local authorities from the periphery contributed and organised their first meeting in Nanterre in October 2002, with the objective of promoting the exchange of experiences and give municipalities from peripheral areas a special space in the debate on the role of cities in the globalised world. The network was established out of the need to create and institute this space in order to continue the debates to increase political pressure of local governments from the periphery for a sustainable, democratic, socially inclusive development of metropolis with worldwide solidarity. Nowadays, 152 local authorities from 22 countries, mainly from Europe and Latin America, but also from Africa and the Middle East participate in the network.

Despite the different socioeconomic realities of these countries, all partners share common specificities such as local authorities located at the "periphery", tied to large urban metropolis. In general, the centres of these sprawls are who act as dynamic centres and active promoters in the globalisation

process. It is at peripheral municipalities, affected by the strong urban growth of metropolis with its adverse effects, where social problems that -mainly in less developed countries- go along with neo-liberal globalisation, are evident. Local governments of the periphery, through their worldwide network, face specific issues such as urban planning against territorial fragmentation caused by social segregation, and other challenges of urban life, such as the right to accommodation, social inclusion and participative democracy.

### 2.4.2. Organisational aspects and activities of the FALP Network

Apart from the Mayor of Nanterre, Mr Patrick Jarry, and the Deputy Mayor, Mr Gérard Perreau Bezouille as politically responsible, there is only one part-time working person for coordinating the network. However, in line with the horizontal and polycentric nature of the network, a large number of municipalities and other institutions voluntarily mobilised their organisational and financial forces in order to increase the influence of FALP. Thus, 36 collective groups from 13 countries co-organised the first World Forum of Local Authorities of the Periphery in Nanterre in 2006, to which 800 representatives from 80 municipalities of 21 countries attended. Eight partners organised and funded preparation conferences in five European and three Latin American cities for this significant event. 100 local authorities from the respective regions participated actively in the meetings.

In order to increase the political influence of the work of FALP Network, a

working group has been created in the framework of the FAL Network. At the heart of CGLU, the Municipality of Villa El Salvador (Peru) is president of this working group called "Peripheral Cities", with Nanterre as Secretariat. At the moment, the objective of converting this working group,<sup>14</sup> into a permanent CGLU committee is being pursued.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the FALP Network has organised seminars and round tables at international conferences such as those at the World Urban Forum of UN-Habitat, at Africités and the International Observatory of Participative Democracy (IOPD).

### 2.4.3 Benefits for the coordinating city and partners of the FALP Network

The work of the FALP Network resulted in the development of a dynamic debate on common issues of peripheral authorities, and also in a higher recognition of this perspective (local and also transnational) in the debates on the role of metropolis as helping actors in the construction of a fairer globalisation.

For the Municipality of Nanterre, the coordination of the FALP Network so far has signified an increase of its transnational contacts, from its six pre-existent town-twinning to almost 200 new local authorities in the whole world. This diversification and multiplication of municipal contacts, as well as its important position in many transnational forums, did not only mean a strong boost of the image of the city of Nanterre on a worldwide scale, but it also allowed the materialisation of bilateral projects with partners from nine

<sup>14]</sup> Working groups contribute to the development of proposals with the aim of carrying out co-operation initiatives between local governments and their associations, in order to enhance the debate within CGLU.

<sup>15]</sup> Committees play the same role as working groups but they also participate in the creation of CGLU's policies and in their implementation.

countries. The exchange and collaboration in the core of FALP also strengthened the Municipality of Nanterre in the local debate on its own perspective, situation and role in the metropolitan sprawl of “Great Paris”.

#### 2.4.4. Lessons of the “FALP” example

The FALP Network represents the example of a network of cities that emerged exclusively from the local initiative of different regions of the world, since the interplay of suburban community interests had proved to be quite weak. Since there is no participation fee for members, there are no significant obstacles for membership, although participation in transnational events - as it is the case in all transnational networks- is difficult, particularly for economically less favoured regions. On the other hand, this means that Nanterre, as coordinating city, does not have a higher budget at its disposal to manage the network’s activities.

According to the Municipality of Nanterre, its main and more significant potentiality in its transnational work is the diversity of the experiences gained within the network’s core. In the debates and technical exchanges, partners benefit particularly from the know-how and good practices emerging from different urban realities. However, the greatest difficulty that a city that coordinates an independent transnational network faces is the realisation of all of the co-operation activities without any financial support from outside. Although participating local authorities have to resort to their own scarce resources to be able to organise technical exchange conferences and to implement co-operation and mutual assistance projects, the coordinating city and partners from four continents have a very strong political will of continuing the work of the FALP Network.

### 3.3. Final conclusions and recommendations

What makes local and regional government become partners in transnational networks in the DC field is not primarily the interaction of interests and increasing their power of influence on higher political levels (as it is the usual case with associations of municipalities), but rather the opportunity for contributing and benefiting from the transnational exchange of know-how, best practices and experiences as regards urban issues. As opposed to the conventional concept of bilateral development co-operation (see Table 1), either at national government or local administration levels, networks of cities as a DC tool leaves behind the typical pattern of transfer of know-how from the North to the South. In comparison with town-twinning or other ways of bilateral DC, co-operation in networks involves a larger number of actors (see Table 2), thus obtaining also a greater geographical scope and a higher multiplication of positive effects of the work and learning in networks. The diversity of entities involved in a transnational network, their experiences and local realities enhance horizontal exchange with new perspectives and ideas, resulting in benefits to all partners, much more than in the case of bilateral initiatives.

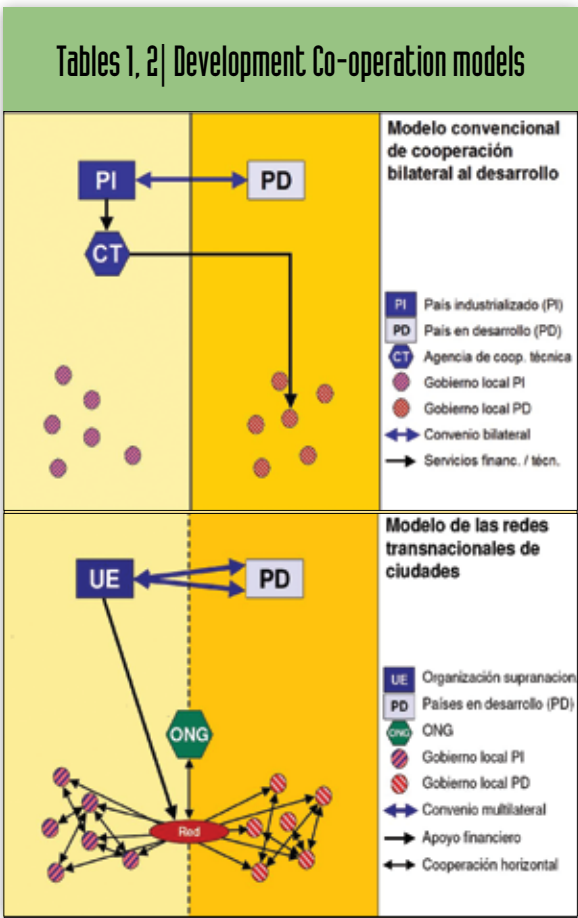
As regards the impact of network co-operation, it should be pointed out that its success cannot be measured –mainly- through tangible products of great financial volume, i.e. the building of infrastructure. The great potentialities of this form of co-operation lie, above all, on the promotion and follow-up of innovation and training processes they may also have a long-term positive influence and repercussions on other fields of local policy. In all co-operation projects mentioned in this article, the fact that the financial volume was

limited did not have a negative effect on the impact of measures. In fact, the DC aspect that usually has the greatest local impact is the transfer of knowledge, in the sense of capacity building, from which both local administrations from the South and the North obtain benefits. UN-Habitat (2004: 3) also holds this theory, stating, in its “State of the World’s Cities” report: “In times of globali-

seems more significant than investing in expanding other services’ infrastructure.”

The four examples of sub-national government networks have shown the great potentialities but also the high demands that the coordination of a transnational network implies. This form of DC is characterised by specific potentialities, i.e. the greater geographic scope, the inclusion of partners from different socioeconomic and cultural environments, the accumulation of very diverse experiences, the effective interaction of municipal interest at an international level, etc. However, it should be noted that the coordination of a transnational network with a large number of partners from different cultures and languages is a very demanding task. It requires not only enough financial resources from the coordinating organisation –which should be available in the long term- but also highly motivated staff, with vast experience in the transnational co-operation field.

Tables 3 and 4 show, as examples, the most significant factors that, according to the empirical research carried out in Criciúma, partner city of “Cities for Mobility”, facilitate or hinder the transfer of technical experiences to partners through transnational co-operation in networks. The transfer of impulse and know-how of the transnational network to Criciúma was invigorated by personal factors that have to do with the two main actors who supported network participation: both the prefect and the Director-president of the transport company showed a very intense and sustained interest in learning the best practice examples of other cities. They also used, in a proactive manner, transnational co-operation boosts to promote and implement an innovative and sustainable urban management in the municipal policy sphere, found in the most advanced cities of Latin America and Europe. The fact that CRICIUMATRANS



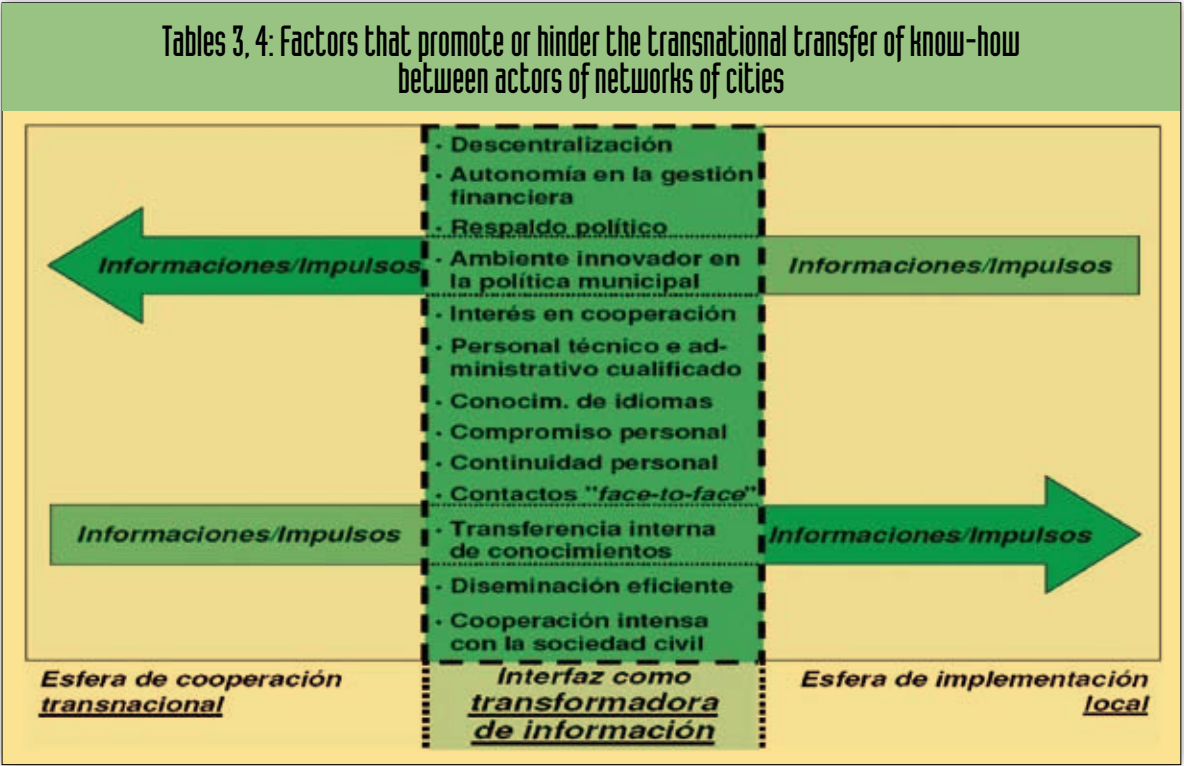
Source: Rothfuss 2007

sation and multicultural cities, public administrations must train their staff in order for them to be better informed, more intensely connected and directed towards the challenges of the future (...). Investing in training



transport company had a quite high financial autonomy, as well as a small group of highly qualified staff, motivated and with knowledge of foreign languages, made participation in the transnational exchange easier, as well as the subsequent application of good practices in the municipal management. The fact that innovations coming from the transnational network were almost exclusively passed on through a face-to-face contact with other transport experts in seminars or personal meetings, must be highlighted. Due to this fact, despite the high travel costs, meetings in person have a substantial importance in transnational co-operation in networks, when the issue is the transfer of tacit knowledge and know-how that cannot be acquired through manuals or books because it is directly linked to the people with the specific experiences.

The four examples of sub-national government networks in this article have shown that establishing a transnational network is helped by the existence of an international organisation programme which provides funding of common projects (“Cities for Mobility” and “Public Safety in the Cities”) or, at least, by an international conference gathering a large number of local or regional actors around a specific subject (“Nrg4SD” and “FALP”). In order for a network to succeed it is indispensable that the coordinating institution has both a profound experience, and its own interests in the specific co-operation field, as well as a strong political leadership, and therefore, a sound commitment with the network’s ongoing coordination and continuation. Although co-operation in networks is characterised by evident potentialities when compared with partnerships or bilateral



Source: Rothfuss 2007

town-twinning, it also implies certain difficulties that jeopardise the good functioning of a transnational network:

The number of transnational networks has strongly increased in the past few years. In a DC “free market”, networks compete for partners and have to constantly demonstrate their usefulness for them, particularly if a membership fee is charged (“Nrg4SD”);

Usually, networks are able to establish co-operation relations as intense as those seen in town-twinning and bilateral projects only for a small percentage of its partners (all networks reviewed);

If there is no international programme in place as a fixed framework for funding common projects, the coordinating city and active partners face the difficulty of self-financing their transnational co-operation activities and/or of seeking various appropriate financial sources for each project initiative (currently all networks reviewed);

The central coordination of a network requires, depending on its size, the long-term availability of certain financial resources that only in the case of a given number of networks may be collected from partners as a fee (“Nrg4SD”). Depending on the network’s subject and the partners’ structure, financing of some of the activities through sponsoring of private companies may be an option (“Cities for Mobility”). However, for networks whose subjects are not directly linked with economic interests, the search for sponsors may become complicated (“Public Safety in Cities”, “FALP” and “Ngr4SD”).

A common problem for networks of cities is for them to gather, in the first place, partners with enough financial resources and highly qualified staff with an international experience (Kern 2001, Rothfuss 2006b, Ugarte & Vergara 2006). The lack of these resources makes mainly small cities of economically less favoured regions become victims



of a “self-selection” mechanism (Kern 2001) along the network building process. If there is a membership fee, the barrier to access the network is even higher, ending up in a “selective process of integration of the most competent” (Ruthfuss 2006a), excluding exactly those members who would more urgently need the institutional strengthening provided by transnational co-operation in networks. Therefore, compared to bilateral co-operation, the selective constitution of transnational networks usually implies the exclusion of weaker institutions, if effective measures to promote differential inclusion and support for these less favoured partners are not taken.

A feasible alternative could be the conceptualisation of networks at two different levels: First, at a transnational level the exchange and co-operation between partners from different regions of the world takes place, as it is the case in most current networks. Second, the network assigns transnational partners the dissemination, in a decentralised manner, of solutions at a local and regional level in order to reach a larger number of lo-

cal authorities and actors that would not have the necessary capabilities to participate in and benefit directly from the transnational work in networks. Making an additional budget available to a local partner of a transnational network, this partner could ensure that results are transferred, applied and taken advantage of more widely through the respective secondary network at a regional level in the different countries. This would contribute towards the reduction of the gap between stronger local actors who have been included in the transnational co-operation in networks and those less capable from the same region that were excluded from the transnational exchange for the above mentioned reasons. However, the key question for improvements to take place as regards this DC tool is that national and supranational development organisations - such as, in the first place-, the European Commission, continue learning from valuable experiences of the past (Ugar-te & Vergara 2006) and keep supporting this effective and economically efficient form of development co-operation and promotion of the “(inter-)regional integration from below” (Rothfuss 2006a).

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Acronyms

IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
DC	Decentralised Co-operation
CGLU	United Cities and Local Governments
FAL	World Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion
FALP	Forum des Autorités Locales de Périphéries (Forum for Suburban Local Authorities)
FOGAR	Forum of Global Associations of Regions
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation Agency
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities.
Nrg4SD	Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development.
IOPD	International Observatory of Participative Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNO	United Nations Organisation
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
PD	Developing Country
PI	Industrialised Country
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
EU	European Union
UITP	Union Internationale de Transport Publique (Public Transport International Association)
URB-AL	Urbes América Latina. The objectives of the URB-AL programme of the European Union are to develop networks of decentralised cooperation between local authorities on concrete topics and problems of urban local development.





## Case study

*The last section in our publication examines the current state of affairs of decentralised co-operation in countries which are highly dynamic in this field. In this edition, the ODC has intended to highlight cases in Argentina and Spain, for they are highly dynamic countries in terms of decentralised co-operation in Latin America and the EU, respectively.*

*In fact, Argentina has been chosen as the Latin American country with the largest number of relations between local and regional governments of that territory and their European counterparts, according to the information gathered by the Observatory. We felt it was important to request the participation of the International Co-operation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Religious Affairs in order to prepare a study on this country for it possesses a holistic insight thanks to its intense activity aimed at globalizing local and regional governments there. The article prepared by Ana Cafiero, Special Representative for International Co-operation Affairs of the above mentioned Ministry – contributes to learning about the institutional context of local governments as well as the governments in the provinces in Argentina, as it provides a wide sample of its activity in the field of decentralised co-operation.*

*Similarly, Spain, apart from being the European country that has developed the most decentralised co-operation relations with Latin America, is also the country whose local and regional governments invests the largest amount of resources in co-operation with development. In his article, Christian Freres demonstrates this great activity by reviewing the institutional context in the co-operation for development of local and regional governments in Spain, and the priorities that these establish, to finally arrive at a description of the direct co-operation that they developed*

*To sum up, we, the Observatory's team wish this Yearbook to be enlightening and hope the readers can provide us with their opinions and suggestions on how to gradually raise awareness on decentralised co-operation.*



Introduction





# Spanish decentralised cooperation with latin america

Christian Freres\*

## KEY WORDS

Decentralised cooperation | Spain | Latin America | Development cooperation | European Union-Latin America relations |

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\*\*| <?>0 The opinions expressed by the author are his exclusive responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the official position of any of the entities to which he is professionally affiliated.

This study reviews Spanish decentralised cooperation (DC) with Latin America. To this effect, it starts with a brief review of the situation and the overall development of this type of cooperation, including an overview of the regulatory and strategic framework and its institutionalality. This chapter highlights the relevance of the Spanish sub-State actors in the sphere of Euro-Latin American relations and stresses the institutional complexity developed by the actors in their DC. The second part of the text deals with cooperation practice in Latin America, and reviews various aspects, focussing specifically on the direct cooperation method. The significant weight it has within the Spanish cooperation system is clear, as well as its determined commitment to promote methods aimed at an increasingly ambitious foreign action, in spite of the considerable relevance of the aid provided by non-governmental organisations. Finally, trends and future prospects are analysed, with emphasis on the challenge put forward by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness for this type of cooperation. In this regard, the challenge to reinforce the internal harmonisation of Spanish Cooperation is remarkable because the current lack of coordination has an adverse effect, not only on its effectiveness, but also implies a high transaction cost for the Latin American partners. In this sense it is also necessary to advance towards the alignment of DC with the development strategies of the countries where it operates.\*\*

## 1. Introduction

The slow yet steady intensification process of the relations between the then European Community and Latin America began over two decades ago. Before that time, this region hardly existed in Europe’s map of foreign countries.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that Latin America is a priority zone for the European Union’s (EU) foreign action today, but there is no doubt that significant progress has been made in the bi-regional links. In this sense we can speak of various stages in the reinforcement process of the relations, which is reflected in the development of di-

fferent factors at internal and international level. We can thus observe how Euro-Latin American relations went from a period that was almost entirely dominated by the governments and the inter-governmental bodies during the eighties, to another period which started in the nineties, where multiple actors become involved and contribute to give shape to them.

Regarding the internal elements that had the strongest incidence on these relations, those with increasingly significant weight – although scarcely studied in the literature (Freres 2003) – are the sub-State governments: regions, provinces and local entities. As with other spheres of European foreign action, there is a considerable variation in the relative weight of each Member

Table 1 | Matrix of relations between sub-state administrations of Europe and Latin America

European country →	“Latin Arch”				Germanic countries and North European Group								
	Spain	Italy	France	Portugal	Germany	Holland	Austria	Sweden	Finland	Belgium	United Kingdom	Others*	Total
Latin American Sub-Region/ Country ↓													
Southern Cone	147	205	84	54	15	3	2	3	1	5	5	7	531
Andean Region	58	16	26	1	4	2	1	2	0	8	0	1	114
Central America+Cuba	225	47	24	4	41	21	12	7	1	11	19	9	408
México	37	3	14	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	4	64
Total, AL	467	271	148	59	65	26	16	13	2	24	24	21	1136
By groups of countries	945				122					69			

Source: Own compilation based on data provided by the EU-LA Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation. This involves bilateral relations between sub-national governments identified by the Observatory. A detailed analysis with previous data can be found in *Anuario* (Yearbook) 2006 (Sarraute and Théry 2006: 25).

\* Includes Greece, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland.

<sup>1</sup> | For a more detailed analysis of the development of the EU-Latin American relations, please refer, among others, to Freres and Sanahuja 2006.



State. In this sense, there is plenty of evidence that the sub-State actors of what we could call the EU “Latin Arch”<sup>2</sup>, have played a major role in the sub-State Euro-Latin American relations. Table 1 clearly reflects this situation and shows that over three quarters of the bilateral sub-national relations are concentrated in the Latin Arch, compared to barely 10% in the case of the next major group.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is most surprising that only one country, Spain, accounts for almost 40% of the overall bilateral relations at this level. This degree of prominence is not reflected as clearly in other areas of the Euro-Latin American links such as trade or official development cooperation.

This is the context of the current chapter on Spanish DC with Latin America. However, the study is not centred on a comparative analysis with the purpose of highlighting the relative importance of Spain in the EU framework. The text rather focuses on examining current Spanish DC with Latin America. First of all, and to this effect, a brief overview is made of the status of this cooperation and its general development, including a vision of the regulatory and strategic framework, and its institutionality. The second part is on the practice of cooperation in Latin America and reviews various aspects. Finally tendencies and future prospects are analysed.

<sup>2</sup> | *Latin Arch is not only a theoretical concept because there is a partnership of intermediate sub-State entities (at provincial level in the case of Spain) that stretches from Portugal to Italy (<http://www.arcolatino.org>). In addition, this concept has been used in the study of Euro-Latin American relations (See Fazio 2001).iones euro-latinoamericanas (Ver Fazio 2001).*

<sup>3</sup> | *The same trend can be observed when studying the participation of the municipalities by country in the European inter-municipal cooperation programme with Latin America, URB-AL*

<sup>4</sup> | *This is a statement made by the OECD Development Assistance Committee in its reports on the assessment of Spanish cooperation since 1998. It is mentioned again in the 2007 draft report.*

<sup>5</sup> | *As reported by García (2003:66), the First European Conference on Cities and Development was held in Cologne, Germany, in 1985, just before Spain entered the Community.*

## 2. General framework

### 2.1. Brief review of decentralised cooperation in Spain

Decentralised cooperation is one of the distinctive elements of the Spanish development aid system.<sup>4</sup> In fact, since the eighties, DC has gained an increasingly relevant role in Spanish cooperation. In a relatively short period of time it has gone from very modest figures to exceeding, by far, 500 million Euros in 2006, and has become a major item of national cooperation. This public policy is supported by many Spaniards, as was demonstrated in a survey carried out in 2006, in which 55% of those polled stated that “their autonomous communities and municipalities should allocate part of their resources to cooperation” (Fundación Carolina 2007:45).

#### 2.1.1. Driving factors of decentralised cooperation

This type of cooperation emerged and progressed for different reasons. The first has to do with the democratisation and decentralisation process undergone by Spain since the 1978 Constitution. The State of Autonomies implied transferring functions and resources from the General State Administration to the regions. At the same time, a decentralisation process towards the Local Entities (provinces and municipalities) also took place. As a result, the sub-national administrations acquired the

capacity to expand the scope of their actions, both in their own spheres and in other countries, particularly in Europe, the Mediterranean and Latin America.

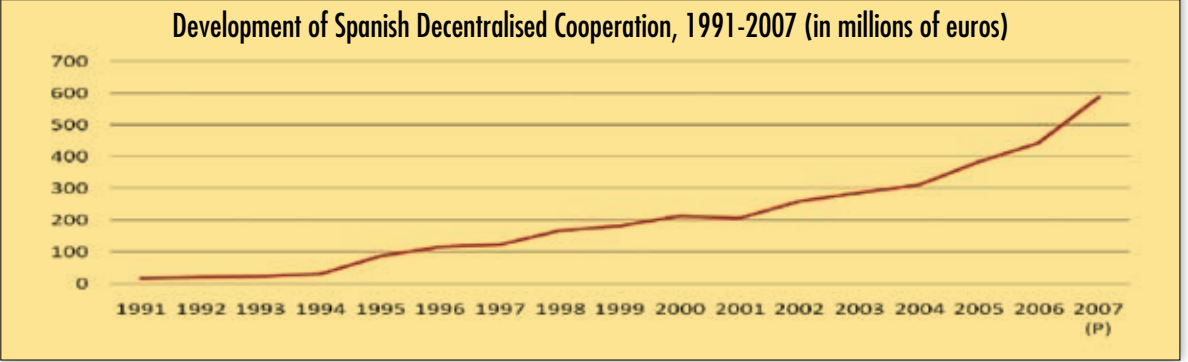
The incorporation into the European Community was the second factor because it opened up the country and offered a whole range of opportunities for contact and exchange with their counterparts in other member States.<sup>5</sup> The autonomous communities (ACs) and local entities mobilised rapidly in order to take advantage of these opportunities, both to obtain resources and to participate in relevant international debates. One of these was on the search of development and cooperation models that involved actors other than the national governments.

A third factor has to do with the proximity to the citizens at this administration level. In a country that was entering a modernisation phase, citizens began to demand not only more and better services, but also that the governments closest to them should take on direct responsibilities regarding their

solidarity with communities from developing countries. The solidarity movements in support of the Saharawi people and Nicaragua, etc., placed pressure on their town councillors, mayors and other political positions in order to allocate resources to projects, campaigns, meetings and many other activities aimed at supporting communities in the South. This led to numerous cooperation and town twinning agreements and various kinds of political initiatives and, gradually, permanent structures for programme management began to take shape.

Finally, a further factor arose in the nineties. By that time, the sub-national administrations had consolidated their position within the State and had started to intensify their demands for an increased transfer of functions and economic resources. This spirit went beyond all spheres of public policy, including development cooperation. In this context, two events lead to what we could call a boom in Spanish decentralised cooperation in the mid-nineties: on one hand, the humanitarian tragedy in Rwanda and, on the other, the popular

Graph 1 | Development of Spanish Decentralised Cooperation, 1991 | 2007 (in millions of euros)



Source: Own compilation based on official data (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación (MAEC – Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation), Annual International Cooperation Plan – Follow up, various years). (p) The data for 2007 are budget allocations.

movement demanding that the government should allocate 0.7% of the gross domestic product to official development aid (ODA). Both processes triggered a marked increase in the public interest and placed pressure for more generous cooperation at all Administration levels. The sub-State governments were the ones who provided the most resolute response to these demands.

2.1.2. General features of Spanish decentralised cooperation

Since its origin, Spanish decentralised cooperation (SDC) has made significant progress. Initially it was a mainly voluntary aid, often promoted by individuals with contacts in other countries and with scarce resources that were mainly directed through non-governmental organisations for development (NGOD). This has now become far more complex, more solid

institutions have been created, management has been professionalized and aid methods have been expanded. In addition, in many partner countries from the South, if we add up the SDC contributions, these exceed those of the General State Administration. That is why this should be increasingly taken into account in the strategic planning and in the dialogue with other governments through the Mixed Commissions.

Much has been debated and reflected over these years on the virtues and problems of SDC. (E.g.: AIETI 2000; Castañeda 2006; Gómez Gil 2002).<sup>6</sup> Without attempting to exhaust the subject, following aspects could be highlighted:

To sum up, this actor is in middle of a consolidation process within the Spanish cooperation system, and has gained a space of its own, both in the country and in the foreign relations of Spain and the European

Union, particularly with Latin America, the preferred destination for its aid.

2.2. The regulatory and strategic framework of Spanish decentralised cooperation

Until July 1998, when the Ley de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (LCID - International Development Cooperation Law) was passed, Spanish cooperation policy had been taking shape through a long process whereby ad hoc regulations were defined with a statutory nature. Thus, while the autonomous communities and local entities were acquiring a growing institutional relevance, a regulatory vacuum was being produced in the field of international development cooperation and foreign actions in the autonomous and local administrations. Strong doctrinal efforts were made to compensate for this, which in many cases were taken on by the Sentences of the Constitutional Court and with an innovative legal praxis.

The starting point of Spanish development cooperation policy was the Spanish 1978 Constitution, which views this policy as an essential aspect of the foreign action of democratic States vis-à-vis those that have not reached the same level of development, and it recognises the exclusive competence of the Central Government on issues involving international relations. The adoption of the LCID enabled the compilation and update, in one single legal text, of the set of regulations

that had been configuring Spanish policy on this issue. This Law is based on six main themes which are gathered in six chapters.

Section 2 refers to the role of the autonomous communities and local entities, and section 3, to the consultative and coordination bodies (including the Inter-territorial Cooperation Commission, created by the same Law).<sup>7</sup> In addition to this, article 20.2 recognises the capacity of the ACs to act on issues involving international cooperation, provided the guidelines established by the Congress of Deputies and the principles, objectives and priorities recognised in articles 2-7 of the same Law are respected.

On the other hand, article 2.1 of the Ley Reguladora de las Bases del Régimen Local (RBRL - Regulatory Law on the Bases of the Local Regime) of 1985 recognises the autonomy of the local entities to intervene in “[...] all issues that may directly affect their circle of interests, conferring on them the relevant functions regarding the features of the public activity in question, and the management capacity of the Local Entity [...]”. This Law is currently undergoing a reform process and, in this area, will attempt to make up for the legal vacuum regarding foreign action of the local entities. In spite of this vacuum, these administrations have been able to develop international initiatives and programmes in an autonomous manner.<sup>7</sup>

Table 2   Summary of the features of Spanish decentralised cooperation		
Features	Advantages	Pending challenges
Autonomy	It is not required to abide by the interests of Spanish foreign policy	Find a working modality within a common framework to contribute to the greater effectiveness of aid.
Relation with other citizens	Greater proximity than with central Administration	Combine a high degree of citizen involvement, concerned about outcomes and impact, involving non NGOD actors
Strategic planning	Various entities have started planning processes	The dependence on calls for NGOD projects restricts the possibility of orienting resources strategically
Links with actors in developing countries	Ease to harmonise with counterpart administrations in the South	Strive to go beyond small interventions with strong local impact to others with greater structural impact
Development awareness and education	In proportion, more resources are allocated than by the central government	Ensure true incidence and greater coordination to prevent dispersion
Presence in Latin America	Institutional links are highly varied and generally strong	Increase participation in less developed areas of the world while maintaining the Latin American priority
Orientation towards social development	More direct contribution to the fight against poverty	Reduce the dispersion of actions to achieve greater impact

Source: Own compilation

<sup>6</sup> | However, it is convenient to bear in mind that there is a problem with the lack of information on decentralised cooperation. Although the situation has substantially improved and might even be better than in other countries of the region, the information available is scattered and not always very reliable. In general, more information has been available on autonomous cooperation although, fortunately, the information vacuum on local aid is now being overcome. In any case, considerable efforts are still required to homogenise information.

<sup>7</sup> | This is practically a unique entity among international donors. The Law defines this Commission as “the coordination, harmonisation and cooperation body between the Administrations that execute accountable expenses as ODA”. These tasks shall be performed, as set out in the Law – in article 20, paragraph 2 – respecting the “principles of budgetary autonomy and self-accountability in the development and execution thereof” that each of the donor institutions should be entitled to.

<sup>8</sup> | According to García (2005), based on Article 25 of Law 7/1985 of April 2nd (RBRL) “we can say that Local Entities have the competence to act in the field of international development cooperation, with the limitations that may arise from the functions conferred on other Public Administrations, particularly the State, on issues involving international relations.”



It should be stressed that since the enactment of the Cooperation Law until the approval of the regulation that governs the composition and functions of the Inter-territorial Commission in January 2000, arduous negotiations took place between the Central Government and the decentralised administrations. One of the pivotal tension issues was the determination of the degree of autonomy of the former over the administrations, though finally a certain consensus between the parties was reached. The Law states that the sub-State administrations may carry out their cooperation programmes, always subject to the guidelines defined by Parliament. The Inter-territorial Commission was established as a forum for the various administrations, so that they may share experiences, unify criteria, develop projects and jointly coordinate their respective initiatives, complying in this way with the functions of coordination, harmonisation and collaboration at the various Administration levels, conferred upon it by the LCID.

Once the national legislative and political framework was in place, a harmonisation process was started with the intention of achieving a coordinated and effective “Spanish system” that could be projected outside the country. In other words, the development process of the State Cooperation Law promotes a debate among all the actors and a series of significant changes in the administration of cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

The same can be said about the autonomous development cooperation laws in force (in all the ACs except Murcia – undergoing legislative process – and in the Canaries), as can be seen in Table 3. This legal framework is important because it adds political weight to the set of cooperation actions. On the other hand, an autonomous legal framework is a relevant

feature of the Spanish model within the international community.

In 2000, cooperation laws were approved in both Aragon and the Community of Madrid. There was a certain emulation of the legislation at state level, because the Madrid law was very similar to the LCID, and its first General Plan (2001-04) was implemented the same year that the central Government approved its first General Plan.

The legal basis of the ACs’ international cooperation has been reinforced with the inclusion of specific references to the issue of the statutory reforms of the current legislation. Each community has approached the subject differently. In the case of the Community of Valencia, this is mentioned briefly under the heading on Foreign Action (Art. 68); Catalonia included two articles on the subject (51 and 197) and Andalusia included various references throughout the text and an entire chapter on development cooperation (V).

All the Communities have also created advisory or consultative bodies that involve all the actors of the region (the first one dates back to 1995 in Asturias) and sometimes an inter-departmental body, a Regional Council, to ensure greater coordination between autonomous and local cooperation. At local level, the autonomous legal frameworks are used as a basis and, when necessary, specific guidelines are approved, among others to regulate the aid, and to support the structure of the administrative management, the operation and functions of the consultative bodies.

The General Plans are the first effort made towards strategic planning. After the

<sup>9</sup> | Regarding the Law, see issue N°2 of the *Revista Española de Desarrollo y Cooperación* (Madrid: IUDC, 1998), and VV.AA. (1999). *La Ley de Cooperación Un Año Después: El Plan Director Plurianual*. Barcelona: Fundación La Caixa; and Manuel Montobbio. “Reflexiones entorno a las implicaciones y retos de la Ley de Cooperación”, REDC N° 5 (summer/winter 1999/2000). pp. 77-99.

Table 3 | Regulatory and Strategic Framework of Spanish Decentralised Cooperation [at state and autonomous

Level	Legislation on Cooperation *	First General Plan (Plan DirectorPD )	Other regulations
Estatal	- Ley de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (1998) (International Development Cooperation Law)	- PD 2001-04	- RD Council (1995, reformed 2004) - RD Inter-Territorial Commission (2000)
CC.AA.			
Andalusia	- Ley Andaluza de Cooperación (2003) - Ley para creación de la Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación (2006)		-Decree that regulates the Cooperation Council and other bodies (2005)
Aragon	- Ley relativa a la Cooperación de Aragón (2000)	- PD 2004-07	- Dec. Council (2000) - Dec. Autonomous Commission (2002)
Asturias	- Ley de Asturias de Cooperación (2006)	- Plan 2004-07	- Dec. Council - Dec. creates Agency (2003)
Balearic Islands	- Ley Balear de Cooperación (2005)		- Dec. Council (2000) - Dec. creates Agency (2006)
Canary Islands	No tiene aún Ley de Cooperación		- Dec. regulates actions (1995) - Dec. Council (2006))
Cantabria	- Ley de Cantabria de Cooperación (2007)		- Dec. regulates subventions (1996)
Castile and Leon	- Ley de Castilla y León de Cooperación (2006)		- Dec. Aid (1998) - Dec. Council (2000)
Castile-La Mancha	- Ley de Cooperación de Castilla La Mancha (2003)		- Dec. Council (2004)
Catalonia	- Ley Catalana de Cooperación (2001)	- PD 2003-06	- Dec. coordination bodies (2003) - Dec. creates Agency (2003) - Dec. Catalanian Committee on HA (2005)
Community of Valencia	- Law on Cooperation of the Community of Valencia (2007)	- PD 2004-07	- Dec. Council (2001)
Basque Country	- Law on Cooperation of the Basque Country (2007)		- Dec. Basque Fund (1990) - Dec. Council (1998)
Extremadura	- Law on Cooperation of Extremadura (2003)	- General Plan 2004-07	- Dec. Council (2005) - Dec. Autonomous Commission (2005)
Galicia	- Law on Cooperation of Galicia (2003)	- PD 2006-09	
La Rioja	- Law on Cooperation of La Rioja (2002)	- PD 2004-08	- Dec. Regional Council (2004)
Madrid	- Law on Cooperation of the Community of Madrid (2000)	- General Plan 2001-04	- Dec. Council (1997) - Dec. Regional Commission (2000) - Dec. Immigration and Cooperation Agency (2005)
Murcia	Bill approved on October 2007 and submitted to the Regional Assembly		-Dec. Regional Council (1994, amended in 1996 and 2002)
Navarre	- Autonomous Cooperation Law (2001)	- PD 2007-2010	- Dec. Council (1996)

Source: Own compilation on the basis of data from the Observatory of the Fund Confederation (<http://www.confederacionfondos.org/>), a space of the AECI (Spanish International Cooperation Agency) dedicated to regulatory frameworks ([www.aeci.es](http://www.aeci.es)) and various institutional pages in the Internet.

\*The titles of the laws have been abbreviated due to reasons of space.

HA = Humanitarian Aid; Dec. = Decree; RD = Royal Decree



precedent of the Community of Madrid and once the Law had been approved, it became mandatory for each Community to implement its own plans. These documents are supplemented with annual plans and sometimes with sectorial documents. A growing number of municipalities have also drafted general plans and annual plans. The next step is geographical planning (i.e., country-plans), although not all the entities consider it necessary to prepare these, in view of the fact that geographical plans already exist at state level.

To sum up, it is evident that the decentralised entities have made considerable progress in establishing a regulatory and strategic framework, which is necessary to support effective cooperation although, as in the case of the central government, the planning systems still require consolidation, so that their effectiveness can be demonstrated.

### 2.3. Institutional and actors of Spanish decentralised cooperation

As observed in the case of the regulatory and strategic framework, there is a certain trend in autonomous cooperation to become organised institutionally in a similar manner to that of the central government. The political decision-making, coordination and consultative bodies are also similar. At local level the situation is somewhat varied, although many similarities can also be found. Regarding inter-institutional relations within the Spanish State, their development was the result of the will of the government of the moment, rather than of the fact that there is a specific body.

#### 2.3.1. Organisation of SDC

Although certain features regarding the institutionality of cooperation are shared

at autonomous and local level, there are also various elements which should be described separately.

Before going into the subject, a few clarifications should be made in order to outline the scope of the analysis covered in the chapter. This study is specifically referred to development cooperation, but it is important to stress that this cooperation is part of a broader scope of the foreign action carried out by sub-State administrations. This foreign action encompasses various issues: from cultural promotion through to economic internationalisation, as well as the link with communities of people who originally come from the region but reside outside Spain. This “paradiplomacy”,<sup>10</sup> is not the object of the study itself but bears relation to it. In the subject at hand, institutionality reflects the specific approach that each administration places on its foreign action. In some cases, the function of international policy – which may include strategic development and the formalisation of institutional relations with counterparts abroad (via twinning or other instruments) – is separated from cooperation, while in other cases, they are closely related.

In the case of the ACs there are two main institutional models. The first one consists in assigning the unit or department to the Presidency of the autonomous government – currently in force in five communities. The second one consists in incorporating it to the Department in charge of the social area (ten communities). Whereas the first model may bestow greater political relevance, it is also possible to link it or subordinate it to other interests of autonomous foreign action. However, in the other model, a certain “contamination” can also occur when linking cooperation with high priority social policies, particularly those involving immigrant

integration. There is no ideal model, but it is important that certain stability should be maintained because a great amount of changes were made in the course of the initial years, which hampered the consolidation of structures and policies. Apparently this trend has been overcome in the current decade and a clear institutional consolidation can be observed.

As stated earlier, cooperation agencies were created in at least five autonomous communities (Andalusia, Asturias, the Balearic Islands, Catalonia and Madrid); in other regions the issue is being debated and in several cases, processes are under way to prepare legislation proposals. However, the new agencies have been in full operation for only a few years so it is still early to carry out an all too rigorous analysis of their results. Without doubt their creation has been important to provide greater continuity to autonomous action and to make management more professional in this area. On the other hand, it has been a means to reinforce the visibility of the actions and of structuring the representation vis-à-vis other actors, both inside and outside the Community. At the same time, the presence of an agency strengthens the capacity to carry out direct cooperation, a method that is becoming increasingly important for SDC.

A certain tendency to reinforce SDC representation abroad can also be observed, specifically in the countries where it operates. The form of representation varies considerably, from the presence of trainees who often reside in the Oficinas de Cooperación Técnica (OTC – Technical Cooperation Offices) of the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI – Spanish International Cooperation Agency), to the opening of its own offices. This presence is concentrated in Latin America and in the Maghreb; it is still quite modest, but appears to be growing.

A remarkable feature of SDC has been the presence of institutional bodies – autonomous or local cooperation councils – to direct the participation of various actors in a territory in the discussions on public policy. Apart from contributing to the improvement of the policies, these bodies have an important function in order to grant them social legitimacy.

The first advisory or consultative councils date back to the nineties and were consolidated as a mandatory body at all decentralised cooperation levels. This has contributed to the wide expansion of the practice of participating in the debates on cooperation policies at autonomous and local level. As pointed out by some authors, problems arise, such as proliferation and overlapping in many of the councils, the lack of clear regulations regarding their functions (i.e. frequency of the meetings, internal organisation, etc.) and sometimes the excessive administrative weight (Castañeda 2005).

On the other hand, practically all ACs have created inter-territorial councils to ensure greater coordination between the regional instances and the local entities. These are a kind of mirror of the Inter-territorial Commission at state level. These bodies have the purpose of serving as a dialogue and information exchange forum, as well as the appropriate setting for promoting the definition of coordinated common policies, including joint actions. A new feature is the creation of thematic working groups (i.e. harmonisation of procedures, co-development, etc.) which make them far more operative. However, as in the case of the Inter-territorial Commission, there is very limited information on its operation, decisions and results. Besides, there is a persistent impression that these councils are serving the interests of those who convene them – the CAs – rather than of those who

<sup>10</sup> | See Freres and Sanz (2003) for a more extensive reflection on this and other related concepts.

are being convened, because they have not become collegial bodies yet. In any case, this Commission has an unquestionable potential, and today it is the only institutional instance for promoting coordination between the CAs, whereas the Regional Councils have the same potential in their territories.

The organisation of local entities varies considerably. In general, the cooperation function is the major responsibility of the Concejalía (Councillorship, in the case of the municipalities) or the Delegación (Delegation, in the case of the Diputación/Provincial Council) in charge of the Social Services area.<sup>11</sup> Some local corporations have a Cooperation (or Cooperation and Immigration) Concejalía or Delegación. These do not account for the majority yet (the Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias – FEMP, Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces – estimates that they represent somewhat less than one fifth of the local entities), but are increasing in number and when this occurs, it reflects a degree of political commitment of the highest possible level. There are no cooperation agencies at local level yet, but some structures, such as some of the Funds, are very much like a small agency.

There are also some bodies such as the Local Councils, which assemble various actors from the territory. The main difference is observed in the Provincial Councils and in the Funds, which have consulting bodies that include many localities from the territory.

### 2.3.2. Inter-institutional relations

CAs mentioned earlier, one of the great challenges of this kind of aid is the coordination with other actors of Spanish Cooperation.<sup>12</sup> Coordination moves in three directions: (i) entirely towards the General State Administration; (ii) between the ACs and towards the Local Entities (LEs); and (iii) between the Local Entities.

Regarding the first level, the role of the Inter-territorial Commission was already discussed. However, this is not the only coordination method. At a more operative level and in the framework of geographical planning, there are further mechanisms for driving inter-institutional coordination. In the first case, the preparation process of the Mixed Commissions between the Spanish Government and the countries of the South provides the ACs and the LEs with the opportunity to open up a dialogue with the AECI regarding future bilateral programmes. As to planning, the exercise carried out between 2005 and 2007 for preparing the country strategy documents (CSD) and the strategic performance plans (SPP) included a participation and consultation mechanism with the decentralised administrations. In both cases, these are incipient practices whose scope and continuity depend wholly on the will of the central Government authorities. Even so, with all its limitations, there are evident collaboration lines which may be intensified with time.

This first coordination level is important, and the others are equally necessary. That is why autonomous laws generally provide an

important space to this issue and many even support the creation of coordination bodies. Even so, practice has varied considerably because in the end, this depends on inter-institutional relations and sometimes even on interpersonal relations. There are even cases in which the ACs have adopted a laissez faire position, in the sense that they do not take on excessive responsibility to coordinate with the Local Entities in their territory.<sup>13</sup>

It is at the level of the LEs that the coordination challenge is absolutely crucial due to the number of actors involved in cooperation. This challenge is approached through various mechanisms. At a general level, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) represents all Spanish Local Entities. The Federation created the Development Cooperation Commission that has various objectives. This includes compiling information on local cooperation (it has prepared the annual reports since 2005),

it contributes to strengthening its members and represents them at the Inter-territorial Commission. Its coordination role takes place at the level of information exchange and in drawing up positions rather than at the operational level of coordination, because it has neither the competence nor the capacity to do so.

Each autonomous community has municipal federations that have a role similar to that of the FEMP at territorial level. In general, certain commissions or groups in charge of development cooperation are included, but their resources are very limited, so only scarce coordination can be promoted.

The FEMP also participates in the Municipio<sup>14</sup> programme, created at the end of 2006 by the AECI together with the Ministry of Public Administrations. This programme was launched with the aim of promoting and facilitating mu-

#### Box 1 | Solidarity and Cooperation Funds

*Local cooperation and solidarity Funds are one of the most distinctive features of the Spanish decentralised cooperation model. Since their introduction, in the mid-eighties, these funds have been placed as a key reference for the sector.*

*At present, about one thousand public local entities are associated to the Cooperation and Solidarity Fund Confederation, created in 1995. The nine funds in the Confederation include local entities in Andalusia, the Balearic Islands (three funds), Catalonia, the Basque Country, Extremadura, Galicia and Valencia.*

*In 2005 about 15 million euros were mobilised, mostly from own resources. The most prominent is the Fons Català, pioneer in this model, which manages approximately one third of the overall amount and brings together about 300 entities.*

*However, the importance of the Funds is not in its figures but in the model they advocate. To this effect, they have defined a set of 10 principles that have to be followed by its members. Some of the advantages are:*

- 1) To become the reference institution to encourage and facilitate the participation of smaller local entities in development cooperation;*
- 2) To enable a more transparent management;*
- 3) To help fund large-scale projects;*
- 4) To promote the direct participation of local entities in cooperation through the exchange of experiences, technical training and support for municipal management.*

*The Funds, alike other areas, have also been subject to criticism. The NGOs, for example, fear that direct cooperation may prevail, and so reduce the need for their participation (and their access to subventions) (Martínez 2005: 86).*

<sup>11</sup> | According to data provided by FEMP, these entities represent two thirds of the total number.

<sup>12</sup> | Many recent studies have approached this issue both in the general context of foreign policy as well as specifically related to the cooperation field. Colina (2007) analyses the issue of foreign action of the ACs and the coordination problems with Spanish foreign policy, whereas Freres and Sanz (2003) address the same subject but focus on the Latin American case. Ruiz Seisdedos (2005) focuses on the relations between the decentralised cooperation administrations.

<sup>13</sup> | In this sense, Ruiz Seisdedos (2005: 236) specifically refers to the case of the Junta (autonomous government) of Andalusia, which in the provisions of the Law of Andalusia does not include any referent to the municipal entities, although it is included in the preamble).



municipal development cooperation. It is still too early to determine the impact it will have, and responds to the need of having a framework to reinforce the coordination of the work in favour of local development from the various levels of the Spanish State.

A clear exception among the LEs is the municipal cooperation funds and the Confederation that brings them together at state level. These funds are regulated by statutes approved by the partner entities (that of the Fons Català dates back to 1986). By their very nature, these funds themselves constitute coordination spaces, resources are administered jointly and they are governed by collective decision bodies (See Box 1). The Confederation is then in charge of the coordination between all nine partner funds and represents them at the Inter-territorial Commission. One of the limitations of the funds is that they only coordinate common resources, because each partner has its own management programme, which is not necessarily coordinated with those of other partners of the same fund.

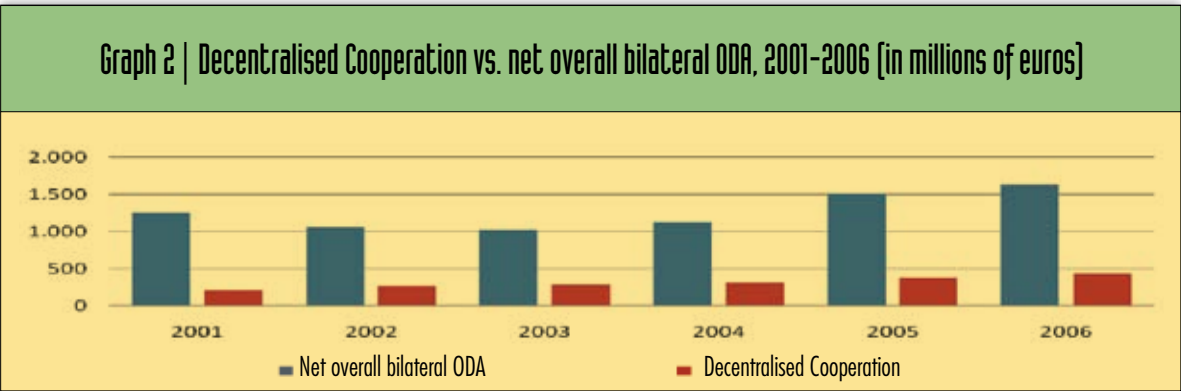
To sum up, coordination offers a complex challenge for which the institutional framework is yet insufficient. However, examples such as that of the Funds, show that it is possible to progress if there is the will and resolution to do so.

### 3. Spanish decentralised cooperation practice in Latin America

#### 3.1. General description of Spanish decentralised cooperation

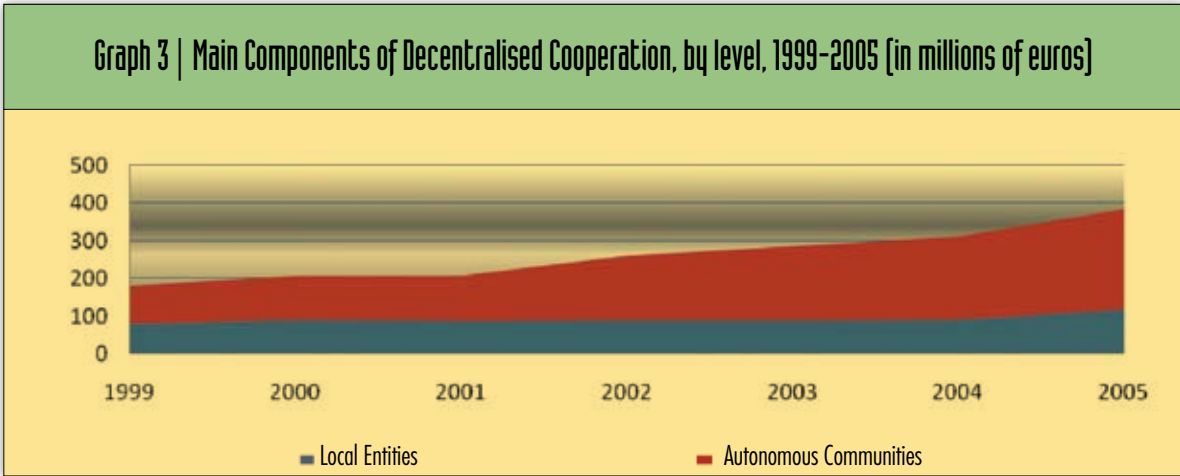
##### 3.1.1. Quantitative development

As can be observed in Graph 1, a significant leap takes place in the mid nineties. Since then, Spanish decentralised cooperation has undergone a steadily growing process.<sup>15</sup> Graph 2 shows how decentralised cooperation is currently equivalent to somewhat more than a quarter of Spanish bilateral cooperation (compared to barely 15% at the end of the nineties). Its relative



Source: Own compilation on the basis of official data (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Annual International Cooperation Plan – Follow-up, various years).

<sup>14</sup> | Ver: [http://www.aeci.es/03coop/1activ\\_coop/municipia2.htm](http://www.aeci.es/03coop/1activ_coop/municipia2.htm)  
<sup>15</sup> | It is important to bear in mind a problem with the data on Spanish Decentralised Cooperation. Whereas the follow-up reports of the Annual International Cooperation Plans drafted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation include quite comprehensive information on autonomous cooperation, the data of the Local Entities have been estimated for many years. Only since 2005, when the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) resumed the compilation task of this information (which it had done until 2001), can we say that the data are closer to reality, although the FEMP itself recognises that some of the data is still missing.



Source: Own compilation on the basis of official data (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Annual International Cooperation Plan – Follow-up, various years).

weight dropped only slightly when the General State Administration started to increase its ODA as from 2005.

Regarding the components of this type of cooperation, the flow of ODA from autonomous communities exceeds by far that channelled

through the local entities, as can be seen in Graph 3. This appears to be quite logical because, in general, regional governments have more resources. However, this does not imply that the main drivers of this cooperation are only to be found among the ACs, because various studies (Freres

**Table 4 | Table 4. Some of the "Engines" of Decentralised Cooperation ODA in 2005, in millions of euros**

	Volume		Volume
<u>ACs</u>		<u>Municipalities/Provinces</u>	
Catalonia	44,10	Municipality of Madrid	20,54
Andalusia	39,94	Municipality of Barcelona	5,32
Basque Country	31,04	Barcelona Provincial Council	3,89
Community of Madrid	21,63	Municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz	2,21
Navarre	16,64	Municipality of Cordoba	1,64
<b>Municipal Funds</b>			
Fons Català	5,92	Total amount mobilised by "engines"	161,82
Euskal Fondoa	1,43	Total SDC	385,13
FAMSI	1,12		

Source: Own compilation, based on data from the PACI – Follow-up 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2006.

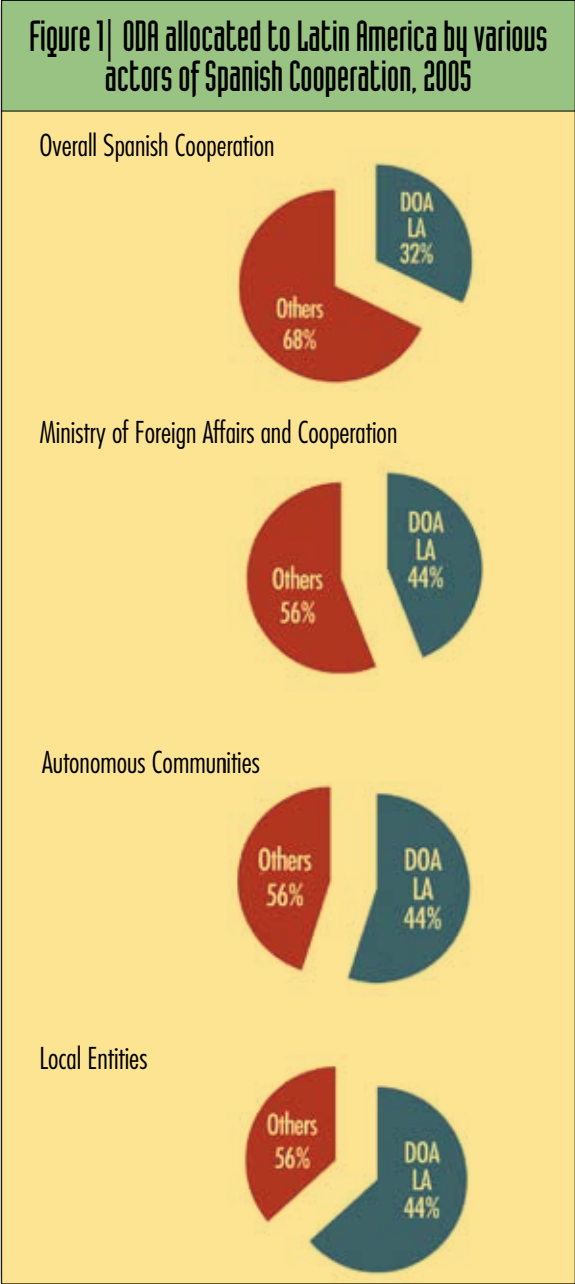
2004b) have identified some local entities as key “engines” of SDC.

When speaking about the engines of decentralised cooperation – see Table 4 – this is referred to the entities that are not only the major sources of cooperation, but also contribute to the innovation of the sector, in institutional terms and in the aid methods. Thus, although the Floral Community of Navarre is not one of the ACs that provides the largest amount of ODA, it is the region with the highest per capita contribution (28.61 euros in 2004, compared to three euros in the Community of Madrid. The Funds, in turn, take the lead in inter-institutional coordination efforts.

Likewise, municipalities such as Vitoria or Cordoba have been very active in the promotion of citizen participation, whereas the Diputación (Provincial Council) of Barcelona has made major contributions to transnational networks within Europe and with Latin America. This is evidently not a scientific concept and there are probably many discrepancies regarding which administrations should be included in the list. In any case, its use lies in the fact that it is a way of distinguishing leaders among a multiplicity of entities and also of approaching the autonomous and local levels jointly, bridging quantitative gaps that might exist.

### 3.1.2. Geographical and sectorial distribution

A very distinctive feature of Spanish Cooperation in general is its preferred orientation towards Latin America. As can be seen on Figure 1, currently 32% of the Spanish ODA is allocated to that region, compared to somewhat over half of the autonomous aid and two thirds of the local cooperation. This situation reflects, without doubt, the greater capacity of the General State Administration of modifying its geographical distribution, thanks to the greater amount of resources and its foreign network,



Source: Own compilation, based on data from the MAEC, PACI – Follow-up, 2005.

Note. Total Spanish Cooperation is referred to the sum of the ODA of all the Public Administrations, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, other ministries, and SDC.

whereas the decentralised cooperation entities have relied, to a great extent, on the NGODs to project their solidarity, and only some of these organisations are present in Sub-Saharan Africa or in the South of Asia, where some of the poorest countries of the world are concentrated.

As with Spanish Cooperation in general, sub-national aid is highly dispersed over sectors and sub-sectors. In spite of this and of the general lack of updated data,<sup>16</sup> there is a clear bias of the SDC towards social infrastructure and services (See Table 5), particularly in the case of local entities. Thus, in 2004, more than two fifths of autonomous cooperation was allocated to this meta-sector. This is even clearer in the case of local cooperation, as more than fifty per cent of the resources were allocated in 2005 to this sector, similar to the average Spanish bilate-

ral aid. Education and health stand out in both levels as key sectors within this field. Another important aspect for SDC is that of the production sectors.

Spanish decentralised cooperation also assigns significant efforts to humanitarian action, more than 8% of its overall ODA average, which without doubt reflects the interest of its populations for this expression of solidarity. Awareness also receives relatively more attention on behalf of the sub-State governments than that observed in the central Administration.

A frequently used indicator to measure a donor’s commitment with the fight against poverty is the percentage of ODA allocated to basic social services, because it is assumed that these are concentrated in the less privileged so-

**Table 5 | Sectorial distribution of Spanish decentralised cooperation, 2004/2005**

	ACs	LEs	Bilateral ODA
	(2004) (1)	(2005) (2)	(2005) (3)
Infrastructure and social services	42,06	56,64	55,9
Education	10,84	16,25	19,1
Health	10,75	14,43	12,9
Governance and civil society	5,32	8,95	9,5
Infrastructure and economic services	1,81	2,33	17,8
Production sectors	10,37	7,11	9,3
Multisectorial aid	19,01	15,53	17,1
Humanitarian aid	8,40	7,95	*
Awareness	6,71	5,24	*

Sources: Own compilation, based on:

- 1) Intermon-Oxfam. *Realidad de la Ayuda (The reality of aid)*, 2005-2006.
- 2) FEMP. *Development cooperation of local entities. 2005 Report*.
- 3) Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. *Annual International Cooperation Plan – Follow-up 2005*. \* These “sectors” are not included in the sectorial distribution of ODA in the PACI.

<sup>16</sup> | A further problem is the lack of uniformity in the categorisation of the involved sectors, as can be seen in the following Table. This is due to various factors. One of these is the lack of a common definition. In this regard, the General Plan of Spanish Cooperation for 2005-2008 contributes to this situation because it is based on sectors that cannot be harmonised with those of the CAD. Another factor is that the compilation of statistics does not seem to be very homogeneous nor is this presented in the same manner by the various sources.

Table 6   ODA for basic social services, 2005		
	ODA for Basic Social Services/BSS (Mill. Euros)	% BSS/ODA available for distribution
General State Administration	115,5	17,98 %
AECI	64,0	22,52 %
Autonomous Communities	58,1	28,69 %
Local Entities	24,4	27,61%

Source: MAEC, PACI-Follow-up 2005, Madrid, 2006, p.29.

cial classes of developing countries. In this sense, the sub-State administrations show a greater degree of commitment compared to the central government: during the 2004-2007 period, while the General State Administration allocated 15.37% of its aid to this purpose, linked to the “20/20” international commitment goals, the autonomous communities allocated 31.17% (MAEC. PACI 2007: 18). In the case of the local entities, the data available for 2005 show a similar behaviour to that of the ACs (See Table 6).

Regarding the MDGs, the behaviour of autonomous cooperation is similar to that found in the central government’s bilateral aid. Whereas in 2005 the General State Administration allocated 51% of its gross bilateral ODA to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the ACs allocated 53% of their aid to this objective. Although there are no data on the LEs on this item, their situation was probably similar, because the degree of local commitment with the MDGs is very high (FEMP, 2006).

Table 7. ODA via NGODs, 2003 and 2005					
	ODA distributed through gross bilateral NGOD/ODA (%)			ODA distributed through gross bilateral NGOD/ODA (%)	
	2003	2005		2003	2005
Autonomous Comm.			Extremadura	83,1	90,9
Andalusia	65,4	64,9	Galicia	35,3	51,8
Aragon	94,3	84,7	La Rioja	86,2	86,3
Asturias	80,2	77,5	Madrid	66,1	81,1
Balearic Islands	62,8	64,9	Murcia	76,8	80,9
Canary Islands	49,3	68,9	Navarre	93,9	92,4
Cantabria	89,6	39,2	Basque Country	83,5	79,6
Castile La Mancha	94,1	92,9	Comm. of Valencia	78,4	82,5
Castile Leon	94,6	84,6	Average ACs	77,9	73,9
Catalonia	90,9	33,4	Local Entities	-	82,0
			Reference: AECI	32,8	38,3

Source: Own compilation based on: MAEC, PACI- Follow up, 2005, and FEMP 2006.

### 3.1.3. Aid methods. A growing diversification

However, in recent years a clear tendency is observed to broaden the SDC instruments, in line with a tendency to place it increasingly within the framework of public cooperation policies. In general, three main methods are observed that operate simultaneously:<sup>17</sup>

1| Direct cooperation is carried out directly by the autonomous community or local entity. This includes twinning and agreements, contributions to multilateral programmes, awareness programmes, some humanitarian action interventions, etc.

2| Coordinated cooperation refers to interventions that are initiatives of the sub-national administration, although part or all of which are carried out in cooperation with another agent.

3| Cooperation on initiative of non-profit entities includes interventions proposed by these entities and co-financed by the autonomous public and local administrations through calls for subventions.

If the third method – particularly cooperation through NGOD – has predominated and continues to be predominant, a growing interest is perceived for enhancing the other two, especially direct cooperation, a method which is not new, even though its weight and level of sophistication has considerably increased in the past years.<sup>18</sup> An example of this can be found in the 2005 programmatic

cooperation document of the Diputación of Cordoba:

*“Without doubt the process which has received most support, especially since 2000, has been that of direct cooperation, which is based on specific working lines promoted by the Diputación itself [...]. The consolidation of this direct cooperation line and the promotion of a municipal cooperation policy, with a greater participation and implication of the municipalities and communities of our province in issues of development cooperation, are some of the major challenges of this new legislature.”*<sup>19</sup>

Other entities have developed documents on the subject, which is an indication of their interest,<sup>20</sup> even when the terms used may vary. For example the Basque municipal fund, Euskal Fondoa, speaks of partial and complete management, whereby the latter is the equivalent of direct cooperation. On the other hand, other administrations do not refer explicitly to the concept and only refer to the cooperation agents, one of which is the public entity itself.

It can also be observed how this trend reflects a clear political intentionality on behalf of many decentralised administrations. In the case of the 2006-2008 Plan of the Municipality of Barcelona, it is clearly stated that 25% of the resources will be allocated to direct municipal cooperation, compared to 60% for aid via calls for non-profit entities (including awareness campaigns). This is possible

<sup>17</sup> | See the Barcelona City Council (2006) that develops these methods and presents an interesting review on their respective development.

<sup>18</sup> | In this context, see Malé (2007) for a detailed analysis of this model, which he strongly supports.

<sup>19</sup> | See Diputación of Córdoba, Declaración de 2005 (2005 Declaration). <http://www.dipucordoba.es/internacional/declaracion.php>

<sup>20</sup> | See, e.g. Municipality of Córdoba, La Cooperación Directa en el Ayuntamiento de Córdoba, (Direct Cooperation in the Municipality of Córdoba) 2004; Community of Madrid, Agreement of the Government Council of June 3, 1999 whereby the Specific Development Cooperation Programme is approved (1999).





because this municipality “has sufficient background knowledge and has given consideration to the international cooperation model it wishes to pledge for, and [which allows it] to centre its activities on bilateral projects, on city-to-city projects...” (Municipality of Barcelona 2006).

Direct action undoubtedly marked a new stage in SDC, although this transformation is not free from controversy. As was to be expected, the major “beneficiaries” of the current model,<sup>21</sup> the non-governmental organizations, have raised some alarm. The NGODs have expressed doubts about directing decentralised aid via the central government (a part of the “direct” cooperation supports AECI programmes), the “risk of carrying out an operation in sectors where the NGODs may have a greater action capacity”, of “reproducing one of the flaws of the central model” due to the lack of coordination and/or “falling into a significant lack of transparency” (Castañeda 2005: 102). In spite of these complaints, the direct cooperation method will probably increase in the future, although it will coexist with other methods which, for various reasons, also have their own *raison d’être*.

### 3.2. Spanish decentralised cooperation with Latin America

The transformation in the methods of Spanish decentralised cooperation is particularly noticeable in the action in Latin America because, as was already pointed out, that is where most of the resources are concentrated. To understand this phenomenon, it

is important to analyse, even if only briefly, the reasons that account for this strong Latin American bias of SDC.

#### 3.2.1. Some of the factors that account for the Latin American focus

Regarding this issue, it is evident that cultural and personal ties have played a significant role in the initial stages. In other words, it has been easier, and even “natural”, to cooperate with the Latin American countries which share a common history and where many people who come from Spanish regions and localities are now living, some of whom still maintain ties to their relatives in Spain. As this cooperation has progressed, the reasons have changed and increased.

Which are the factors that have contributed to maintaining the bias towards Latin America? On one hand there are various internal factors.<sup>22</sup> First of all the historical and human ties have to be emphasised, which led to numerous spontaneous contacts which, with time, ended in actions that were more or less supported by institutional cooperation. Cooperation based on the initiative of citizens present in the Latin American countries has also been very frequent. The role of members of religious orders has been particularly intense and many have sought support in their territories of origin in Spain. In this sense, the ACs and the LEs have also justified part of their action in the region through the presence of numerous groups; this is a powerful argument behind the importance of Cuba for cooperation from Galicia and the Canaries.

There has been a recent turn in this situation with the growing presence of Latin American immigrants in Spain. The region is the second major zone of origin of people who have come to the country in recent years. In addition to having to respond to their needs in terms of social integration in the territory, they are a new reason for cooperation with Latin America, particularly with those countries that account for most of the flow: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

Political solidarity has also played an important role in SDC. This motivation is based on political affinity and a growing awareness regarding the need of contributing to the reduction of poverty and the global inequalities. In both cases, Latin America is a clear referent for the ACs and the LEs due to their cultural proximity. Additionally, a significant number of Spanish local and autonomous leaders have had direct experience in the region and are aware of their potential and challenges.

Finally, in the framework of the global internationalisation trend of regions and cities, Latin America is, together with Europe and the south of the Mediterranean, the preferred zone of action. On account of the shared language and culture, this region offers many opportunities, and is also in midst of a decentralisation process, so that there is great demand for foreign cooperation and SDC is a much-demanded natural partner.

On the other hand, a factor that enhances the Latin American focus is the pre-

sence of a relatively powerful infrastructure of Spanish Cooperation in Latin America, which serves as a direct or indirect support of autonomous and local action in this region. For example, the presence of the Oficinas Técnicas de Cooperación (OTC – Technical Cooperation Offices) of the AECI in every country provides not only a referent that does not exist in other areas in the South, but often also facilitates the work of the ACs and the LEs who are active in the area. The extent of this is such that various OTCs have staff from the decentralised cooperation, and in the larger ones, there is a person from the AECI who has the main function of serving as a liaison with SDC.

Furthermore, something that is particularly evident in the case of the ACs, is the fact that there are other interests, such as political (i.e. due to the presence of a large number of residents who come from that community) or economic reasons, that may serve as an additional incentive for cooperation actions in many Latin American countries (Freres and Sanz 2003).

On the other hand, there is a series of exogenous factors that have directly or indirectly driven SDC with Latin America. This idea is related to the analysis made by Sarraute and Théry (2006:33) on the “relations induced by programmes or meetings”. One of the most significant was, without doubt, the framework offered by the European Union which, since the entry of Spain in 1986 has expanded its collaboration with this region. Although the volume may

<sup>21</sup> | According to data of the CONGDE (2006: 17), in 2005 23% of the resources given to the NGODs – approximately 121 million euros – came from decentralised administrations. This is equivalent to 50% of the public contributions received, and almost twice the amount of contributions received from the AECI (although the relative importance of the AECI is expected to increase as from 2006, with the implementation of the NGOD Agreements method). One quarter of the increase in resources for the NGODs between 2004 and 2005 came from SDC.

<sup>22</sup> | See Sarraute and Théry 2006 for an analysis of this aspect at European level.

<sup>23</sup> | The following indicators of Spain’s presence in this programme are worth noting: From the 14 thematic networks of the URB-AL Programme, three have been chaired by a Spanish local entity; from the 186 approved projects, 58 are led by Spanish localities; the Documentation Centre of the URB-AL Programme (CDPU) is situated in the city of Malaga; and this Observatory has its headquarters in the Barcelona Provincial Council. Further information available in: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/urbal/index\\_es.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/latin-america/regional-cooperation/urbal/index_es.htm). This analysis coincides with that presented by Sarraute and Théry (2006: 34) who highlight the key importance Southern European in programmes such as URB-AL.

not have been significant in relative terms, the creation of horizontal cooperation lines, especially to link European and Latin American cities (URBAL),<sup>23</sup> has had a major impact on Spanish local cooperation.

Additional resources probably do not represent the main benefit for most of the Spanish local entities (which is quite the opposite for many of the Latin American counterparts). These programmes have rather led to an external confirmation of the need to promote the direct cooperation method with greater intensity.<sup>24</sup>

Other external elements that have also gone in the same direction of enhancing this vision include the Local Human Development Programme (LHDP),<sup>25</sup> and the programme that was derived from the LHDP, the ART initiative (Support to Territorial Networks and other issues on cooperation for human development) – both of the United Nations. In spite of being global programmes, their performance has been particularly fruitful in Latin America and the Spanish local entities – and some ACs – have been some of its most active participants.

A further major result, both in the case of the EU cooperation and in the cooperation promoted by the United Nations, has been the promotion of trans-regional networks that involve a series of private and public actors and the increase of paradiplomacy, particularly at local level (some have called

this “city diplomacy”). This experience has undoubtedly enriched the traditional task of SDC, and it can be stated, in fact, that the Spanish local entities have taken on a leadership role in many initiatives.

Apart from extending the development cooperation opportunities, these networks are an interesting tool per se, in the light of reinforcing the voice of decentralised administrations in the international community. In the specific field of European-Latin American relations they have enhanced the reflection on social cohesion, a central issue in the bi-regional political dialogue since the Guadalajara Summit of 2004 (Freres and Sanahuja 2006).<sup>26</sup> In this context, we should highlight the Forum’s initiative EU- Latin America and the Caribbean, with Representatives from the Local Governments, which met in Paris for the first time on November 2007.<sup>27</sup> Spain is one of the organising countries of this initiative that expects to contribute to the bi-regional process. Regarding the Ibero-American Conferences, the Local Government Fora<sup>28</sup> are a significant input of the construction process of an “Ibero-American citizenship” and their proposals have been conveyed to the Summits ever since their beginning in 2005. There are networks such as the Ibero-American Union of Capital Cities (UCCI – Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas), the Ibero-American Union of Municipalities (UIM – Unión Iberoamericana de Municipalistas)

or the Ibero-American Organisation on Inter-Municipal Cooperation (OICI – Organización Iberoamericana de Cooperación Intermunicipal), and programmes such as the Ibero-American Centre of Strategic Urban Development (CIDEU – Centro Iberoamericano de Desarrollo Estratégico Urbano) which have been mainly promoted by Spanish entities. On the other hand, in both contexts, the bi-local link is considered an important asset by the Spanish Government in its international position.

This brief overview highlights the fact that the driving foreign programmes are focused on the local administration level and that there are no major initiatives that approach intermediate administration levels (regional, autonomous, etc.). In Spain, whereas the FEMP and the Funds Confederation operate at municipal and provincial level, promoting coordination and the exchange of information and experiences, there is no equivalent body for the autonomous communities. In practice, this problem in the cooperation field has been overcome through the Inter-Territorial Commission and through coordination exercises on geographical planning and the dialogue with the Latin American partner countries.

### 3.2.2. The driving role of Spanish entities and initiatives

Some of the entities and initiatives that have played a driving role regarding SDC to Latin America should be mentioned in this context. At a general level, the FEMP plays a vital role as the representative body of Spanish municipalities and provinces, by promoting local cooperation and contributing to

establish a common working framework within the current wide diversity. Its focus is not Latin America, but a significant part of its international activity outside the EU is centred in that region. In addition, one of its tasks has been to support counterpart organisations in Latin American countries through meetings organised for exchange and training purposes or for specific technical support. Likewise, the FEMP maintains a contact and twinning database.<sup>29</sup> This role as a centralised “register” is important, especially if a greater quality control is achieved in order to prevent the proliferation of agreements with no substance.

The abovementioned networks and partnerships, such as the CIDEU, UCCI, OICI, have also played a relevant role. CIDEU is one of the soundest programmes of the Ibero-American Summits. It is headquartered in Barcelona and has involved many Spanish localities in cooperation initiatives with Latin America. The UIM created a project linked to the Ibero-American system that is centred on strengthening the management capacity of local governments in Latin America, and is funded with contributions of the AECEI, the Junta of Andalusia and various local entities of Andalusia. The UCCI is also linked to the Summits, and although only two of its members are from Spain (Madrid and Barcelona), it has served as a referent for Spanish-Latin American inter-municipal cooperation.

On the other hand, the Centro de Estudios Municipales y Cooperación Internacional (CEMCI – Centre for Municipal and International Cooperation Studies) in Granada should be mentioned, which is in charge of an important training task, with a strong Latin American orientation as part of its internatio-

<sup>24</sup> | This is because the underlying philosophy of the decentralised communitarian cooperation concept was to strengthen the ties between the UE and its counterparts in partner regions – in contrast with the “Spanish model” where, until recently, the adjective “decentralised” was used mainly in reference to the “non central” source of the aid resources.

<sup>25</sup> | For information on the LHDP in Cuba, where Spanish participation has been very relevant, see <http://www.undp.org.cu/pdhl/>

<sup>26</sup> | The last meeting held in Rosario, Argentina, in July 2007 dealt with this subject precisely. See: <http://www.cen-trourbal.com/rosario.htm>

<sup>27</sup> | See: [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/la/lac/lg/overview\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/la/lac/lg/overview_en.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> | The II Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments was held in Valparaíso, Chile: Further information available at: <http://www.foroiberoamericanolocal.org/>

<sup>29</sup> | The latest list is from January 2007 and more than 100 twinned LEs were recorded (in many cases more than one) with counterparts in Latin America. See: [http://www.femp.es/index.php/femp/areas\\_de\\_gesti\\_n/relaciones\\_interlocales](http://www.femp.es/index.php/femp/areas_de_gesti_n/relaciones_interlocales)

<sup>30</sup> | For further information see: <http://www.demuca.org/>



nal action. In the Central American region, FUNDEMUCA (Foundation for the Local Development and for the Strengthening of the Municipal and Institutional Development in Central American and the Caribbean),<sup>30</sup> an initiative of Spanish Cooperation which since 1995 has involved various Spanish municipalities in various training and institutional reinforcement projects, has also played a major role.

### 3.2.3. The weight of SDC in Spanish Cooperation with Latin America

A fact that is not always taken into account is the relative weight of decentralised aid in the context of Spanish Cooperation with many Latin American countries. In this regard, a clear example was the renewal of Spanish bilateral cooperation for Cuba in

September 2007, after four years in which the official flows had been discontinued. The fact is that Spanish autonomous and local cooperation was maintained alive throughout this period, which in itself was a positive factor, but also contributed to facilitate the official re-instatement.<sup>31</sup>

Preliminary data for 2006 show that this situation is also reflected in the global Spanish cooperation figures for Latin America. As can be seen on Table 8, the overall contribution of SDC in 2006 to the nine major Latin American recipients of Spanish ODA was more than one third of the total amount, compared to hardly one fifth of the amount contributed by the AEI, the main actor of the Spanish system. From this group of countries, in only two of these – Argentina and Brazil – the AEI is ahead of SDC, basically

Table 8   Major Latin American recipients of Spanish gross bilateral ODA, 2006 (Mill. Euros)						
	Ranking*	Total ODA	AEI	Total %	ACs and LEs	Total %
Guatemala	1	176,2	11,9	6,8%	20,6	11,7%
Peru	7	57,6	11,7	20,3%	35,5	61,6%
Colombia	8	52,5	11,7	22,3%	14,2	27,0%
Bolivia	10	45,5	12,7	27,9%	26,3	57,8%
Honduras	11	38,6	11,8	30,6%	15,3	39,6%
El Salvador	12	35,8	10,1	28,2%	23,6	65,9%
Nicaragua	15	30,2	6,2	20,5%	18,3	60,6%
Argentina	23	15,0	5,8	38,7%	4,8	32,0%
Brazil	28	13,6	4,1	30,1%	3,4	25,0%
Total 9 countries		465,0	86,0	18,5%	162,0	34,8%

Source: Own compilation based on MAEC, *Avance de Seguimiento PACI-2006*. Madrid: MAEC, 2007. Note: \*Ranking refers to the relative position in the recipient list which includes countries from other regions.

<sup>31</sup> | According to a press article, “the Cuban government highlighted the fact that the various actors of Spanish decentralised cooperation [...] ‘have contributed to the reestablishment of this dialogue’” See: *La Vanguardia*, September 29, 2007 (<http://www.lavanguardia.es/lv24h/20070929/53397998349.html>).

because the latter has concentrated on Central America and the Andean region. Evidently, in the case of SDC, a large number of donors are being added who do not operate as a block, but even so this shows that it has a remarkable relative weight.

As in the case of bilateral cooperation in general, as can be seen in Table 9, SDC more or less equally divides its resources between Central America and the Caribbean on one side and South America on the other. Both autonomous and local cooperation allocate their aid to the following same countries (in this order, depending on the year): Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Colombia.

Local entities and autonomous communities have also shown a high degree of commitment with the region through their response to the various humanitarian tragedies that regularly devastate Latin America. This became evident once again in the case of the earthquake in Peru in August 2007. In spite of occurring in mid-summer, decentralised cooperation rapidly responded to the Peruvian requests, to a great extent because its presence in that country – mainly through the supporting NGOs, but also through the ties consolidated with various regional and local institutions – is highly relevant. A further sig-

nificant fact was the coordination efforts with official cooperation, which designed a reconstruction plan that involved SDC in a relevant manner.

### 3.2.4. Direct cooperation in Latin America

The information on the SDC methods in Latin America is quite dispersed so it is not easy to obtain a complete picture of a specific instrument as with direct cooperation. Even so, the available data provides sufficient basis to determine a certain general tendency. In this regard it should be pointed out that a significant part of this cooperation is not recorded in the ODA figures because they are often referred to institutional contacts, consultancies and other types of aid that do not involve financial contributions. In any case, it should be stressed that this is a field that plays a relevant role and is clearly growing in importance.

This method can probably be observed more clearly among the leaders in the sector because most of the entities have a cautious behaviour regarding innovations. Resistance may occur internally (bureaucratic inertia) or externally (particularly in actors who consider that their current favourable situation has been affected, such as the NGOs), but

Table 9   Decentralised cooperation with Latin America, 2005		
	ACs	LEs
Central America and the Caribbean	72.557,05	25.976,90
South America	73.648,73	27.335,20
Total Latin America	146.205,78	53.312,10
Latin America as % the overall ODA	55%	63%

Source: Author’s own compilation.  
Note: These are estimated data because they were obtained from various sources (MAEC, FEMP) that use different methodologies.



there are also political or institutional reasons that may account for a cautious attitude.

In any case, it is evident that the development of the direct cooperation of Spanish decentralised entities is best observed in Latin America. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that much of the background to this approach is to be found in the cooperation with the Balkan area.

To understand the new aspects and the extent of this method, a useful approach is to analyse it from different points of view:

- The development of direct cooperation. The case of the Municipality of Barcelona is quite illustrative in this regard. Since 1991, this city has gone through three clear stages in the development of its direct cooperation. The initial stages were strongly marked by the Balkan crisis, a zone it did not hold too many ties with before, but as a result of the intense civil mobilisation that took place, it became the destination of all its direct cooperation actions during the 1991-94 period. This development was a very useful experience and was transferred, in the second stage (1995-1998), to other areas such as Latin America, with actions in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela, in addition to some sub-regional actions in Central America. These were, in general, modest projects, meetings, technical aid actions, etc. A new and powerful dynamism was created because this implied involving various public entities of the city in cooperation activities with Latin America. During the third stage (1999-2002), these lines start to become consolidated, with a focus on the “exchange of experiences in knowledge transfer on local management issues” rather than on the contribution of funds. There is a clear orientation towards the social sectors in the Latin American projects. Colombia and Cuba stand out for the number of projects implemented during the pe-

riod (eight and 13 projects, respectively. In Colombia the focus was on cooperation with the city of Bogotá and an agreement was signed with the purpose exchanging experiences on issues involving local policies, such as citizen security. Cooperation with Cuba has been focused on supporting the recovery of Old Havana.

- Network support to enhance impact. The support provided to networks and partnerships of local entities in Latin America has been a key element of this type of cooperation. The Barcelona Provincial Council, like many other Spanish LEs, has demonstrated that it is fully committed to contribute to the strengthening of organisations such as the Central-American Conference for State Decentralisation and Local Development (CONFEDELCA – Conferencia Centroamericana por la Descentralización del Estado y el Desarrollo Local) or the Central-American Institute for Local Development (IDELCA – Instituto de Desarrollo Local de Centroamérica), which it carries out with other partners of the autonomous communities.

- Better defined and focalised agreements. The Spanish LEs have a long-standing practice in signing agreements with Latin American counterparts, but the follow-up of many of these has been scarce or nonexistent. However, a growing practice is observed in the current approach of direct cooperation: the signing of cooperation agreements to carry out quite well-defined activities, including monitoring and assessment mechanisms. There are many examples of this. In the case of the Municipality of Cordoba, three agreements have been signed with Latin America: two with homonymous cities (in Mexico and in Argentina) and one with Old Havana, and this is being extended to other municipalities in the region, through agreements with a more sectorial approach.

- The migration and development links. The migration issue is actually becoming an im-

portant factor for promoting direct cooperation by SDC. This can be observed in the increasing number of contributions in the field of what has been called co-development. Many examples could be quoted. An interesting one is the project of the Murcia Administration and the province of El Cañar in Ecuador, which also involves various municipalities in Murcia, the Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo and the AECI.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, even when frequent co-development actions are finally not implemented, the presence of a migrant Latin American population is quoted as a driving factor for cooperation, as in the case of an agreement signed between the Balearic Islands and Colombia in 2006 for cooperation in various sectors. One of the explicitly quoted reasons which led to the signing of this agreement is the fact that Colombians “are the second largest population of Latin American immigrants in the Balearic Islands”.

- Public-Private Partnerships. A further element that might probably reinforce this type of cooperation is the presence, in Latin America, of companies, banks and savings banks that are well-established at autonomous or local level. Numerous cases of Public-Private Partnerships to promote development are already being observed. An example of this is the Alianza por el Agua en América Central (Alliance for Water in Central America),<sup>33</sup> which involves autonomous and local entities responsible for policies on water-related issues, water utilities, the AECI, various NGOs and bodies of the UN that promote better access to drinking water.

- Coordination with AECI. AECI has been a major partner in many of the larger direct cooperation interventions of SDC. For many years, the Xunta (autonomous government) of Galicia

has been working together with the Agency in the fisheries sector in various Latin American countries as a result of an institutional agreement. Several decentralised entities cooperate with the AECI Araucaria XXI Programme on the environment.

- Multilateral Cooperation. Multilateral organisations are becoming increasingly relevant as partners. The LHDP of the United Nations was mentioned earlier, and is in charge of channelling the contributions of many Spanish autonomous and local administrations towards Latin America. In this context, the International Meeting “Multilateral Framework and Decentralised Cooperation for the Millennium Goals”, held in Havana in December 2005 should be mentioned, which was organised by the UNDP and drew numerous attendees from Spain.<sup>34</sup> This is an acknowledgement, on one hand, of the growing relevance of decentralised cooperation as a new fund source for multilateral action and, on the other, that it is a relevant route of direct cooperation for SDC. In this context, the Municipality of Barcelona, in its presentation on direct municipal cooperation, included multilateral programmes focused towards “the construction of peace, the support to municipalism, the government and local democracy, and of the entrepreneurial capacity of the cities”.<sup>35</sup>

Regarding the dimensions of direct cooperation, there is no information available on SDC in Latin America, which makes it difficult to carry out a rigorous analysis of the issue. However, a considerable variability can be observed. Some entities allocate a fixed percentage (Municipality of Barcelona), some allocate almost everything through this route (Euskal Fundazioa), while others lack clear criteria (Community of Madrid). It is interesting to take a

<sup>32</sup> For further information, see: <http://www.codesarrollocanarmurcia.org/>

<sup>33</sup> See: <http://www.alianzaporelagua.org/somos.asp>

<sup>34</sup> See: <http://www.codesarrollocanarmurcia.org/>

<sup>35</sup> Source: <http://www.bcn.cat/cooperacio/esp/multi.html>

<sup>36</sup> See: [http://www.fonscatala.org/arxius/publicacions/memories/Memo2006\\_ct.pdf](http://www.fonscatala.org/arxius/publicacions/memories/Memo2006_ct.pdf)



Table 10   Direct Cooperation of the Junta of Andalusia with Latin America, 2006			
Managing entity	Number of projects	Funding	Funding (%)
Junta of Andalusia (direct)	13	13,55	23,82
NGOD	55	13,08	23,00
Local Entities	1	1,00	1,76
Social and corporate agents	9	4,10	7,21
TOTAL	79	31,73	100,00

Source: Junta of Andalusia. International Development Cooperation Programme. 2006 Balance, p. 31.

close look at the case of the Junta of Andalusia, because for many years now, it has shown a clear preference for this type of instrument. Table 10 shows the resource distribution by managing entity for Latin America in 2006. Direct cooperation, implemented through the Junta itself, adds up to over 13.5 million euro, and is the major item in terms of importance. In relative terms, only 12% of the aid allocated to the Mediterranean and less than 2% of aid sent to Sub-Saharan Africa was channelled through this method.

With a far smaller overall budget (approximately six million euros in 2006), the Fons Catalá allocated 20% of what it has termed “own initiatives”, almost 100 thousand euros, to Central America.<sup>36</sup> In turn, from the overall 2.64 million euros budget in 2006, this year the Municipality of Vitoria-Gasteiz implemented only one direct cooperation action (by the entity itself) in Peru, for a value of 50,000 euros, although it has signed agreements with various organisations including the Euskal Fondoa for over 500 thousand euros, some of which could be included in a wider definition of direct cooperation.<sup>37</sup>

The preference for Latin American is also stated in the political explanation provided by the Diputación (Provincial Council) of Cordoba regarding its direct cooperation.<sup>38</sup> In this context, it states that it has decided to direct this type of aid to Bolivia and Guatemala due to the ongoing decentralisation processes and to their high percentage of indigenous people. This is implemented through agreements with institutions and focusing on involving the municipalities of the province in these programmes.

To summarise, it is not possible to provide a fair account of the growing importance of direct cooperation as a method of SDC with Latin America. A deeper knowledge on the subject would require having comparable and independent data, because most of the information available at the moment consists of partial figures and general impressions. In any case, for a region with average-income countries, the direct cooperation method is quite meaningful because some of the pressing bottlenecks in Latin America are found in the local, regional and national institutional environment. So if this type of instrument can

<sup>37</sup> | See Memoria 2006 of the Municipality Vitoria-Gasteiz in [http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/wb002/docs/coop/es/datos\\_2006\\_consejo.doc](http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/wb002/docs/coop/es/datos_2006_consejo.doc) . The overall amount of 200 thousand euros of the agreement with Euskal Fondoa is allocated to projects in Latin America.

<sup>38</sup> | See 2005 Declaration: <http://www.dipucordoba.es/internacional/declaracion.php>

contribute to reinforce the capacity of Latin American decentralised administrations, its impact will be greater than that which results from other forms of cooperation, even when far fewer resources are involved.

### 3.3. Tendencies and outlook

This study has shown that decentralised administrations have acquired a leading role in the Spanish cooperation system. This fact is evidenced through of the amount of these contributions, which are one of the major items of the overall Spanish Cooperation, and are the result of an enormous budgetary effort made by the entities themselves over barely one and a half decades. The relevance of the sector is also seen in the consolidation of a regulatory, strategic and institutional framework that includes many innovative elements for this level of administration and that is observed with interest from outside Spain.<sup>2</sup>

It has also been clearly stressed how important Spanish decentralised cooperation is and has always been for Latin America. This is not only evidenced in the distribution analysis of the economic resources, where Latin America stands out with respect to other regions – with contributions over 170 million euros in 2006 – but also in the rich and complex mesh of networks that connects the Spanish, Ibero-American and Euro-American entities with this region. Thanks to this activism, Spanish decentralised entities have gained a leading position in the various horizontal cooperation programmes between the European Union and Latin America and in the framework of Ibero-American Cooperation.

This leadership is a legitimate source

of pride, but also involves very important responsibilities for the entities themselves and for the central Government. In this context, a remarkable effort is observed on behalf of both parties for taking on these commitments, both politically and by committing resources. It is currently not possible to quantify that contribution, but there is no doubt that it is a significant amount.

We have also observed the weight SDC has in Spain’s Cooperation with Latin America, where the overall aid of the decentralised entities exceeds, in various countries, the DOA of the AECI, the major management body of the General State Administration. In some countries, such as Peru and El Salvador, SDC represents more than 60% of Spanish ODA. However, to view SDC as a set could also lead to the misunderstanding of considering the actors as a coordinated unit, when the fact is that progress is still required in this area.

The latter is one of the major challenges of SDC and it will be no easy task to advance too far, because the internal institutional incentives are not clearly aimed at a more intense coordination. The central Government’s efforts to provide encouragement towards this goal are clearly insufficient and are also resisted by many local communities and entities for fear of losing autonomy in this field.

In this sense, there is a lack of reflection and development of strategic lines to fully situate SDC on the path of the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> The analysis made in Box 2 shows how these principles (appropriation, harmonisation, alignment, management by objectives and mutual

<sup>39</sup> | A draft of the Spanish Cooperation Assessment made by the CAD in 2007 refers repeatedly to decentralised cooperation as a globally positive and distinctive component of the Spanish aid system.

<sup>40</sup> | The Declaration can be obtained in Spanish at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/56/34580968.pdf>

## Box 2 | Decentralised cooperation and the Paris Declaration

*What is the position of SDC vis-à-vis the five principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness for Development? This is a pending issue of this type of cooperation, as was pointed out in the latest assessment carried out by the Development Aid Committee on Spanish Cooperation. Some of its concepts have been published in a recent article by its Chairman, Richard Manning (2007). Based on his – and other – analyses, the following conclusions can be drawn:*

1) *Regarding appropriation (partner countries have effective authority over their development policies and strategies and coordinate development actions), there is an important problem with the entry because governments in many developing countries consider that appropriation is related solely to national governments. This point of view ignores the fact that a significant part of ODA is channelled through decentralised administrations in those countries. For SDC, this is a core issue, because its main interlocutors are precisely these administrations. Insofar as direct cooperation can be addressed in this manner, it will provide a very positive contribution.*

2) *As to harmonisation (actions of donors are harmonised, transparent and collectively effective), this is one of the major internal challenges for Spanish Cooperation as a whole. In this sense, the concept of autonomy of the autonomous and local action has to be kept in balance with the need to cut down transaction costs, reduce overlapping, and improve coordination and transparency. There are no unique models to advance in this direction, but it is essential to take more resolute steps. In this framework, the work of the Funds Confederation and of the FEMP become increasingly important, although their capacity shall have to be reinforced and further mechanisms should be created in order to incorporate the ACs, because the Inter-Territorial Commission does not have operational capacity*

3) *Alignment (donors base all their support on the strategies, institutions and national development procedures of the partner countries) has similar implications to appropriation because, once again, its focus is set at national level. One of the problems bilateral cooperation has had is the creation of parallel management units that enable overcoming administrative obstacles, but do not contribute to the institutional strengthening of the partners. Bilateral ODA has increased the use of general and sectorial budgetary support instruments, aimed at providing alignment. To what extent is it feasible – or convenient – to consider the implication of SDC in this type of instruments?*

4) *The management by objectives approach (resource management and improved decision-making focused on results) is a pending challenge for the entire Spanish Cooperation. The introduction of multi-annual and annual plans, of country and sectorial strategies, contribute to this end, but it is necessary to advance more rapidly with a holistic vision that may enhance follow-up and assessment.*

5) *The challenge of mutual responsibility (donors and partners are responsible for the development outcomes) is not mentioned too much, but it is essential because this is precisely what cooperation involves – not merely aid. Once again, the route of direct cooperation can contribute to significant progress in this direction, because actions should reflect a solid agreement between the parties, with shared responsibilities.*

*Finally, the Paris Declaration was in Fact developed and adopted by national States and not by other actors, but its principles should be valid for all the cooperation system.*

responsibility) involve overall challenges, and in the specific case of cooperation with Latin America, they are particularly relevant due to the weight they carry in that region for SDC. To this effect, the direct cooperation may become increasingly important as an instrument, but provided it does not lose sight of the need to link it to the Paris principles.

Finally, given its leadership in the Euro-Latin American and Ibero-American

context, Spanish Decentralised Cooperation should play a driving role in the debate and development of proposals for the application of the Declaration of Paris principles, by resorting to its experience and presence in Latin America. Thus, important steps could be taken, not only towards the substantial improvement of the global effectiveness of that kind of cooperation, but it would also contribute to improving the development objectives of Latin American countries.



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## Case study



# Decentralised cooperation in Argentina

Ana Cafiero\*

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Sustainable Human Development and Integration |  
Local development |  
Decentralised cooperation |  
Argentina |

*This section has three chapters. The first focuses on the profile of Decentralised Cooperation based on the coordination of Sustainable Human Development with international integration.*

*The concept of Development is approached from the various perspectives that have enhanced it historically. Its potential for “Local Development” is dealt with in depth, so as to provide a specific implementation framework through Decentralised Cooperation.*

*Decentralised Cooperation is defined as the foreign relations policy carried out by territorial entities with the purpose of collaborating with its counterparts in responding to the most critical demand claimed by its people: to win the battle against poverty and its leading cause, namely growing inequality.*

*In order to assess its possible application in Argentina, the second chapter analyses the capacity and potential of the provinces and municipalities to promote Decentralised Cooperation programmes. The geodemographic features and the legal framework are described, as well as the main conclusions of the research that was conducted in order to determine this quantitatively.*

*The third chapter describes the major Dissemination, Implementation and Training programmes executed with the aim of democratising the profile of the International Cooperation actors. It also includes a selection of experiences and outcomes obtained after these issues began to be approached in the framework of the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup>*

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## 1. New prospects in International Cooperation: the contribution of Decentralised Cooperation to Local Development

### 1.1. Extending the horizon of the concept of Development

The international development aid system has faced profound “global” transformations in recent years – global processes that have reconfigured the classical north/south cooperation relationships – and also doubts generated locally regarding the management systems and the weakness of the results obtained. This has led to the need of rethinking the traditional model.

That is why, in addition to the aid based on the traditional State-State practice, i.e. from donor to beneficiary, other modalities have been incorporated which have been introduced as multi-directional cooperation, and with the actors directly involved in the development, implementation and monitoring processes. A new paradigm of international relations is beginning to take shape. The concept “cooperation” acquires a new value, namely as all the work that can be carried out jointly to achieve a goal, and that goal is precisely that of materialising the “right to development for all people”.

In view of the subordination models that are typical for official development aid, the middle-income countries of the south are claiming a development model that includes integration, complementarity and solidarity. The value of each country's experience – particularly in democracy-building, which involves enhancing the development of its people – demands citizen participation. This is necessary in order to develop policies for solving specific problems of the people which, in Latin America, involve mainly fighting against poverty and inequality.

In the year 2000, during the United Nations 55th General Assembly, all the Nations committed themselves to prioritise the fight against poverty and proposed, in its VIII Millennium Goal, to “Develop a Global Partnership for Development” that will contribute to organise and synergise aid for the progress of the people. In order to be able to implement this in a framework of respect to the diverse cultural values and idiosyncrasies, it is essential to open up to new forms of relating and integrating, and to increase the scenarios that provide a space for all actors responsible for achieving this goal. Nobody is exempt from this responsibility: the national States, the local governments, the enterprises, universities, civil and community associations and the entire international system. Hundreds of Territorial Entities play a major role here and, through international integration, view this as an opportunity to strengthen their relations and mutually benefit from the exchange of experiences. This implies redefining and extending the civic responsibilities in the global society and turns the classical beneficiaries of traditional cooperation into active agents of this emerging scheme.

The fact that not only the central governments participate in the international links, but also the local governments, the NGOs, the universities and the enterprises, makes all of them play a leading role in the development process.

This transformation in the role of the local governments is bringing about a change in the traditional paradigms of development aid. This new leading role taken on by territorial actors makes them become involved in the new Decentralised Cooperation modalities.

As mentioned earlier, the ultimate goal of this cooperation is the development of the people, but this concept is being debated permanently. For decades now, the reality of an increasingly inequitable and excluding world

has demonstrated the inadequacy of policies based on restricting development to growth, industrialisation and modernisation. In their search for a better description of development, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) have proposed new definitions, as have many other social and academic movements.

Initially, “development” was a synonym of economic development: it was firmly considered that this, by itself, would entail social development. Time painfully demonstrated that things do not behave in such a linear or simple manner, and even less that this is the individual responsibility of each nation. The idea was to try and create a far more complex, comprehensive and active notion of development, within the context of interdependence of the countries. This is how the concept Sustainable Human Development arose, which is now being proposed by the United Nations. It shows the aptness of the value of inter-generational solidarity, and claims the need to include social and cultural issues, while placing development within a territory, and stressing local development as the suitable strategy to overcome poverty conditions.

In this context, Amartya Sen (2000) made a relevant contribution and pointed out that development should be understood as the expansion of capacities and the degree of freedom people have to decide – according to their values – how they wish to live. The concept of freedom is thus associated to that of development: development takes place if there is freedom for all. Capacities, from an individual point of view, are those options a person has to achieve wellbeing from the communitarian point of view, the strengths a society has to grow or to face adversity. Education as an ongoing learning process is the key asset that

enables personal and social satisfaction, and this is where international cooperation acquires far-reaching implications.

Sen (2002) also raises the issue on the purpose of development. If people are its ultimate aim, then a merely individual interpretation of freedom is not acceptable, unless it is directly bound to justice. Nobody can be fulfilled in a society that cannot be fulfilled. In societies with exclusion and poverty as its main features, like Latin American societies, the true exercise of freedom and capacity development should include, in their international context, policies that have the same approach.

In view of the homogenising and standardising model for cultures proposed by globalisation, the education and continuous education of citizens facilitates the consolidation of identity values, not in a nostalgic or static manner but in a dynamic way that contributes to the articulation of intra and inter-regional differences (Kliksberg, 2000).

Reigadas (2003) also points out that education is not only useful for training human resources for productive development but mainly for training citizens to become capable of promoting a new development model, which is centred on people as its first and foremost subject.

## 1.2. The Integration and Development binomial

A development strategy is, at the same time, a strategy aimed at facilitating insertion in the world. The integration-development binomial implies that true progress in the growth model with social equity, shall only be possible if this done jointly with other countries, according to Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Jorge Taiana (2007). This is precisely one of the challenges of regional integration: to achieve an integration model which takes into account the population’s ge-

nuine development and wellbeing as points of reference (Scannone 2004).

In order to measure the feasibility of this challenge, it is necessary to insist in acknowledging that Latin America is the most unequal region of the planet. Kliksberg (2007) states that in the past twenty-five years the number of new poor people rose to seventy million, and this number has not decreased in spite of the significant economic growth that has been taking place for five years, and the Gini coefficient is very high because it reached 0.56.

Everyone depends on everyone else in the field of development. Inter-dependence on global issues such as poverty, inequality, pollution, energy deficiency, financial volatility, industrial delocalisation, emerge as global-local problems that involve decentralised public policies, both in the countries of the north and of the south. To grow, to distribute and to integrate are verbs that have to be conjugated jointly and in the present tense if a timely response is to be achieved at all for citizens who cannot keep on waiting for long-term results.

This international debate has been explicitly opened ever since the wealthier societies considered that their sole responsibility is centred on directing the flow of aid only to the group of the 35 poorest countries, while excluding from international cooperation almost one hundred nations, which are namely those that managed to qualify as middle-income countries. Needless to say how much contrast there is in terms of income, sustainability of the achieved level of development, of institutional models, and even the different values in the countries that are included in this category (Cafiero, 2007).

That is why the binomial “development plus integration” summarises the international

policy strategy through which each nation can manage to become actively inserted on the basis of a project that is inherent to the country.

This debate generates controversy among the development experts as to whether there is a single development model that should be followed by all countries, where the international cooperation correlation would respond to the classical north-south relation, while other viewpoints propose that the ethics of development should create an inter-cultural consensus so that each country is free to decide on the development options from a number of models. The correlation for this criterion is south-south cooperation and decentralised cooperation, whereby the partners within a symmetric relation are defined as the actors of this international link, and this will enable a clearer progress in this direction, compared to the traditional north-south correlation.

Being part of interdependent relations implies that the freedom countries have to chose their development model is strongly based on the capacities trained through the exchange of experiences, on technical assistance between institutions and, increasingly, between territorial entities with similar development styles. This method, which is termed “decentralised cooperation”, is growing in the spheres of international integration and solidarity strategies.

Cooperation has a relevant message to convey in this context, and this implies changing the imposed concept of a single development model for another, whereby each nation has the “right to development”. Therefore, nations and their citizens should support knowledge exchange, training, and other models that, by respecting this point of view, support and supplement the effort undertaken by each country. In this scheme, the role of the State for promoting and articulating favourable



public policies, aimed at comprehensive local development strategies, cannot be delegated. (COPPPAL 2006).

The globalisation process has not only modified the life perspective in the different places, but social life is occurring in a new world scenario, characterised by the decline in some of the historical sovereignty features of the Nation States and the growing relevance of supranational entities (MERCOSUR, NAFTA, European Union, etc.).

As a result, decisions involving major issues at macro level for each national society are often being taken by actors that move outside the regulation and control spheres of the National States, and tend to become distanced from the people themselves.

In this context, it might appear that the municipalities are those that are best interpreting the meaning that local level has for its citizens (Pereyra, 2005). However, in order to allow this to reach its maximum potential and so that it does not remain restricted to isolated efforts, it should be articulated with the national policy to strengthen it at federal level, and executed by the central administration, as stated in the country's Constitution. It is in this context that the synergy of local development may reach a national dimension.

In this framework, local levels – paradoxically enough – are becoming more relevant for directing the development processes and specially, for seeing that these respond to the needs of the population. This becomes particularly important for formulating and applying local human development strategies, with an impact at national and supranational level (Arroyo, 2001).

At the Conference held in July 2007 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Society for International Development (SID 2007),

when reflecting on the outcome of what had been achieved over this period, a shift was proposed in the concept and practice of “money changing hands” to “ideas changing minds”, as the road for creating a new cooperation model, which requires being ready to listen and to learn all the time. This obviously implies focusing on endogenous development, at enhancing local capacities and at the contribution of innovative international cooperation models, such as decentralised cooperation, which is a road that has yet to be dealt with in depth.

### 1.3. The promising outlook of local development

Human development, approached locally, implies three distinct and integrated levels: a given territorial sphere which is part of a larger one; the local society which, based on that territory, is an integral yet differentiated part of the nation, and the local government that has been conferred attributions to act at territorial level as the politically responsible authority for that society.

Local governments, therefore, respond to a complex reality. In addition to their administrative functions, they also have an executive role to play in defining and executing territorial, social and economic policies (FAM 2003).

Municipal autonomy does not imply an isolated or independent organization, but one that shares regulations and provides services together with other “intermediate” state organizations, whose decisions also have an impact at macro-territorial level. Such is the case of the provinces in our country, the regions in Italy, the autonomous communities in Spain, and the states in Brazil or Mexico, etc.

Municipalities are, within the state's organization, the units that are more closely linked to the specific needs of the population, particularly

with those that involve quality of life. Municipalities are also the state administration levels which the greatest amount of demands and pressure placed upon them by the population in order to meet their economic, social and political needs. Municipal governments are those which are closest and most accessible to the demands of the various social groups that make up a community and, particularly, those with the lowest income levels, and hence the need to integrate and prioritise the various demands such as justice, equity, health, education, urban services, housing, food or management transparency. Municipalities belong to the administration level which is most sensitive to adjustment problems, errors and deviations that might occur both at political-institutional level and in ethical issues.

Human development at local level promotes a comprehensive approach, according to the report of the Senate of the Nation (1997), i.e. it is considered in five inter-related dimensions. Firstly, it is viewed not only as growth or competitiveness factor at territorial level, but also involves equity, employment, a fair income distribution and social integration. Secondly, as providing security in the sense of the soundness of the Democratic State and, at the same time, as having a growing responsibility on public issues over society as a whole. In the third place, from the point of view of sustainability, striving for example not to depend solely on a single natural resource, and avoiding processes of that lead to destroying the environment in the medium or long-term, or in aiming to increase the quality of life of the current and future population. Fourthly, as a participative activity, with a harmonising conception that promotes a different relation between the State, the market and civil society. Finally, as governance, in the sense of enhancing effectiveness and efficiency, the capacity to represent the will of the people and government transparency, aimed at achieving consensus and institutional creativity.

The current transformations of the State restrict the participation of its higher government levels, especially at federal level, regarding the conditions of the population's quality of life and the development of the economic activities. Significant tendencies are contributing to State decentralisation and globalisation. As a result challenges have increased, but also the opportunities and, therefore, the relevance of the particular features of the territories. That is why, in a framework marked by complexity and uncertainty, it is essential to be able to develop a local strategic capacity (Herzer 1997).

Inequalities should be tackled at the starting points in order to approach local development. These depend on the size of the cities, on their productive tradition and their ties with zones that have a more dynamic development, on the technological and commercial weakness of the local communities vis-à-vis the globalised world and the distortions that arise as a result of the lack of integration of the social and productive mesh, as well as the dissociation between education, production and competitiveness among the local educational resources and their ties to the production of the area. All these problems involve new challenges which will require induction and articulation activities from the municipalities.

The objective is to guide the territorial government's policies, plans and actions towards the local common good. To set up the strategic capacity that guarantees the achievement thereof, each local society has human, natural and economic resources, a historical and cultural pattern, an identity, infrastructure and technological know-how that are its potential for development, its strengths and also its weaknesses. The purpose of the following chapter is to provide a detailed description of the Argentine situation on this issue by analysing the quantitative and qualitative dimensions and the legal framework.

## 2. The Republic of Argentina and its territorial entities

### 2.1. The Provinces and Municipalities in Argentina: where and how people live

The Republic of Argentina comprises 23 provinces and the Autonomous city of Buenos Aires, which is the seat of the national government. In accordance with the federal system adopted by the Constitution, the provinces are autonomous and maintain all

power that has not been explicitly delegated to the federal government.

Each province has its own Constitution that organises its own Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers and regulates the municipal autonomous system. There are a total of 2217 municipalities and communities distributed in the provinces.

Most of the Argentine population lives in cities and are active in urban occupations (industry, commerce, services). According to the Census carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC – Institu-

to Nacional de Estadística y Censos) in 2001, about 90% of the total population was living in built-up urban areas of at least 2000 inhabitants. This is not only an urbanised society but there is also a strong relative weight of medium-sized built-up urban areas (one third of the population) as well as a strong concentration in the first city (the metropolitan city of Buenos Aires), where a further third of the country's population lives. The medium-sized cities were those which grew most during the last inter-censal period, and the only ones that increased in number in all the country between 1980 and 2001.

The average number of inhabitants by municipality is considerably larger in Argentina than in European countries, and lower than in the bordering countries. Local realities in Argentina are best understood in the regional framework, which serves as a reference and identity. At the same time, when introducing the region, it is possible to have a clearer approach to the analysis of the type of infrastructure available at local level, the services provided, the population's expectations, the political relationship of the municipalities with the province, etc.

The dispersion observed in the operating mode of the 24 municipalities comprised in the province of Buenos Aires, as conurbations of the Metropolitan Area of the City of Buenos Aires, with a surface of 3,680 km<sup>2</sup> and over 12,000,000 inhabitants in 2001, shows an urban-suburban continuum. This poses a constant demand for facilities, infrastructure and public works in order to respond to the complex mesh of economic, cultural and political relations linking one municipality to the

other and to the Federal Capital, and configuring a contradictory and problematic unit. Every day the inhabitants traverse the geography of its municipalities, combine means of transport, seek health care at hospitals outside their own municipalities, and resort to services provided by other municipalities and by the Federal Capital itself.

The larger cities in the Regions of Northwest (NOA),<sup>1</sup> Northeast (NEA),<sup>2</sup> Nuevo Cuyo,<sup>3</sup> and Patagonia<sup>4</sup> share similar features: This category only includes the provincial capital cities, except for the province of Mendoza, where six of the departments have more than 100,000 inhabitants. Even so, in the Patagonia, only two of the six provincial capital cities have more than 100,000 inhabitants (Neuquén and Río Gallegos). The majority of the municipalities of the NOA (43%), Nuevo Cuyo (45%) and Patagonia (57%) regions are rural municipalities (less than 2,000 inhabitants). In the NEA region, most of the municipalities correspond to small-sized cities (between 2,000 and 10,000 inhabitants) and include 49% of the cases in the region.

Medium-sized cities do not account for more than one quarter of all municipalities in any of the regions. Although their demographic weight is much higher, in the NOA they add up to 14%, in the NEA to 20%, in Nuevo Cuyo to 22%, in the Central region to 6%, and in the Patagonia to 13%.

The reality is quite different in the Central region: it comprises 21 cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants (there are only three other cities in the rest of the country: the cities of Corrientes, Salta and San Miguel de Tucumán).

Table Nº 1  Distribution of the Argentine Municipalities and Population by Province			
Provinces	Municipalities and Communes	Population (2006)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Autonomous City of Buenos Aires		2.776.138	200
Buenos Aires	134	14.276.909	307.804
Córdoba	428	3.203.309	168.766
Santa Fé	363	3.089.311	133.007
Mendoza	18	1.658.873	150.839
Tucumán	112	1.432.552	22.524
Entre Ríos	264	1.220.123	78.781
Salta	59	1.191.748	154.775
Misiones	75	1.060.199	29.801
Chaco	68	1.055.011	99.633
Corrientes	66	997.224	88.199
Santiago del Estero	116	866.576	135.254
Jujuy	60	662.477	53.219
San Juan	19	662.439	86.137
Río Negro	75	578.554	203.013
Formosa	37	534.015	72.066
Neuquén	57	525.355	94.078
Chubut	46	443.779	224.686
San Luis	64	412.110	76.748
Catamarca	36	371.459	99.818
La Rioja	18	327.960	92.331
La Pampa	79	319.152	143.440
Santa Cruz	20	217.402	243.943
Tierra del Fuego	3	123.458	20.912

Source: Municipal Affairs Secretariat, Ministry of the Interior, 2006.

<sup>1</sup> It comprises the provinces of Tucumán, La Rioja, Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca, Santiago del Estero.  
<sup>2</sup> It comprises the provinces of Formosa, Chaco, Misiones, Corrientes y Entre Ríos.  
<sup>3</sup> It comprises the provinces of San Juan, San Luis y Mendoza.  
<sup>4</sup> Se conforma por las provincias de Neuquén, Río Negro, La Pampa, Chubut, Santa Cruz y Tierra del Fuego, Antártica Argentina e Islas del Atlántico Sur.

mán); 906 of its 992 municipalities have less than 30,000 inhabitants and, as a region, it represents 52% of all the municipalities in the country.

The situation in the Province of Buenos Aires is yet more diverse: with over 14,200,000 inhabitants, it has two-thirds of all the municipalities of the country that exceed 250,000 inhabitants and, in addition to this, a high percentage of its municipalities (34%) are medium-sized cities.

The provinces of Mendoza and San Juan do not have departments/municipalities with less than 2,000 inhabitants and the medium-sized cities account for the majority in that range (61% in Mendoza and 53% in San Juan).

## 2.2. Local capacity in Argentina. Legal framework

There are various types of urban settlements in Argentina (local societies or municipalities) and associated to those, there are various types of local governments, which depend on the diversity of the social and economic development levels, on the institutional forms, on the population volume and the geographical features.

The provinces still have, within their scope of power, the capacity to determine their own municipal system, depending on their particular features, as laid down in the constitutional reform of 1994. Municipal governments are part of the country's political and institutional organisation. They are a component of the state organisation, which is based on the National Constitution and established in the Provincial Constitutions. Therefore, there is no Argentine municipal system as such. However, in the course of time, and especially after the constitutional reforms that were carried out in almost all the provinces

after the reinstatement of democracy in 1983, these systems have become more similar to one another.

The new article 123 of the National Constitution, reformed in 1994 establishes that: "Each province shall dictate its own constitution, according to the provisions of article 5, ensuring municipal autonomy and regulating its scope and contents in the institutional, political, administrative, economic and financial order".

The guiding principle is that everything that can be managed and solved at an institutional level that is closer to the citizens should not be managed and solved at a higher administration level. Local governments are defined within a system of relations and the distribution of attributions and resources with respect to the other two levels of the State administration: the national and the provincial levels. This has to do with the degree of centralisation or decentralisation of the state organisation as a whole. The differences in municipal autonomy will be dependent on whether there is a certain degree of significant economic autonomy, on the economic potential and the idiosyncrasy of its people.

But the globalisation processes have introduced in local societies the direct or indirect presence of large corporations and economic conglomerates that develop their specific interests. This corners the governments and produces a paradoxical effect: globalisation strengthens and weakens them at the same time, because if the entailed economic growth is not beneficial for the national interests, it will not lead to human or local development, as Báez points out (2007). At the same time, the National States tend to become decentralised and to transfer to the local governments a significant part of the attributions that are linked to the localisation

of economic units, their operation and their link to the public interests at local level.

As a result, the smaller units of the state organisation have to take over the task of receiving, regulating and controlling the larger and more powerful units of private economy. This requires transforming the municipal role, its capacity to represent the various interests and its effective and efficient action in order to respond transparently to local demands.

The presence of partnership processes between local governments is relevant in this regard, as it integrates regions with similar problems and potential. Some Argentine municipalities and provinces have started with this internationalisation process with strong initiative and leadership capacity.

In order to make municipalities the major component of the strategic capacity of local societies, they should have a strong institutional capacity. This capacity – to a great extent – is composed of elements that involve the municipal organisation and functioning conditions.

A further aspect that should be taken into account regarding how municipalities operate, are the decentralisation processes executed by the provinces or the Nation, as these may lead to social and territorial segmentation and to the introduction of a certain disintegration (social, territorial and political) that might weaken the less favoured social actors. Although decentralisation contributes to the expression of the regional differences and to the fact that they may contribute to enhance social life as a whole, when it involves inequalities between poor and wealthy regions it can act as a disintegrating force.

If these processes are to favour integration, they should be supplemented with ac-

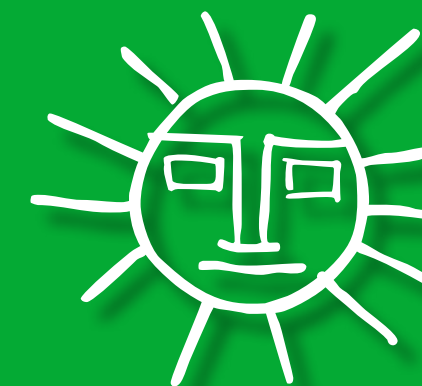
tions undertaken by national and provincial governments which, adjusted to the real conditions of each locality, may guarantee the basis for equity which goes beyond the regional and local differences.

Since 2003, the national government has been analysing the institutional capacities of local governments to promote conditions that may allow them to have a truly effective role in the promotion of human development processes at local level. This highlights the reformulation of federal relations in two directions: to guarantee equity at territorial level throughout the country and to achieve equitable distribution of resources at the various levels of the state organisation (decentralisation). The contribution of international cooperation is highly useful to support the implementation of these innovative management processes.

Although the States have historically had the power to determine foreign policy, it should be pointed out that some countries, without precluding such authority, have incorporated certain powers into their legislations in order to allow the international action of sub-state governments, provided certain pre-established requirements are complied with.

The Argentine Constitutional reform of 1994 incorporated Article 124 which states: "The provinces may create regions for the economic and social development and establish bodies with the faculty to comply with its objectives. They may also sign international agreements, provided these are not incompatible with the foreign policy of the Nation and they do not affect the faculties conferred upon the Federal Government or the Nation's public credit, with the knowledge of the National Congress..."

It should be mentioned in this context that a small but very active number of Argen-





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tine local governments participate in the International Networks of Municipalities and Local Development Partnerships, which includes, among others the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Rosario, Florencio Varela, Rafaela, Mar del Plata, Avellaneda, Bahía Blanca, Barranqueras, Bragado, Córdoba, General San Martín, Hurlingham, La Plata, La Matanza, Junín, Río Cuarto, Lomas de Zamora, Morón, Guaymallén, Mendoza, Montecarlo, Realicó, San Miguel de Tucumán, San Salvador de Jujuy, Santa Fe, Tandil, Santiago del Estero, Villa Gesell, Quilmes, Resistencia, Salta, San Fernando del Valle de Catamarca, Trelew, Ushuaia, Villa Mercedes, Villa María. The spheres in which they participate vary considerably: many have done so quite actively through the URBAL Programme, which was implemented more than 12 years ago and is one of the best examples of the promotion of local development through Decentralised Cooperation. Some of the other relevant networks are the Mercocities, the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) the United Towns Organisation (UTO), the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the World Association of Major Metropolises, the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), the Digital Cities Network, the Latin American Forum of Environmental Sciences (FLACAM), the Global Cities Dialogue Network (GDC), the International Association of Educating Cities (AICE), the Ibero-American Organisation for Inter-Municipal Cooperation (OICI), the Municipalist Ibero-American Union (UIM) and the Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Urban Development (CIDEU).

The Office of the Unit for Strengthening Local Governments of the National University of Quilmes (Cravacuore 2007) published a survey carried out by the Institute of the Argentine Municipalities Federation. This survey showed that, in 2006, 70 Argentine municipa-

lities that had become organised in 72 micro-regions, from which 56 were provincial, 11 inter-provincial and five international, specifically with Chilean counterparts. The novelty was that half of these inter-municipal entities arose as a result of the Argentine crisis that broke out in 2001.

Almost fifty per cent of these are in the Pampa region (Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Entre Rios and Cordoba), which is also the region with the greatest amount of municipalities in the country. This process is even taking place between the local governments of the provinces of the Patagonia, which add up to 200, and the same occurs in the northern part of the country. Another important example is the Zicosur (Zona de Integración del Centro Oeste de América del Sur – Integration Zone of West-Central South America) which brings together the highest authorities of the nine governments of the north of Argentina, the four of the south of Bolivia, two regions of the north of Chile, the seventeen Paraguayan departments and the State of Mato Grosso in Brazil. Their objective is to encourage integration in all areas in order to optimise the use of the bioceanic corridors and through that, to promote foreign trade. Additionally, in the Agreement of July 2007, they expressed the interest of Zicosur in identifying and participating in the opportunities provided by Decentralised Cooperation.

This research shows that all these associations have placed their priority objective in the fight against poverty and, in this framework, seek to find the adequate scale to respond to issues related to production, decent employment, the environment and social matters. From all these, 58% is being allocated to improve employability of the poor.

It is interesting to highlight that more than 70% of these initiatives have already be-

come institutionalised, so that they do not depend exclusively on the leadership of the heads of the communities. State policies are beginning to take shape, based on the strength provided by the associative opportunities they offer. This is such a solid process that in 43% of the cases, they are funded by the municipality's own funds, 28% by mixed funds and only 27% by external resources.

The actors of these local development processes agree that the main demand is to find technical assistance to strengthen the associative capacity, particularly for the joint training of development programmes, the search for funding and management problems.

As an initial balance, it can be stated that it is still too early to consider that the foreign relations strategy is a State policy for the majority of the territorial entities in our country. There is, therefore, a strong potential to continue contributing to the promotion and articulation of this international policy strategy.

Most of the Provinces, especially those that reformed their Constitution after 1994, have incorporated international issues as varied as regional integration, international trade, the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands, as well as claiming a space for their own international action that may enable them to act in this context, without competing with the national State policy, (Zubelzú 2004). At the same time they were empowered to create Regions, a platform that has been used by many provinces to effectively promote foreign relations actions.

In order to fulfil this mandate, many provinces have generated organisational changes in their government structures, and various organisational statuses have arisen to comply with the practice of international management, so that it is very difficult to syste-

matise the heterogeneous and disperse information available.

### 2.3. The National Executive and the Municipalities

The National Executive has prioritised the relation with the Municipalities through the creation of the Municipal Affairs Secretariat of the Ministry of the Interior, which is the area responsible for local issues and technical assistance provided to municipalities for modernising the administrative systems and strengthening their management capacity.

Its specific objectives are focused on providing technical assistance to the municipalities in order to modernise the local administration systems and to strengthen their management capacity, to assist the provinces in decentralising functions towards the municipalities, to propose means for studying, formulating and executing decentralisation policies, to propose the execution of plans, programmes and projects involving the development of local governments, to assist in programming the political reform at local level, to propose policies and strategies to establish micro-regions and to promote the spirit of cooperation among the various social actors of the neighbouring communities.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Sub-secretariat on Institutional Affairs, promotes articulation at international political level and, through the General Direction of International Cooperation, supports the links required by Decentralised Cooperation.

Together with these Ministries, the Argentine Federation of Municipalities (FAM) also plays an active role. The latter is the non-state public entity entitled by the National Law to promote the defence of the country's Municipalities through diverse functions. Among others, these include: to become the natural

institutional sphere for the convergence of all Municipalities; to represent associated Municipalities before the three powers of the Nation, the provincial authorities and the foreign organisations; to promote improvements in the community administration, particularly those related to planning, management control and cooperation actions and technical assistance; to establish agreements with similar associations in other countries, as well as with regional and international organisations; to promote new modalities of interrelation and cooperation of the municipal public sector with other social actors, such as intermediate entities, professional associations, universities and educational institutions, private companies, non-governmental and community organisations.

Since July 2007, its active Chairman, Mr Julio Pereyra, Mayor of Florencio Varela, also chairs the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA), a fact that is acknowledging the relevance and leading role of municipalism in Argentina.

This description reviews the cross-sectional nature of the national policy on municipal issues, in the sense that each Ministry or entity contributes its specific mission and function to territorial management, with the purpose of raising the conditions in which local authorities have to meet the growing citizen demands. Likewise, the signing of agreements has enabled the joint execution of programmes on issues such as training, dissemination of internationalisation opportunities, export promotion for SMEs, dissemination of good international management practices, etc.

## 2.4 Some of the features of local governments

For over a decade, various institutions such as the Argentine Ministry of the Interior, through the Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Secretariats, the Argentine Federation of Municipalities and the National Universities of Quilmes, General Sarmiento, Río Cuarto, Entre Ríos, Litoral, del Sur, Córdoba, Tecnológica Nacional, have appeared as those who are most actively concerned about local development issues. Within that framework, they have carried out research on various issues which enable obtaining some overall qualitative impressions on the regions and their local governments:

The municipalities that define integration policies do not respond to a single party, production or managerial profile. There is a predominating strong regional identity and a common vision on the potential of partnerships. Some provinces or municipalities get together to carry out a more intensive promotion of productive and other issues in order to bring about innovations in the traditional bureaucratic management model of state issues. Others do so with the aim of generating social programmes with technologies that are appropriate to the demands of the population and some to generate common infrastructures.

The lack of trained staff and technical teams to implement government management models seems to be one of the major limitations for municipal management. This difficulty is even more critical in medium-sized cities that are incorporating new functions and competences at a frenzied pace (transferred by due right from the Nation and the Provinces) and can only rarely follow that process by re-training their staff or setting up working teams.

Most local governments work “on demand” (for more than worthy reasons) and do not have the capacity to establish their medium and long-term priorities. This situation, which affects all the municipalities of the country, has specially impacted the NOA and NEA regions due to the type of demands and the prevailing traditional municipal management model.

Budgetary constraints are also a widespread problem due to the low revenue of the municipalities. The Central region appears to be in better budgetary conditions at local level, in spite of having to cater for large urban centres.

The Nuevo Cuyo region has the most diverse political-institutional realities and municipal-provincial relations. Compared to all other regions, it has the greatest disparity in terms of territorial division models, co-participation systems and social and economic developments.

There is strong disparity in the demographic volume of the municipalities of the Patagonia region, but the predominant management models are more similar in their features to those of the Nuevo Cuyo region than those of the NOA or NEA regions.

The universities that become involved in these processes are generally those that have been intricately involved in the region ever since their foundation and are therefore regarded as “their own” by local society and the municipal agents. Their articulating role is facilitated by the fact that they are institutions that contribute technical or development-specific elements to the development of the local actors. This usually begins in the form of training projects, and if these are successful, they are then raised to higher-level projects, such as regional integration projects.

In this context, achieving international projection for a larger number of local governments is becoming increasingly important. Municipalities are increasingly and more intensively including foreign relations in their agendas as an instrument to drive their growth. Through the link with other foreign local governments, they will be able to have allies that contribute to creating or strengthening a mo-

del to promote progress in the various issues that are considered priority areas, and through the various operating modalities: twinning agreements, specific actions, projects, programmes, participation in networks and forums, exchange of successful experiences, technical assistance, etc.

## 3. Argentina and Decentralised Cooperation

Policies directed at Local Development that are coordinated with foreign territorial entities are in midst of their growth and consolidation process. They emerged in the past decade as an adaptation alternative to a globalised economic context. The tendency at that time was to minimise the role of the national State but, simultaneously, some of the local governments were starting to value the role of the processes of associability, regionalisation and internationalisation in order to respond to the citizens’ needs.

New management concepts began to arise, especially regarding participative and strategic planning in order to direct complex processes of change. Local development was placed as a priority and monitoring and assessment instruments began to be applied. Spaces for cooperation between the various public and private actors are generated in this framework in order to respond to the demand for greater participation. This strategy has not become widespread, and only few local governments participate in these processes; the initiatives have not been systematised nor are they all too visible and, even less, considered State policies.

At the same time, in the international context, the amount of resources allocated to cooperation has become stagnant and these are concentrated in low-income countries, with the argument put forward by the donor countries that this decision is justified in the

framework of complying with the Millennium Goals. As a result, as from 2003 Argentina decided to continue participating in the international cooperation system through a more systematic insertion in the new tendencies generated in many other countries, both in the north and the south, that seek, as in the case of our own country, more and better policies of development with integration, as an alternative response to overcome the narrowing of the mentioned links decided upon by some of the powers.

Taking this position into account, the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Office for International Cooperation (DGCIN – Dirección General de Cooperación Internacional), decided four years ago to extend and increase those specific efforts and created a “Programme to Promote Decentralised Cooperation”. The objectives of raising awareness, providing an institutional framework, training and articulating activities are implemented through two supplementary programmes, namely the “Federal Cooperation Programme” and the “Programme to Promote Decentralised Cooperation” which are aimed at the actors of decentralised cooperation: the provincial governments, municipalities, universities and NGOs, in order to generate a coordinated system to support local development within the framework of and supported by a national policy.

### 3.1. The Federal Cooperation Programme

*The Federal Programme is based on the following guidelines:*

- To guarantee the adequate federal distribution of the cooperation received by providing transparency on the existing opportunities and prioritising the development of those areas in the country with less relative development.

- To keep all public and private sectors permanently informed on the International Cooperation activities through the website <http://www.cancilleria.gov.ar/dgcin.html> and through the numerous Seminars organised in every Argentine province.

- To train the new development actors in cooperation project formulation.

- To identify the new international tendencies that may enable Argentina to maintain an active role on this issue.

In this context, the following activities have been carried out since 2003: 1) Every province was encouraged to organise a specialised area on International Cooperation affairs. Based on that initiative, officials were appointed with this aim and some of the provinces even assigned a very high status to this area, such as an under-secretariat or a cooperation agency. 2) Over 3000 representatives of the civil society were trained. 3) Over 3800 people, distributed in ninety virtual rooms throughout the provinces, were informed of the cooperation opportunities with the main donor countries: Japan, Italy, Spain, Germany, Canada and the European Union. 4) Meetings called “Federal Cooperation Committees” (Mesa de Cooperación Federal) were convened and were attended by provincial and national officials and NGOs, in order to inform them of the opportunities offered by the more than five hundred foreign organisations interested in having their work interacted with Argentine entities, and that are published in the website. 5) Twenty-three workshops were organised in various parts of the country on issues related to Participative Planning and Monitoring and Project Assessment, based on the Project Circle Management (PCM) methodology of the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which trained

700 new actors. 6) Over 50 visits were made to Argentine provinces and municipalities in order to disseminate information related to decentralised cooperation.

### 3.2. Programme for the Promotion of Decentralised Cooperation

The objective is to strengthen the international action schemes of local governments so that their projects, international exchange or the training provided are carried out within the framework of their local development. Since 2004, the DGCIN is supporting a policy to promote, systematize and implement these opportunities.

A research was carried out on the opportunities provided by decentralised cooperation and its modalities of action, with the following results: over 200 twinning agreements have been signed in the country between various Argentine and foreign provincial and municipal governments; there are traditional ties between Argentine local governments and other local counterparts, based mostly on the migration currents; some of the local governments participate in multilateral networks; there is also a proliferation of university exchange actions; and actions have been implemented and are being implemented between NGOs that have access to the Calls for official development aid from the countries of the north.

Below are some examples of cooperation modalities based on different features such as: 1) The common roots given by the presence of immigrants on the territory, 2) The experience of a province that has an International Cooperation Agency, and which has the second largest number of municipalities in the country, 3) The systematisation of initiatives developed in the framework of the Decentralised Cooperation Meetings organised by the DGCIN.

#### 3.2.1. Immigration as an actor of co-development of international relations

- Description of the case of the Pigüé-Aveyron relation. The strong presence of French immigration has contributed to establishing a strong link between the District Saavedra-Pigüé (Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina) and the Department of Aveyron (Region Midi-Pyrénées, France). Pigüé is one of the most important cities in Argentina that was founded by the French. A project was implemented to teach the French language at high-school level in educational institutions because this had been discontinued in the schools of this city of Aveyron origin, and so an important opportunity to orally transmit customs and traditions was being lost.

Thanks to the Project of the Amicale de Intercambios Pigüé, a local NGO, the students of the Pigüé schools will once again have the opportunity of learning French as a foreign language at school. This project, which was approved in 2006, is financed by the General Council of the Aveyron, with funds from Decentralised Cooperation and the local Municipality. The Alliance Française of Pigüé will sponsor the dissemination of the French language and culture. Various types of gastronomic, cultural and social activities linked to the French culture are planned for the 2005-2010 period.

#### 3.2.2. Decentralised Cooperation in the Municipalities of the Province of Santa Fe

In order to systematise the decentralised cooperation experiences in which Argentina was participating, the DGCIN carried out a survey at the beginning of 2007 among all the municipalities in Argentina. To convey some of these results, an analysis is made of the international actions of the municipalities



of the Province of Santa Fe, which is one of the provinces with the greatest number of experiences in its territory (it ranks second in number).

With the polled data, the Cooperation Agency of the Province of Santa Fe stated that in the first quarter of 2007, from the 362 local governments of the Province of Santa Fe (50 Municipalities and 312 Communities) a sample was obtained comprising the status of the cooperation relations of 25% of the local governments (of both categories). Eighteen per cent of the sample holds international cooperation relations, and from these, approximately 14% has twinning agreements with Communities, most of all in Italy, as well as with communities in Spain, Switzerland, France and Brazil. Likewise, 5% has international technical cooperation actions and/or participates in networks of municipalities such as “UR-BAL” and “MERCOCITIES”.

3.2.3.Promotion work carried out by the DGCIN to strengthen Decentralised Cooperation

3.2.3.1. Decentralised Cooperation Meetings [2005 and 2007]

When analysing the heterogeneous practices and actions that have been implemented and those that are currently carried out in this field, it can be observed that although there is a background of relations, these have not been conceived yet as part of the framework of systematic decentralised cooperation relations, and it is convenient to carry out an implementation process with local governments in order to take true advantage of such opportunities.

In this context, the National State, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, In-

ternational Trade and Culture, resolved to promote international actions of the sub-national governments in order to promote their development.

In the framework of the Programme to Promote Decentralised Cooperation and in order to guarantee transparency and equity in the access to information, the possibilities of establishing new cooperation links with various territorial entities in Germany, Spain, Italy and Japan were disseminated through the website.

In addition to this, two events were held, in 2005 and 2007, with the aim of promoting new international cooperation links. More than one thousand participants from Argentina attended each of these events, with delegations from the 23 provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, municipalities, universities and NGOs.

Representatives of the following foreign territorial entities attended the first event: from Italy, the regions of Abruzzo, Emilia Romagna, Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, Lazio, Lombardia, Marche, Piemonte, Toscana, Umbria, Veneto, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano, the Autonomous Province of Trento; from Germany the Federal States of Bavaria and Rheinland-Westphalia; from Spain the Government of Galicia, and from Japan the Prefecture of Okinawa. The attendees of the second event came from the regions of Abruzzo, Basilicata, Emilia Romagna, Friuli Venecia Giulia, Liguria, Marche, Piemonte, Puglia, Toscana, Umbria and Veneto, in Italy; the Community of Andalusia and the Xunta of Galicia, in Spain; the Federal States of Low Saxony and Bavaria, in Germany, the State of Lara, in Venezuela; the Government of Antofagasta, in Chile; the Prefectures of Ataxa and Belo Horizonte, in Brazil, and the Chinese Province of Henan.

Table Nº 2 | Links Generated during the Decentralised Cooperation Meetings [2005 and 2007].

	Health	SMEs	Education	Tourism	Environment	Social Integration	Culture	Institutional Strengthening	Transport
Bavaria		City de Bs. As. Córdoba Mendoza Santa Fe			La Pampa				
Baja Sajonia		Buenos Aires City Bs.As.	Mendoza	Corrientes Salta	Misiones Santa Fe				
Sittutgart			Buenos Aires		City Bs.As. Entre Ríos				Buenos Aires Catamarca Entre Ríos Salta Santa Fe
Andalucía	Buenos Aires City Bs.As. Córdoba Corrientes Formosa San Juan Santa Fe				Formosa				
Galicia			City Bs.As Misiones Santa Fe						
Basilicata		Chubut Salta							
Emilia Romagna		Buenos Aires  Salta							
Friuli Venecia Giulia								Misiones	
Lazio					Buenos Aires				
Liguria						City Bs.As			
Marche	Buenos Aires	Buenos Aires	Santa Fe	Buenos Aires  Misiones	Corrientes La Pampa	Catamarca			
Piemonte		Catamarca							
Puglia		Buenos Aires	Santa Fe	Mendoza					
Toscaza				Mendoza Salta		Santa Fe			



Veneto		Buenos Aires Corrientes Formosa				Santa Fe			
Lara		Formosa		Corrientes			Ciudad Buenos Aires		
Belo Horizonte		La Pampa		Corrientes Santa Fe	Buenos Aires Corrientes Misiones				Formosa Misiones

The first Event bore its fruit through the consolidation of initiatives such as the strengthening of the cooperation in the Province of Misiones thanks to the association with the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region, the creation of the productive-tourist and cultural corridor between the Province of Buenos Aires and the Puglia Region, the participation of the Provinces of Mendoza, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and Cordoba in the Project to develop Argentine SMEs with Bavaria, or the design of a new relation strategy with the state of North Rhine-Westphalia to create an association on clean production issues and alternative energy, among others.

The systematisation of the links generated at the Decentralised Cooperation Meetings held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2005 and July 2007 is reflected in the 77 initiatives between the national and foreign territories that were generated on those occasions.

The progress that took place between one Meeting and the following should be highlighted, as there was a stronger presence of provincial and municipal authorities in the second event; the 38 meetings between the Argentine and foreign representatives for specific exchanges were highly productive, as was pointed out by its participants, and specially by the presence of Latin American de-

legations that act as a strong driving force for the regional integration through their sub-national governments.

### 3.2.3.2 Some examples of tangible results of actions promoted by the Office for International Cooperation (OGCIN)

Relations between the Province of Misiones, Argentina and the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region, Italy.

- Background: Since its inception in 1991, the Office of the Under-Secretary for Trade and Integration of the Province of Misiones has been actively engaged in international cooperation activities. On account of the existing structure, this Office has not been able to act as a benchmark for the province, nor has it been granted due authority to obtain cooperation funds for either the public or the private sector. Object: To empower the Office of the Under-Secretary for Trade and Integration, so that it can play a central role in the area of cooperation. Process: This initiative was submitted to the authorities of the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region within the framework of the 1st Decentralised Cooperation Conference held in Buenos Aires on 30 September 2005. At this international event, the above-mentioned Italian Region expressed interest in cooperating with the Province of Misiones. As a result, in 2006 both parties agreed

to establish an institutional strengthening programme which was actually launched in April 2007 with the first mission from the Friuli-Venezia-Giulia Region. This led to the initiative of advancing in three areas: 1. Exchange programme between the Friuli and Misiones Libraries; 2. Promotion and commercialisation of products, tourist services and of Misiones and Guaraní handicrafts in the Friuli Region; 3. Implementation of the Agritourism Programme.

Relations between the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina and the Puglia Region, Italy.

- Background: This initiative stems from the contribution made to the Province of Buenos Aires over the past years by Italian-Argentineans from Puglia. Object: The Project Corredor Productivo, Turístico y Cultural (Production, Tourism and Cultural Corridor) aimed at enhancing the experience gained by Italians and Argentineans (Puglia – Buenos Aires) in the institutional, economic, tourist, cultural and social fields. The idea is to create a network as a platform for designing an internationalisation strategy that may help foster the development of both Buenos Aires and Puglia. Networking will make it possible to examine successful experiences and identify organisational elements that could be transferred as “good practices” from one territory to the other. Process: In its search for new markets, Puglia needs to establish relations with regions that are compatible it terms of tourism, that have natural resources and offer a window of opportunity for sharing technology through the joint work of their combined human resources. Argentina was selected on the basis of Puglia’s strong cultural and spiritual bonds with this country, particularly with the Province of Buenos Aires.

## 4. Conclusions

If the integration-development binomial implies that we can effectively manage to consolidate growth and social equality in our countries, provided this is done together with other countries, then decentralised international cooperation relations are bound to play a strategic role in this direction. In a globalised world it is essential to understand and respect the multidimensional nature of development if we do not wish to lose the wealth of diversity and specificity of the people. To that end, we must effectively fight against the most serious danger that is threatening humankind today: poverty and inequality.

The development of people and their nations depends more and more on variables beyond their control, which in turn result from increasing economic and financial globalisation. The integration between countries and regions also reconfigures the space where people live. Citizens increasingly tend to raise new issues before local governments, and demands for policies that may foster the well-being of their communities.

Government authorities are placing increased expectations on the associability between the national regions and their foreign counterparts in the hope that this will jointly lead to strengthening the local governments, both in responding to the global threats and problems and in widening the scope of opportunities that may guarantee sustainable human development to their citizens.

Decentralised Cooperation is a valuable tool for widening and diversifying local governments’ administration capacity. The



DGCIN aims to promote, coordinate and support any initiatives of this cooperation method that may help guarantee a good administration for local communities. Fostering and coordinating activities does not imply monopolising decentralised cooperation actions. This innovative cooperation tool is in line with the foundations of our Constitution and with the nationwide project implemented by the Federal Government so that it may be granted national-policy status.

To that end, since 2003 the DGCIN has been conducting a series of awareness-raising, 'institutionalisation', training and coordination activities aimed at attracting new actors to international cooperation, such as provincial and municipal governments, universities and civil society members.

Awareness-raising activities included visits to all the provinces and many municipalities in order to explain the use and convenience of internationalisation at local-government level as this enhances government performance by directly comparing, though with a limited budget, different styles of administration, and learning innovative ways to address complex issues – e.g. a poverty-reduction through the creation of decent employment, the integration of youth at social risk, environment-friendly production, etc.

The DGCIN further explained the importance of coordinating the work of actors representing various interests and organising monitoring and assessment activities of the local programme and policies. According to a preliminary diagnosis only 10 per cent of local governments had started to identify internationalisation strategies through twinning agreements, and barely half of these had deepened the bonds by promoting specific initiatives for the systematic exchange and integration process at micro-regional level,

between provinces or at international level, but without doing so systematically through Decentralised Cooperation.

National universities, on the other hand, have achieved remarkable regional integration through the National Universities' International Cooperation Network (RED-CIUN). However, because such integration is basically academic, it is not necessarily compatible with local development strategies. A small number of prestigious national universities have included in their syllabi the analysis of local issues as a specific contribution to their respective communities. Until the DGCIN launched the Federal Cooperation Programme, only the larger civil society organisations would seek to go beyond national borders. Since more than five hundred foreign social organisations wishing to cooperate with their Argentine counterparts were identified and listed on line, exchange experiences have thrived. Thus, the objective of equity and justice has been achieved as every Argentine association wishing to benefit from this integration tool can now access international cooperation. While the results so far are promising indeed, it is still imperative to coordinate initiatives and generate the necessary synergy to boost local development.

As far as 'institutionalisation' is concerned, while this instrument for promoting international bonds has been adopted by all the provinces, their hierarchical status and sustainability vary greatly, ranging from Under-Secretariats or International Agencies in some provinces to Focal Points in others. It should be mentioned that more than half of the provinces, as well as the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, have very active policies in this direction. Regarding training, the DGCIN has generated a critical mass of about seven hundred individuals, including

officials, university graduates and civil society representatives who have been trained with the purpose of implementing the entire cooperation process.

Regarding coordination, efforts are being made to switch from the donor-beneficiary to the partnership model, with relations based on a cooperative method and in which the actors work together in pursuit of common goals. This approach demands not only a longer maturity period for consolidating bonds, but usually also the need for innovative management practices. Networking has been encouraged because it promotes horizontal and symmetric relations, the exchange of experiences and, most importantly, communication between users scattered far and wide. At the same time, as each province has its own municipal system, the DGCIN strives to identify the decentralised cooperation profile that best suits each province on the basis of its specific territorial features, its economic growth potential and its idiosyncrasy. The Office further seeks to identify international connections in line with the five objectives of a government focused on human development: equity, sustainability, participation, security and governance. Comprehensive regional development projects appear to have the greatest potential as they can effectively harmonise economy and production with community and institutional demands. The DGCIN suggests that the hundreds of qualified individuals be considered a critical mass for the purpose of implementing the various stages of these processes.

Regarding future prospects, the research conducted by the DGCIN shows that while successful initiatives have been implemented in Argentina, only a handful of very active municipalities which have already joined international networks boast the greatest potential. Indeed, by adapting their func-

nal structure and recruiting duly qualified staff, these municipalities have already achieved tangible results that have enhanced their performance through this foreign relations method. Even though most of the municipalities have not deepened this process, more and more local governments are likely to join in as a large number of local institutions are actively engaged in awareness-raising, training and permanent consultation initiatives. The most advanced and successful initiatives are being implemented with the territorial entities in three nations with which Argentina has strong historical bilateral cooperation bonds: Italy, Spain and Germany. The DGCIN strives to promote Decentralised Cooperation between provinces and their Latin American counterparts. By doing so, it aims at extending the integration scenario and contributing to the sustainability of the positive results obtained in the fight against poverty and inequality. This is a huge challenge because Latin America is precisely where the tension between excessive resources and excessive affliction proves most disturbing both ethically and politically.

Because associability entails a collective learning process characterised by innovation and constant evolution, it calls for an analysis far beyond each specific experience. All too often, these processes are not visible as they tend to focus on qualitative aspects, strengthening of local institutions and 'soft' technologies rather than on the traditional material requirements of development. As a result, it is not easy to accurately assess the impact of foreign relations, for it normally takes longer than the tenure of the local government's administration itself.

The mere fact that more and more actors of increasingly diverse backgrounds are joining in is, in itself, a remarkable achievement. It creates positive medium- and long-



term synergies, and consolidates the culture of development with integration amongst participants from both territorial entities. Because this circumstance creates a new international scenario, the territorial entities in the various countries are constantly designing and redesigning methodologies and adjusting the principles their relations are based on. Budgetary and financial aspects are no minor issues, yet they are usually smaller than the full potential of these processes. The countries of the north are developing methodologies that combine local and national resources in order to respond to the twofold challenge of giving more international participation to territorial entities, and to prevent national gover-

nements from decreasing their contributions to medium-income countries. They are also interested in finding suitable counterparts for accessing European Union resources.

Decentralised Cooperation as a contribution to Local Development is a complex political experience in the field of international relations and the DGCIN has played a very active role promoting a democratic approach.

Considering that human affairs are open-ended in nature, cooperation between nations entails a positive, dynamic, permanent and exciting agenda.

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## Acronyms

AMB	Barcelona Metropolitan Area
AECI	Spanish Agency for International Cooperation
AERYC	Regions and Cities from Latin America and the Caribbean
AICE	International Association of Educating Cities
AL	Latin America (LA)
AOD	Official Development Assistance (ODA)
ALC	Latin America and the Caribbean
ARE	Assembly of European Regions
AUGM	Association of universities Montevideo Group
BID	Inter American Development Bank (IADB)
BIDCE	Educating Cities International Documents Databank
CAN	Andean Community
CCAAM	Andean Consultative Council of Municipal Authorities
CCAA	Autonomous Region
CD	Decentralised Cooperation
CDE	Spanish Decentralised Cooperation
CDP	Public Decentralised Cooperation
CdR	Committee of the Regions (CoR)
CDPU	Documentation Centre for the Urban Programme
CE	Economic Commission (EC)
CEMCI	Centre of Municipal Study and International Cooperation
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
CESPI	Centro de Studi di Politica Internazionale
CGLU	United Cities of Local Governments (UCLG)

CIG	Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC)
CIDEU	Ibero-American Centre for Urban Strategic Development
CMG	Common Market Group (Mercosur)
CMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CNCD	National Commission of Decentralised Cooperation
CONFEDELCA	Central America Conference for State Decentralisation and Local Development
CRPM	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CSEMB	Sub-Regional Cooperation of the Baltics States
DGCIN	International Cooperation General Direction
EEUU	United States (USA)
FAL	Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion
FALP	World Forum of Suburban Local Authorities
FCCR	Consultative Forum of Municipal Government, Federative States, Regions and Departments
FEDER	European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
FEMP	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Regions
FLACAM	Latin American Forum of Environmental Sciences
FLACMA	Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations
FOCEM	Mercosur Structural Convergence and Institutional Strengthening Fund
FOGAR	Forum of Global Associations of Regions
FSE	European Social Fund
FUNDEMUCA	Local Development and Municipal Strengthening Foundation of Central America and the Caribbean
GDC	Global Cities Dialogue
GL	Local Government (LG)
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
ICLEI	International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives
IDELCA	Local Development Institute of Central America
INDEC	National Institute of Statistics
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
LICD	Law of International Cooperation for Development



LOCAL	Latin American Observatory of Changes
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
Nrg4SD	Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development
OCD	European Union – Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation
OCDE	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
OICI	Ibero American Organisation of International Cooperation
OICS	Inter-Regional Observatory on Cooperation for Development
OIDP	International Observatory for Participatory Democracy
OLDP	Locals Observatories for Participatory Democracy
ONG	Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)
ONGD	Non-Governmental Organisation for Development
NU	United Nations (UN)
PD	Development Countries
PI	Industrialised Countries
PDHL	United Nations Human Development Programme
PMSS	Mercosur Social and Solidarity Programme
PNUMA	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
PNUD	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
PYMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
RAC	Andean Cities Network
REGLEG	Conference of European Regions with legislative power
REM	Specialised Meeting of Women (Mercosur)
REMI	Specialised Meeting of Municipal and Cities Councils
RRII	International Relations
SALAR	Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities
UCCI	Union of Ibero American Capitals
UIM	Ibero American Union of Municipal Professionals
UITP	International Association of Public Transport
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
VNG	Association of Netherlands Municipalities





