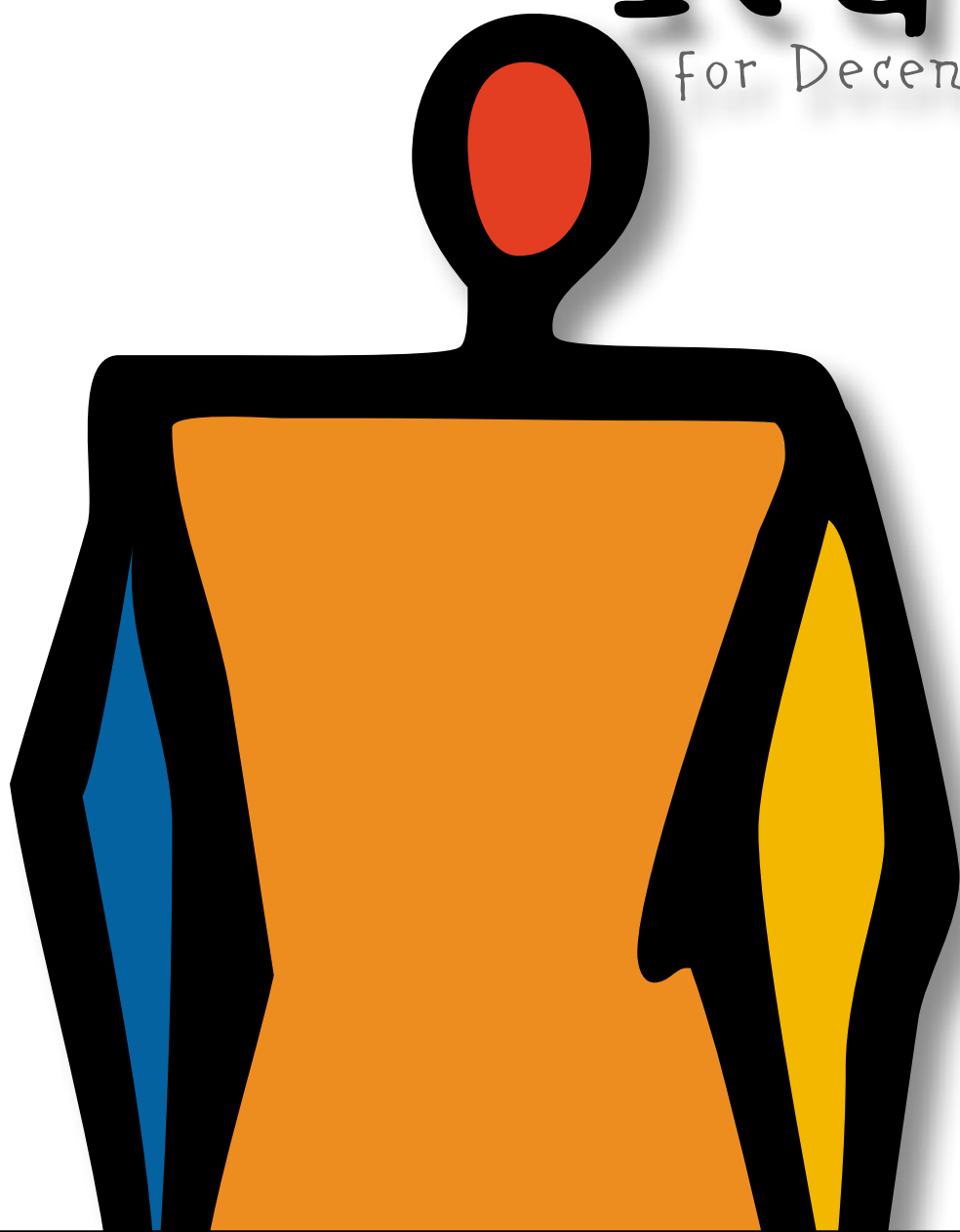


Yearbook

for Decentralised Cooperation



Year 2006

Yearbook

Decentralised Cooperation



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The European Commission's URB-AL programme is a programme of institutional support for local communities such as cities, provinces and regions of Latin America (AL) and the European Union (EU). Since 1995 and until 2006, during which year it ended, the programme financed 14 thematic networks on urban policies and more than 180 specific projects on these different subjects.

Within the framework of this programme and following upon its intermediate external evaluation, as well as the conference held in March 2004 in Valparaiso on "Appraisal and prospects for decentralised co-operation between local communities of the European Union and Latin America in the field of urban policies" with the participation of many communities in both continents, the European Commission decided to create the European Union – Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation with the general aim of consolidating local association between the two continents and expanding upon and multiplying its results, impacts and benefits regarding urban policy.

To attain this general objective, the Observatory is responsible for developing a systematic record of decentralised co-operation actions between local governments of Latin America and the EU, highlighting the impacts and scope of involvements through the construction and application of quantitative and qualitative indicators, disseminating its pool of resources, including training actions; producing capacities, knowledge and systematic and comparative reflection on operators, programmes, projects and their results, over and beyond the URB-AL framework.

In 2005 the work of the Observatory began, in a joint process on an unknown subject which had barely been researched. The publication of the first Decentralisation Co-operation Yearbook was, without a doubt, one of its first achievements. In this work we are currently researching it in greater depth and enhancing knowledge on decentralized co-operation.

It is unquestionable that day by day local authorities gain in legitimacy in all aspects of policy, in particular as regards co-operation

with development. It is a phenomenon that the URB-AL programme both supported and developed. In particular, the role of local communities to improve and promote social cohesion was always a central element of the programme and will continue to be one of the European Commission's priorities for Latin America.

In this sense, the Observatory must make available to local communities specific tools that allow innovative aspects to be identified that decentralised co-operation and its value added provide regarding other more classical forms of action in favour of the development of the countries and citizens of both continents. The Yearbook must be, precisely, a tool that makes defining decentralised co-operation possible, identifies its actors and its resources, but also its limits, in order to be able to choose the best urban development strategies.

Given the specificities of decentralised co-operation, and particularly keeping in mind what global resources are available, it is clear that the former cannot solve all problems, and that therefore work must continue with various

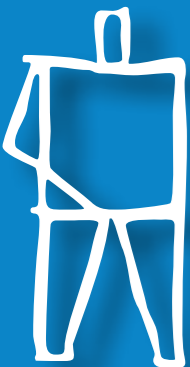
levels of power and national and international institutions.

To conclude, we consider Yearbook 2006 to be a specific tool that provides data of all kinds on decentralised co-operation in order to directly help local communities.

Lastly, the European Commission congratulates the Barcelona Provincial Council – the entity in charge of the Observatory – as well as its members and all participants for this second volume of the Yearbook that will certainly allow progress to continue as regards knowledge of this broad area of decentralised co-operation between the EU and Latin America.

Riccardo Gambini
Chief of Unit

"Decentralised operations Latin America"



The creation of the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (OCD), arising from the agreement of several Latin American and European public institutions, has meant the beginning of a new and fruitful stage in the way decentralised co-operation for development is understood, as a phenomenon that mobilises a significant and increasing amount of resources and commands an important place on the political agenda of many public administrations.

The appearance of this second Yearbook of the Observatory confirms how correct this proposal was that has led us to weave a sound municipal diplomacy. A singular diplomacy that arises with budding economic, technological and cultural globalisation is used to enhance public service to the population. In this context, the OCD has signified an important qualitative leap in the development of decentralized co-operation in the region, both because of the involvement of the many collaborating partners and the firm support received

from the European Union (EU)

Networking is helping to provide rapid dissemination of good practices and to universalise the advances that are arising along the way to strengthening economic development, social cohesion and the sustainability of the environment in our societies. We network because our territorial administrations of the North and South share concerns and also political methods and convictions. That is why we wish to take effective advantage of the direct relationship between citizenship and public authorities, not only to channel existing demands adequately but also to facilitate understanding and solving of common problems.

We must continue to work, then, on the co-ordination of decentralised co-operation initiatives in order to enhance their efficacy. And this new issue of the Observatory Yearbook is an excellent contribution to the advancement along these lines, since it brings together a rich collection of analyses, reflections and case exhibits that refer us to the most exciting

reality of co-operation in the development of Latin America.

In the Barcelona Provincial Council we are convinced that the work of the Observatory helps to intensify knowledge on decentralised co-operation and also to increase the involvement in it of the territorial administrations of the North. We must be more efficient in the use of funds applied to decentralized co-operation initiatives, something which is doubtlessly indispensable to increase confidence in the validity of these policies. We are also overcoming the habit of specific grants, substituting it by processes of collaboration in which our Latin American partners participate from the start as such, with results that are manifestly positive for the consolidation of the local fabric in their countries, the institutional strengthening of municipalities and the dissemination and application of good practices in the field of urban policies. Specifically, we are demonstrating that the lack of active participation by local authorities that are democratic

and have been strengthened becomes inexcusable if we are to obtain optimal and lasting results on the way to universalizing peace, welfare, human rights, democracy and the quality of life for all people, regardless of where they live.

Celestino Corbacho
President of the Barcelona Provincial Council



At the time of presentation of Yearbook 2005 of the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation, we asserted that this was a significant sign on the road to jointly building international interactions and new equilibriums from local spaces. Likewise we believed that it was a space for reflection and submitting proposals that would allow us to progress towards social cohesion and fight poverty, towards regional integration and the reinforcement of local capacities. In this regard, the presentation of Yearbook 2006 is an opportunity to view the way trodden and to provide some reflections on the subjects that have guided our agenda.

2006 was doubtlessly a year of particular significance on the international agenda of local governments oriented towards the objectives of social cohesion. The First Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments held in Montevideo in October marked the reassertion of the commitment of cities and local areas to the great themes of the present and future. In this framework the subject of migrations was addressed, as well as the issue of displacement of individuals and communities,

its impact on cities and local spaces and the responsibilities of local governments.

In the present context, marked profoundly by globalisation processes, with a strong increase in the displacement of people and communities among diverse continents and countries and also of internal migrations within our countries, characterised by the expulsion of entire populations from the central areas to the periphery of our cities, addressing social integration acquires particular importance for cities and local areas. In the opposite sense efforts at social integration, the deepening of differences between those who wish to or must move, between those who may or may not choose the place to develop their life projects, are accompanied by discrimination and loss of references, with singular impact on local areas. Exclusion and the formation of ghettos take on a new dimension as social pathologies in the context of the intensification of the globalization process, which supposes a greater challenge for our local governments.

These changes have shaken the societies of all countries with diverse social, political and also individual consequences. Today

our societies look into a broken mirror that returns multiple partial images from which it is difficult to reconstruct a harmonious and recognizable whole. Each fragment is incomplete and needs the others.

Modern society has lost the ancient walls that isolated and protected it, but today internal walls are put up that fragment the cities, isolating and segregating its inhabitants, generating new forms of marginalisation. These are invisible barriers that gradually occupy areas in the city, which reduce the chances of relationships among its inhabitants, which reduce areas for inclusion and construction of cohesion in society.

A model of a city that is defined by internal walls, that places internal limits within its own territory, is a city that closes the way to hope. It is a city in which its inhabitants do not know themselves, do not know their capacities and limitations, a city in which the other is a stranger, and fear and danger are deposited in each other. Estranged from each other, separated, isolated, the inhabitants of cities perceive each other as a threat, and at the same time they do not develop their own

capacities, whereby they perceive themselves as weak and vulnerable.

Today we find ourselves entering a new century, which demands that we continue building and forging our identities, in order to progress towards integrated societies, built on relations of greater equity, and towards new local, regional and international equilibriums. The commitment taken on by local governments, decentralized co-operation and the efforts made to strengthen local and regional integration processes are then tools with which to continue to build and consolidate, in order to fully assume the challenges of the future.

Ricardo Ebrlich
Mayor, Montevideo Municipal Government



Presentation of Yearbook 2006

It is my pleasure to present to you the Yearbook 2006, which gathers together the progress made by the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation in the analysis of relations between sub-national governments in both regions, as well as leading articles on this subject.

After two years of life the Observatory has succeeded in becoming an outstanding actor in the debate on new forms of co-operation. Given the richness and complexity of decentralized co-operation, the expansion of knowledge on this phenomenon is a necessity, not only to gain awareness of the facts of the international action of local administrations, but also to improve co-operation in development in general.

In this regard, the appearance of Yearbook 2006 is a new tool in the hands of people who work day after day on decentralized co-operation. Following the success of Yearbook 2005, designed to provide an overall view of the phenomenon, this year our intention is to go into greater depth regarding some of the more specific aspects of decentralised co-operation.

The contents of Yearbook 2006 are many and very diverse, but they always revolve

around co-operation for development of sub-national governments. Important changes are still taking place in this field among which the creation of various Latin American local governments for is to be highlighted.

It has already been some time since States are no longer the main actors in the international arena. Proof of that is the multiplication of decentralized co-operation initiatives, many of which are spontaneous. However, as this Yearbook shows, supra-national organizations and States increasingly make an effort to make participation of municipalities and regions active at the international level.

Without a doubt, information exchange among the people who are aware of the facts of decentralised co-operation is a key factor to influence the constant evolution of this phenomenon, especially at a transcendental time such as when new programmes are being designed to reinforce decentralised co-operation.

In view of this development, it is relevant to recall the need for active participation by the main actors of decentralised co-operation, not only in the implementation of these programmes, but also in their design. This doubtlessly helps to improve these types of initiatives but also to increase the legitimacy of efforts

made by other government levels to reinforce decentralized co-operation.

I would also like to point out that, despite this being the principal publication of the Observatory, our efforts are not limited to analyzing the present situation regarding decentralized co-operation through its Yearbook: the rest of the efforts made by the Observatory are the best indication of our commitment to research in matters of decentralized co-operation.

The Observatory's endeavours do not end with the analysis of the systematised data; much energy is devoted to disseminating the pool of resources of decentralised co-operation. Perhaps the best example is the appearance of our new resource centre in the Observatory's web page, which helps to provide information on the main characteristics and limits of this type of co-operation in order to improve understanding of the reality of the co-operation initiatives promoted locally. Another clear indication of the Observatory's efforts to improve knowledge and practice in matters of decentralized co-operation has been the creation of an on-line training course, the first two issues of which have been a resounding success.

The aim of these initiatives is, to a

large extent, the creation of a community of knowledge in which elected positions, technical staff, experts and individuals interested in decentralised co-operation participate with the purpose of approaching the general objective of the Observatory, which is none other than to consolidate the European Union-Latin America local partnership through enhanced knowledge of the reality around us, in order to multiply the positive results of this kind of co-operation.

Finally, I would like to take advantage of the occasion to express my thanks to all members of the antennas of the Observatory for their efforts devoted to these initiatives and to the institutions that have made publication of Yearbook 2006 possible, without whose collaboration the Observatory's activities would have been very difficult to carry out.

Agustí Fernández de Losada
General Co-ordinator of the European
Union-Latin America Observatory
on Decentralised Co-operation



As, with the whole team at the Observatory, we begin the analysis of decentralised co-operation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America (AL), we gradually discover the wealth and diversity of this complex phenomenon. One of the main tasks of the Observatory is to make its full scope known, through its different publications and, especially, through the Yearbook that you are now holding in your hands.

The first issue (Yearbook 2005) focused mainly, as is logical, on the genesis of decentralised co-operation, on its conceptual delimitation and on the point of departure of the local governments in the different possible fields of incidence of said co-operation.

The intention of Yearbook 2006 is to follow the guidelines set out in the first publication, although placing stress, at this time, on the reality of decentralized co-operation and on the specific experiences that we begin to become aware of and to be able to study and disseminate. Along these lines, the present document has kept a very similar structure to that of the previous Yearbook,

a division into five large sections: (1) Analysis of decentralized co-operation; (2) social cohesion and poverty reduction; (3) governance and institutional strengthening; (4) regional integration processes; and (5) case studies¹, although we have tried to provide analyses anchored to a larger extent in the knowledge of co-operation practices and to enrich each of the sections of the Yearbook with illustrations of real cases.

1. Analysis of decentralised co-operation

This section is centred on the analysis of the decentralised co-operation phenomenon in general. It involves, together with the on-line Resource Centre offered by the Observatory (www.observ-ocd.org), one of the main displays of the Observatory to present the data detected and systematised as regards this phenomenon.

The first article, devoted to the analysis of the data gathered so far by the Observatory, is an update of the information presented in the same section of Yearbook 2005, since the number of decentralized co-operation initiatives on which conclusions have to be reached has practically doubled. This has allowed confirmation of trends already detected and fortification of the analysis with new lines of research for the future. The article, prepared by Santiago Sarraute and Hervé Théry and titled “Analysis of bilateral relations among sub-national public administrations of Latin America and the European Union” also incorporates a presentation of charts that allow the complexity of the phenomenon to be visualized.

Likewise, the section includes an analysis of the co-operation networks between local and regional governments, “Networks of

¹ | *These sections are in keeping with the strategic guidelines of the Observatory since they involve key spheres of decentralised co-operation.*

cities as a privileged tool for decentralised co-operation management,” prepared by Antonio Cardarello with Jorge Rodríguez. Starting from a contextualisation based on the internationalisation of local actors, the article delves deeply into the practice of networks by describing their origin, evolution, definition, topology and the advantages of this type of relationship. It then analyses participation in the networks identified by the Observatory that involve both Latin American and European participants, proving that the networks are a privileged tool for interaction between sub-national governments.

The article “URB-AL: A case of decentralised co-operation,” prepared by Rómulo Caballeros, offers a review of the EU programme after ten years of propitiating the exchange of experiences and practices. The programme has been very innovative in EU-Latin America co-operation, because of the way it has stimulated participation of more cities and regions, as well as the creation of thematic networks and the preparation of common projects between local European and Latin American governments.

Finally, this section includes, as a novelty regarding Yearbook 2005, an agenda of prominent events in the world of decentralized co-operation during the year 2006. Said agenda intends to present the principal conferences, seminars, encounters and training courses devoted to discussing or analyzing this phenomenon, in order to promote information exchange among academics, technicians, elected persons and individuals interested in EU-Latin American decentralized co-operation.

2. Social cohesion and poverty reduction

Decentralised co-operation is an instrument that can contribute to the enhancement of local policies aimed at the reduction



of poverty and – in a much broader manner – at the improvement of social cohesion. Municipalities and regions must face up to new challenges to build more integrated and cohesive local societies and have to overcome the difficulties that are born from what is still an insufficient recognition of their role, both in the area of competence and in the distribution of resources among the different levels of public administration.

From this point of view, although decentralised co-operation does not yield sufficient resources to significantly lessen the pressure of citizens on government levels responsible for those tasks, it can be a tool to promote exchanges that facilitate drafting and implementing public policies and allow an improvement of the present situation at the local level.

The second section is focused precisely on those subjects via an article prepared by María Julia Reyna and Alicia Ziccardi, “Decentralised co-operation policies and programmes of social cohesion,” presenting the characteristics of social issues that affect the local world and influence social cohesion (migrations, employment, gender, youth, etc.), as well as the strategic role of decentralised co-operation in this area.

One of the most important elements of social cohesion is the active promotion of truly integral gender policies. To ensure the constancy of the importance of the said policies and of the efforts already made by local governments in this regard, Yearbook 2006 also echoes, in this section, the initiative launched by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) that has drawn up a Charter to which European municipalities and regions may adhere, in the full understanding that by signing it each local government takes on a series of specific commitments in this area. This specific practice is offered as an element to be taken into account for possible decentralized co-

operation initiatives involving local gender policies.

Moreover, a more specific section on analyses of experiences with highly relevant decentralized co-operation and social cohesion initiatives is included.

3. Governance and institutional strengthening

The third section of the Yearbook is devoted to an analysis of the extent to which decentralized co-operation has an impact on the management capacities of local and regional governments.

The article “Decentralised co-operation and institutional strengthening of local governments in the North and in the South,” prepared by Carlos Hernández and Carlos Illán, analyses the impact of this phenomenon on the institutional strengthening processes of local governments both in Latin America and in the EU. This last point deserves special attention because the results of decentralised co-operation are frequently visible in the South, but not as much in the North.

Moreover, Miguel Azcueta’s article “Decentralised co-operation and citizen participation” reflects on the capacity of decentralised co-operation to incorporate new social actors into the political interaction and on the richness this type of exercise produces, by reinforcing citizen awareness and promoting transparency.

Finally, this section includes the presentation of a series of initiatives that illustrate the efforts made in the sphere of local governance in Latin America.

4. Regional integration processes

Regional integration of sub-national governments responds to diverse rationales. In the first place, globalisation means that municipalities and regions increasingly sha-

re common problems and that, therefore, there is more information exchanged. Moreover, the will to internationalise (or even the need to do so) of cities and regions in many cases fosters the creation of transnational structures of sub-national actors.

If the previous Yearbook explored the general progress made in regional integration and analysed what the place was for local governments in institutions responsible for regional integration processes, Yearbook 2006 is devoted to actions pertaining to regional integration carried out by sub-national governments.

Álvaro Padrón’s article titled “Reflections on integration processes in Latin America” examines the advances and limits of sub-national government integration processes, since with ever greater frequency local and regional governments create thematic networks and instruments that allow them to develop new strategies for common problems.

Furthermore, the article “Trans-frontier co-operation in Latin America and the European Union: Contributions to the regional integration process,” prepared by Aurora Hernández, Alicia Jiménez and Juan Carlos Picón, analyses the reality of decentralized transnational co-operation. More specifically, the article illustrates the need for local transnational governments of Latin America to co-operate in certain spheres, as well as their implications for regional integration agendas.

Finally, this section also includes a collection of experiences in matters of decentralised co-operation and regional integration.

5. Case studies

The last section of this publication is devoted to an analysis of the reality of decentralised co-operation in countries that stand

out because of their activity in this regard.

Yearbook 2005 presented the situation of decentralised co-operation in France. For Yearbook 2006 the cases of Italy and Mexico were studied.

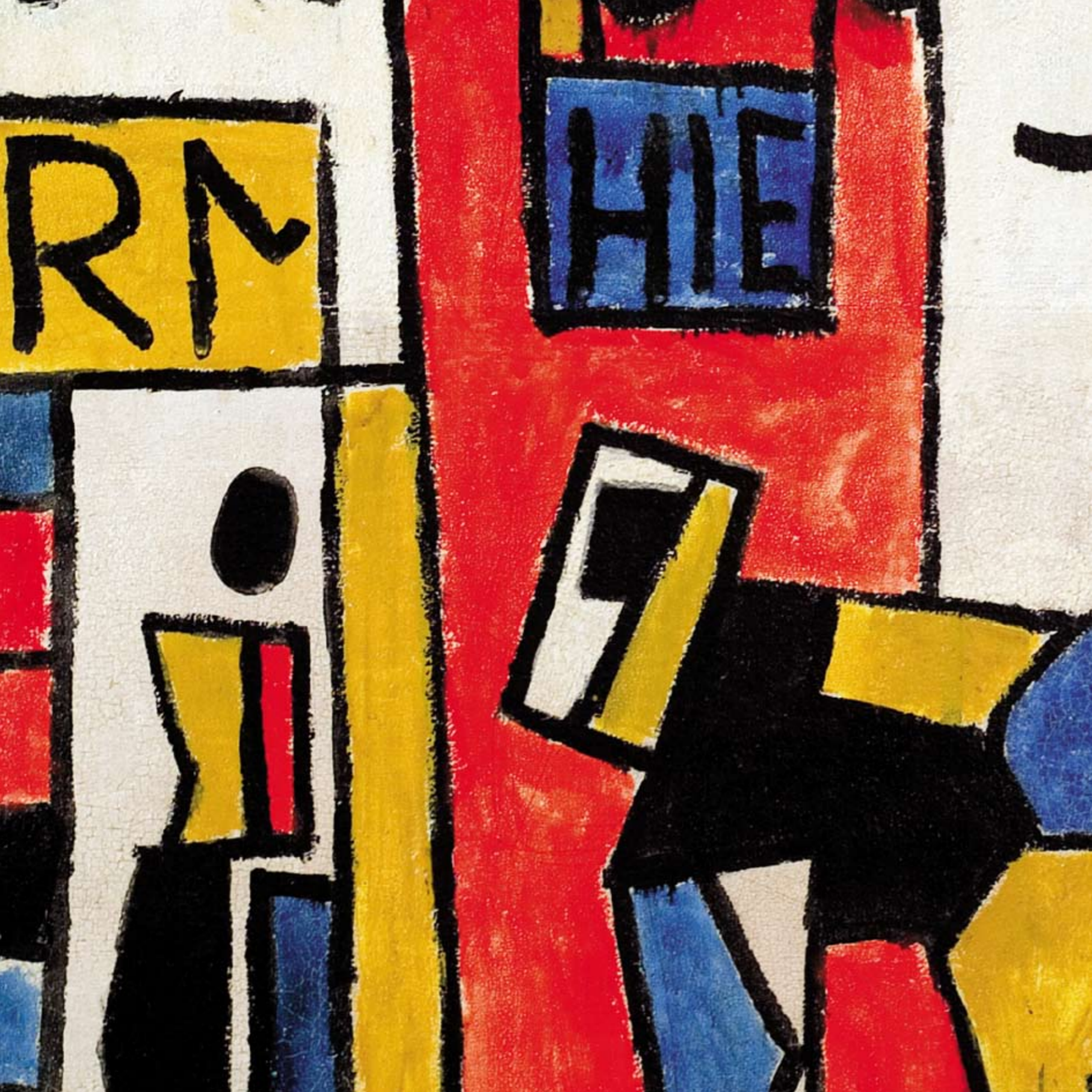
Indeed, sub-national governments in Italy are among the most dynamic in the European Union regarding decentralised co-operation with Latin America. More specifically, as Marina Izzo and Andrea Stocchiero point out, decentralised co-operation in this country is characterised in large measure by the dynamism of the regions.

Likewise, the case of Mexico is also paradigmatic. The changes occurring in the political system of this country have opened the door to decentralisation processes and therefore to the participation of sub-national governments in the international arena. Moreover, as Leonardo Díaz states, these changes have allowed a series of changes to begin in the legal framework of this country that will allow emerging decentralized co-operation to improve.

To conclude, we, the Observatory team, hope that reading this Yearbook will be a fruitful experience and we hope that the opinion of readers and their suggestions will progressively enhance this instrument of knowledge and spread decentralised co-operation.

Jean-Pierre Malé
Executive Director of the European
Latin America Observatory
on Decentralised Co-operation





Analysis of local decentralised co-operation



Introduction

The first section of the Yearbook focuses on an analysis of decentralized co-operation. To do so it relies on the search and systematization of data carried out by the Observatory's team. This section is, in large measure, one of the main displays through which the Observatory presents the data gathered on decentralized co-operation between the European Union and Latin America over the whole year.

If the efforts of Yearbook 2005 were focused on defining decentralised co-operation and establishing its limits, this year its analysis gains in depth because of the accumulation of a greater degree of information. Obviously, given the complexity of the subject, the results presented are not final. However, the information presented here does allow the process of approximation to EU-Latin America decentralized co-operation to be continued in order to achieve greater depth and knowledge of the realities of this type of co-operation.

Continuing the work initiated in Yearbook 2005, this section includes a study on the decentralised co-operation relations detected between both regions. The analysis done this year is based on a greater number of cases, beginning with which the trends detected earlier have been confirmed and new conclusions have been reached. As a novelty, this article incorporates maps based on existing information, a fact which allows us to visualize the dimension of the phenomenon we are dealing with.

Moreover, a document has also been produced, on the basis of Observatory data, on the decentralized co-operation networks that exist between the European Union and Latin America. This type of instrument deserves special attention since it is based on a flexible model of co-operation based in turn on horizontal exchange that wants nothing to do with a North-South hand out approach.

Part of the Observatory's efforts have also been addressed at analysing the European Commission's URB-AL programme, doubtlessly one of the principal programmes designed to step up the creation of networks. In April 2006 the last request for proposals of the URB-AL programme took place; for the ten years this programme has been in place it has played a central role in reinforcing relations between the sub-national governments of the European Union and Latin America via a direct exchange of experiences between territorial council members and technicians of both continents. For this reason, the article on this programme presents its results and impacts not only at the level of projects presented but also as contributions to the decentralized co-operation concept.

Finally, a brief agenda reviews the most outstanding events in the area of decentralised co-operation during the year 2006. Given the breadth and diversity of the phenomenon, we are dealing with a selection that illustrates the rich resources of this type of co-operation, especially the events devoted to the analysis of the phenomenon and training initiatives.

We hope you agree with us that these articles help to define more precisely the characteristics, capacities and limits of decentralised co-operation and that we must continue to work in the same direction to improve the results of this long process of analysis.



Analysis of local decentralised co-operation

Analysis of bilateral relations among sub-national public administrations of Latin America and the European Union

Santiago Sarraute Sainz*
Hervé Théry**

This article analyses the complex network of bilateral relations among sub-national governments of Latin America and the European Union (EU) with the intention of pointing out their main trends and characteristics. The analysis relies on the data obtained by the European Union-Latin-America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation which is constantly being expanded as the phenomenon of decentralised co-operation is gone into in greater depth. The article shows how these relations are unequally concentrated by countries, the most active of them being Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Portugal in the EU, and Argentina, Nicaragua, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Chile in Latin America. Furthermore, there is also a certain tendency to be detected of administrations to act with their opposite numbers, both at the administrative level and in terms of population size. The analysis done allows factors that motivate or facilitate the establishment of bilateral relations to be identified. Among the most important factors are historical ties, the fight against poverty, political solidarity or new trends in paradiplomacy such as public marketing, political lobbying alliances or strategic positioning of cities and regions which can be highlighted. Finally, the participation of governments in bilateral relations is compared to other types of co-operation such as sub-national government networks or projects arising from the URB-AL programme. When making these comparisons the enormous potential for generating close links in the other sub-national types of relations can be observed, the latter being privileged spaces for encountering other institutions that in the main still do not participate in bilateral relations.

KEY WORDS

Decentralised co-operation |
Paradiplomacy |
International relations |
Co-operation for development |

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1. Introduction

Decentralised co-operation between sub-national administrations of Latin America and the European Union (EU) is already a widespread issue of relations that translate into political, technical, financial, economic and cultural exchange. Among the different modalities or types, bilateral relations stand out regarding other multiple partnerships such as networks, for example, because they may lead to closer links between public administrations.

The aim of this article is, precisely, to show some features of bilateral relations involving decentralised co-operation between the EU and Latin America, based on the characteristics of sub-national administrations participating in same.

The article contains a methodological introduction in the second section in which it specifies the purpose of the study, the information-gathering strategy and the limitations thereof. The third section provides data on the characteristics of the relations and of their participants. In the fourth some reasons for the establishment of bilateral relations are mentioned. The fifth compares participation in bilateral relations to that which occurs in networks and that generated in the URB-AL programme. Finally, a series of conclusions are reached derived from the analysis provided in the article.

Based on the article in the previous Yearbook “An approximation to decentralized co-operation in the EU and Latin America,” written by Arnau Gutiérrez, this article goes into greater depth regarding bilateral relations and contributes new data gathered during the second year of operation of the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (OCD).vatorio de Co-operación Descentralizada UE-AL (OCD).

2. Methodology

The decentralized co-operation bilateral relations identified by the OCD are those in which there is a partnership agreement in place between two public administrations to initiate a process of collaboration and/or exchange. No distinctions in that identification have been made on the basis of the contents of the relations: those which are most focused on development co-operation actions in the classical sense are grouped together with cultural exchange or relations being included in the more generic phenomenon of the paradiplomacy of sub-national governments (see Aldecoa and Keating, 1999). Neither have distinctions been made on the basis of the duration of the agreements. Therefore, it is possible to find herein, from permanent or quasi permanent links such as, for example, town-twinning, to actions limited in time such as projects.

The initial strategy for identifying bilateral relations has involved mainly locating sources of information that had already been gathered by sub-national government bilateral relations. ¹ EIn a later phase internet information was searched regarding relations that had already been identified. One of the results of this second search has been the identification of new relations.

The result obtained is a photograph of the bilateral relations among sub-national administrations of Latin America and the EU that makes it easier to identify general trends. However, this photograph has some limits, mainly due to the difficulty of locating all the relations in place within so vast a territory and of maintaining the information up-to-date. Anyway, we hope that reading this article will help to motivate your sending us

¹ | See more information in Gutiérrez Camps (2006).



information on this type of relations so that it may be included in future analyses.

Finally, the article involved has certain particularities: (1) The analysis is based on geographical characteristics, populations and administrative levels (local, metropolitan area, intermediate² and regional) of sub-national governments. The characteristics of the populations are analyzed only in the case of municipalities. (2) The information on the URB-AL programme is based on the systematisation done by the OCD on the basis of data supplied by the European Commission. (3) Graphs and tables supplied are all produced in-house. (4) The maps appearing throughout the text contain only relationships between municipalities.

3. Description of bilateral relations in figures and maps

The OCD has identified 980 bilateral relationships between sub-national governments in the EU and Latin America, involving a total of 1,136 public institutions or aggregates of same. The result is a dense and complex mesh (see Figure 1) that will be unwoven throughout this section.

3.1. Figures referring to relations

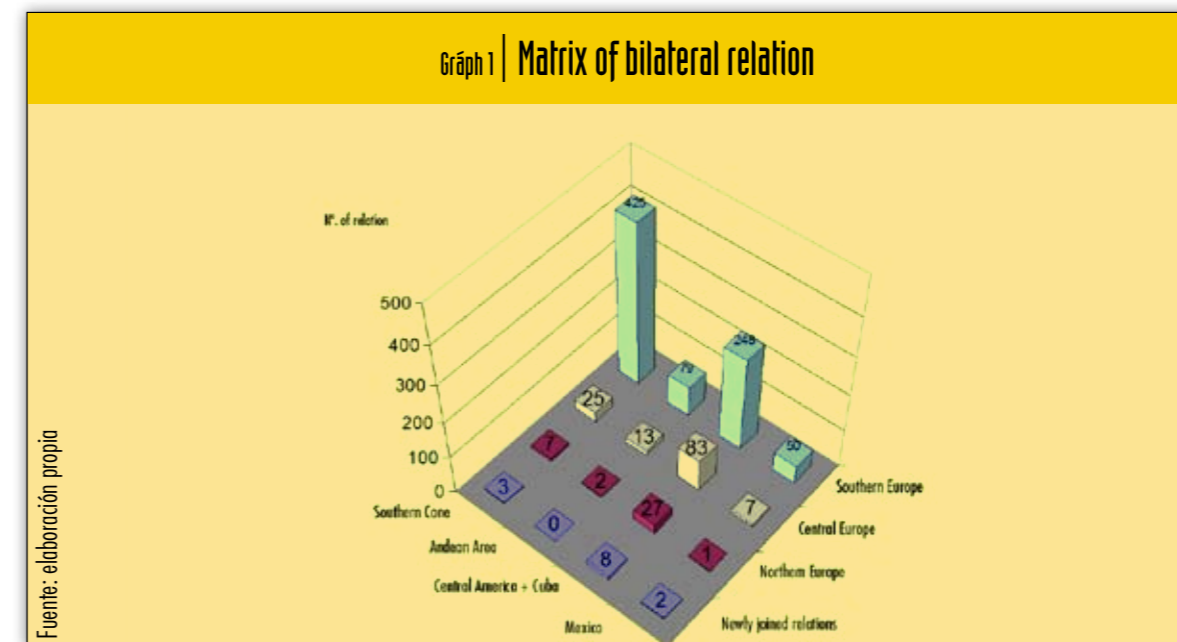
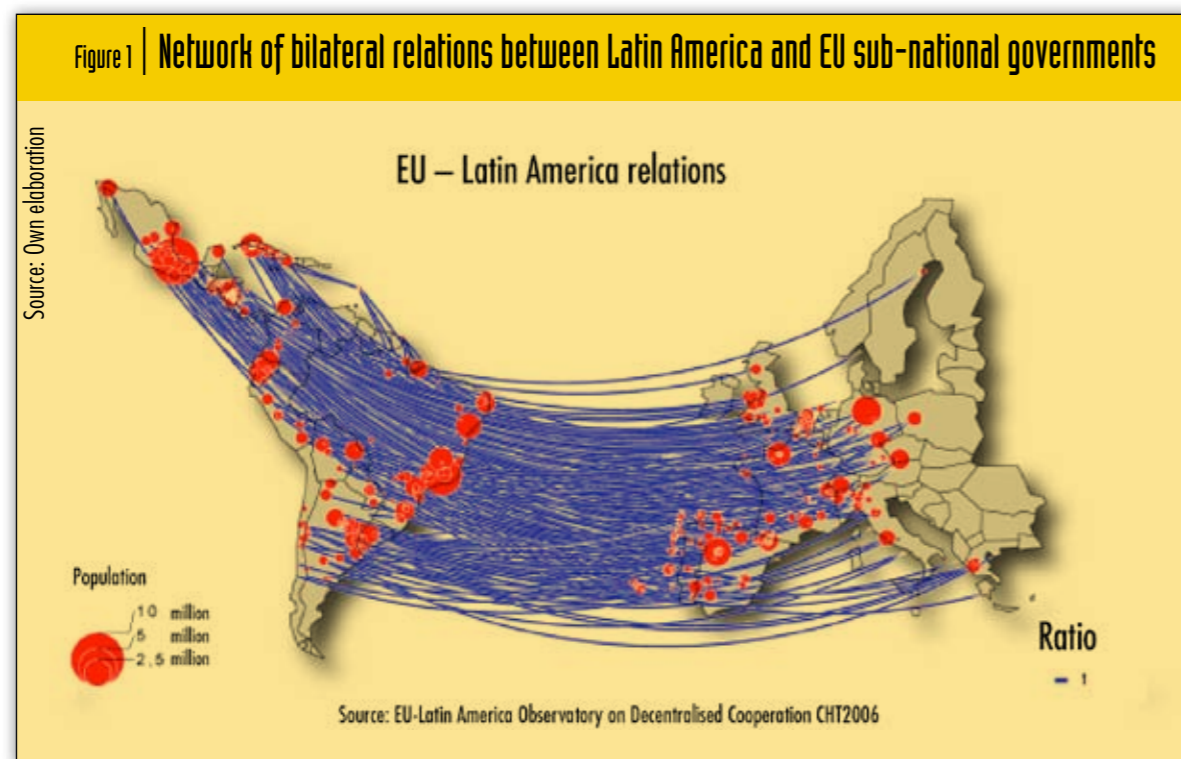
3.1.1. Geographical analysis

The geographical distribution of relationships is irregular with regard to groupings

of countries by continental sub-regions.³ In general terms, Graph 1 shows that the sub-region of Southern Europe and the sub-regions of the Southern Cone and Central America in Latin America concentrate the greater part of the relations identified. The result is that the sum of relations between said continental sub-regions adds up to almost 70% of the 980 identified. At a second level of importance, Central Europe also stands out because of its relations with Central America and the Southern Cone, the Andean Area and Mexico with the countries of Southern Europe and, to a lesser extent, Northern Europe again with Central America

Distribution of relations by countries shows a

high degree of concentration in some of them (see Table 1). This phenomenon is more pronounced in the EU where five countries (Spain, Italy, France, Germany and Portugal) concentrate 87% of the relations of the total of 25 that make up the EU (the majority from Southern Europe). In addition to this, participation is scarce or nil in the majority of its countries, particularly in the last ones incorporated into the Union and in those of Northern Europe. Specifically, the OCD has not detected any relations in the case of ten countries (Denmark, Cyprus, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxemburg and Malta) and scarcely any in five other countries (Czechia, Slovakia, Finland, Greece and Poland).



² |All sub-national governments (or groups of them) are considered to be intermediate levels when the latter are between the municipal and regional levels excluding metropolitan areas. For example, provinces (in the case of Europe), commonwealths, districts, associations of municipalities, etc.).

³ |The countries taken into account in each continental sub-region are the following: Southern Cone: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay; Andean Area: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; Central America + Cuba: Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; Southern Europe: Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal; Central EU: Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg and Netherlands; Northern EU: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, United Kingdom and Sweden; New EU incorporations: Czechia, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Poland.

In the case of Latin America, although the said phenomenon is less pronounced, a certain concentration of relations in some countries is to be observed. Specifically, five of the 18 countries studied (Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Cuba and Mexico) concentrate 79% of relations identified. However, by contrast to the EU, relations have been identified for all countries and there are few cases in which they are scarce (Costa Rica, Honduras, Panama and Paraguay).

Table 1 also shows concentrations of linkages between countries that stand out because they are so numerous. Specifically, relations of Spain with Argentina, Nicaragua, Cuba and Mexico; Italy with Argentina; Brazil with France and Portugal and Nicaragua with Germany add up to more than half the total relations identified.

The results obtained make it possible to visualise some major trends in the motivations that have led to the establishment of co-operation links between sub-national administrations of Latin America and the European Union. Specifically, historical links based on colonization periods and later emigrations from the EU to Latin America, as well as solidarity processes, initially in policies and later in the reduction of poverty indices, may be behind an important percentage of relations identified. These trends shall be analysed in greater depth in section 4 of this article.

Table 2a | Matrix of Latin American bilateral relations percentages by population segments/administrative level

EU/Latin America	Latin America municipalities <100.000	Latin America municipalities >100.000 <500.000	Latin America municipalities > 500.000	Adm. Supra-municipales AL
Municipios UE <100.000	56,81%	32,26%	7,96%	18,63%
Municipios UE >100.000 <500.000	28,09%	31,72%	10,62%	10,29%
Municipios UE > 500.000	14,05%	33,87%	76,11%	26,96%
Adm. Supra-municipales UE	1,05%	2,15%	5,31%	44,12%

Source: Own elaboration

Furthermore, the fact that the majority of EU countries maintain scarce or no relations with Latin America may be explained, fundamentally, by the few cultural links in place between those countries and Latin America. However, other factors have a minor influence, such as the lack of much tradition in the role of donors of co-operation for development prevailing mainly in countries recently incorporated into the EU or the lack of resources and of regulatory frameworks in other countries.

3.1.2. Analysis of populations at the administrative level

Sub-national governments at the municipal level are the administrations which are numerically the most active in bilateral relations since they take part in 91% of them (870 cases), of which 87% occur only between municipalities (761 cases). Regional governments appear below (including federated states), 12% of which participate in the relations identified (121 cases).

Bilateral relations between sub-national governments of Latin America and the European Union are as a rule more frequent between opposite numbers. If this tendency is analysed from the point of view of Latin American sub-national governments, it can clearly be seen (see Table 2a) that it is more often that municipalities of greater population size, of smaller population size and su-

Tabla 1 | Matrix of number of bilateral relations between countries

Country	España	Italia	Francia	Portugal	Grecia	Alemania	Holanda	Belgica	Austria	Reino Unido	Suecia	Finlandia	Chequia	Polonia	Eslovaquia	TOTAL
Argentina	67	119	14	2	3	6	1	1	1	3		1	1	2		221
Brasil	18	26	54	50	1	8	1	1		1						160
Chile	18	2	15				1	2	1	1	1					41
Uruguay	20	6	1	2				1								30
Paraguay	6			1		1										8
Perú	8	3	13		1	1	2	1	1							30
Bolivia	4		6			1		5			1					17
Colombia	13	2	2													17
Venezuela	10	1	4	1												16
Ecuador	8	1	2					2			1					14
Nicaragua	81	8	7		1	37	21	5	12	17	7	1	6		2	205
Cuba	71	7	13	3				1		2						97
El Salvador	23	2	2													27
Guatemala	11	3	1			1		5								21
Honduras	6					1										7
Costa Rica	4		1													5
Panamá	4															4
México	33	1	14		2	6			1		1				2	60
TOTAL	405	181	149	59	8	62	26	24	16	24	11	2	7	4	2	980

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2b | Matrix of EU bilateral relations percentages by population segments/ administrative level

UE/Latin America	AL Municipalities <100.000	AL Municipalities >100.000 <500.000	AL Municipalities > 500.000	AL supra-municipal administrations
EU municipalities <100.000	71,69%	15,87%	2,38%	10,05%
EU municipalities >100.000 <500.000	59,29%	26,11%	5,31%	9,29%
EU municipalities > 500.000	24,72%	23,25%	31,73%	20,30%
Supra-municipal administrations UE	4,76%	3,81%	5,71%	85,71%

Source: Own elaboration



Table 3 | Number of participants per country according to characteristics

Country	Municipalities <100.000	Municipalities >100.000 <500.000	Municipalities > 500.000	Supra-municipal Administrat.	Total
Costa Rica	0	1	0	0	1
Cuba	25	15	2	9	51
El Salvador	10	3	0	3	16
Guatemala	13	2	1	1	17
Honduras	1	1	2	1	5
Nicaragua	71	7	1	1	80
Panamá	0	1	1	1	3
Argentina	72	20	9	14	115
Brazil	30	28	18	9	85
Chile	11	9	2	6	28
Paraguay	2	1	1	0	4
Uruguay	0	2	1	0	3
México	9	8	13	4	34
Bolivia	3	3	3	0	9
Colombia	5	4	4	0	13
Ecuador	6	4	2	0	12
Perú	2	6	3	4	15
Venezuela	1	6	3	1	11
Germany	21	21	6	3	51
Austria	9	2	1	1	13
Belgium	17	1	0	1	19
Holland	11	12	2	0	25
Luxemburg	0	0	0	0	0
Denmark	0	0	0	0	0
Finland	1	1	0	0	2
Ireland	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom	2	16	2	0	20
Sweden	10	1	0	0	11
Spain	155	36	6	19	216
France	56	9	2	29	96
Greece	5	1	1	0	7
Italy	84	10	5	25	124
Portugal	25	11	1	1	38
Czechia	5	1	1	0	7
Cyprus	0	0	0	0	0
Slovakia	2	0	0	0	2
Slovenia	0	0	0	0	0
Estonia	0	0	0	0	0
Hungary	0	0	0	0	0
Latvia	0	0	0	0	0
Lithuania	0	0	0	0	0
Malta	0	0	0	0	0
Poland	0	0	3	0	3

Source: own elaboration

pra-municipal administrations ⁴(to a lesser degree) relate to their European counterparts rather than to the remainder (76%, 57% and 44% respectively). If analysed from a European perspective (see Table 2b), the same is clearly the case regarding supra-municipal administrations, small municipalities and less frequent in the case of municipalities of greater population size (86%, 72% y 32%, respectively).

In the case of medium-sized municipalities (between 100,000 and 500,000 inhabitants), the behaviour is different, both compared to previous cases and by comparing the Latin America and EU trend. In the case of Latin America, relations showed a similar frequency both in percentage of relations with small municipalities, and with large European municipalities. In the case of EU municipalities relations are clearly more frequent with small Latin American municipalities. (59,29%).

The same trend mentioned in the previous paragraph repeats itself if relations are analysed between the different supra-municipal administrative levels. Indeed, in most cases relations with other levels are more frequent. The only case that

partially escapes this trend is that of regions, which relate to their opposite number in 40% of cases in which they participate (46 relationships).

3.2. Figures referred to participants

As has been mentioned at the beginning of this section, 1,136 institutions are participating in the 980 relations that have been identified. This presumes an average participation of 1.7 relations per participant.

At the level of distribution by continental sub-regions and by countries, significant differences are not to be observed in comparison with the description provided in paragraph 3.1.1 (see Table 3). The most important fact is that the distribution between the number of participants from Latin America and the EU is unequal, the Europeans being a larger percentage (56% of total institutions) than Latin Americans (44%).

This situation may be due to the role adopted by European sub-national governments in most decentralised co-operation relationships

Figure 2 | Distribution of participants by countries



⁴ | *Supra-municipal administrations* refers to all sub-national governments or groupings of same that are not municipalities: federated states, regions, provinces, metropolitan areas, regional governments, commonwealths, associations of municipalities and other entities.

being that of financier, whereas their limited resources prevent them from being prodigal in their relations, a factor that does not affect the Latin American case. Another supplementary cause is that some sub-national governments in Latin America have gained much experience in the field of international relations, a fact that makes it easier for them to multiply their contact possibilities.

Another important fact is that the territories of sub-national governments active in bilateral relations are concentrated in some regions or areas of their respective countries. This fact can be seen clearly in the United Kingdom, Italy, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Mexico, inter alia.

As for population characteristics and the administrative level of the participants, Graph 2 shows that their number diminishes when the size of the municipalities increases as well as the administrative level of sub-national governments as a whole. Furthermore, if Latin America and the European Union are compared, it can be observed that the European participating municipalities are in general smaller and on the contrary a greater number of European supra-municipal administrations participate. This fact may be due

fundamentally to a lower ratio of population per municipality in the European Union while there is a greater number and variety of supra-municipal administrations in the said geographical area. But another reason is the fact that Latin American municipalities have less resources and competencies available that allow them to participate in the international arena, a factor that affects mainly smaller municipalities.

The supra-municipal administrations most active in the relations identified are the regions, followed by the intermediate levels (see Table 4). Also to be highlighted is that while a certain parity can be observed between the number of Latin American and European Union participant regions, there are significant differences in the number of administrations with intermediate levels.

4. Factors that facilitate or motivate bilateral relations

Various factors, even for each relationship individually, may make possible or motivate the generation of links between Latin American and

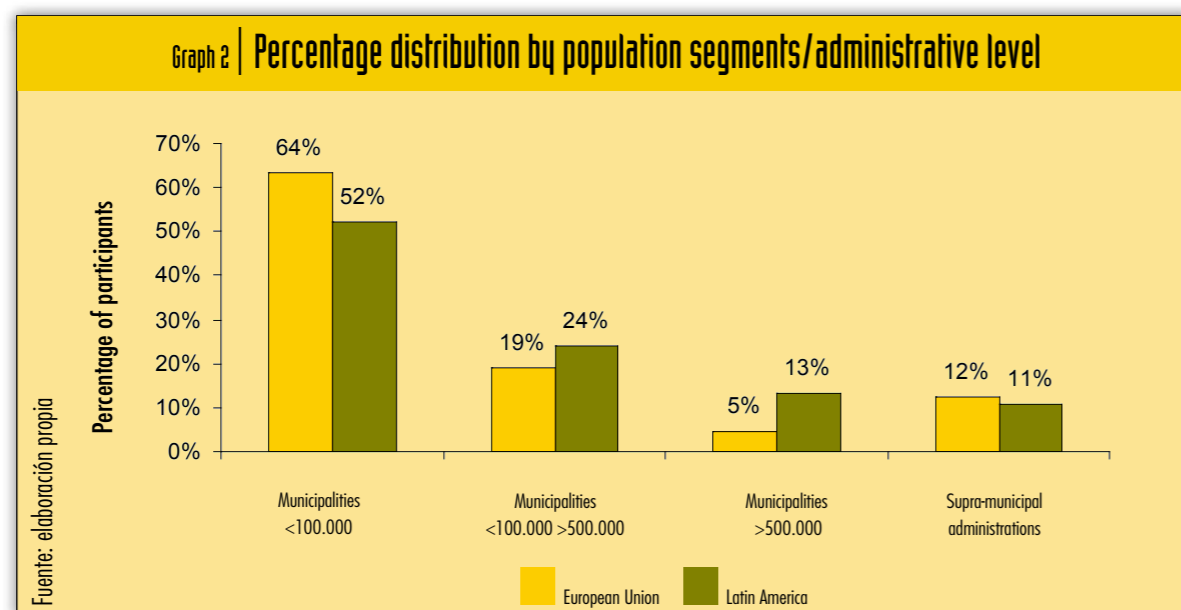


Table 4 | Distribution of supra-municipal administrations by geographical area

Supra-municipal administration typologies	LA N° participants	Latin America	EU	N° Total
Metropolitan areas	2	9		11
Intermediate levels	14	31		45
Regions	33	38		71
National municipal associations	5	1		6
Total	54	79		133

Source: Own elaboration

European Union sub-national governments. Detailed knowledge on this could be obtained on the basis of the aggregate analysis of the contents of each relationship, an area of study that is not within the scope of this article. However, participation characteristics of bilateral relations facilitate grouping them according to some common motivations, which are the subject of this section.

4.1. Historical and human ties: colonisation and emigration of EU to Latin America

There is no doubt that the factor that most helps to generate decentralized co-operation links

are the historical ties between both geographical areas, which come from the era of European colonization in Latin America, and to a lesser extent, from the existence of more recent cultural ties, the result mainly of migratory flows from Italy and Spain.

The period of colonisation left as one of its most important consequences the Portuguese language in Brazil and Spanish in the remainder of Latin America, a fact that enormously aids relations with Portugal and Spain, respectively. The importance of the existence of a history, language and culture in common is clearly to be observed in the case of Spain, the sub-national governments of which are more discretely present in Brazil

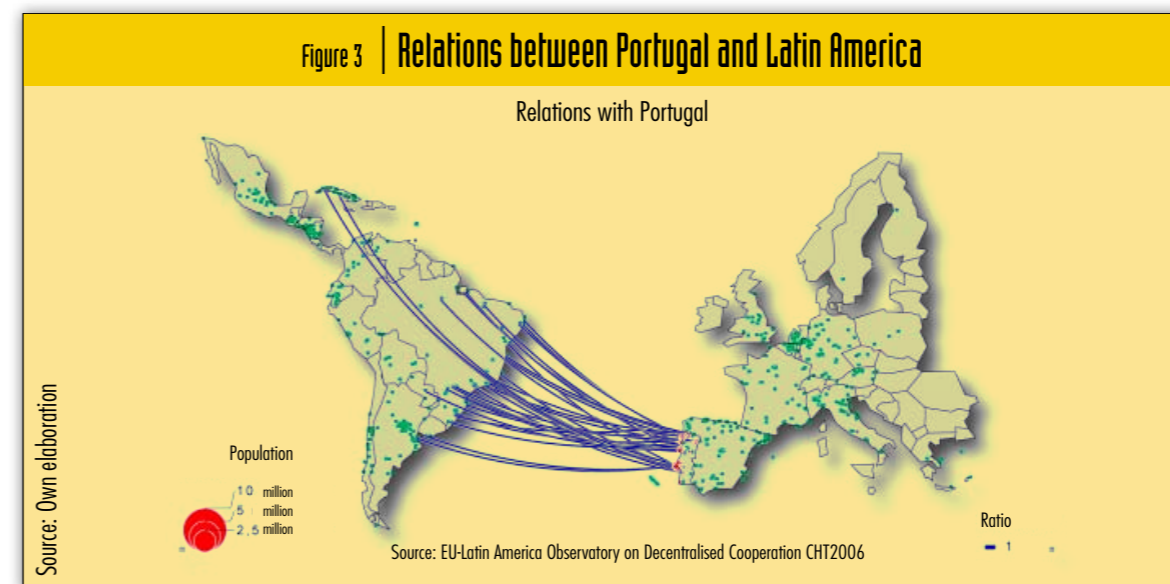


Figure 4 | Relations between Italy and Latin America



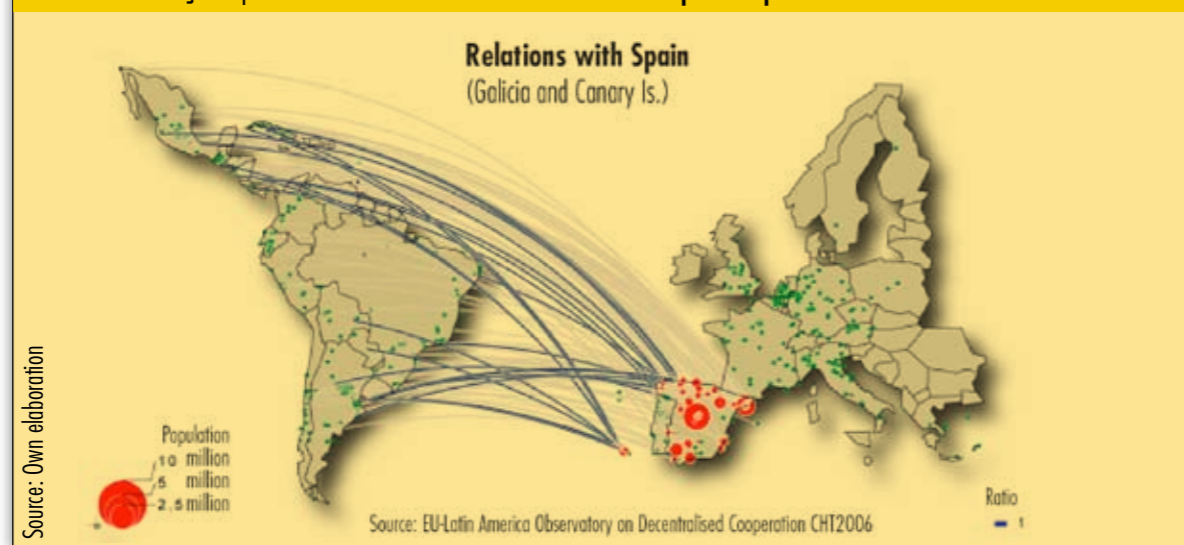
(11% regarding total relations of Brazil) and in large part in the rest of Latin America (more than 40% regarding total relations identified):

The same also happens in Portugal in which the large majority of its relations are concentrated in Brazil (see Fig.3). The second country in Europe with most relations with Latin America is Italy. These relations are mainly concentrated

in Argentina and to a lesser extent in Brazil (see Figure 4), precisely where a very significant volume of Italian emigrants were concentrated. This fact underlines the great importance that the ties caused by migrations also have in the promotion of relations among sub-national governments.

What is described in the case of Italy is also true in the case of some areas of Spain such as

Figure 5 | Relations between Galicia and Canary Is. in Spain with Latin America



Galicia or the Canary Islands, with large movements of emigrants towards Argentina and Cuba, respectively (see Figure 5). They could even explain in part the important concentration of relations between Mexico and Spain, the ties of which could have been influenced considerably by Spanish emigration after the end of the civil war (1936-1939).

Finally, the importance of the historical factor as facilitator and promoter of relations between sub-national governments explains, save for the cases of France and Germany, the great disproportion in the number of participations among countries of the EU to be observed in the third section of this article.

4.2. Solidarity: political resemblances and reduction of inequalities

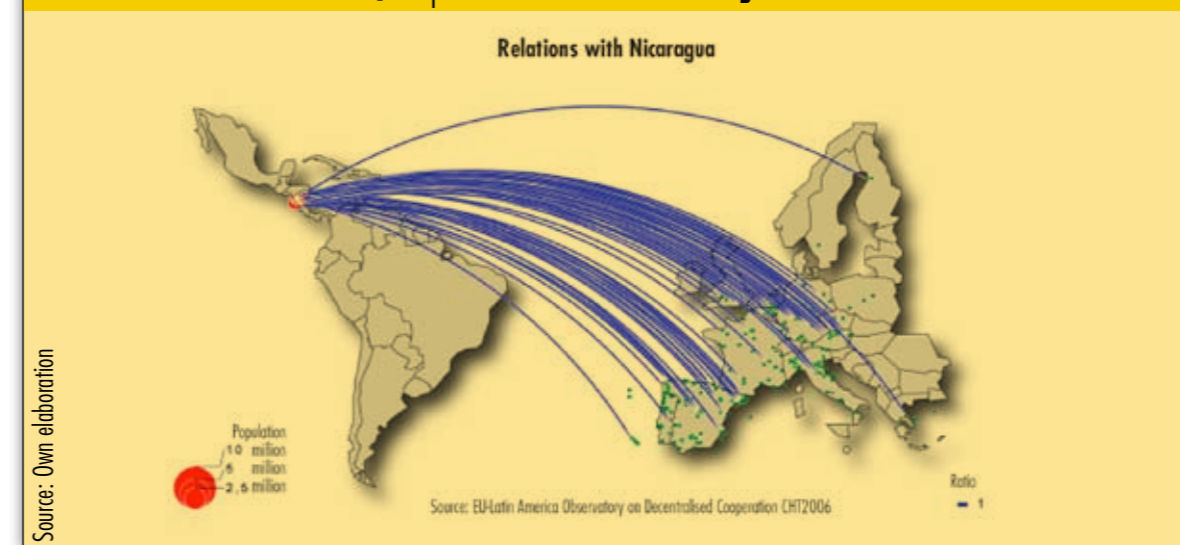
Solidarity is another of the factors that motivate the establishment of relations between sub-national governments of Latin America and the European Union. Specifically, solidarity with the most disadvantaged is perhaps the most frequent trend to

boost the involvement of municipalities and other European administrative levels in relations of decentralized co-operation because a large part of the population of Latin America lives in conditions of poverty. However, it is difficult to visualise that phenomenon concentrated in some area of Latin America since poverty affects most of its countries to a greater or lesser extent.

The solidarity phenomenon may indeed be defined in countries where there has been political solidarity extended from Europe with revolutionary movements in the seventies and eighties of the 20th century. The Latin American country that has most capitalised that phenomenon has been Nicaragua followed at a distance by Cuba and El Salvador.

Much of the town-twinning in Nicaragua began with European support for the Sandinista Movement and, later, continued partly because of the poverty conditions in which the Nicaraguan population lived and also of solidarity to palliate natural catastrophes, especially those caused by hurricane Mitch (1998). The distribution of European participation in relations with Nicaragua has the peculiarity that it concentrates the greater part by far of the relations of counties not located in Southern

Figure 6 | Relations between Nicaragua and EU



Europe (see Figure 6). In particular, it concentrates a large majority of the relations of Germany, Austria, Czechia, Slovakia, Holland, United Kingdom and Sweden (see Table 1). It also concentrates the greatest number of Spanish relations in comparison with the rest of the countries of Latin America, although there have been no close historical ties recently between Spain and Nicaragua other than a common language. Therefore, Nicaragua is the best example of the solidarity phenomenon, concentrating 21% of total bilateral relations.

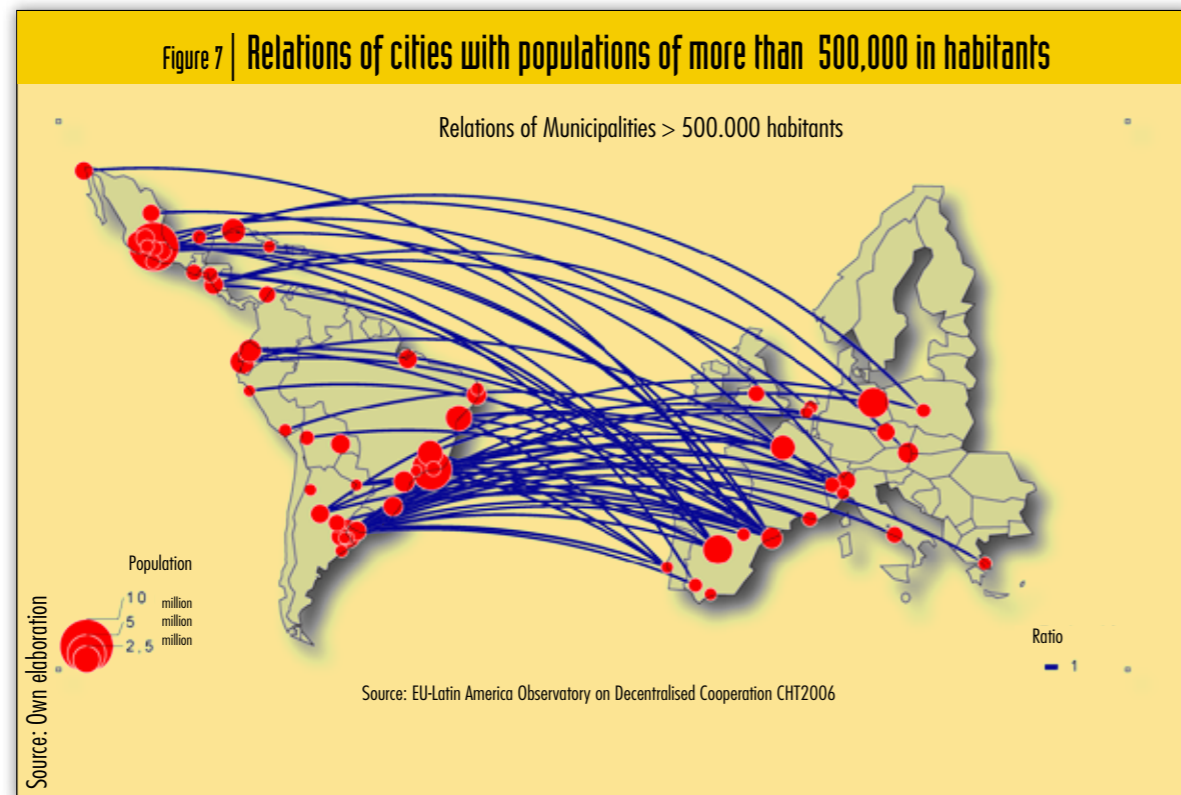
4.3. The internationalisation of regions and large cities

Entry into the international arena of large cities and of other supra-municipal governments such as regions, provinces or metropolitan areas, is particularly important due to the volume of relations in

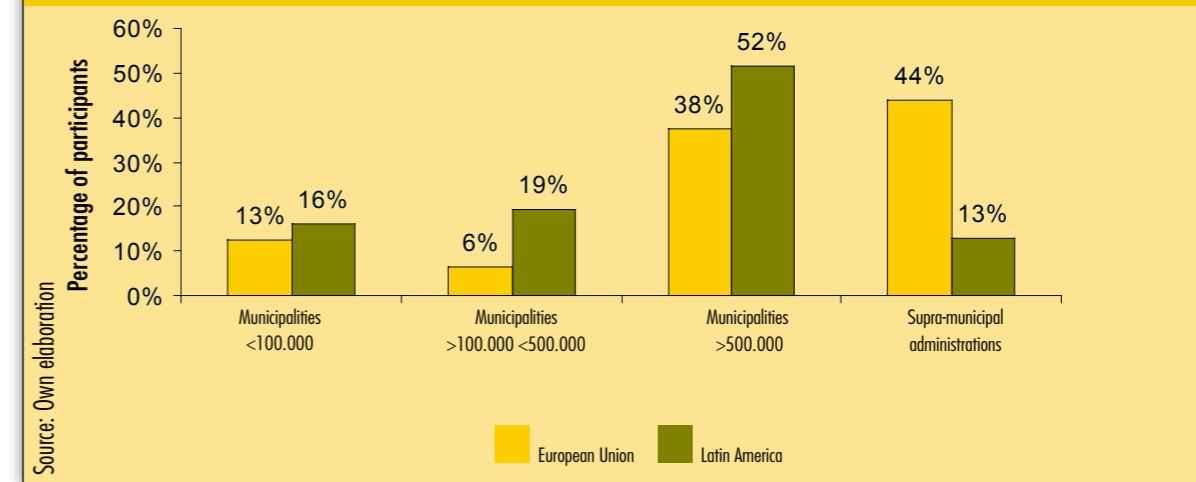
which they are immersed (see Figure 7). In the specific case of bilateral relations identified by the OCD the said institutions are the most active if compared to small municipalities (see Graph 3).

The motivations of such great international activity are diverse and in all probability are not circumscribed solely to cultural relations which are in many cases the product of historical ties, or to actions linked to solidarity with political movements or with the most disadvantaged. Other factors such as urban marketing, corporate strategies of transnational enterprises and their impact on local matters, or the alliances between cities as strategies to exercise world lobbies, appear on the international agendas of sub-national governments⁵, mainly those of greater size.

Relations between large cities are distributed throughout Latin America and the EU and are therefore difficult to focus on territorially (see Figure 7) This is not the case in regions that are concen-



Graph 3 | Distribution of the most active sub-national governments by population segments/administrative level



¹ | Active sub-national governments are those that take part in 5 relations or more.

trated in specific countries. In Latin America the federal states of Argentina, Brazil or Mexico and the Chilean regions are notably active in co-operation relations. In the case of the EU the most active are once again Spain, France and Italy, in this case hand in hand with their regions.

4.4. Relations induced by programmes or encounters

Since the middle nineties decentralised co-operation programmes have been emerging that facilitate encounters between sub-national governments. In the case of Latin America the most prominent are the URB-AL programme⁶ and the Local Human Development Programmes (widely known as PDHL for the Spanish initials) implemented in Cuba and Colombia.⁷ One of

the results of those programmes are the relations fostered between sub-national governments.

The URB-AL programme has been, without a doubt, the programme that has facilitated the most relations between sub-national governments. The OCD has still not studied the impact in terms of bilateral relations promoted. In any case the type of programme presumes that not all relations generated will allow identification. This occurs because relations between institutions have been circumscribed in many cases to exchanges between technicians or persons in charge of sector departments interested in the different themes promoted by sector networks. Said relations do not always reach the persons responsible for establishing institutional agreements, and remain in a framework of technical contacts. Therefore, the impact of URB-AL on the fostering of relations cannot

⁵ | Javier Sánchez (2006): "La acción internacional de las autoridades locales" ("International actions by local authorities"), Module 1 of on-line training, Barcelona: OCD

⁶ | For more information see Rómulo Caballeros' in this publication

⁷ | For more information see UNOPS document (2004): Report on multilateral human development programmes. Roma: UNOPS

be measured easily in terms of formalized institutional relations between governments, which are what the OCD mainly addresses.

In the case of the PDHL mentioned above, the OCD still has no systematised information available. In any case, they have also been the source of initiatives with a widespread potential to generate relations, especially between Cuba and sub-national governments of Italy and Spain..

Another international programme that in a minor way has linked European and Latin America municipalities is the NEWS (North East West South) programme. This programme fostered the establishment of triangular exchange relations at the beginning of the nineties between municipalities of Nicaragua, Holland and former Czechoslovakia. This fact caused the occurrence of the majority of links identified between Czech and Slovak municipalities, and some Dutch with Nicaraguan opposite numbers.

Besides international programmes, initiatives are arising in national frameworks which can potentially generate relations. Among them are programmes (for example, “French-Mexican Programme of Municipal Co-operation” or “100 Città per 100 Progetti per il Brasile” between Italy and Brazil), and encounters of sub-national governments such as the “Seminar between inter-municipal structures of France and the Southern Cone” or the “French-Brazilian Decentralised Co-operation Encounter” held in Montevideo and Marseille, respectively, in 2006..

5. Comparison with other decentralised co-operation actions

As has been mentioned in the introduction to this article, bilateral relations are one of the possible ways to establish relations between sub-national governments of Latin America and the EU. The OCD has also systematised participation in URB-AL networks, participation in networks arising outside that programme and that of the projects financed within the framework of URB-AL. It is precisely in this section that participation in bilateral relations with those of the rest of systematised actions is compared in order to analyse their differences and similarities.

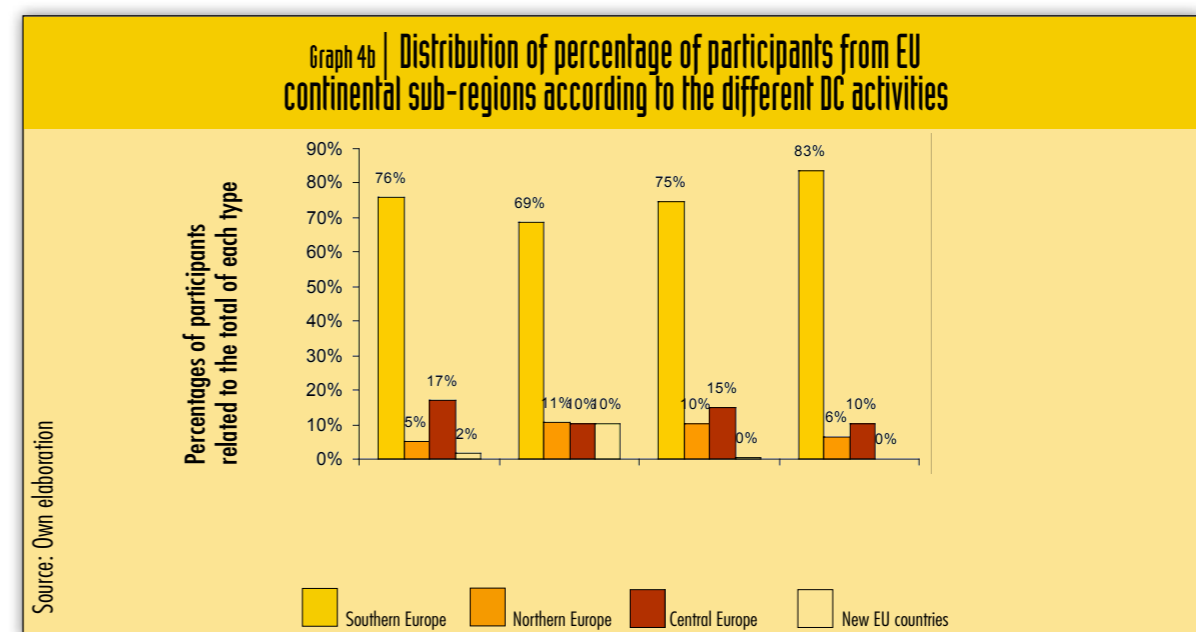
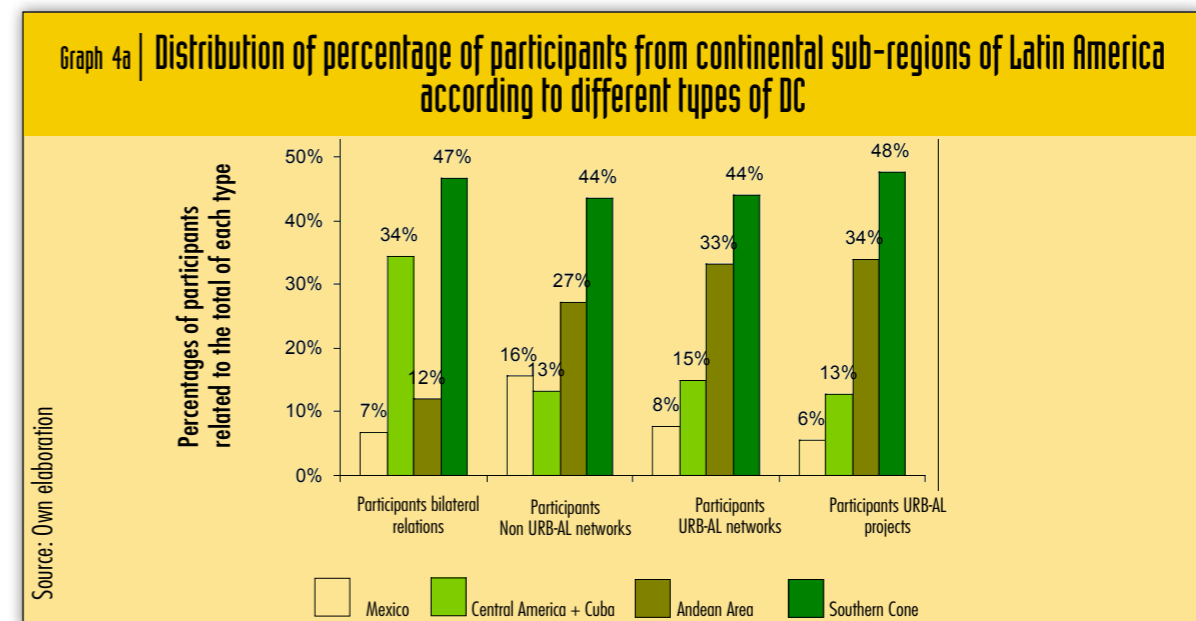
5.1. Comparison between number of participants

Overall figures for participation of each type (see Table 5) show that bilateral relations are not only important because of the strength of the links that they may potentially generate, but also because of the fact that a considerable number of sub-national governments are mobilized. This mobilization may even be more important if possible because of the greater complexity and effort required to establish and maintain bilateral relations in comparison with other forms of participation such as networks.

Type of relationship	Nº of participants ²
Bilateral relations	1136
URB-AL networks	909
Non URB-AL networks	706
URB-AL projects	500

Source: Own elaboration

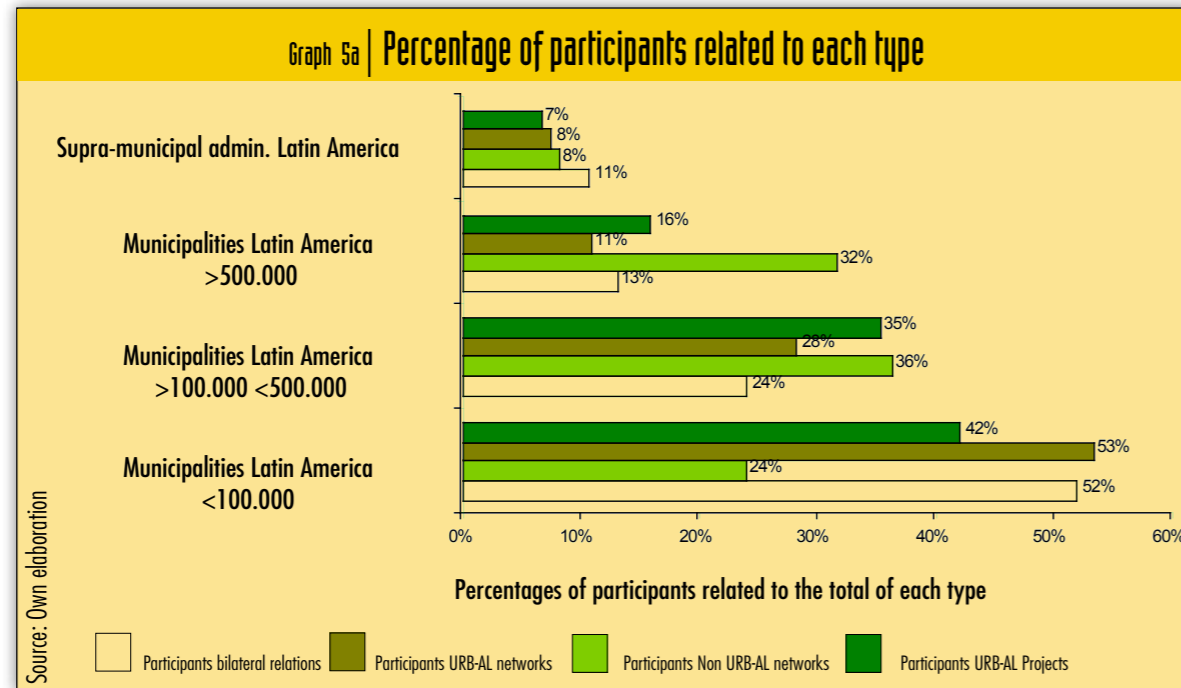
¹ | The conclusions reached on the basis of this table must be tempered by the fact that all existing networks have not been systematised (see note 13).



⁸ | For more information see http://www.trnava.sk/old/news/en_01.html

⁹ | Those registered in the networks of Phase II and those of Phase 6 (Urban Environment and 9 (Mobility Control) of Phase I have been systematised.

¹⁰ | Participation in all networks identified arising outside URB-AL have been systematised, where sub-national EU and Latin America governments are registered simultaneously.. The only exceptions are the “Ibero-american network of digital cities” and “Mayors for Peace.” For more information see Cardanello’s article published in this same Yearbook.



5.2. Comparison of types by continental sub-regions

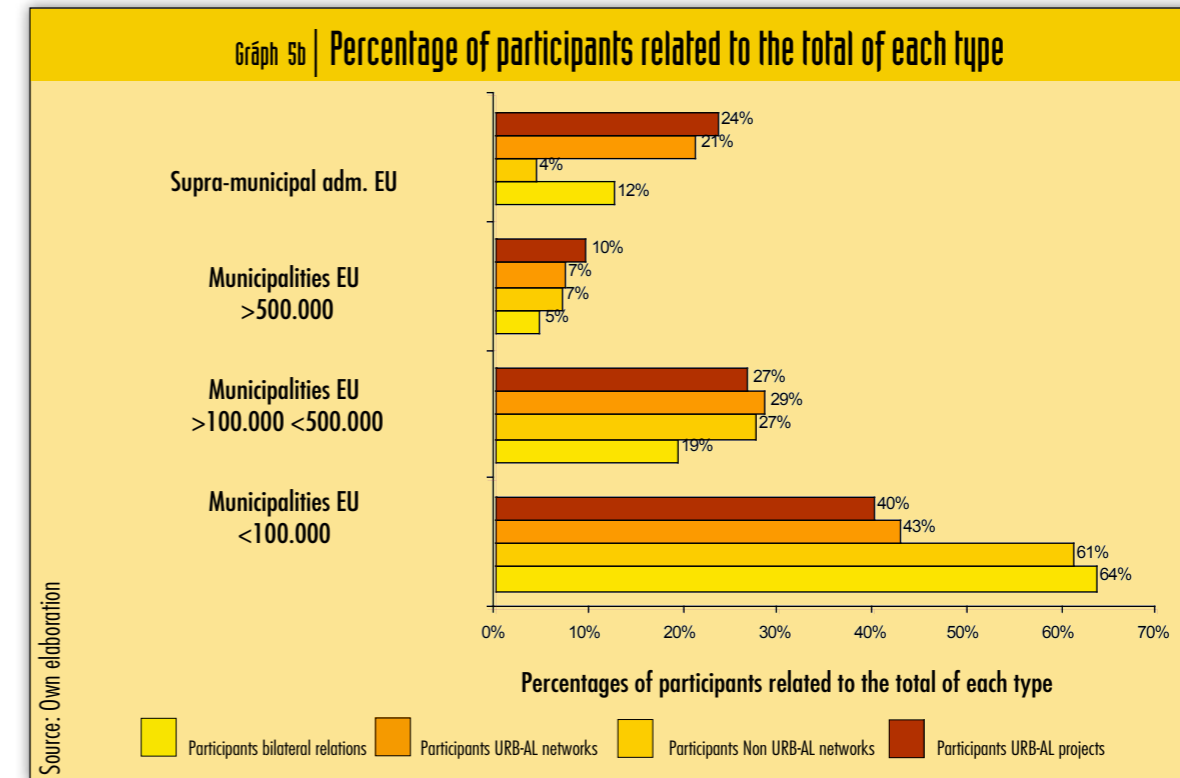
The distribution of the number of participants of the different types of decentralized co-operation by continental sub-regions shows that some of them are heterogeneous (see Graphs 4a and 4b). In the case of Latin America, Southern Cone participants are the most numerous in all types with no significant variations among them. In the remainder of the sub-regions variations are detected among which the widespread Central American participation in bilateral relations stands out with regard to the rest of the types. This fact contrasts with the low participation in sub-national bilateral relations of the Andean area, the sub-national governments of which seem to have found in the networks and the URB-AL programme another entrance to decentralized co-operation with the EU.

In the case of the EU the general keynote among the different types of decentralised co-

operation is that Southern Europe is quite by far the sub-region that shows the greatest number of participants in each type (see Graph 4b). The most striking difference between types is to be found in the case of the networks that do NOT arise from the URB-AL in which the participants of Northern Europe, Central Europe and the new incorporations into the EU add up to more than in the remainder (31% regarding the total), and also participations are more equal among them. The explanation of this latter fact may be related to the circumstance that the motivation of sub-national governments to participate in international networks is not circumscribed so much to factors linked to cultural, political and economic proximity to Latin America.

5.3. Comparison of types according to population and administrative level characteristics

The analysis according to population and administrative level characteristics of par-



ticipants shows significant differences among types (see Graph 5a and 5b). In the case of Latin America the non URB-AL networks are the type in which there is most participation of municipalities of greater size. The participants in bilateral relations and those registered in URB-AL networks have, on the contrary, increased the participation of small and medium-sized municipalities, and the percentage of participation of large municipalities is low.

In the case of the EU, bilateral relations are also a type in which a greater number of small municipalities participate. However, it is the non URB-AL networks that most facilitate the participation of small municipalities while the URB-AL activities have had greater indices of participation of large cities and supra-municipal administrations than in the case of Latin America.

5.4. Analysis of participants involved in various types of participation

Some participants identified participate in more than one type. In this section those that participate in bilateral relations at the same time as they participate in another of the types studied are analysed.

Data by continental sub-regions show (see Table 6) that there are no significant differences between them, not even when comparing Latin America and the EU. The only exception to this general tendency are the participants of the countries most recently incorporated into the EU in which there are no coincidences of institutions between types. In any case, the low participation in this sub-region almost does not affect the overall EU percentage.



Table 6 | Percentage of simultaneous participation in bilateral relations and in other types of relations by continental sub-regions

Latin American sub-regions	Percentage of coinciding participation in bilateral relations and in other types regarding each sub-region	EU sub-regions	Percentage of coinciding participation in bilateral relations and in other types regarding each sub-region
México	23%	Southern Europe	15%
Central America + Cuba	16%	Northern Europe	11%
Andean Area	12%	Central Europe	14%
Southern Cone	19%	New EU countries	0%
TOTAL L. America	16%	TOTAL EU	14%

Source: Own elaboration

Regardless, if the phenomenon is analysed from the viewpoint of population characteristics and the administrative level of institutions, significant differences between them are to be observed (see Graph 6). What most stands out is that there are few small municipalities (less than 100,000 inhabitants) that participate in bilateral relations and that also participate in another type of collaboration, and that, moreover, the percentage of the said double participation increases, as the size of municipalities increases. This trend is more pronounced in Latin America where the percentage of large municipalities that participate in several types of collaboration is greater (69%). That can be explained by the greater capacity of the municipalities, as they increase in size and therefore in resources, both to access information on the supply of activities and their ability to take part in same.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of bilateral relations of sub-national public administrations of Latin America and the European Union shows some constants that do not deplete the richness of the phenomenon

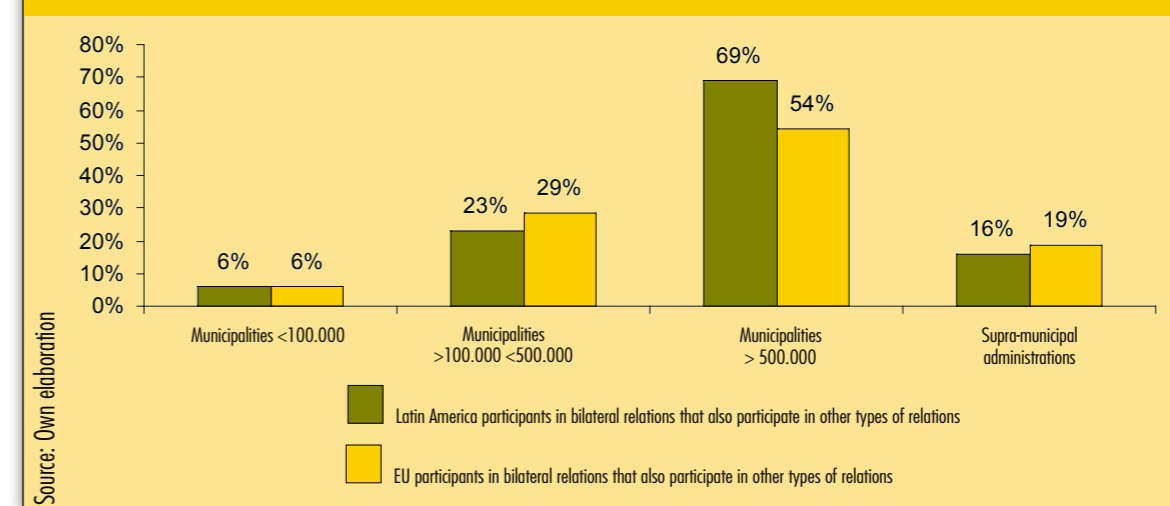
The relations are motivated or fostered by various factors among which are the fight against poverty, political solidarity, historical ties or new trends in public marketing, political lobby alliances, or strategic positioning of cities and regions. In brief, both past and present feed the mutual will to collaborate.

The relations analysed present significant differences according to administrative level characteristics or population size in the case of municipalities. Those differences tend to give shape to spaces for collaboration in partnerships, the members of which have similar general characteristics (as, e.g., size and administrative level) or common concerns.

Other types of collaboration such as networks are making more dynamic the participation of institutions not present in bilateral relations. Those types of collaboration constitute privileged spaces of encounter with great potential to generate close links between administrations. For this reason, inter alia, it can be expected that decentralized ties between Latin America and the EU will increase in the medium term.

The diversity of types of collaboration that this brief analysis has outlined

Gráfico 6 | Percentage of simultaneous participation in bilateral relations and other types of relations by population characteristics and administrative level



shows a phenomenon of relations that is increasingly consolidated. Although data available still does not reflect all the relations in place, the richness of typologies of relations detected presupposes

that future increases of information will surely contribute to demonstrate the vigour and vitality of relations between local institutions on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Networks of cities as a privileged tool for decentralised co-operation management

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KEY WORDS

Latin America |
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This article describes and analyses a specific type of international action of the sub-state governments in Latin America and the European Union, which has fostered and strengthened decentralised co-operation between the two continents – the networks of cities. The article first describes the origin and evolution of the process of internationalisation of local actors, which emerges as an increasingly important dimension of local policy. Moreover, a definition is proposed of the concept of networks as well as a typology for the analysis of these based on their characteristics and objectives. The second part of the article studies the phenomenon of networks of cities through examples of institutions in Latin America and the European Union. The empirical emphasis is based on the description of participation in the networks identified by the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation that include both Latin American and European participants. The analysis demonstrates that the networks are an excellent tool of interaction between sub-state governments, that favours decentralised co-operation and the objectives that the local actors propose for the development of their policies.

1. Introduction

This article intends to describe and analyse the international action of sub-state governments,¹ by focusing on the networks phenomenon, a type of horizontal relationship between local actors that is an important dimension of decentralised co-operation between Latin America and the European Union (EU). There are two parts to this article: in the first part we shall provide an outline of the importance in today's world of the international participation of cities. In addition, a brief introduction to the concept of networks of cities is provided, their history and objectives, the benefits of belonging to a network, thus proposing a typology for organizing its analysis. In the second part, we are planning to study the phenomenon of networks of cities via examples which incorporate, at the same time, Latin American and European institutions. The study, therefore, will be empirical and its central feature will be the description of the participation of networks already in place. To do this, the analysis will use as its input data obtained by the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (OCD), which is in charge of a data base that is constantly growing which provides information on the different phenomena involved in decentralised co-operation. The purpose of the analysis is to visualise the degree to which networks perform as an excellent tool for relationships and interaction among cities, in order to aid decentralised co-operation between sub-state governments, or the development and strengthening of the objectives that these local actors have set themselves for the development of their policies at the regional, inter-regional and world levels.

¹ | By sub-state governments we mean those that act one level below the national administration, such as municipalities, states, provinces, regions, metropolitan areas, etc.

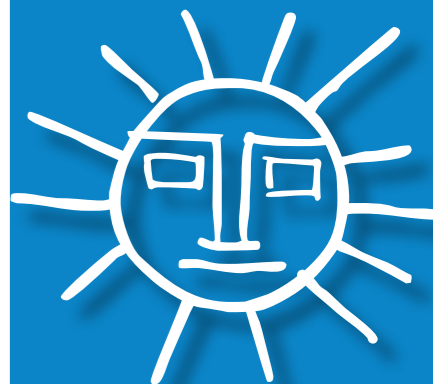
² | "A State that shares authority (i.e., ultimately the capacity to impose legitimate violence) all along a network. A network, by definition, has nodes and not a centre. Nodes can be of different sizes and may be linked together by asymmetrical relations in the network, in such a way that the network State does not prevent the existence of political inequalities among its members." (Castells 1998: 365).

2. Cities in the international arena

We can place the consolidation of the role played by local actors in the international arena in the last two decades, as the phenomenon of paradiplomacy called by some authors (Godinez and Romero, 2004). There are many and very varied reasons why the cities and other sub-state circles of government appear on the international scene, playing in a scenario traditionally reserved for States. Specifically in this regard, Chasqueti (2006: 12) points out that "local governments have acquired an important protagonist role in the international scenario in the last few years. This phenomenon reached its maximum expression when Joan Clos, Mayor of Barcelona, took part – on behalf of the local governors of the world – in the United Nations Assembly held in June 2001, and when, in Paris in May 2004, a world organisation was formed, United Cities and Local Governments, from the merger of two large associations of cities (IULA and UTO) to promote co-operation and integration of local governments."

Although this is not a final analysis of the reasons which result in this phenomenon, we shall look at three to begin our approximation to same. They are: 1) the Nation-State crisis; 2) how different parties governing at different levels, national and sub-state, live side by side; and 3) regional integration.

In the first place, in an attempt to explain this explosion of the local world in the international scenario, Castells' hypothesis (2003) blames the crisis of the Nation-State and the neo-liberal collapse for the appearance of the "network State",² and in that framework of things local



take on new significance, increasing their power. This demands new forms of management and performance on the part of sub-state governments. The author analyses how, all over the world, States are trying to become legitimate in two ways: 1) decentralising their structures by transferring functions to local governments (be they municipal, provincial and/or regional) and reinforcing their autonomy; and 2) by active participation of citizens, not only allowing local governments to be elected directly, thus democratising and legitimizing their election, but also promoting citizen participation in different decision-making activities.

Added to this, in second place, are the political motives, perhaps complementary to the above, and generally associated with the co-existence of different parties in national and sub-state governments. The fact that different parties govern at different levels may involve problems of cohabitation, which translate into relationship problems between both spheres and may, in some cases, lead the central government to make resources scarce for sub-state governments for which it feels less affinity. That would lead cities to try to obtain additional resources through international relations.

Thirdly, the commitment of cities to regional integration shows up as a factor generating networks of cities. Among other examples, for instance, we have Mercocities and the Andean Network of Cities in Latin America and Eurocities in the European Union. In this regard one could see how “regional integration would inevitably alter the relationship between cities and their previous areas of influence, and the cities would remain subjected to a series of challenges difficult to overcome. Tasks like the renewal and reconversion of the productive base of cities, the generation and maintenance of the urban infrastructure, the development of acceptable levels of quality of life and the interrelation of feasible social integration mechanisms were considered goals that the cities could not meet in isolation. There were more than enough reasons why cities

should associate in a network that would defend their interests and points of view and prompt them to develop and grow “(Mercocities Permanent Technical Secretariat 2004.)

Finally, a fourth element should be added which is frequently not highlighted as it should be: interest in specific themes. This can become a real stimulus to participate in the international scenario. Thus we can see how cities specialize in a particular theme, as for example, Sao Paulo regarding urban poverty or Porto Alegre regarding the participatory budget, which provides them with expertise and prestige in their *modus operandi*, that differentiates them from others and projects them into the world crowned by a seal of quality or capability in that theme.

The reasons that explain why cities participate on the international scene mark some distinctive characteristics of that participation and also common or similar aspects in the strategies and tools used. Surely in local government management these motives cannot be disassociated and be confused with each other or all live side by side with each other. We see those distinctive features when, for example, we think of the participation of cities such as Malaga, which refers us to the environment theme, to Valparaiso which we immediately associate with a city involved with the URB-AL Programme, and the same thing occurs when we refer to Montevideo and social policies, Rosario and Stuttgart or to Barcelona and urban development and to Porto Alegre and the participatory budget.

It seems clear that at present local governments, at the same time as they have become important actors in the international scene, have also sought different forms of association that have a greater influence on their area of action. In this sense networks have been an excellent form adopted by cities. Examples of this are the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Ibero-American Centre for Urban Strategic Development (CIDEU), The Union of Ibero-american Capital Cities (UCCI) and the Portuguese Language Capitals Union (UCCLA), or-

ganizations that group cities and associations of local governments of the European Union and Latin America, or Eurocities and Mercocities to mention two which operate territorially in the framework of European and South American integration.

When we observe the strategies implemented by sub-state units for their international access, we shall see that participation in networks has become an excellent instrument for attaining that goal. Here it is necessary to remember that the URB-AL Programme was a stimulus for networking between the cities of the EU and Latin America, and that doubtless there is a before and an after involved. Although some networks of cities were already in place before the execution of this programme, one can say that the existence of the latter contributed favourably to the further development of networks of cities and to the capacity of local governments to increase their participation in decentralized co-operation.

3. Origin and evolution of networks of cities

The formation of networks of cities is not a phenomenon of our age. Indeed, we can trace their existence to antiquity, from the Greek city-states, passing through Medieval Europe, experiences such as the Hanseatic League, and also at the very origin of the Spanish empire in America, the ideal organisation of which was visualised as an interrelated network of cities (Meneghetti Netto 2005).

In the twentieth century a first attempt was made to create a network of cities, in the present meaning of the term, in Belgium in 1913 when representatives of more than 20 countries created the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA). This first attempt was interrupted by the advent of the First World War. During the period between the two world wars the idea of grouping a network of cities lay stagnant and would only

gather force again after the end of the Second World War. In this sense the creation of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), founded in 1951, is the reflection of the need to make joint efforts to overcome the difficulties in which Europe was immersed following the war. Without a doubt, this process, as the one which was being carried out at the same time to fortify town-twinning between French and German cities, would become a key background feature that, reinforced by the creation of the UTO, was one of the bases of European integration (Batista 2006, Chasquetti 2006 and Meneghetti 2005).

In this sense Chasquetti (2006: 12) states that the “experience of the European Union shows that the construction of networks of regional and local governments helps to strengthen the integration process, makes decisions more legitimate and adds an actor to the development of community policies.” The author also stresses how we can now see in Europe “many networks of cities and regions, where the local dimension is represented institutionally at a very high level: the Committee of the Regions, made up of regional and municipal governments.”

In the case of Latin America it was necessary to wait for the winds of change that began to be felt as from the re-democratisation in which the continent was submerged in the eighties. Among the changes detected there was not only a wave of reforms of the State and of reforms of the political systems; one of the most highlighted characteristics was the search for greater autonomy and decentralisation at the sub-state level. In this sense one can observe how, in this period, there was a simultaneous process of creation of new municipalities together with a greater emancipation of them, which carried with it the need for cities to insert into networks as a way to obtain resources and insert successfully into the region and the world.

4. Definition of the concept

In order to address the definition of networks as a concept, we take as our starting point Scheid's (2005) definition, cited by Gutiérrez Camps (2005: 104) in the OCD Yearbook 2005: "structures in which actors take part joined by the fact that they share some characteristic that allows them to create links with the purpose of attaining common objectives. Regarding their goals, the networks are willing to undertake common actions which would be difficult to do if the entities that give shape to the network were to work separately." A similar definition is provided by Batista et al (s/f: 4), who define networks as "a way to organise entities, institutions, social groups or individuals, that relate to each other according to an interconnection based on the principle of horizontality, - without a central line of command - seeking to reach jointly common objectives that they determine for themselves".³

As regards their characteristics, Gutiérrez Camps (2006: 104), following Scheid (2005), understands that among the main characteristics what stand out are "flexibility, which makes them dynamic and highly adaptable; co-operation among equals, because what are involved are actors of many kinds that interact without establishing hierarchies (only the figure of the co-ordinator is on a higher plane in order to be able to make the flows of information more dynamic among members), and the existence of a common objective."

When referring to the objectives of networks, Gutiérrez Camps (2006: 105) quotes Borja and Castells (1997), stressing "the consolidation of territorial, economic, political, demographic, etc. spaces to create economies of scale, generate value added or develop in-

³ | Horizontal organisation assumes a division of responsibilities following an interrelation between network members, which is opposed to a vertical and hierarchical organisation.

frastructures; structuring a lobby system; inserting in an international system that allows access to and use of an increasing volume of information, exchanging experiences and technologies; obtaining leadership functions and inserting participants in higher spaces of action."

Other objectives that may be mentioned refer to a better level of living for persons living in those cities, promoting the exchange of experiences and better practices among local government officers involved, promoting integration in one country or region, assisting economic development and aiding the internal political projection of cities. To that may be added that belonging to a network facilitates the implementation of transnational projects

Box 1 | Main features of networks

1. Absence of a central line of command in networks of cities; the relationship is horizontal, with no ranking.
2. Global or macro-regional geographical coverage: networks of cities act in the international scenario on a scope that in another time would have been unimaginable: its principal network, CGLU, has become an accepted actor dealing with the international community. In the same way, the macro-regional actions of networks have influenced regional integration processes.
3. Agility: both because of their horizontal structure and of the use of new communications technologies, the networks are extremely agile, both in decision-making and regarding exchange of information and experiences.
4. Richness of actors: networks gather together and insert in the international scenario many political actors, either governmental or not, whose presence would otherwise be much more fragile.
5. Democratisation of knowledge: networks simplify knowledge sharing which is, in fact, democratisation for fighting against some specific common problems of their members. It is important to point out that, through networks, the smaller cities with less experience in the international area can take part in international co-operation activities, thus benefiting from a wealth of exchange of experiences which, otherwise, would be unavailable to them.

Source: Batista (2006: 33).

and allows the flow of international co-operation to be increased so as to improve communication among different peoples.

5. Types of networks

When thinking of a classification, Batista's (2006: 31) comment is pertinent: "besides its scope, that may be international or regional, cities establish networks to work on the basis of specific profiles (urban conglomerations, capital cities, etc.) or with a clear thematic approach. On the basis of this alliance, the orientation may be more strategic and the network may exercise lobby functions, or more practical emphasising technical exchange." That is to say, to help make systems of networks of cities we can group them into different categories according to a common denominator they share - geographical, profile

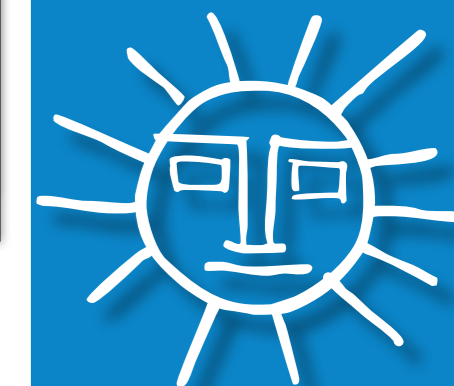
or thematic -, or according to the common objective they propose as a goal. Thus a distinction may be made between thematic networks, networks with specific profiles and geographical networks (regional or global) and between those that pursue a political objective such as, for example, to influence integration processes, and those that promote technical exchange.

However, as every attempt to classify a reality that includes a multiplicity of forms of relating between cities, it is sometimes not so simple to locate the networks clearly in one category or another. As Batista (2006: 32) points out, geographical networks have tended to "combine the political pressure they exert with technical exchange and, in some cases, such as Eurocities and Mercocities, they have been endowed with thematic units or groups to carry out said exchange. Likewise, networks in which the exchange component predomi-

Table 1 | Types of networks

	Territorial or geographical	With a common specific profile	Thematic
Strategic orientation / Lobby	Andean Network of Cities (linked to ACN, Andean Community of Nations)		ICLEI (Internacional Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) to the United Nations
Practical orientation / Technical exchange	Mercocities (linked to Mercosur) FLACMA (Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations) FEMICA (Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus)	Metropolis (cities of more than a million inhabitants) UCCI (Union of Ibero-American Capitals) UCCLA (Union of Luso-African-American-Asiatic Capital Cities)	URB-AL Networks: drugs and city, preservation of historical contexts, local democracy, economic development, urban social policies, urban environment, urban development, transport, local financing, fight against poverty, political women, information society, citizen safety CIDEU (Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Urban Development)

Source: Own elaboration based on Batista (2006) and Keiner and Kim (2007).



nates, if they specialise, may adopt positions regarding the themes that concern them.”

It is also true that there are other possible criteria or forms of addressing classification that we will only point out here. One would refer to the characteristics of the co-ordinator. For example, to compare Latin American versus EU co-ordinators or distinguish between co-ordinators that are public administrations versus those who are not (international institutions, NGOs and even companies). Another way networks may be classified would be according to their origin or to the factors that influenced their creation.

Below we provide a brief description of the classification criteria selected for purposes of our analysis, by means of certain examples that refer to some of their basic features.

5.1. Territorial or geographical network

Territorial networks may be defined as groups of cities within the same geographical area,⁴ that decide to work jointly on themes of common interest. Each network establishes its organization and operation according to statutes on which they have agreed. In most cases one of the member cities plays the role of co-ordinator of the network: this role is usually only temporary and held in rotation. The main objective of international network organisation is to expand and tighten the links between the participating local governments, by generating spaces of co-operation that exceed the local and national area in common themes. Active participation in international networks allows generation of specific actions designed to bring about an increase in the ex-

change of experiences between localities that share similar problems, in order to work on solutions jointly, which doubtlessly leads to a fruitful exchange.

Regional networks often include diverse topics that interest the community belonging to a single territory. Batista et al. (s/f: 11) highlight that “the networks of cities that act in the area of regional integration, such as networks of Mercocities and Eurocities, have played an important role in strengthening and democratising regional integration processes.” As examples of international networks of a regional nature mention can be made of the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA), the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA), the network of cities of the MERCOSUR (Mercocities), the network of cities of the European Union (Eurocities) and the Andean Network of Cities (RAC).

The main objective of the global networks is to empower their members, on the one hand by increasing the flow of communications among local governments and, on the other hand, by strengthening their weight as spokesmen to national governments or international organisations. They also seek to facilitate access to national and international sources of financing, as well as all the information available, and also to become effective disseminators of their own activities. Regarding exchange, international networks would contribute to deepening experiences that allow their participants to promote local and regional socio-economic development and, lastly, to distinguish the factors that contribute to the implementation of successful experiences, so as to help to replicate them in other local go-

⁴ | Batista et al. (s/f: 20) point out that although “cities and local authorities have associated and organised in networks at the international level, it has been established that there has also been similar movement at the national level. This associative movement of cities and other forms of local government has occurred in various countries with the purpose of strengthening local powers and facilitating the exchange of experiences between cities.” However, we leave aside in this study an analysis of the logics of relationships and operation of municipalities at the national level, which without a doubt will have characteristics in common with those of the international networks, but will also have their own intrinsic characteristics, which are outside the scope of our analysis.

vernments. In this field the creation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the greatest network of cities at present, the product of the merger in May 2004 of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the World Federation of United Cities (UTO) and Metropolis, deserves to be highlighted.

5.2. Networks with common specific profiles

Some networks of cities have in common that they are based on their diverse characteristics, either because of the facts that identify them or because of their size. Metropolis, for example, connects large cities and capitals, promoting exchanges of experience in areas such as urban planning, economic development, environment and transport, to find solutions to common challenges of large cities. Moreover, there are networks which have a common denominator are made up of capital cities. Such is the case of the Union of Ibero-american Capital Cities (UCCI) or the Union of Portuguese speaking-African-American-Asiatic Capital Cities (UCCLA), whose principal objective is to promote co-operation among local authorities of the capitals of Portuguese speaking countries. The latter operate both through cultural, scientific and technological exchange and the creation of encounter possibilities, in order to promote progress and welfare of its inhabitants. Another example of this type of network would be the Forum of Local Authorities of the Periphery (FALP), created by the need to institute spaces to continue the debates on urban intrinsic characteristic that the peripheral cities share and to widen the universe of protagonists involved.

To summarise, in each of these cases certain specific characteristics of the cities allow them to share a certain reality that in turn may generate common needs and experiences, the addressing of which is sought through exchange by means of the use of networking as a tool.

5.3. Thematic networks

The main objective of these networks is to define and develop a dimension within a specific area of study, or in relation to other subjects of common interest, by means of different types of co-operation.

The purpose of thematic networks is work in common, exchange and collaboration between cities centred on well-defined subjects. These subjects may be proposed by the organization or by their co-ordinator or by cities that wish to form groups for this purpose. This type of network (as its own name indicates) is specifically concerned with one, at the most two related themes.

Their composition includes cities of different geographical areas that seek to associate with each other in order to focus on the exchange of experiences in various aspects of local activity, such as communications, employment, energy, the environment, transport, tourism, city planning, etc.

This type of network is generally made up by committees or working groups that are highly specialised and whose objective is to undertake studies on themes of specific interest. The activity of these networks is carried out via international conferences and encounters, colloquiums, on-line debates, seminars, etc.

Within thematic networks we may mention some as prominent as the International Council of Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) or the members of the URB-AL programme

6. Networks: an effective way to empower decentralised co-operation.

Networks make an excellent co-operation between member cities possible; the very interaction among their members, whose relationship is horizontal, creates a series of po-

sitive externalities. We may even assert that there is an immediate return that is the result of the mere fact of participation. This may be more clearly manifested when we think of small cities or medium-sized ones that attain greater presence, not only abroad but inside their own countries. In this sense good examples are cities like Porto Alegre or Rosario, which when they became members of networks attained greater standing in their respective countries. Among other advantages derived from belonging to a network one can highlight the possibility of accessing knowledge, the opportunity to generate specific spaces (zones) of influence, the emergence of conditions favourable to development, the advantage taken of the experience in practice of other cities, important gains in terms of governance and citizen participation, increasing the depth of local management autonomy, etc.

Regarding the relationship we are dealing with, we find that belonging to a network is often an excellent instrument for decentralised co-operation. In this sense, Batista et al. (s/f: 10) highlighted how the international networks of cities “have been a means for greater international insertion of local governments, for increasing decentralised international co-operation – co-operation between cities – as well as a channel of greater international resonance for discussing and making public the problems facing local governments.”

When we, particularly in the EU, think that an institution is contemplating the possibility of some type of co-operation with Latin America, at first we generally imagine a direct transfer of economic, material or technical resources. We believe that in this sense the networks can turn that idea into a new, more positive and profitable logic. Co-operation based on a network may alter the traditional way in which it is perceived and can thus be thought of in a different way,

via different modes, such as the possibility of sharing information, practices or objectives in common, in order to achieve or attain objectives or goals that are also shared.

By way of example, in his analysis of the Mercocities network, Chasquetti observed how the existence of that network “actively promoted horizontal co-operation between cities by developing Thematic Units that, with the passage of time, became real sub-networks of cities. In their method these entities worked very autonomously on the analysis of specific problems, the transfer of ‘good practices’ and the formulation of common projects. Proof of the latter is the joint participation of several cities in areas such as the URB-AL Programme of the European Union or the Educating Cities Programme” (2006: 14). The author also highlights that it “evolved as a horizontal network of cities with a clear sense of co-operation and exchange between its partners based on the work of its Thematic Units” (2006: 15).

As we mentioned above, the very existence of a network presumes a series of benefits and of resources that occur by the mere fact that it is kept active. It presumes interests that are generally beneficial (to all the cities involved) as well as determining a particular return for those who fulfil the role of co-ordinating it. With the purpose of establishing or determining what the benefits of exercising its co-ordination are we can highlight the organizing of seminars, congresses, etc., all of which are activities that make a city and its capacity to influence its visible at regional or even at the global level visible.

7. An analysis of active networks between Latin America and the European Union

The analysis shown in this section focuses on the characteristics of network

participants that include among their members sub-state public administrations both of Latin America and the European Union.

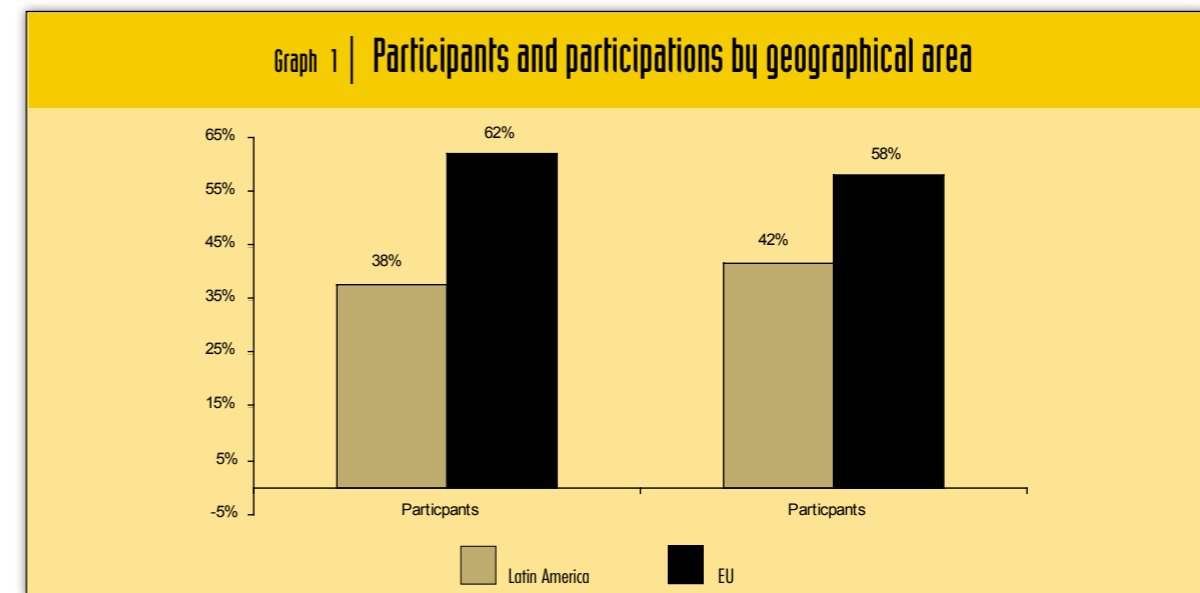
Specifically the networks identified by OCD that fulfil that criterion are shown in Table 2.⁵

Table 2 | Registered in European and Latin American networks

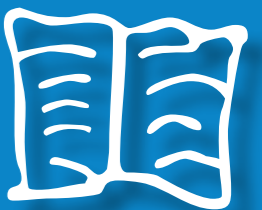
Name of network	Registered EU	Registered LA	Total registered
International Association of Educating Cities	279	40	319
Forum of Local Authorities of the Periphery (FALP)	20	11	31
Global City Dialog	98	26	124
Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)	122	30	152
Metropolis	11	16	27
Organisation of World Heritage Cities (OWHC)	102	33	135
Ibero-American Centre for Strategic Urban Development (CIDEU)	9	56	65
INTERLOCAL Network of Ibero-american Cities for Culture	4	27	31
Union of Portuguese Language Capital Cities (UCCLA)	2	6	8
Union of Ibero-American Capitals (UCCI)	3	20	23
Urban Environment (network 6 of the URB-AL programme)	68	109	177
Cities for Mobility (network 8 of URB-AL programme)	82	107	189
Women and City (network 12 of URB-AL programme)	95	179	274
Total	895	660	1555

Source: Own elaboration based on OCD Data Bank information.

Graph 1 | Participants and participations by geographical area



⁵ | The Ibero-american Network of Digital Cities and Mayors for Peace have not been taken into account in this study since no complete information was available. In the case of networks arising from the URB-AL programme only those that remain active have been considered.



Total sub-state government registrations of all networks analysed add up to a total of 1555 participations, in which a total of 1041 public institutions are involved.

7.1. Participation in networks by region and sub-region

The geographical distribution of relations is markedly irregular regarding groups of countries by continental regions (see Graph 1).

We can see from the graph above that although the EU surpasses Latin America both in number of participants and of participations, the difference in the number of participations is smaller. This leads to a ratio between the num-

bers of participations over participants which for Latin America is on average higher at 1.7, compared to 1.4 in the case of the EU. That is to say, although less Latin American sub-state units participate in networks than their European peers, the rate of participation in Latin America participating municipalities is greater.

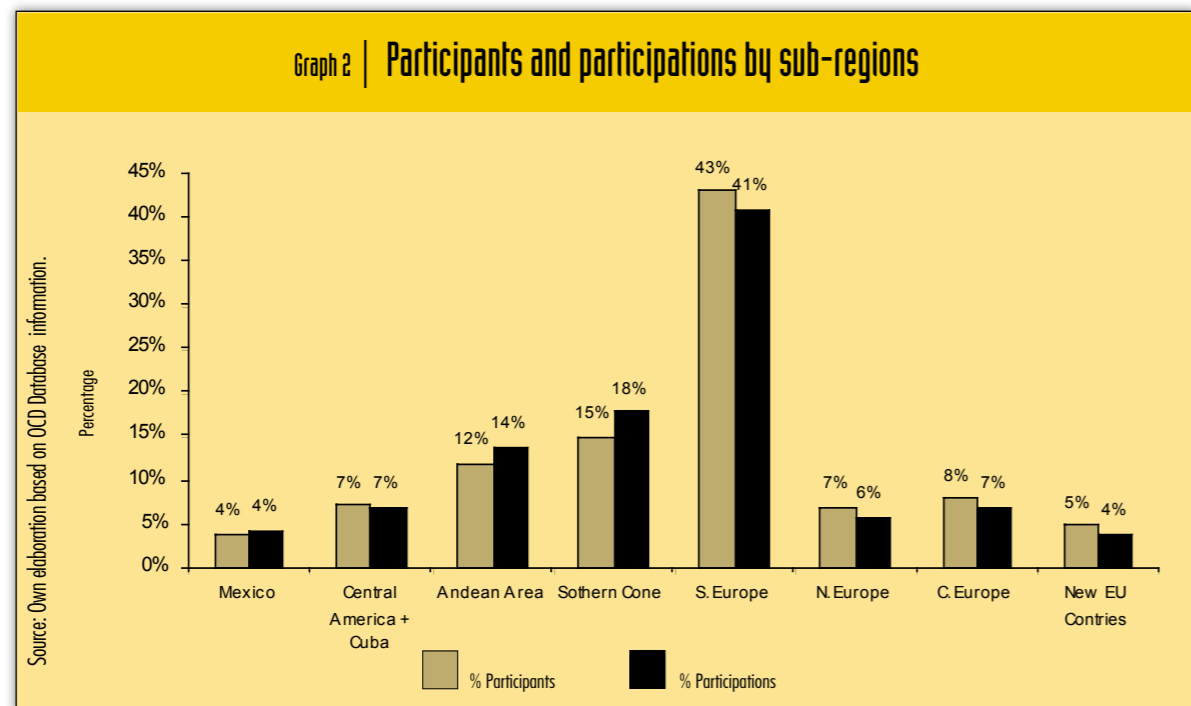
Now we shall see what happens if we break down participation in networks by sub-regions (see Graph 2). We can see an irregularity once again in the participation between the different sub-regions that is notoriously more marked in the case of European sub-regions.

From the graph we can see that both the sub-state units participating in networks and their participations are concentrated to a large extent in the Southern sub-region of the EU (42.5% and

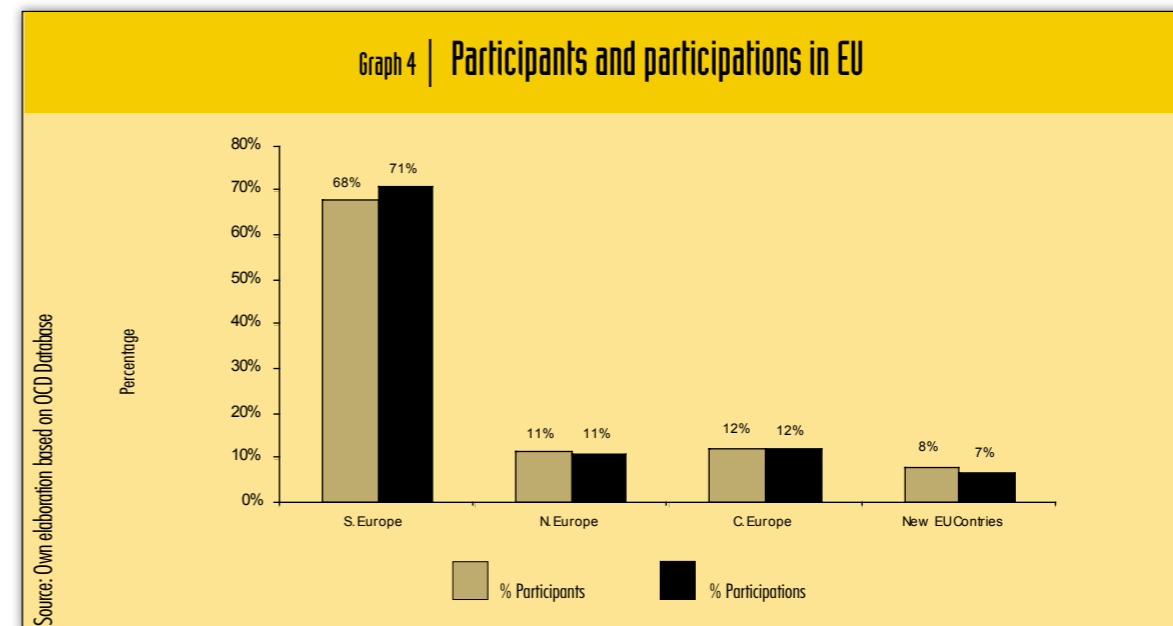
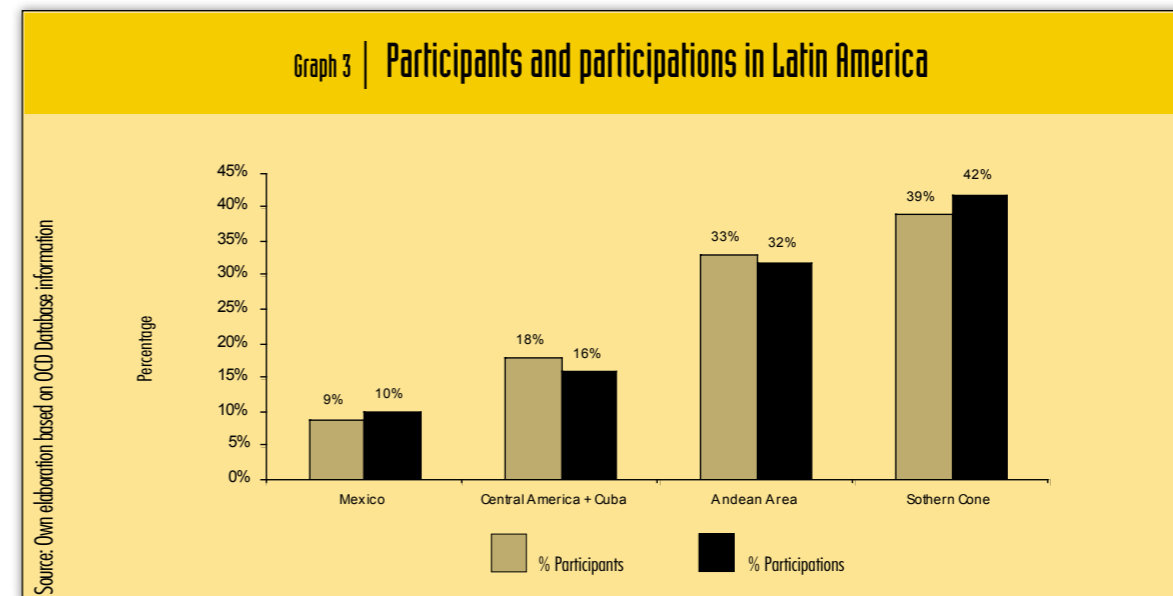
40.6%) and in the sub-regions of the Southern Cone (14.9% and 17.7%) and the Andean Area (12.4% and 13.7%) of Latin America. The total of these three sub-regions adds up to almost 69.7% of the units identified as participants and 72% of participations. On a second level of importance

we find Central and Northern Europe as well as Central America. Finally, in a more modest position than the previous countries, we have the new EU member countries and Mexico.

If we examine the participation of sub-regions by continent we see that in Latin Ame-



⁶ | The countries considered in each continental sub-region are as follows: Southern Cone: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay; Andean Area: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; Central America and Cuba: Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama; Southern Europe: Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal; Central EU: Germany, Austria, Belgium, and Netherlands; Northern EU: Denmark, Finland, Ireland, United Kingdom and Sweden; New EU countries: Czechia, Cyprus, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Poland..



rica (see Graph 3) the sub-regions stand out in the following order according to quantity of participants: Southern Cone (39.4%), Andean Area (32.8%), Central America (18.3%) and lastly Mexico (9.4%). This relationship is also valid for participations: 41%, 7%, 32.3%, 15.8% and 10.3%, respectively.

In this graph when we see the ratio of participations over the number of participant units we find that Mexico shows the highest average (1.84), followed by the Southern Cone (1.77), the Andean Area (1.65) and Central America (1.44).

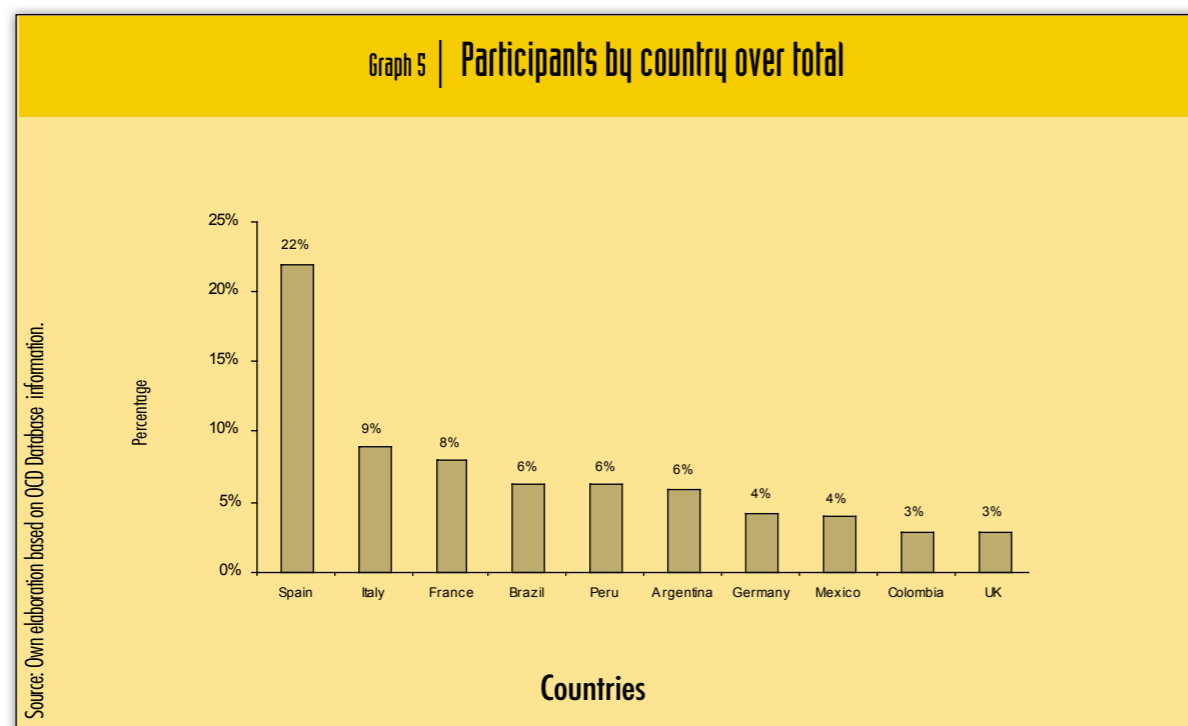
In the EU (see Graph 4), the list is headed by the South of the continent, followed by the Central area, the North and lastly the new EU countries. This is also valid for participant units: 68.2%, 12.2%, 11.1% and 8.5% and participations: 70.5%, 11.6%, 10.8% and 7%.

When we examine the ratio we find the situation remains the same in that the South has the highest rate (1.43), but there is a change

in the second place, which is occupied here by the North (1.35) displacing the Centre (1.32) to third place, while the new members remain in last place (1.15).

7.2. Participation in networks by country

When we look at the data by countries, if we take the first ten in the order they appear in we find five from the EU and five from Latin America (see Graph 5). In the case of the EU we have Spain, Italy, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, while in the case of Latin America we have Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Mexico and Colombia. These ten countries concentrate 70.3% of participating units. There is, however, a large imbalance in favour of EU members that almost double those of Latin America, when 46% is added up and compared to 24.3% from Latin America. Those that clearly stand out are those of the South of the EU, particularly Spain (22.2%) that alone almost equals the five Latin American countries.



When we look at each region individually we see that the five countries of Latin America with the greatest number of participating units represent 64.4% of the total of their area, while the best positioned five of the EU concentrate 73.9% of the continent.

In the case of Spain it seems clear that its strong presence is explained because it was the principal colonial power in the region (by far the greatest presence when compared to Britain or France), and also because of its common heritage and language. This is added to the important flow of immigrant Spaniards at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the twentieth and after the Spanish civil war of 1936-9. In the case of Italy we could trace, as in the case of Spain, the important migratory flow at the end of the 19th century and beginnings of and even mid-twenties to Latin America, with a particularly strong presence in the Southern Cone, in which region – it may be stressed – a high percentage of Italian citizens living outside Italy are to be found.

Germany, France and the United Kingdom (although with a lesser presence than those already referred to) also had immigrants to Latin America, and they are three of the main powers involved in the Second World War. The experience of having participated in this war was the start of the practice of town-twinning between French and German cities and led to the conviction that there was a need for integration and exchange between different peoples. In the case of the countries of Latin America, the presence of the strong colonies of immigrants from Spain and Italy influenced very significantly the formation of national identities and it was natural for Latin America to turn to these countries when seeking an exchange. The fact that in Latin America participation was located mainly in the Southern Cone may be explained in two ways: the existence of the Mercocities network and the presence

of Argentina and Brazil. These two giants, due to their size, possess a large number of participating sub-state units. Those two countries together with Mexico are the largest countries, with the most developed economies and the largest amount of cities, and that fact alone may be one of the advantages of participation.

We may even trace reasons of a political nature, such as the anti-imperialist feeling against the United States (U.S.) which leads people naturally to turn towards Europe. Or even the fact that the U.S. does not look towards Latin America with an interest in establishing ties (beyond economic ties) may leave the initiative to establish more productive contact in other areas of the EU.

7.3. Characteristics of network participants

Besides the differences in participation by region or sub-region, it is also interesting to find out what types of cities participate in the networks, to see whether there is any identifiable pattern regarding who are accessing this tool for decentralised co-operation and who are outside the international circuit of cities.

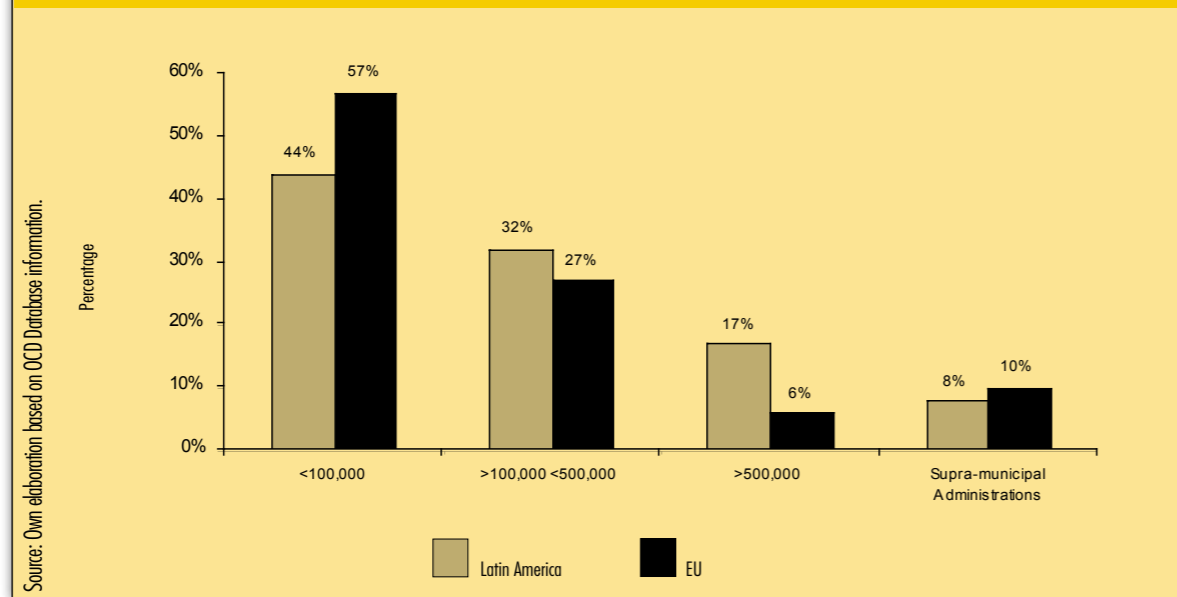
The data gathered by the Observatory show that 90.9% of network participants are concentrated in municipalities. This shows a scarce participation of supra-municipal authorities, such as regions, provinces, etc. This phenomenon is a bit stronger in Latin America (92.4%) compared to the EU (90%). In Latin America, the Andean Area (10.9%) and Mexico (10.8%) almost double the Southern Cone (5.2%) and Central America (5.6%) in the participation of supra-municipal authorities. In the Southern EU (11.5%) and in the Northern EU (11.1%) they are ahead of the Centre (7.6%), while the new EU countries have no cases of supra-municipal participating authorities.

It is worth mentioning that not all coun-

⁷ Here the term supra-municipal authorities refers to any level of public administration above the municipality and below the national State..

⁸ Although Uruguayan Municipal Mayors are more than a mayor, they are halfway in fact between a mayor and a governor.

Graph 6 | Distribution by segments of population



tries possess supra-municipal authorities. Uruguay, for example, goes from the national government to local governments without any other regional instances, such as provinces, states or even regions. Indeed, in Latin America we only have four countries organized as federated states (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and Venezuela).

The same phenomenon is to be found in Europe where, except for the southern and northern areas of the continent, in which there is a distinct involvement of supra-municipal authorities in network participation, in the remaining countries it is less so – the case of Central Europe – or inexistent, as in the new EU countries.

Now we shall see what happens if we break down network participation by population size of the participant cities (see Graph 6).

It can be inferred from Graph 6 that in the EU participating units are strongly concentrated in cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants

(57%), while little more than a quarter (27%) are cities of between 100,000 to 500,000 inhabitants, 6% are cities greater than 500,000 and 10% are supra-municipal authorities.

In Latin America relationships are different: although participation in networks is also concentrated by and large in cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants, it does not amount to half and totals 44%, while cities of between 100,000 and 500,000 inhabitants make up almost a third (32%). But doubtlessly what most stands out is the strong presence of cities of over 500,000 inhabitants that make up almost one fifth (17%), while the participation of supra-municipal authorities is more reduced (8%).

8. URB-AL and non-URB-AL networks

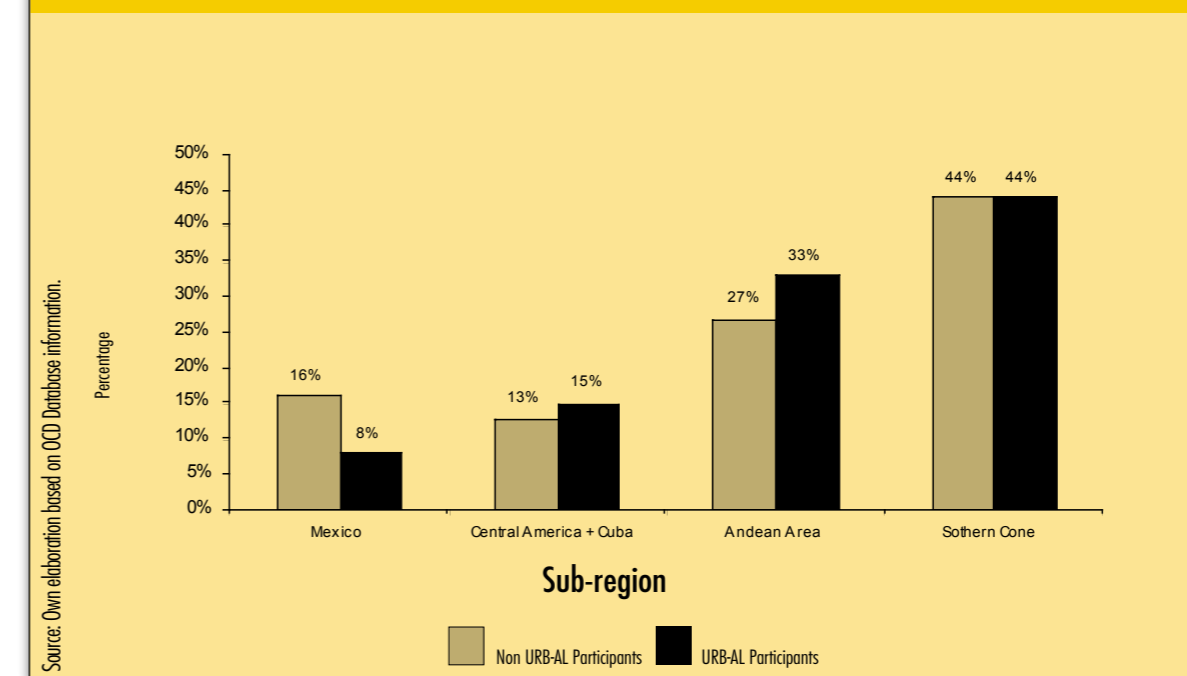
As was pointed out above, the URB-AL Programme was a landmark in the history of decentralised co-operation, while its objective was

precisely to develop networks of decentralised co-operation among local communities of the EU and Latin America on specific themes and problems. In order somehow to measure the impact of URB-AL, we consider it pertinent to make a comparison between the participation of cities in URB-AL networks and the participation in networks originating outside the URB-AL programme

A first aggregate comparison of participations in non URB-AL networks with those in URB-AL networks shows that of a total of 2452 participations both of EU and Latin America, 915 (37.3%) are non URB-AL and 1537 are URB-AL (62.7%). Among participants of a total of 1615, we have that 706 (43.7%) are non URB-AL and 909 (56.3%) are URB-AL.

By continent, of the 915 non URB-AL participations 265 (29%) are from Latin America and 650 (71%) are from the EU. Of the URB-AL, 1000, (65.1%) correspond to Latin America and 537 (34.9%) to the EU. If we look at the participants we find that in the non URB-AL 171 (24.2%) are from Latin America while 535 (75.8%) are from the EU. While there are 580 URB-AL participating units (63.8%) belonging to Latin America, 329 (36.2%) are members of the EU. It is likely that these marked differences between participation rates of both continents are due to two factors. On the one hand, the specific objective of the URB-AL Programme was to promote the participation of the local Latin American authorities in particular. On the other hand, non URB-AL networks, the geographical

Graph 7 | Non-URB-AL and URB-AL in Latin America



⁹ |URB-AL networks the participation of which is analysed are those that remain active both in Phase I and in Phase II: URB-AL 6 (Urban Environment); URB-AL 8 (Cities For Mobility); and URB-AL 12 (Women and city). The non URB-AL that are analysed are those appearing in Table 2 with the exception of networks originating in the said programme.



scope of which is not limited to these two continents, are in the main co-ordinated by European territorial governments, which means that they are more disseminated in this region through the regional and national networks of European sub-state governments.

If we look at how the participant units are distributed by sub-region we see that in Latin America the Southern Cone amounts to close to 50% both in quantity of non URB-AL participants and of URB-AL participants, in both cases with 44% (see Graph 7).

The Andean Area accounts for one third of URB-AL participants and little more than a quarter of non URB-AL participants. Central America on its part is located with 15% and 13% of URB-AL and non URB-AL participants, respectively, while Mexico is the only case in which non URB-AL participants exceed URB-AL participants and even double them at 16% compared to 8%.

When we go on to observe the EU (see

Graph 8) we find that the Southern region of the continent concentrates an immense majority of the participants of both categories, it being a bit higher in URB-AL networks – 75% compared to 69% of non URB-AL networks.

The North in turn is almost equal (11% of non URB-AL compared to 10% of URB-AL), Central Europe localities account for 15% of URB-AL and 10% of non URB-AL while finally the new EU countries account for 10% of non URB-AL and there is no incidence of URB-AL.

We shall now observe the behaviour of the sub-state units according to their participations in various networks (see Table 3).

Among the 25 localities with the greatest amount of participations Barcelona, Belo Horizonte and Quito stand out with 13. Montevideo has one less, followed by Buenos Aires, Lima and Rio de Janeiro with 11. With ten participations we find Malaga, Porto Alegre and Sao Paulo. Of these ten cities, eight are South

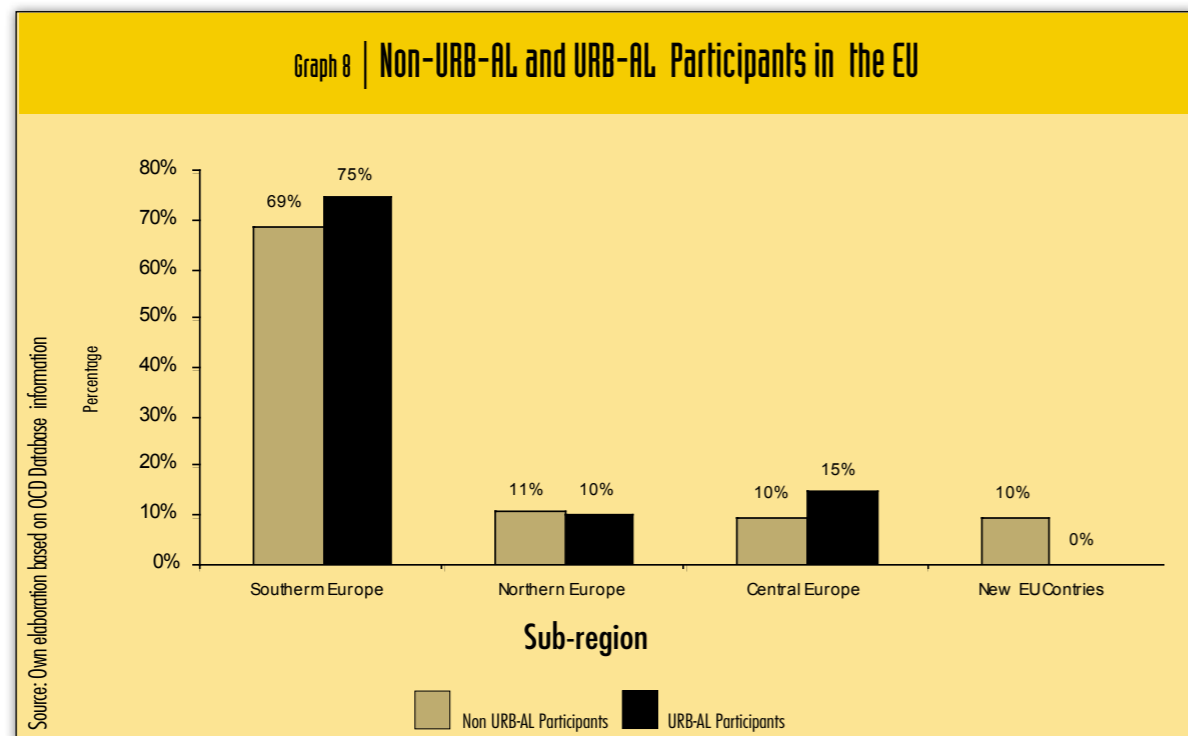


Table 3 | Amount of participations by locality

Institution	Country	Area of action	Geographical area	Participations	Non URB-AL participations	URB-AL participations
Barcelona City Council	Spain	Municipal	Europe	13	6	7
Quito Municipality	Ecuador	Municipal	South America	13	8	5
Belo Horizonte Municipal Prefecture	Brazil	Municipal	South America	13	6	7
Montevideo Municipal Council	Uruguay	Municipal	South America	12	5	7
Lima Municipality	Peru	Municipal	South America	11	5	6
Rio de Janeiro Municipal Prefecture	Brazil	Municipal	South America	11	6	5
Municipality of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires	Argentina	Municipal	South America	11	6	5
Malaga City Council	Spain	Municipal	Europe	10	3	7
Porto Alegre Municipal Prefecture	Brazil	Municipal	South America	10	5	5
São Paulo Municipal Prefecture	Brazil	Municipal	South America	10	4	6
Illustrious Municipality of Valparaiso	Chile	Municipal	South America	9	2	7
La Paz Municipal Mayor's Office	Bolivia	Municipal	South America	9	4	5
Madrid City Council	Spain	Municipal	Europe	9	3	6
Medellín Mayor's Office	Colombia	Municipal	South America	9	2	7
Bogota Mayor's Office	Colombia	Municipal	South America	9	4	5
Rosario Municipality	Argentina	Municipal	South America	9	3	6
Rome Commune	Italy	Municipal	Europe	9	4	5
Guadalajara Municipality	Mexico	Municipal	Central America and Caribbean	8	4	4
Queretaro Municipality	Mexico	Municipal	Central America and Caribbean	8	3	5
Donostia-San Sebastián City Council	Spain	Municipal	Europe	8	2	6
Santo André Municipal Prefecture	Brazil	Municipal	South America	8	2	6
Illustrious Municipality of Viña del Mar	Chile	Municipal	South America	8	2	6
Municipality of Mexico City	Mexico	Municipal	Central America and Caribbean	8	3	5
San Salvador Mayor's Office	El Salvador	Municipal	Central America and Caribbean	8	2	6
Manizales Mayor's Office	Colombia	Municipal	South America	8	3	5

Source: Own elaboration based on OECD Data Bank information.

American (four Brazilian, one Argentine, one Ecuadorian, one Peruvian and one Uruguayan) and two European (both Spanish).

This first squad is followed by Bogota, La Paz, Madrid, Medellín, Rome, Rosario and Valparaíso with nine, while with eight we have Donostia-San Sebastián, Guadalajara, Manizales, Mexico City, Querétaro, San Salvador, Santo André and Viña del Mar. Here we also observe a majority of Latin American cities that add up to a total of 12 – including this time two Mexican cities and two Central American cities – compared to only three participating localities of their European peers.

Another observation to be made is that of these 25 units which show a greater number of participations all are municipalities; the first supra-municipal authority to be highlighted is the province of Treviso (Italy) that has seven participations. There is also a clear predominance of capital cities, ten of them, and/or large metropolis – 18 of these municipalities have a population of more than one million inhabitants.

Finally, if we compare participation in URB-AL and non URB-AL networks of these cities that show the highest participation rates, we see, firstly, that all the cities participate in both types of networks. In ten cases there is an absolute or almost balanced participation in URB-AL and non URB-AL networks – Barcelona, Belo Horizonte, Lima, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Porto Alegre, La Paz, Bogota, Rome, Guadalajara. Of the remainder, in only one city – Quito – is the participation rate greater in non URB-AL networks. These data demonstrate that there are links between the URB-AL and non URB-AL networks through parallel participations, but there is also a clear predominance of participation in the former over the latter

8.1. Synergy between Mercocities and Network 12 of the URB-AL Programme

To take the analysis of the links generated between URB-AL and non URB-AL networks into greater depth, we shall now examine the participation of cities of a Latin American network – Mercocities – in Network 12 of the URB-AL Programme. We feel that this analysis is interesting because it addresses a cross-sectional axis such as the gender theme and shows the greater participation of cities in decentralized co-operation promoted through the URB-AL Programme, based on participation in a spontaneous network.

Mercocities was founded in 1995 and is the association that groups the cities of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay) plus Chile, Bolivia and Peru. Among its objectives it favours the participation of cities in the MERCOSUR structure, pursuing joint decision-making in areas of its competence and developing co-operation among the cities of the region regarding programmes and projects of common interest. Mercocities is made up of 180 cities distributed as follows: 64 in Brazil (35.5%), 59 in Argentina (32.8%), 20 in Paraguay (11.1%), 16 in Uruguay (8.9%), 12 in Chile (6.6%), four in Bolivia (2.2%), three in Venezuela (1.7%) and two in Peru (1.1%). Mercocities possesses 14 Thematic Units that address the study of diverse subjects, such as social development, local economic development, culture, financial management and autonomy, environment, citizen security, tourism, urban development, gender, youth, education, strategic planning, science and technology and international co-operation.

¹⁰ | Web: www.mercociudades.org y Web: www.diba.es/urbal12

¹¹ | The cities of Venezuela joined Mercocities in the Twelfth Summit Meeting, held on December 1, 2006, in the city of Morón, Argentina

Table 4 | URB-AL 12 participant cities and Mercocities

Country	Total URB-AL 12 (No.) partner cities	URB-AL 12 partner cities and members of Mercocities	
		No.	Percentage
Argentina	18	8	44,4
Brasil	26	13	50,0
Paraguay	2	1	50,0
Uruguay	5	4	80,0
SUB-TOTAL	51	26	58,9
Bolivia	7	0	0,0
Chile	8	3	37,5
Perú	40	1	2,5
TOTAL	106	30	28,3

Source: Own elaboration based on OCD Data Bank information.

Network 12, entitled “Promotion of women in local decision-making” but better known as Women and the City, was launched in April, 2003. The general objective of Network 12 is to share experiences and promote common projects among local entities of EU and Latin American countries, with the aim of proposing new models of cities through the cross-sectional implementation of policies involving equal opportunities and the promotion of active citizenship of women.

Table 4 shows a strong link between both networks and the great participation of cities of the one in the other. Overall, 30 of the 106 cities that are partners of Network 12 of URB-AL are members of Mercocities, which amounts to almost 30%.

Furthermore, if we only examine participation in Network 12 of the cities that are more active in the integration process, i.e., those that belong to the countries that

are full members of MERCOSUR, the rate of participating cities is even higher. Of the 51 Network 12 partner cities of these four countries, almost 60%, i.e., 30 cities are members of Mercocities. Only Argentina has a rate of participation of Mercocities’ partner cities in Network 12 below 50% and in the case of Uruguay it is 80%.

This data points to the existence of a synergy of participation in these spaces. However, to fully understand the links generated between one network and another, it is necessary to research several dimensions of the relationship between both, which exceeds the scope of this analysis. A future task, for example, to incorporate into the analysis done by the Observatory, shall be to explore specific factors that strengthen the links between one network and the other – which may address who the co-ordinators are or the mechanism and channels of dissemination of their activities, for example.

Likewise, it would be interesting to evaluate to what extent the presence of the same actors in the diverse spaces of decentralized co-operation that are generated through the networks acts as an obstacle to entry of new partners, with less experience in performing at an international level.

9. Conclusions

The analysis of networks of sub-state units of Latin America and the European Union allows some conclusions to be drawn that do not presume to put an end to the subject but which, on the contrary, attempt to become a point of departure to be able to analyse the phenomenon in full.

We can glimpse diverse motivations for the establishment of networks of cities, from those that aim at specific themes such as the fight against urban poverty, to those whose principal objective is to facilitate regional integration, passing by those that seek to reposition their members both in the national and international spheres.

The networks have played a leading role as a singular instrument capable of promoting the participation of sub-state units that previously did not intervene in any type of decentralised co-operation. In this sense the networks have become an area disposed to forge or establish close links between the units that constitute them, with the consequent transfer of information, resources

and experiences that result in the development of participating sub-state units.

The promotion of horizontality among participating cities generates in and of itself a positive impact on relationships and consequently on exchange and the advantage taken of experiences.

Participation in networks has revealed itself to be a basically municipal phenomenon, relegating supra-municipal localities to a second plane.

Belonging to a network generates the possibility of getting closer to other cities that face similar challenges and to share information on important subjects for the management of those problems. It can thus be expected that participation of sub-state units in networks shall continue to increase, which in turn leads to stimulating exchange in diverse forms of decentralised co-operation.

The experience detected in networks in place thus allows us to predict a promising a future for them, where they play an increasingly important role in the increase of relations and co-operation between local institutions of the EU and Latin America.

Lastly and taking as a reference point the case of Europe, where networks of cities played and do play a fundamental role in the integration process, the existence of a network like Mercocities may lead to results of vital importance at times when the integration process has received much questioning by some actors.

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Network web sites

Asociación Internacional de Ciudades Educadoras: www.edcities.bcn.es/

Centro Iberoamericano de Desarrollo Estratégico Urbano (CIDEU): <http://www.cideu.org/>

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI): <http://www.iclei.org/>

Metrópolis: <http://www.metropolis.org/index.html>

Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC): <http://www.ovpm.org/>

Red INTERLOCAL de ciudades iberoamericanas para la cultura:

<http://www.campus-oei.org/interlocal/>
União das Cidades Capitais de Língua Portuguesa (UCCLA): <http://uccla.pt/>

Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas (UCCI): <http://www.munimadrid.es/ucci/>

URB-AL 6 Medio Ambiente Urbano: <http://www.urballmalaga.com/index.php>

URB-AL 8 Cities for Mobility: http://www.stuttgart.de/europa/urb-al/s_/index.html

URB-AL 12 Mujer y Ciudad: <http://www.diba.es/urbal12/>



URB-AL: A case of decentralised co-operation

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KEY WORDS

Decentralised co-operation |
URB-AL |
Local governments |
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In this article a general account is provided of the URB-AL Programme in an attempt to point out its principal achievements, as an example of a decentralised co-operation effort impelled by the European Union. The objective of the programme is to propitiate the exchange of experiences and good practices among local governments and communities of the European Union and Latin America. The results are very satisfactory and a reasonable level of efficacy and efficiency has been obtained regarding resources allocated. Compared to traditional co-operation schemes, where assistance-type actions prevail, the Programme is a good example of the qualitative leap signified by the new decentralised co-operation approach. The latter offers more direct and participatory co-operation alternatives, through the exchange of experiences and institutional support for strengthening local and municipal entities, considered to be new guidelines of local development. URB-AL responds fully to the concept of decentralised co-operation because it is based on the mobilisation of a target group of local actors, it is instrumented by means of transfers and exchange of experience activities, actions are proposed by the actors themselves and all activities are carried out according to the principle of co-financing by the beneficiaries.

1. Introduction

This study describes the characteristics and analyses the most outstanding results of the URB-AL Programme that is a specific case of decentralised co-operation, financed by the European Commission and developed by local governments of the European Union (EU) and Latin America.

Several conceptual definitions have arisen in present international discussion with a view to capture the specific nature of decentralised co-operation. From a complex and broad perspective, a re-definition of the concept already established on co-operation for development is sought, by means of a growing questioning of traditional, vertical and centralist forms of concentrating power, decisions and resources in national governments. In a more concise meaning it is understood to be the group of co-operation activities among local governments that focus on sharing experiences, a meaning that is adopted in this document.

After ten years of execution of the URB-AL Programme, it seems timely to reflect on its history and the lessons it has yielded. This article is based fundamentally on the reports produced by two evaluation missions, carried out at the end of 2003 (European Commission 2004) and of 2005 (European Commission 2006), documents, a letter of information, guides and materials made public by Europe Aid – Office of Co-operation, the Bureau for Latin America, the European Commission (EC) and on the author's personal experience derived from several activities carried out as a programme consultant.

Without exhausting the subject, we refer below to some broad features of what URB-AL has meant, on the one hand regarding the performance of local governments on the basis of Programme inputs and, on the other hand, regarding experiences to improve the result of

the decentralised co-operation programmes of Europe targeting America and, to the extent that any generalisation is possible, also for decentralised co-operation programmes in other regions.

In a first section a statement is made on the evolution of the new decentralized co-operation scheme, to locate the URB-AL dimension in that process. There follows a brief description of the URB-AL Programme, of its beginnings, scope and objectives, as well as the organization and dynamics of its development, in order to define the concepts and terms used in the document. Under a fourth heading the main results obtained are shown as well as the obstacles and limitations faced in developing the activities of the Programme. The impact of the programme on the dynamics of decentralised co-operation is then evaluated as well as the effects produced in local participating governments. Finally, by way of conclusion, some of the achievements and lessons learned during the execution of URB-AL are described.

2. Decentralised co-operation

During latter years, the classical schemes of international co-operation have been looked at again on the basis of the increasing complexity of international relations, the emergence of new and very diverse actors, the dissemination of democratic processes and the urgency of boosting decentralization. One of those changes is expressed in decentralised co-operation criteria. (Romero 2004).

Because of these changes, the new resources and programmes have been aimed at fostering and empowering the capacities of the receivers of co-operation, by means of a more participatory process, reinforcing both the plurality of actors and their direct commitment to actions of co-operation. That was how decen-



tralised co-operation was born as a new type of international co-operation, conceiving development as focused on promoting human rights and reinforcing the active participation of multiple actors, instituting a practice of solidarity and co-responsibility in international relations.

Decentralised co-operation settles into local and regional dimensions and its action is directly related to structural change and democratisation, in order to expand the spaces of intervention and commitment of the different actors of the civil society. In a general context, in which centralised and vertical power structures are questioned, decentralised co-operation strengthens the local structures of government and citizen participation, at the same time as it makes government actions more transparent and effective. Their specific difference lies in that it makes participation of beneficiaries in the complete cycle of co-operation more extensive, from their design and execution up to their monitoring and evaluation. In a broad sense decentralised co-operation is a process of collective action that presumes the commitment and responsibility of the various agents on the basis of well defined sector objectives.

The decentralised co-operation approach in the EU was translated into the start-up of a series of specialized programmes and of initiatives addressing specific actors. For Latin America it materialized in the URB-AL Programme, the objective of which is to develop direct, lasting and sustainable linkages between local European and Latin American entities through the dissemination, acquisition and application of best practices in the field of urban policies. That programme was conceived as a response to the increasing importance of cities and their decisive role in the enhancement of socio-economic conditions and the quality of life of the population.

The EU, as a pioneer in this type of co-operation, defines it as “a new approach [...]

that seeks to establish direct relations with local organs of representation and to stimulate its own capacities to project and carry out initiatives [...] taking into account its interests and its points of view on development” (European Commission 1992). In fact, to the extent that this expression of international co-operation has been taking shape, various interpretations have been formulated on the meaning and characteristics of decentralised co-operation. In that regard there have been interesting and very extensive conceptual discussions on the subject (see Romero 2004, Gutiérrez Camps 2006). In this article we do not presume to elucidate this subject; however, it is considered important to make reference to the significance that this type of co-operation is acquiring, since URB-AL is, in the case of Latin America, one of the representative programmes in the matter.

3. The URB-AL Programme

3.1. Description of the URB-AL Programme

URB-AL began in 1995 with the purpose of favouring exchange of experiences and good practices between local governments and communities of the EU and Latin America, by means of an instrument of decentralised horizontal co-operation. The Programme, developed in two phases, fully responds to the political priorities of co-operation between EU and Latin America, contained in several European Commission (EC) communications (EC 1995, 1999, 2000).

The first phase occurred between 1995 y 2000, within the 1996-2000 regional programming period, with an allocation of 14 million euros. The second phase corresponds to the period 2001-2006, with a budget of 50 million euros. In this phase all projects were

type “A”, involving activities aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and of good practices of governments, by means of staff internships, training seminars or presentations of experiences among experts or officials of local governments, production of training programmes designed for staff of local governments, development of methodological guides, among other mechanisms. Seventy percent of the initial budget to be financed was contributed by the EC up to a maximum of 100,000 euros per project and each planned to last up to three years.

On the basis of the experience obtained in the first phase of the Programme, changes were introduced in the second phase that improved the operation of the system, among which the changes in the nature of the projects stand out. In the first place, type “B” projects were added, that would contain proposals of specific actions, as for example the start-up of a service, implementation of a pilot project that could be replicated in other communities that participated in the common project, restoration of cultural goods that had a common heritage value, undertaking joint activities, transferring management systems, etc. In the second place, the co-financing percentage was kept at 70% by the EC but the maximum amount to be financed increased to 250,000 euros for type “A” projects; a maximum of 800,000 euros for type “B” projects was established, and the maximum duration of the projects was reduced to two years. This second phase ended formally in July 2006, at the stage of selection of common project proposals presented at last call, although it will still take some time to conclude the projects in execution.

URB-AL started as a response to a demand manifested by numerous Latin American entities to consider a collaboration programme that would address the urban problem as a whole. It was a response to the growing importance of cities both in Latin America and

Europe. From that perspective it seemed advisable to choose a decentralised approach, so that the stakeholders themselves would take part directly in the definition and development of activities. At the regulatory level, the EC already had a framework to define and execute decentralised initiatives in Latin America.

3.2. The components of the URB-AL Programme

The URB-AL was basically the dynamic interaction of three components: biennial encounters of municipal authorities of both regions, operation of the Thematic Networks (TN) and execution of Common Projects (CP). A fourth secondary component was the action of External Partners.

The biennial encounters of municipal authorities devoted themselves to evaluating the pace and dynamics of the programme, as well as to reflect on the new themes that had to be addressed in the TNs in place or in other new ones.

The TNs were a group of participants from local governments of both regions (between 125 and up to 200) and a co-ordinating cell (the local government of a city) that assumed a contractual relationship with the EC and became responsible for developing conceptually the central theme of the network, holding annual meetings with all the members and boosting the generation of CPs among members.

The Common Projects were executed by groups of municipalities from both regions, by a limited number (no more than 15 and not less than five) chosen according to geographical diversity criteria in a ratio of three from Latin America and two from the EU. Project activities were co-ordinated by a city that also had a contractual relationship with the EC and that was in charge of administering the resources assigned and of providing impetus to the planned activities in the project.

Finally, the group of External Partners

was made up of academic, scientific or research participants specialising in the core subject of a certain network, that do not participate as partners with full rights, so that they cannot co-ordinate networks or projects, but who as external members take part in the development of substantive activities, contributing their knowledge and experience on the matter.

3.3. URB-AL Programme dynamics

The preparatory work of the TN co-ordinating cell involved drafting the substantive documents of the theme and convening the meeting to define the group of partners. Once this process had concluded a dynamic relationship got under way within the annual meeting. In that meeting the partners were stimulated to reflect and debate on the central theme and on various aspects of their particular interest that were related to the matter under discussion. From there common project initiatives arose that were related to the central question, a number of partners who would participate in the project were appointed, who committed themselves to develop activities and execute specific tasks assigned to each one of them, and a decision was made on the co-ordinating city for the project, which would be in charge of administering the budget and of direct relations with the participant partners.

After the annual meeting a technical relationship was established between the TN and the project co-ordinators, via which the EC provided the guidelines, orientations, calendar of events and the material needed to draft the basic document that would contain the description of the project that the partners were planning to implement.

Once the EC had approved a project and assigned the respective funds, a sustained process of interaction began between the co-ordinator of the project and the partners/beneficiaries in the case of type “A” projects and the beneficiaries/users in the case of type “B”

projects. The most intense and direct relations between the co-ordinators and the beneficiaries of the actions were generated at this stage.

In type “A” projects these were direct relations with local government officials and were brought about in a training exercise or one of exchange of experiences. However, in type “B” projects, although direct relations were maintained with government officials in charge of taking specific action or carrying out the works, a link was also established with the population, trade unions, associations or specific population groups (teachers, youth, women, senior citizens, the disabled and others) that would benefit from these actions, particularly as regards improvements in daily living conditions.

The EC supervised the use of the funds and subsequently ensured that the activities and actions had been carried out as agreed, through evaluations and auditing.

3.4. The relevance of the URB-AL Programme

It is well-known that the URB-AL Programme pursued general and specific objectives consistent with the needs and problems from which local governments had been suffering since the mid-nineties

Medium-sized and small EU cities were facing a challenge because of the increasing weight the problems of great urban areas had been acquiring, areas that concentrated an increasing use of public resources. They are stable populations, but with a need to consolidate participatory processes and above all with a need to affirm their cultures or, in other cases, to expand social services or generate productive activities that would provide a response to the demand for employment. Finally, some of these European cities have been losing their stability to the extent that they had been affected by a migratory flow, particularly crucial within the last few years.

From the Latin American perspective

in general it is necessary to keep in mind that in the mid-nineties people were still living in the aftermath of a contradictory period, of political and social tensions, some of them not exempt from violent confrontations.

Moreover, it was difficult to provide a response to the expectations of the democratisation process, in the midst of a prolonged economic crisis that began in the early eighties, with debt problems and the challenges posed by indispensable economic reforms to adapt to the rapid and transcendent changes set off by globalization.

As democratic processes in the region advanced, it became increasingly evident that responsibilities regarding matters connected with the quality of life should fall to the authorities closest to the population receiving the services or government interventions.

Consequently, addressing areas such as health, education, citizen security, the environment, gender issues, senior citizens, persons with different capacities, youth, attention to vulnerable groups, inter alia, as well as matters of productivity and entrepreneurial competitiveness, equity and income distribution, among many aspects, became a concern also of local governments, both because of the very strength of the growing democratic process and because of the demand of the civil society that favoured the possibility of “social controllership” in actors that were closer than national authorities.

Within this cumulus of contradictions, there was a surge of non governmental organizations (NGOs) as an expression of the vertebrated civil society, which in many cases promoted transparency in the handling of State issues and the civil society’s capacity to supervise or audit the performance of basic services.

The problems brought to the attention

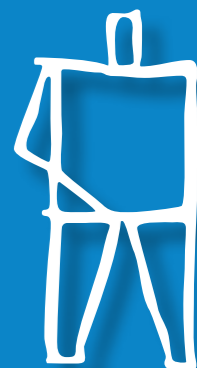
of local governments in Latin America, particularly in countries where the decentralisation process was manifested in greater depth, were precisely these problems of how to deal with those subjects, without sufficient experience, without any background information on their nature and without officials prepared for those delicate tasks. The real needs of local governments to face the new demands went from budget structuring, including public funds for the performance of services that were previously provided by the central government, to how to confront problems of community development related to a large diversity of areas.

Conclusively, the proposal to initiate the process of relating cities and of exchanging experiences that URB-AL encouraged provided an opportunity to find a solution to brand new problems, mainly regarding the exchange of experiences through the execution of common projects.

Likewise, URB-AL is consistent with EU strategy in the region since it is an important economic and political partner for Latin America, it is the principal donor of the region and the first source of direct foreign investment. EU relations with Latin America have been built up in a permanent bi-regional dimension and several specialized dialogues are under way with sub-regions, such as the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Community and Central America.

In each of those levels, and on other national levels, a complete range of co-operation agreements have been concluded based on three pillars: economic co-operation, institutionalisation of political dialogue and consolidation of trade relations. In that sense, URB-AL responds mainly to two lines of action that are contained in the EC regulations: technical and financial assistance

¹ See EC regulation 443/92



for social development and economic co-operation for financing institutional training actions of economic sectors in beneficiary countries.¹

Besides these political priorities, in which the URB-AL is consistent, changes have occurred in the way external co-operation is implemented by the EU. In May 2000 there was an important development when the decision was made to create EuropeAid, to return to the Commission the activities undertaken regarding external services and to deconcentrate towards the delegations the management of project co-operation, in order to provide a more local service, as well as a greater consistency in programming via the production of national and regional strategic reports. Later, in 2002, the Commission increased its efforts to strengthen civil society networks as a first priority.²

At the 3rd Latin America and the Caribbean-European Union Summit held in 2004 in Guadalajara, Mexico, the commitment to consolidate the strategic association between the two regions was reiterated and the EU established as basic co-operation objectives with Latin America and the Caribbean, to strengthen the regional integration process and boost co-operation in all areas of science and technology, as well as to fight against social exclusion. Lastly, the Fourth Summit held in Vienna, Austria in May 2006 ratified the objectives of earlier summits, including an explicit reference to support programmes related to the local partnership between the EU and Latin America.

4. Main results

The results obtained by TN activities are particularly important. In their implementation strong personal relations were generated

that tend to be permanent and to become a vehicle for consultation and exchange of experiences. In fact, among the results obtained those doubtlessly worthy of mention include the multiple and vigorous relations of officials and authorities of municipal governments of EU and Latin America, of large, medium-sized and small cities, immersed in a variety of circumstances. Indeed, in both evaluations made it has been detected that even when activities of a TN or of a specific project concluded, personal communications among partners continued for specific consultations on themes or on aspects very different from the main theme of the TN or the project that had generated the contact.

Among the most important results planned the large amount of actions by the local authorities of the EU and Latin America are taken into account, as a consequence of the work of the TN meetings or the results of the projects. In the research done at the time of one of the two evaluations undertaken, almost half the actors stated that “policy orientation was modified” or “new municipal or local services were generated;” two thirds stated that “new policies were designed,” and a large majority were of the opinion that “new action was taken” (European Commission 2004). These results not only go beyond what was originally planned but they reveal an especially important impact of the said actions on a considerably large population group,

Another important effect has been the production of a large amount of substantive material, in terms of background, realities and actions of good local government, confronting a large variety of problems that are being “municipalized.” This is a new reality, at least for Latin America, where the origin of the municipality occurred when the nation state arose and where decentralization has taken a

different route to that of European entities, in which the municipality preceded the nation state.

European partners, on their part, acknowledge an authentic enrichment as a result of contact with other experiences and levels of urban conflict. The common projects generated an important amount of valuable documents that analyse, develop or systematise the central concerns of the TNs or are collections of practices of good governance, regulations, regulatory frameworks, institutional structures, and others.

Teamwork was also dynamic, with discipline and a sense of community, which for some cities has been very beneficial. The internationalisation of relations has allowed cities that exerted leadership to be placed in a dimension which they had not previously enjoyed. Knowledge and direct contact with new and previously distant realities is without a doubt a result that had already been foreseen when the Programme was designed. Learning how to work as a team and the sense of participation in the dynamics of networks have been a valuable experience for many local government officials in both continents.

4.1. Thematic Networks

TNs in general fulfilled efficiently the functions they were assigned. On the one hand, they fostered access by many local governments to the international scenario. When analysing the information available from the EU-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (OCD) we find that 62% of the partners registered in Phase II of the URB-AL TNs do not participate in any of the 980 decentralised co-operation bilateral relations identified among sub-national governments of Latin America and the EU. This implies that for most of those countries their main external connection is this Programme.

On the other hand, TNs helped to ex-

change experiences and knowledge, promoting the organisation of multinational working teams for the development and execution of projects of common interest. At the same time, network co-ordinators acquired experience in handling instruments and standards.

Except for Network 1 (Drugs in the city), in all other TNs the co-ordinating cell carried out its activities at a satisfactory level as planned. As can be expected, as new networks were organized the result of the last ones was an improvement on the first due to the learning process provided by the earlier ones. Moreover, one of the main reasons why actions were weakened in the first TN and the cell ended by discontinuing operations, despite the fact that all its projects were concluded satisfactorily, was because there was not yet enough experience in working according to the dynamics envisaged by the Programme.

The co-ordinating units (cells) provided in a timely manner the guides and forms prepared by the EC and the documents containing guidelines for the formulation of common projects. In some cases they also contributed with a review of consistency between activities, schedules and resources, before formal submission of the project document to the Commission. Thus the approval of an increasing amount of projects was ensured in the most recent TNs.

URB-AL II benefited from accumulated experience and both its organizational and technical structures were able to increase efficiency in the fulfilment of assigned responsibilities. The duties of the EC as well as those of TNs and those of project co-ordinators were fulfilled in keeping with pragmatic and transparent criteria,

Both programme evaluations requested by the EC show that the mechanisms and structures worked efficiently and complied with precision in the different phases of the Programme cycle, from the identification of needs and beneficiaries up to the definition of

² See *Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) of April 2002*.

instruments. Technical Network start-up, operational features shown in the yearly meetings, awareness of the concepts by the partners and the improvement in the quality of the projects submitted, as well as the practice acquired in selecting the projects, are indicators that witness to the structural and operational efficiency of URB-AL. This is corroborated by the surveys carried out, in which the great majority of the interviewees value the work done by URB-AL positively (European Commission 2006).

The absence of disputes or the fact that so far 98% of the projects have been concluded, reflects, in turn, good organisation, management and interpretation of standards and procedures. The timely preparation of information material, guides on standards, project and budget manuals and the preparation of cases supplied the programme with instruments of support that influenced positively on its efficiency.

Programme operation, based on network operation, allowed the traditional model of regional co-operation centralised in national governments to be surmounted, because it was possible to identify interests with greater precision on a local plane, thus defining cities and regions as actors of new spaces of integration and exchange. Moreover, the TNs were built up as a very useful instrument to boost regional integration. The approach and connectivity that made them function show that there are important thematic and operational links to establish relations and associations between the participants that are closer and more enduring.

The actions carried out were reflected in the organisation of meetings of the 13 Thematic Networks that gathered together 2,493 members and held a total of 40 meetings. This means that, starting from an assumption that

the meetings of the TNs lasted three days, there was an approximate total of 22,000 opportunities for encounter/days or contact/days, either bilateral or as a group.

This increase of relations and contact opportunities between officials and technicians of local governments and external partners also reflected the set of training actions designed for officials to improve their possibilities of responding when faced with specific problems and the central themes of the respective networks or projects. To achieve such opportunities in traditional co-operation would have required a much greater budget.

As can be observed in Table 1, the 13 Thematic Networks in operation were able to generate 188 projects that dealt with a multiplicity of subjects. It can also be seen that as experience was accumulated in the operation of the system, a greater number of projects were being approved. Thus, while in the “Drugs and city” TN, that was the first, and “Preservation of the urban historical contexts”, the second, only 9 and 12 projects were approved respectively, in the last ones to operate, especially from Phase II on, such as the TNs on “Promotion of women in decision-making” or “Fight against poverty,” 18 and 20 projects were approved respectively.

Moreover, it can be observed that both the experience and the greater availability of resources of the European co-ordinators in TNs were important factors, among others, to obtain greater approval of projects (55.9%), compared to the 44.1% achieved by American co-ordinators. This occurred in spite of the proportion of three to two in favour of Latin American partner participation which was deemed desirable.

As for the number of cities registered in each of the TNs, 2,493 cities were convened (see Table 2).³ Within this total, some acted

at least once in the annual meetings, most did so on the three occasions there were meetings. The most active partners registered in more than one of the Networks. Therefore the number of registrations amounted to little more than 3,100.

The three subjects that drew the most participants belong to Phase II and of them two were co-ordinated by Latin America and one by the EU.

At the global level the desirable proportion of three to two in favour of Latin America was achieved. It can be seen in Table 2 that 62.2% of cities registered in all TNs were American, while 37.8% were European cities. It may be pointed out, however, that in three of the TNs the proportion was the reverse, probably because those themes were more important for EU cities.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the first eight TNs that were included in Phase I registered on average 165 partners, while in the last five of Phase II 234 cities registered on average. That fact, together with a greater amount of projects per Network, that resulted in greater resources used, shows that as experience was gained efficiency increased in the organisation of TNs and in general in the operation of the system.

4.2. Common projects

The projects were practically defined in the workshops that were held during the annual meeting of the TNs, where the central theme of the initiative submitted was discussed. However, the availability of resources was very important as well as the political backing of the community representative who was to co-ordinate the project, since in the first place he had to assign resources for drawing up the relevant document before funds for the grant

Table 1 | Networks, co-ordinators and projects approved

Network	Co-ordinating city	No. of projects	% of total	% of geo-geographical area
1: Drugs and city	Santiago de Chile	9	4.8	10.8
5: Urban social policies	Montevideo, Uruguay	19	10.1	22.9
7: Urban development management and control	Rosario, Argentina	12	6.4	14.5
9: Local financing and the participatory budget	Porto Alegre, Brazil	11	5.9	13.3
10: Fight against rural poverty	Sao Paulo, Brazil	20	10.6	24.1
14: Citizen security in the city	Valparaíso, Chile	12	6.4	14.5
Total Latin America		83	44.1	100.0
2: Preservation of urban historical contexts	Vicenza, Italy	14	7.4	13.3
3: Democracy in the city	Moulineaux, France	13	6.9	12.4
4: The city as promoter of economic development	Madrid, Spain	23	12.2	21.9
6: Urban environment	Málaga, Spain	14	7.4	13.3
8: Control of urban mobility	Stuttgart, Germany	10	5.3	9.5
12: Promotion of women in local decision-making	Barcelona, Spain	18	9.6	17.1
13: The city and the information society	Bremen, Germany	13	6.9	12.4
Total European Union		105	55.9	100.0
Total all networks		188	100.0	

Source: Own elaboration based on OCD figures.

³ | Own preparation based on information provided by the OCD for the Networks of Phase II, of Networks 6, 8 and of the information contained in the Mission Evaluation Report for 2004.

Table 2 | Cities registered in each network, by region

	Total registered ¹	LATIN AMERICA		EUROPEAN UNION			
		Drugs in the city	% in total networks	% in total of each network	Registered	% in total networks	% in total of each network
TOTALS							
Preservation of urban historical contexts	2493	1550	100.0	62.2	943	100.0	37.8
Democracy in the city	114	86	5.5	75.4	28	3.0	24.6
The city as promoter of economic development	195	76	4.9	39.0	119	12.6	61.0
Urban Social Policies	148	93	6.0	62.8	55	5.8	37.2
Urban environment	207	102	6.6	49.3	105	11.1	50.7
Urban development management and control	169	114	7.4	67.5	55	5.8	32.5
Control of urban mobility	177	109	7.0	61.6	68	7.2	38.4
Local financing and participatory budget	122	79	5.1	64.8	43	4.6	35.2
Fight against poverty	189	107	6.9	56.6	82	8.7	43.4
Promotion of women in local decision-making	255	175	11.3	68.6	80	8.5	31.4
The city and the information society	275	189	12.2	68.7	86	9.1	31.3
Citizen security in the city	274	179	11.5	65.3	95	10.1	34.7
Ciudad y sociedad de la información	194	126	8.1	64.9	68	7.2	35.1
Seguridad ciudadana en la ciudad	174	115	7.4	66.1	59	6.3	33.9

¹ Refers to number of cities registered in each network.

Source: Own elaboration. For Networks 6, 8 and those of Phase II, based on OCD figures, and for the rest of the networks of Phase I, based on European Commission figures (2004).

would become available. In the second place, because finally it was often the co-ordinating body that contributed the larger part of the counterpart resources.

The 188 projects executed involved a total of 500 partners, who in total had little more than 1,400 participations (see Table 3). If it is kept in mind that during its execution each project held on average two meetings, this means that a total of 375 meetings were held and on the whole around 8,700 opportunities for encounter/days were advanced among project partners.

In the case of type “A” projects, their results were directly focused on promoting re-

lations between municipal or regional government officials, in charge of a specific area of community service, municipal administration, planning or execution of activities to promote local development. By means of a dynamic interaction event and exchange of experiences good practices in government and a reciprocal enrichment were fostered.

The field of intervention of “B” type projects is at a higher level, due to the more significant financial resources the EC can make available and that they can embrace dimensions of territorial or institutional action. By way of illustration, we may mention the production of collective services and the procu-

Table 3 | Participant cities, participations and co-ordinated projects, by sub-region

Groups of countries	Participants ¹	%	Participations ²	%	Coefficient ³	Coordinate dprojects by countries ⁴	%
Sub-regions							
Mexico	16	3.2	27	1.9	1.7	5	2.7
Central America and Cuba ⁵	36	7.2	91	6.2	2.5	2	1.1
Andean Area ⁶	96	19.2	272	18.7	2.8	19	10.1
Southern Cone ⁷	135	27.0	535	36.7	4.0	54	28.7
Southern Europe ⁸	181	36.2	471	32.3	2.6	92	48.9
Northern Europe ⁹	14	2.8	15	1.0	1.1	4	2.1
Central Europe ¹⁰	22	4.4	46	3.2	2.1	12	6.4
TOTAL	500	100.0	1457	100.0	2.9	188	100.0
Geographical Area							
Latin America	283	56.6	925	63.5	3.3	80	42.6
European Union	217	43.4	532	36.5	2.5	108	57.4

¹ Means number of participant partners.

² Means number of participations by partners.

³ Means coefficient of participations related to number of participants.

⁴ Means number of projects co-ordinated by cities belonging to the different sub-regions.

⁵ Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

⁶ Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela.

⁷ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

⁸ Spain, France, Greece, Italy and Portugal.

⁹ Denmark, Finland, Ireland, United Kingdom and Sweden.

¹⁰ Germany, Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg and Netherlands.

Source: Own elaboration based on OCD figures..

rement of interest for all the cities involved in the project, as is the case of the Multinational School for Municipal Training, or a social service in a municipal area specialized in attending and assisting vulnerable families; another example would be urban rehabilitation of a degraded area of a city. A type “B” project can be undertaken in a particular municipality of the group of partners, but anyway must generate benefits for the other participating cities, most often by transferring the experience generated by the project.

These projects pursue the goal of obtaining tangible results and their aim is, for example, to solve a social problem through the rehabilitation of a building or a facility of public interest. The tangible aspect in these cases is not only the physical structure, but also the visibility of the benefits for the participating partners, when they share processes of political learning and generate the mechanisms to convene the population and the civil society organised to accept and participate actively in obtaining the results. Two types of actors par-

ticipate in type “B” projects: in the first place, the city that co-ordinates the project, that benefits directly because it is generally there that the specific action is generated. The participation of the rest of the partners is then more receptive and results in receiving the experience of the direct beneficiary partner.

To summarise the diversity and great quantity of projects encouraged by the programme involves, on the one hand, the efficiency of the organisation to awaken the interest of new actors (the local governments), that they make take advantage of the options offered by international co-operation and, on the other hand, it is proven that the number of cities with experience has grown, that they seek to attend to particular aspects of problems which have already been worked on in other projects or faced by other cities. This has led to important initiatives of type “B” common projects. It is also obvious that there is a mutual interest between Latin Americans and Europeans to establish connections of an institutional, cultural and economic nature.

The wide range of activities and of subjects which the projects were able to access provided a great field of possibilities for municipalities and external partners to inquire into a series of aspects of the urban problem, from territorial, social, economic, even cultural dimensions, including aspects such as governance, democracy and human rights, increasingly related to municipal management. In this sense, Phase II has incorporated new fundamentally social themes, such as the fight against poverty, citizen security and the integration of women to local decision-making. In this way the programme has become more efficient to face today’s problems in America and in Europe, and that has allowed a reassertion of the lead taken by local entities in promoting and

managing their own development and evaluation.

The major part of activities involved the execution of common projects with palpable results. According to the two evaluations carried out, of 188 projects approved 98% have been concluded on time and it is expected that that percentage will not change in the case of those that are still being executed.

Also in the case of projects, the trend in the proportion desired regarding number of participants from Latin America and the EU was maintained, but with greater emphasis as regards participations. However, concerning the co-ordination of projects the proportion was the reverse, since EU cities co-ordinated 57.4% (see Table 3).

The 500 partners involved in total projects undertook 1,457 participations, which means that each city acted in a different way and at a different time, on an average of three projects.

One can see from the same Table 3 that the cities of Latin America belonging to the sub-region of the Southern Cone had the greatest interest in and possibilities of participating and that they achieved the greatest ratio of participations. Therefore this was the sub-region of Latin America which co-ordinated the most projects. Within the sub-region the intense activity of Brazil, Argentina and Chile stands out in that order: they executed 51% of Latin American participations (see Table 4).

At the other extreme we find Mexico, with only 16 participants and the lowest coefficient of participations. In the sub-region of Central America,⁴ despite the fact that seven countries are included, only 36 local governments participated and only two projects were co-ordinated. The Andean Area, in turn, occupied an intermediate level (see again Table

⁴ | For purposes of this document and according to the OECD classifications of sub-regions, Central America included the following countries in the sub-region of Central America: Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua y Panama.

Table 4 | Participants and participations by country

Countries	No. of participants	No. of participations	Percentages		Ratio of participations to participants
			In total of region	In overall total	
America	283	925	100.0	64.9	3.3
Mexico	16	27	2.9	2.0	1.7
Costa Rica	8	26	2.8	1.9	3.3
Cuba	1	6	0.6	0.4	6.0
El Salvador	8	26	2.8	1.9	3.3
Guatemala	5	7	0.8	0.5	1.4
Honduras	4	8	0.9	0.6	2.0
Nicaragua	7	15	1.6	1.1	2.1
Panama	3	3	0.3	0.2	1.0
Bolivia	14	36	3.9	2.6	2.6
Colombia	26	46	5.0	3.3	1.8
Ecuador	13	67	7.2	4.9	5.2
Peru	35	105	11.4	7.4	3.0
Venezuela	8	18	1.9	1.3	2.3
Argentina	38	160	17.3	11.7	4.2
Brazil	49	178	19.2	12.8	3.6
Chile	38	139	15.0	10.1	3.7
Uruguay	7	52	5.6	3.8	7.4
Paraguay	3	6	0.6	0.4	2.0
Europe	217	532	100.0	35.1	2.5
Spain	85	253	47.6	18.3	3.0
France	17	38	7.1	2.8	2.2
Greece	5	8	1.5	0.6	1.6
Italy	56	132	24.8	9.6	2.4
Portugal	18	40	7.5	2.9	2.2
Denmark	4	5	0.9	0.4	1.3
Finland	1	1	0.2	0.1	1.0
U. Kingdom	5	5	0.9	0.4	1.0
Sweden	4	4	0.8	0.3	1.0
Germany	9	19	3.6	1.4	2.1
Austria	1	4	0.8	0.3	4.0
Belgium	9	19	3.6	1.4	2.1
Holland	3	4	0.8	0.3	1.3
Total	500	1457		100.0	

Source: Own elaboration based on OECD figures.

3) and the participation of Peru was the most important (see Table 4),

.As regards the EU, what clearly stands out is the sub-region of Southern Europe which had the highest participation (181) and co-ordinated the largest number of projects (92) in the whole programme. This was especially due to, on the one hand, Spain, linked by a common language, and on the other hand, by the special interest taken by Italy in some subjects. In other sub-regions participation was more discrete, probably due to language barriers, according to the two evaluations mentioned (European Commission 2004 and 2006).

Regarding project execution it should be scored that the countries of Latin America responded with particular enthusiasm to the dynamics of Decentralised Co-operation, since the average participation coefficient (3.3) was much higher than that of the EU (2.5). This demonstrates the great interest that some American countries took in the programme, because they visualised the possibility of gaining spaces of action and autonomy regarding the tiresome hindrance of national authorities and the possibility of finding responses, on the part of EU partners, to the new challenges presented by decentralisation. On the other hand, the differences in participations of the Latin American sub-region respond, in good part, to the late trend in the countries of Central America and Mexico, in comparison with the older expressions of decentralisation in Southern Cone countries. Conversely, the important differences in participation by the EU countries are defined, to a large extent, by the difficulties in communication due to language barriers.

From a different point of view, it seems important to refer to the impact that the programme could have had on the population, which was the principal objective of URB-AL Programme. Table 5 shows that programme actions were carried out both in small cities

of ten thousand people and in megalopolis of more than a million inhabitants. Based on the figures of Table 5 a conservative estimate (although an estimate of the population benefited directly or indirectly by the Programme is impossible) is that URB-AL actions were carried out in a total of between 80 and 100 million inhabitants.

In general, for the most part participations occurred in the intermediate segments of the population, between ten and 250 thousand inhabitants. Furthermore, one can see that in the first segment (of up to ten thousand inhabitants) participation was modest, particularly in Latin America, that of the EU being more important. At the other extreme, participation of large cities (more than a million inhabitants) was 9.7% but Latin American cities tripled EU cities, although the greater participation, both in Latin America and the EU, was in the segment of 100 to 200 thousand inhabitants. Nevertheless, regarding regional participations in the different strata, what stands out is that the greater proportion of Latin America was concentrated in the 700 thousand to one million segment of the population, while the weight of the EU was greater in the ten to 50 thousand segment of inhabitants, reflecting the different dimensions of both regions in terms of population size.. Indeed both evaluations reflect that one of the benefits reported by EU participants was to have been able to examine how urban and municipal problems were handled by the great urban areas of Latin America.

4.3. Some lessons learned

Notwithstanding the positive nature of the overall review of the good things of the URB-AL Programme, some weaknesses have been identified in the evaluations carried out (European Commission 2004 and 2006) which, if overcome, would increase

Table 5 | Percentage of participants and participations of regions by segments of population

Ranking by thousand inhabitants	Latin America			European Union		
	% of segment in total participants	% of participants in segment	% of participations in segment	% of segment in total participants	% of participants in segment	% of participations in segment
Up to 10	7.3	50.0	62.9	11.2	50.0	37.1
10 to 50	20.8	58.7	57.3	22.5	41.3	42.7
50 to 100	17.0	59.5	66.5	17.8	40.5	33.5
100 to 250	20.8	56.3	64.3	24.9	43.8	35.7
250 to 500	16.6	69.4	70.9	11.2	30.6	29.1
500 to 750	5.0	54.2	58.2	6.5	45.8	41.8
750 to 1000	2.7	63.6	74.5	2.4	36.4	25.5
More than 1000	9.7	80.6	83.5	3.6	19.4	16.5
TOTAL	100.0	60.5	68.4	100.0	39.5	31.6

Source: Own elaboration based on OCD figures

significantly the potential results of other programmes of this kind. Precisely, favourable results were achieved despite the fact that during the first two years implementation of the programme suffered the consequences of the weakness of the initial formulation (European Commission 2004). Besides, the changes in the entities managing the programme, as well as those of the Commission's external aid structure, did not make things easier.

Another of the weaknesses, especially for a decentralised programme, was the lack of tools for monitoring and divulging activities, because of which the URB-AL Programme results were not adequately established. In this sense, it would seem advisable that TN work or activities should continue while the projects were being executed. The fact that the period of execution of the last projects is longer causes some difficulties, particularly regarding dissemination of the results obtained when they are put in practice. Therefore, it would have been desirable that the contractual relationship of the TN cell should

include the responsibility to close down the activities of all its projects and draw up the corresponding institutional report. An attempt is being made to remedy this deficiency with the present specific project, URB-AL Programme Documentation Centre (CDPU), that is being developed by the Malaga-Valparaiso consortium.

It may also be scored that the articulation of the different urban scenarios – large and small cities of America and Europe – with dissimilar institutional frameworks and operative contradictions, makes management complex in certain areas. This diversity has exerted an influence on the circumstance that the main beneficiaries of the TN are cities or municipalities, well endowed financially and more active on the international scene, which in some cases may have increased asymmetries (see Table 3).

Moreover, no mechanism was planned to enable co-ordinating units to monitor project activities more continuously before annual meetings. Because of this it was not

possible to correct some of the problems that arose during project execution, such as delays in the presentation of source documents or holding project meetings, weakness in their content or lack of communication between project co-ordination and partners.

In the two evaluations mentioned it was possible to establish that during the entire execution of the programme the difficulties in getting some countries and minor municipalities in Latin America to participate persisted. Participation criteria were unfavourable for some of the Andean countries and especially for those of Central America. Likewise in Europe participation was concentrated in the Southern sub-region, whereas that of other sub-regions was lower (see Table 5).

One of the weaknesses of the system, especially regarding Latin America, was the lack of prior familiarity on the part of partners with EC procedures and requirements. In this sense it would have been useful to have some technical support to be able to advance more rapidly in the production of project documents, mainly in cases in which prior experience was lacking. This subject seems important in a decentralized co-operation programme since the units that have experience in preparation of projects and procedures often present sound documents that are generally selected.

Conversely, participants with greater limitations, precisely those that should obtain the greater benefits from the programme, do not obtain approval of their proposals because these are clearly weak in terms of technical consistency. Therefore, the need to co-ordinate projects inclines the asymmetry towards entities with greater resources and experience. That can explain why the networks co-ordinated by European cities have achieved the majority of projects, even when the two to three relationship in favour of Latin America participations was sought, in Networks and in Projects (see Table 3).

In operational terms, the lack of administrative training of the beneficiaries regarding the application of contractual conditions, in some cases prevented the streamlining of disbursements to finance activities in a timely manner. Finally, greater precision seems to be needed in the description of functions both of TN co-ordinators and of projects, in order to homogenize the conditions in which they act and the results they obtain, so as to avoid the translation of a different level of access to information or greater initiative into a greater access to resources of a certain TN or Project.

5. Characteristics of URB-AL decentralised co-operation

The principle of decentralised co-operation was very relevant for the development of the URB-AL Programme because it was based on the mobilisation of a target group of local actors through TNs and was instrumented horizontally, through transfer and exchange of experience activities. The activities were proposed by the actors themselves, they were all based on co-financing by the beneficiaries and all participants (municipalities) were eligible without any intervention by national governments or NGOs.

With this guidance economies of scale and greater efficiency were achieved (when comparing with the unit cost of bilateral projects); decision making was much quicker, since once the scheme had been approved the procedures were shorter; direct beneficiaries were more involved in the implementation of actions; a multiplicity of actions and exchanges were introduced that made possible the mutual enrichment of participants; widespread coverage of regions was achieved through networks specific to target groups; and multiplier effects were produced via networks.

Despite the obvious virtues of a decen-

tralised co-operation programme, as in the case of URB-AL, there are some elements that must be overcome in the future, as experiences become more fruitful through practice. The following aspects may be highlighted at this time: multiple actions dilute the visibility of their effects; the administration of a multiplicity of small projects implies a strong management team (internal or external of the EC) for the numerous administrative procedures and intense technical monitoring involved; the co-financing principle in turn, and the level established in general, favour the most solid partners, with greater resources, at the same time as it limits the participation of weaker partners; and finally, account must be taken of how difficult it is for the EC to measure the impact and to structure a memory of those programmes which would make possible the re-use of project results.

6. Prospects

The EU has decided to conclude the URB-AL Programme with the last few projects approved in the month of July, as had been planned, and there was no expectation envisioned to initiate a new phase of same. As time passed the themes withered away and procedures became routine and repetitive as well as the contents of the projects. However, the mechanism of decentralised co-operation has demonstrated the good things both in this programme and in others that are being carried out and it is natural to expect that other initiatives of this kind will emerge gradually.

On the one hand, the amount of activities that may be developed with limited resources signifies an encouragement for the donors to the extent that they presume to extend the expected results to a large number of beneficiaries. On the other hand,

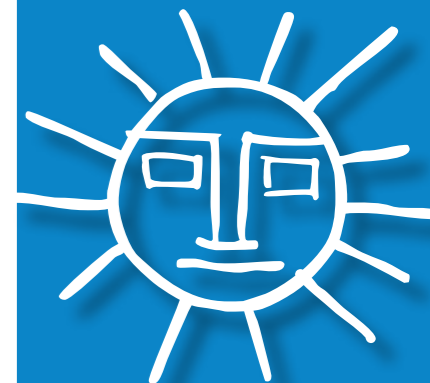
the fact that the beneficiaries define their own targets and objectives leads to a clear appropriation of results on their part, which makes activities and outcome more sustainable. Finally, the aim to boost democratic values and participation require converging procedures in which the solutions to problems arise from the exchange of experiences, before they do in traditional welfare oriented mechanisms.

Consequently, it is to be expected that the EU will continue to use decentralised co-operation as an effective instrument in its objectives to stimulate economic and social development both in Latin America and in other regions. New priority themes for the European Union, such as social cohesion or the information society, together with others addressing the consolidation of the sustainability of democracy and equity, as well as the fight against exclusion or the stabilisation of migratory movements are doubtlessly areas in which decentralised co-operation can play a determining role.

7. Main conclusions

In general, the evaluations have found evidence that the results of the programme are positive and that a reasonable level of efficacy and efficiency in the utilisation of assigned resources has been achieved. URB-AL has been shown to be a useful and very pertinent programme for the needs of participants and capable of adapting to and dealing with the subjects addressed in the EU – Latin America dialogue.

Pertinent and valuable instruments have been developed to connect local communities of Latin America and the EU, making possible the definition of many projects specifically adapted to the needs expressed by local actors. The Networks have been able to adapt to the



needs of European and Latin American local entities. The accent has gradually shifted from a predominance of themes that are specifically public, more traditional in municipal practice, to matters more linked to development, promotion of welfare and social participation.

A qualitative leap has been observed in the conception and application of URB-AL Programme that has made it possible

to overcome the traditional scheme of co-operation programmes, in which actions which can be of assistance in some way are prioritised. URB-AL exemplifies more direct and more participatory co-operation alternatives through the exchange of experiences and institutional support, for strengthening local and municipal entities, considered to be the new guideline in local development.

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Gutiérrez Camps, Arnau (2006). "Una aproximación a las relaciones de cooperación descentralizada entre la Unión Europea y América Latina". En Anuario de la Cooperación Descentralizada Año 2005. Montevideo: OCD.

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Decentralised Co-operation Agenda 2006 *

The overall objective of the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation (OCD) is to consolidate the local partnership between these two regions, by going into further depth and multiplying its results, impacts and benefits as regards urban policy. An important dimension of this goal has to do with making visible and disseminating the activities carried out by the many actors in decentralised co-operation. Once the Observatory had been in place for one year and taking into account its positive value as a space for exchange and as a multiplier of information (as, for example, in the evaluations of the 1st Annual Conference), it was considered timely to include in the Yearbook 2006 a specific article that would bring together the greatest possible amount of activities that had to do with decentralised co-operation between local governments of the European Union and Latin America in the course of this year.

* OCD Antennas for Europe and Latin America in charge of gathering information, OCD Antenna for Latin America in charge of drafting.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of actions of different kinds related to decentralised co-operation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America that have taken place during the year 2006. To review a year of decentralised co-operation is not an easy task, since it is a dynamic phenomenon where information on meetings, training events, publications or agreements on co-operation is still not very systematised. Therefore the data presented here are a first attempt to gather information on such activities, and it is not exhaustive.¹

In general the activities collected were publicised by electronic communications media, such as websites and electronic mail lists of the different co-operation actors – local and regional governments, and their networks or associations, ministries of foreign affairs, co-operation agencies, and a few agencies or consulting firms that specialise in decentralised co-operation. Likewise, to the extent that the Observatory has become consolidated as a benchmark in the area of decentralised co-operation in the course of the last year, local actors have also approached us, generating direct flows of information towards the OCD that help to disseminate these activities.

As regards the contents of the information provided here, on the one hand the meetings on decentralised co-operation that took place both in Europe and in Latin America were surveyed. We left out the events that dealt with the decentralised co-operation of one of the two regions with

other continents, as for example co-operation relations between European countries and those of Central Europe, Russia, Africa, the Middle East or Asia. On the other hand we highlighted training activities involving decentralised co-operation since these speak of the sustained interest of local actors in accessing the tools needed to promote the practice of decentralised co-operation in both continents. It also seemed to us relevant to mention the web sites that provide information – either new or up-dated during the past year – on decentralised co-operation relations in Europe and Latin America, or that promote co-operation practices in the local area. Moreover we sought to include the main bibliographic materials published in 2006.

The information presented is necessarily succinct for reasons of space, although we have attempted to include as far as possible, besides the basic data for each item, a very brief summary of its contents and an internet address in order to allow those who are interested to access further information. Finally, the article includes some general reflections on what the agenda of decentralised co-operation in the year 2006 had been, highlighting some of the items we considered of significant importance or interest for all the actors involved.

2. Decentralised Co-operation Agenda 2006

2005-2006

Oct. 2005 - Oct. 2006. San Sebastián (Spain). Master's in Decentralised International Co-operation: Peace and Development, Analysis and Management of the Global Agen-

¹ Any information on decentralised co-operation activities to be publicised through OCD publications may be sent to the following electronic addresses: observatoriomontevideo@prodo.imm.gub.uy; ocd.bcn@diba.es



da within the framework of the United Nations System. Universidad del País Vasco. www.zi.lp.chu.es.

Nov-2005 - Jun-2006. Paris (France). Higher studies diploma : L'Action Internationale des Collectivités Locales. (International Action of Local Communities.) Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques (IRIS, Institute of International and Strategic Relations). www.iris-france.org/fr/pages/ipris/progs06/aicl.pdf.

2006-2007

April 2006 - March 2007. Presential and distance. Diploma in Local Management and Development. Unión Iberoamericana de Municipales (UIM). www.uimunicipalistas.org.

May 2006-Dec. 2007. Guayaquil (Ecuador). Master's in Governance and Political Management. Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil; George Washington University. www.ucsg.edu.ec/catolica/secundarias_ucsg/html/sistemapostgrado/maestria_gobernabilidad/maestriapensamiento.htm

JANUARY

14. Lille (France). Workshop: 'Concevoir un micro-projet de solidarité internationale' ('Conceiving an international solidarity micro-project'). Lianes coopération. www.lianescooperation.org

21. Lille (France). Workshop: 1, 2, 3... Ready, set, go ! Preparation for departure for and meeting with another culture'). Lianes coopération. www.lianescooperation.org

23-24. Caracas (Venezuela). Foro de Autoridades Locales para la Inclusión Social (Forum of local authorities for social inclusion). Meeting of male and female mayors and representatives of local governments of the whole world, created in 2001 within the framework of the World Social Forum. Among subjects addressed are: social inclusion, public policies and services, peripheral cities, human rights in the city, decentralized co-operation,

citizen and participatory democracy www.falcaracas2006.org

FEBRUARY

8-10. Washington (United States). Executive Bureau of United Cities and Local Governments (Bureau Ejecutivo de Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos) (CGLU). In a dialogue with the World Bank, the mayors of the world placed financing cities at the centre point of the debate on world governance www.cities-localgovernments.org

13-15. Vienna (Austria). International Partnership Fair . The 2nd Meeting of the Local Economic Development and Job Creation Programme of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/LEED), a Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance. This meeting seeks to foster the exchange of experiences and the search for new local partnerships to improve local economic development and social inclusion. Organised by OECD-ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation). www.partnershipfair.zsi.at

20 Feb.-23 June. XV Programa de Pasantías para funcionarios públicos de la Comunidad Andina. (15th Internship Programme for public employees of the Andean Community. www.comunidadandina.org

22. La Plaine Saint Denis (France). Training : Intercommunalité et international (Inter-community and international.) Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

23 Paris (France). Training : Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée (International institutions and decentralised co-operation) . Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

MARCH

2-3. Lisbon (Portugal). 1st High Level Conference EULARO-OBREAL (Observatorio de Relaciones Europa América Latina) Europe-Latin America Observatory on Relations. The Euro-Latin American Forum intends

to establish an area for dialogue between political, academic, entrepreneurial and diplomatic communities of the European Union and Latin America <http://www.obreal.unibo.it/News.aspx?Action=Data&IdNews=115&Actual=False>

6-8. Porto Alegre (Brazil). Seminar Network 9 URB-AL: "Financiamiento Local y Presupuesto Participativo" (Local Financing and Participatory Budget). The 153 participants from 16 countries addressed participatory budget experiences, stressing two main topics: sustainability and qualification/systematisation of participatory budgets. Organised by the Porto Alegre Prefecture. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/projects/urbal/infos/urbal_info_23_es.pdf

7-9. Málaga (Spain). 'Normas y procedimientos para la ejecución de proyectos URB-AL'. (Standards and procedures for URB-AL project execution). Presential training on conceiving and managing URB-AL projects or other European decentralised co-operation projects. URB-AL Programme Documentation Centre -(Centro de Documentación del Programa URB-AL) (CDPU). www.centrourbal.com

9-10. Brussels (Belgium). International Co-ordinators in Europe: 'Making connections' (Coordinadores Internacionales en Europa: 'Haciendo conexiones'). This second meeting of people responsible for international and European regions and local governments addressed, among other subjects, the different types of decentralised co-operation. Organised by SALAR, ANCI-IDEALI, Danish regions, AMF, AFLRA, LGLIB, Deutscher Städte-tag, ARRICORD. <http://www.ideali.be/en/news316.html>

10-11. Málaga (Spain). Seminar of inauguration of the URB-AL Programme Documentation Centre and the Observatory on Urban Environment. Organised by the Malaga City Council and the Valparaíso City Council. www.centrourbal.com

22-24. Seville (Spain). Workshop: 'Identificación e intercambio de estrategias para me-

orar la efectividad de los proyectos de cooperación de ciudad a ciudad en apoyo a las metas del milenio' 'Identification and exchange of strategies for improving the effectiveness of city-to-city cooperation projects in support of the millennium development goals'. UN-Habitat Best Practices Seville Centre for C2C Cooperation. DLC@urbanismo-sevilla.org

27-28. Brussels (Belgium). EU-LAC High Level Conference on 'Promoting social cohesion: the experiences of the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean'. About 200 people of the civil society, the entrepreneurial world, academia, the trade union movement, international organisations and local governments gathered together jointly to promote social cohesion in both regions. Organised by the European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/world/lac-vienna/events/social_cohesion.htm

28-30. Montevideo (Uruguay). First Annual Conference of the Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation. Experts and local authorities of Europe and Latin America debated on the subject of local decentralised co-operation both on a theoretical plane and from the point of view of their own practice, regarding four themes: regional integration, social inclusion and the fight against poverty; institutional strengthening and governance; and gender themes. www.observ-ocd.org/

29-31. Valencia (Spain). Fifth Forum of the World Alliance of Cities against Poverty. (V Foro de la Alianza Mundial de Ciudades Contra la Pobreza.) This meeting sought to create joint strategies at the local and regional level to achieve the Millennium Development Objectives. Organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) www.ch.undp.org/wacap

APRIL

20. Mexico DF (Mexico). Taller Regional Centroamérica, México y El Caribe de Lucha contra la Pobreza Urbana. (Regional

Workshop of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean against urban poverty.) Brought together the mayors of the region and experts in urban policy, social policies and economic development. Organised by the Ibero-American Union of Cities and Capitals (UCCI), the Government of the Federal District and the Friedrich Ebert-Mexico Foundation. www.munimadrid.es/ucci http://www.fondeso.df.gob.mx/memoria/3er_taller/boletinPrensa.pdf

21. Mexico DF (Mexico). 21st Meeting of Mayors of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean UCCL www.munimadrid.es/ucci

24-26. Vienna (Austria). Seminario Internacional REAL (Relaciones Europa-América Latina) 2006 (Europe-Latin America Relations (REAL) International Seminar). The relations between Europe and Latin America were addressed along two main thematic lines: social cohesion and regional integration. "Empowering local decentralised co-operation" was highlighted among the conclusions and proposals of the Seminar. www.real2006.net

26. Paris (France). Training event: 'Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée' ('International institutions and decentralised co-operation'). Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

MAY

1. Quito (Ecuador). Congress of the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (Congreso de la Federación Latinoamericana de Ciudades, Municipios y Asociaciones) (FLACMA). One of the FLACMA objectives is to promote Latin American integration in municipal terms, by promoting co-operation, twinning and inter-municipal solidarity. www.flacma.org

3-5. Stockholm (Sweden). Urban Futures 2.0. The aims of the European conference on urban governance and partnerships are to address future challenges for cities, to promote new institutions and tools for dialogue and

partnership. This was organised by the city of Stockholm, Ministry of Justice of Sweden, European Commission. www.urbanfutures.se

9 May-8 June. Madrid (Spain). Pasantías en Relaciones Internacionales. UCCI. (Internships in International Relations.) www.munimadrid.es/ucci

10-12. Innsbruck (Austria). 23rd General Assembly of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (Asamblea General del Consejo de Municipios y Regiones de Europa) (CEMR). The CEMR joins together about 100,000 cities and regions of Europe. It publicises local and regional autonomy within the EU, influences European policies and fosters the exchange of information, at the local, regional and international level. Organised by the CEMR and the Committee of the Regions of Europe (CCRE). www.ccre.org

12. Vienna (Austria). Fourth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the EU and Latin America/Caribbean. (4^a Cumbre de Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno de la UE y América Latina / Caribe.) The Summit made it possible to make progress in terms of relations between the parties including the start of discussions on the possibility of an association with the Central American countries and possibly with the Andean Community. www.eu2006.at/en/The_Council_Presidency/EU_LAC_Summit_Vienna/UEALCespagnol/index.html

15. Paris (France). Training event: 'Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée' ('International institutions and decentralised co-operation'). Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

16-17. Paris (France). Colloquium: 'Villes et mondialisation: Réseaux de ville et politiques publiques dans le cadre des programmes européens' (Cities and globalisation: City networks and public policies within the framework of European programmes). Organised by Université Paris VIII.

16-19. Bahía Blanca (Argentina). IX Seminario Internacional de la Red Iberoame-

ricana de Investigadores sobre Globalización y Territorio (9th International Seminar of the Ibero-american Network of researchers on globalisation and territory). In this seminar territorial problems arising from ongoing globalisation were analysed through an exchange between European and Latin American researchers. Organised by the Departments of the Economy and of Geography and Tourism of the National University of the South <http://www.uns.edu.ar/congresos/ixrii/index.asp>

17-18. Lyon (France). GLOBAL CITY: International forum for city actors. Building a sustainable city. This forum brought together more than a thousand participants, city planners, chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, to exchange strategies, methods and solutions as an input to the development of a sustainable view of cities. Organised by www.globalcityforum.com

21-30. Brazil. Seventh International Training Tour for Authorities on Local Development: "Generating tools for the development of cities". (7^a Gira Internacional de Capacitación para Autoridades sobre Desarrollo Local: 'Generando herramientas para el desarrollo desde las ciudades'. ONWARD, Organización para el Desarrollo de América Latina y el Caribe (Organisation for the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean) www.onward.org.br/programacion_esp.php

22-24. Marseilles (France). First French-Brazilian decentralised co-operation meeting. In order to take stock of co-operation between the two countries, the specificity of the co-operation was analysed, and a dialogue in greater depth was sought as well as agreements between both regions. Organised by PACA (Region of France) and Cités Unies France. http://www.cites-unies-france.org/html/regions/ameriquelat/ameriquelat_index.html

22 May-2 June. Madrid (Spain). XXV Programa Iberoamericano de Formación Municipal. (25th Ibero-american programme of Municipal Training). Includes modules on

international co-operation, social policy, municipal emergency services). UCCI. www.munimadrid.es/ucci

26. Udine (Italy). Seminar: 'Come possono gli enti locali essere attori di cooperazione?' (¿How can local entities become co-operation actors?). The seminar, designed for public officials of the region, analysed decentralised co-operation and its input to the development of territories. Regione FVG (Italia). http://www.provincia.udine.it/p2k/Home/Ente/Uffici/Politiche%20Sociali,%20Lavoro%20e%20Collocamento/Politiche%20Sociali/Osservatorio%20per%20le%20politiche%20sociali%20e%20le%20politiche%20di%20part/Immigrazione/Eventi/26maggio2006_coop_ud.pdf

JUNE

1-2. Rosario (Argentina). Agencias de Cooperación Internacional con líneas en desarrollo económico local. (International Co-operation Agencies with guidelines in local economic development.) Organised by Mercociudades-UTDEL (Local Development Thematic Unit). <http://www.mercociudades.org/index.php?module=PostWrap&page=/descargas/paginas/desarrolloeconomico.htm>

6-8. Paris (France). Workshop: 'Coopération décentralisée et développement durable' ('Decentralised co-operation and lasting development'). Cités Unies France. www.cites-unies-france.org/html/formations/index.html

7. Paris (France). Training event: 'Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée' ('International institutions and decentralised co-operation'). Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

8-9. Mexico DF (Mexico). Primer Foro Nacional sobre Asuntos Internacionales de los Gobiernos Locales. (First National Forum on International Affairs of Local Governments) National debate on Federative Diplomacy bringing together academia, representatives of co-

operation agencies and international organisations and local officials, by sharing successful experiences of international activism as a tool to strengthen local development. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <http://www.sre.gob.mx/eventos/forogoblocales/programa.htm>

12-14. Montevideo (Uruguay). International meeting: 'Desarrollo Local y Cooperación Descentralizada para las Metas del Milenio'. ('Local development and decentralised co-operation for the goals of the millenium.') Brought together local governments of the country and international co-operation agencies. Special stress was laid on the inputs of decentralised co-operation for local development. Organised by UNDP, ART, UNFPA, AECI, Presidency Uruguay. http://www.ilsleda.nazionunite.it/eventi/details.php?ev_id=26&lang=es

14-16. Gijón (Spain). XII Seminar on: 'Gestión Pública Local: La cooperación de los gobiernos locales al desarrollo'. ('Local Public Management: Co-operation of local governments to development.') Organised by the Gijón City Council and the University of Oviedo. http://www.xixon.izquierdaxunida.com/iu.php?id_tipo_comunicado=11

16. Turin (Italy). ACEL Torino Localworld Seminar: 'La valorizzazione delle competenze locali nei programmi internazionali' ('Evaluation of local competencies in international programmes'). The Agenzia di Cooperazione degli Enti Locali (ACEL, Local Entity Co-operation Agency), created by the Province of Turin and 35 local governments of the province, provides training, transfer of knowledge and assistance to local governments in their international co-operation activities. <http://www.acel.to.it/index.php?p=nw>

19-23. Vancouver (Canada). Third World Urban Forum. Among other subjects addressed by this event that brought together more than 10,000 participants, we can mention innovation and local action in the fight against poverty, inclusion and social cohesion in cities, urban planning and citizen participation, the

development of partnerships and the exchange of experiences. Organised by UN-Habitat, Government of Canada, Globe Foundation. <http://www.wuf3-fum3.ca/>

JULY

5-7. Lyon (France). Codatu XII: 'Decentralised cooperation for urban transports: Experiencing direct cooperation between local governments worldwide' Decentralised co-operation and urban transport was a subject addressed, emphasising the need for associations between public and private sectors to improve transport systems. It was organised by CODATU (Co-operation for urban mobility in the developing world), an association that fosters the exchange of experiences regarding urban and peri-urban transport systems since 1980. <http://www.codatu.org/english/conferences/lyon06.htm>

13-14. San José (Costa Rica). XII Asamblea Plenaria de la Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas (UCCI) (12th Plenary Assembly of the Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities). www.munimadrid.es/ucci

13-15. Washington (U.S.) Sister Cities International Conference. 1.200 delegates from 39 countries gathered together to celebrate the 50th anniversary of this North American organisation. Organised by Sister Cities International. www.sister-cities.org/sci/sci-programs/Conference

14. Rome (Italy). Seminar: 'Il contributo delle autonomie locali e della società civile italiana nei rapporti con l'America Latina' (The contribution of local autonomies and the Italian civil society in relations with Latin America). The seminar analysed territorial partnerships as a type of co-operation between both regions, and the support provided to trans-frontier co-operation as a way to support local development, as well as proposals for social inclusion in the continent. Finally the relationship between local autonomy and the Italian civil society was analysed. Organi-

sed by the Centro de Studi di Politica Internazionale (CESPI, Centre for International Policy Studies) and the Istituto Italo-Latino Americano. (Italian-Latin American Institute) <http://www.cespi.it/PROG-CONVEGNI/Cespi-IILA14luglio06.pdf>

25-26. Llançà (Spain). Events on Decentralised Co-operation and Municipal Diplomacy for Peace: 'La Cooperació des d'Administracions Sotsestatal' ('Co-operation of sub-state administrations'). Organised by the Centre Català d'Anàlisi i Informació Internacional (CCAII, Catalan Centre for International Information and Analysis). www.ccaii.net/epi

25-28. Belo Horizonte (Brazil). II Forum della cooperazione decentrata

Italia-Brasile (2nd Forum of Italy-Brazil decentralised co-operation). This seminar sought to foster decentralised co-operation projects between the two countries regarding the themes of women's rights, housing policy, infancy and youth, urban mobility, management of water resources and waste. It was organised within the framework of the 100 Cities Project, the objective of which is to create a network of cities active in decentralised co-operation between Brazil and Italy, in support of the decentralisation and participatory democracy process in Brazil. www.progetto100-citta.it

27-29. Cali (Colombia). Second Latin American Congress of Local Governments and Cities: Experienciamerica (The American experience) – Transferring information to the world.' The main objective of the Congress was to identify themes that would make it possible to take municipalities out of their environment and make them aware of the world in general, in such a way that by following parameters of an international type, they would be better placed to obtain credit in the areas of co-management, production, tourism and trading. Organised by FLACMA. www.flacmacongreso.com

AUGUST

10 aug.-11 sept. Santo Andre (Brazil). 2nd Course on Regional Integration, Local Governments and Civil Society. (2º Curso sobre Integración Regional, Gobiernos Locales y Sociedad Civil.) Mercocities. mercocities@santoandre.sp.gov.br

SEPTEMBER

Sep.- Dec. On-line. On line training course: 'Especialista en Cooperación Descentralizada UE-AL'. (Specialist in EU-Latin America Decentralised Co-operation.) OCD. http://www.observ-oed.org/act_formacio.php

4-5. Sao Paulo (Brazil). Seminar: 'Las nuevas realidades y potencial de cooperación entre UE-AL' (The new realities of and potential for co-operation between the EU and Latin America). The aim of the seminar is to promote debate between the co-ordinators of the papers and prominent members of the academic and intellectual community, in order to better integrate the final product. OBREAL-EULARO –EU-Latin American Relations Observatory. <http://www.obreal.unibo.it/News.aspx?IdNews=147&IdPerson=3410&IdNewsletter=38>

6-8. Montevideo & Canelones (Uruguay). France-Southern Cone Seminar: 'Intermunicipality and decentralised co-operation.' (Seminario Francia-Cono Sur 'Intermunicipalidad y cooperación descentralizada'.) Experiences of associations between municipalities that respond to the problems of waste management, transport and local development were analysed. Montevideo Municipal Government, Canelones (Uruguay) Municipal Government, Cités Unies France, Local (France).

11-27 Sep. Paris. Intensive training course: 'L'action internationale des collectivités locales' ('The international action of local communities.'). Three modules designed for people in charge of international relations in local governments. The objectives of the mo-

dules are: acquiring knowledge on the regulatory framework and on action regarding the international relations of a local community; developing capabilities regarding planning, management and financing of an international action project; building a first network of contacts linked to decentralised co-operation. Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

14-17. Lyon (France). Congress of the International Association of Educating Cities. (Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Ciudades Educadoras.) One of the four topics addressed at the Congress on co-operation between cities, with a workshop devoted to co-operation between public services. Ciudades Educadoras. www.aice2006.lyon.fr

28-29. Perpignan (France). Seminar: 'L'évolution du champ d'action internationale des collectivités locales de 1992 à 2006' ('Evolution of the field of international action by local communities from 1992 to 2006'). In the 5th edition of the Summer University the networks of co-operation between local governments were addressed: actors and implications for co-operation. Association of people responsible for international relations and decentralised co-operation. (ARRICOD) in France. <http://arricod.free.fr/p4.htm>

OCTOBER

-3. San José (Costa Rica). Training seminar: 'Impulsar un nuevo modelo de cooperación descentralizada en Centroamérica'. ('Boosting a new model of decentralised co-operation in Central America.'). OCD. http://www.observ-oed.org/act_formacio.php

2-6. Lisbon (Portugal). 11th International Metropolis Conference (11^a Conferencia Internacional de Metrópolis.) The conference focused on the subject of migrations, and on cities as places of arrival or departure of migrants. Metrópolis. www.ceg.ul.pt/metropolis2006/index.html

4-6. San José (Costa Rica). VI CON-

FEDELCA (Central American Conference for Decentralising the State and Local Development). Decentralisation, citizen participation and local development in the region were analysed. CONFEDELCA is a space for exchange and debate, for generating proposals among different actors in Central America. www.confedelca.org

4-8. Perugia (Italy). International Conference of Local Authorities for Peace and Human Rights. Founded in 1986, the national coordination of local entities for peace and human rights brings together local Italian governments that promote peace, human rights, international solidarity and co-operation. Organised by Enti Locale Pace. <http://www.entilocalipace.it/agenda.asp>

5-6. Viedma (Argentina). 8th National Seminar of the MUNI Network (National Network of Academic Centres devoted to the Study of Management in Local Governments). Presentation of experiences and case studies on three topics - local government and public policies; management by consensus and citizenship; territory and development - in order to link the results of research with local government training and management processes. www.cedet.edu.ar/sitio/agenda/SeminarioRedMunimayo2006.pdf#search=%22Red%20Muni%22

6-7. Biarritz (France). 7^o Foro de Biarritz 'Identités, Intégrations' (Seventh Biarritz Forum: 'Identities, integrations'). This focused on the situation of relations between Europe and Latin America, the migrations, in which local governments were able to present their own views. Organised by CMEAL. www.cmeal.org

10. Paris (France). 'Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée'. ('International institutions and decentralised co-operation'). Organised by the Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

12-13. Lisbon (Portugal). Lisbon Conference on the Millennium Development Goals: '8 Ways to Change the World! The Contribu-

tion of Local and Regional Governments to the Achievement of the MDGs'. As a contribution of local governments to the MDGs, decentralised co-operation and twinning of cities was scored. CEMR - Council of European Municipalities and Regions www.ccre.org/docs/declaration_finale_omd_lisbonne_en.doc

16-20. Morón (Argentina). ILPES training courses. Mercocities Local Economic Development Thematic Unit

17-21. Turku (Finland). WHO Assembly on the European Network of 'Healthy Cities'. The following topics were addressed in its annual meeting: Progress and innovation in healthy and inclusive urban policies, especially in response to specific demands of the more vulnerable communities. The European network of healthy cities brings together more than 1200 cities in 30 countries. The WHO 'Healthy Cities' programme addresses local governments to influence urban policies that take into account inequalities in access to health and the needs of the more vulnerable groups.. www.euro.who.int/healthy-cities

18-20. La Romana (Dominican Republic). III Reunión Anual de la Organización Latinoamericana de Gobiernos Intermedios (OLAGI). (Third Annual Meeting of the Latin American Organisation of Intermediate Governments.) OLAGI was created in December 2004 by 14 countries with more than 150 representations that exercised administration at the intermediate level of government in Latin American countries. www.olagi.org/

23-26. Valparaíso (Chile). Training course: 'Normas y procedimientos para la ejecución de proyectos comunes (A y B) del programa URB-AL'. (Standard and procedures for the execution of common projects (A and B) of the URB-AL programme.) Centro de Documentación del Programa URBAL (CDPU). www.centrourbal.com

25-28. Lyon (France) International economic and social forum 'For a responsible globalisation'. One of the goals of this meeting

had to do with making cities and territories the actors of globalisation, considering territories to be a place for greater learning about co-operation between those who have a leadership role to play in the intersection of networks that spread out on a planetary scale. Organised by Ville de Lyon, Grand Lyon, Rhône Alpes. www.forum-lyon.com

26-27. Montevideo (Uruguay). 1^o Foro Iberoamericano de Gobiernos Locales. (First Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments.) The theme of migrations was central to this meeting in which the OCD participated by presenting the first yearbook on decentralised co-operation. Organised by the Barcelona City Council, Montevideo Municipal Government, the Santa Tecla City Council, UCCI. www.foroiberoamericanolocal.org

31. Marrakech (Marruecos). UCLG World Council. www.cities-localgovernments.org

NOVEMBER

9-10. Santa Lucía de Tirajana (Spain). Training actions: 'La evolución de la cooperación internacional de los entes locales. Code-sarrollo.' ('The evolution of international co-operation of local entities. Co-development') FEMP. http://www.femp.es/index.php/femp/formaci_n/acciones_formativas/cooperaci_n_internacional

17. Valencia (Spain). IV Jornadas de Municipalistas por la Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo: 'La gestión de la cooperación, la homologación de bases y procedimientos'. (Fourth Municipalist Events for International Co-operation for Development: 'Management of co-operation, homologation of bases and procedures. There was debate on all those aspects that may improve the quality and transparency of the way local entities manage resources designed for co-operation, as well the way they exchange experiences. Organised by Municipalistas por la Solidaridad y el Fortalecimiento Institucional (MUSOL). <http://www.musol.org/index2.php>



22-23. Paris (France). Colloquium: 'La coopération décentralisée change-t-elle de sens?' ('Does decentralised co-operation change direction?'). The seminar convened around 200 participants, theoreticians and practicing stakeholders. Organised by Cités Unies France and Centre de Recherches Internationales (CRIS) of the Sorbonne University, Paris. Paris. www.cites-unies-france.org

22-25. Manchester (United Kingdom). Twenty-first Annual General Assembly of Eurocities. 'Knowledge Cities: Villes du Futur'. The debate focused on the opportunities provided by the knowledge economy and how European cities can take advantage of this to face problems such as competitiveness, durability and social inclusion. Eurocities, since 1986, brings together the main European cities in a platform for the exchange of experiences and a joint search for innovative solutions. <http://www.eurocities.org>

24. Paris. Training event: 'Les institutions internationales et la coopération décentralisée' ('International institutions and decentralised co-operation'). Agence COOP DEC Conseil. www.coopdec.org

29 Nov.-3 Dec. Morón (Argentina). XII Cumbre de la Red Mercociudades. (Twelfth Summit of the Mercocities Network). This event brought together around 500 municipal governors, mayors and representatives of close to 200 cities of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Venezuela, to evaluate what had been done during the year 2006 and project the work for the next year. Mercocities is the main network of municipalities of the Mercosur founded in 1995 with the aim of fostering participation by municipalities in the regional integration process, promoting the creation of an institutional area for the cities within the MERCOSUR and developing exchange and horizontal co-operation among the municipalities of the region. www.mercociudades.org

30 Nov.-1 Dec. Córdoba (Spain). II Foro

Andalucía Solidaria. (Second Andalusia Solidarity Forum). The purpose of this forum was to consolidate the event (space) for multidisciplinary discussion which has been held biannually since its first edition in 2004, to deal with the problems, guidelines and characteristics of Andalusian co-operation with development. Organised by the Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (Fondo Andaluz de Municipios para la Solidaridad Internacional) (FAMSI). http://www.andaluciasolidaria.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=45&Itemid=118

DECEMBER

4. Bonn (Germany). International Workshop: 'Europe-Latin America Co-operation: Concepts, actors, dynamics'. A reflection was undertaken on the challenges of co-operation in a post-developmental agenda; co-operation and gender; democracy and multi-culturalism; the environment and challenges to the concept of national sovereignty. Organised by EULARO and the Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE, Germany). <http://www.obreal.unibo.it/News.aspx?Action=Data&IdNews=146>

7-8. Oxford (United Kingdom). Fourth Annual Meeting on 'Democracy and the Fight Against Inequality'. REDGOB & BID. http://ocaribe.org/red/info_02.htm

3. Some reflections on the Agenda

The above data establishes that the decentralised co-operation theme was clearly installed in the international agenda both in Europe and in Latin America in the year 2006, with a total of almost 60 meetings recorded. The events are distributed quite equally between the American continent (27) and Europe (30). Of the countries with

the greatest activity, Spain, France and Italy stand out in Europe and Uruguay, Mexico and Brazil in Latin America. Many of these meetings were held for the first time while others, already established, were repeated, thus making their position secure in the international co-operation agenda as spaces for meetings and debate.

Besides events expressly devoted to decentralised co-operation among local governments of Europe and Latin America, the subject was addressed in events of a more general nature, where decentralised co-operation emerges as a new dimension of debates. For example, one of the themes of the International Economic and Social Forum on 'For a responsible globalisation,' that took place in Lyon (October), was 'Cities and territories – actors of globalisation.' Moreover, the Seventh Forum of Biarritz (October), devoted to relations between Europe and Latin America, included a master's conference on the role of mayors in Europe and Latin America. The final statement of the annual meeting of the World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty (WACAP), (March) also highlighted the important role played by co-operation between the territories in the fight against poverty, and put forth a series of demands addressed to central governments for the latter to facilitate the development of such policies. Finally, the World Urban Forum (June) is worthy of mention: it addressed, among other subjects, innovation and local action in the fight against poverty, inclusion and social cohesion in cities, urban planning and citizen participation, the development of partnerships and the exchange of experiences.

In Europe, the 21st General Assembly of Eurocities (November), that brought together the main cities of the continent, as well as the 23rd General Assembly of the Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe (May) reflect the long history of

interrelations between cities and territorial governments in this region. On the other hand, the Second Meeting of People Responsible for International Relations in Europe (March) demonstrates the most recent trend that makes this interrelation appear to represent a broader strategy for the internationalisation of these local actors. This Meeting brought together more than 380 professionals responsible for the international relations of territorial governments all over Europe, and shows, in particular, the increasing participation of local governments of the new European states. The main concern of these participants is the need to provide guidance for the external action of local governments over and beyond the mere search for European grants.

In Latin America, the First Annual Conference of the Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation was held in Montevideo (March), at which prominent experts and local authorities of Europe and Latin America were present and debated on the subject of local decentralised co-operation both on the theoretical plane, and from their own practice. The sixth edition of CONFEDLCA was held in Central America in October and confirmed its nature as a space to boost decentralised co-operation for local governments in the region. The meetings of local governments that are members of the Mercocities Network have also been incorporating the subject of local decentralised co-operation as an important factor for the promotion of local development. At its twelfth Summit, that was held in the Argentine city of Morón (29 November to 1 December), representatives of more than 160 cities of the region were present, among which Venezuelan cities were to be found for the first time, following the recent incorporation of Venezuela to MERCOSUR. Also increasingly important were the numerous meetings of local authorities of the continent, such

as the Twenty-first Meeting of Mayors of Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean (January), the Congress of the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations (FLACMA) that met in the city of Quito, Ecuador, in April and again in June in the city of Cali (Colombia). Finally, the first Ibero-American Forum of Local Governments met in 2006 within the framework of the Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government, with the purpose of supporting and complementing that Summit from a local vantage point. These meetings have allowed links to be tightened between local governments, both North-South and South-South, and ideas and experiences to be disseminated and exchanged regarding decentralised co-operation.

It is also worth mentioning some national meetings organised to co-ordinate the external action of local governments. Seminars were organised in Mexico, Chile and Uruguay with the purpose of building up the awareness of local governments regarding the challenges posed by internationalization of cities and the types of access to decentralised co-operation. In these three countries the role of central government institutions is noteworthy, such as ministries of foreign affairs or planning, that have organised these seminars on the basis of their own experience in international co-operation and together with the presence of local European governments, or co-operation agencies. Moreover, bi-national meetings stand out, such as the French-Brazilian decentralised co-operation meeting, or meetings between Italian and Chilean regions. Among the most active countries the strong leadership role of Brazil must be recognized, which country organised bi-national meetings with France and Italy.

Some preferences may also be detected by countries regarding specific types of decentralised co-operation on which atten-

tion is focused. Thus it can be noticed that in Chile trans-frontier and triangular co-operation are assigned priority, while Mexico, through its foreign office, is promoting twinning. In the case of France, co-operation is given priority regarding types of municipal and territorial management, such as inter-municipality, and in Italy, the Centre for International Policy Studies (CESPI) in the RISTIS project prioritises regional integration and trans-frontier co-operation.

A trend is also established towards thematic focusing of the seminars in which the subject of decentralised co-operation is dealt with, key themes of the meetings in the year 2006 being transport, social cohesion and water. This would seem to indicate that decentralised co-operation is not addressed only as a practice, but also as one more type of co-operation at the service of the solution of specific problems.

The need for training and skills development is a constant for the local governments that participate in the decentralised co-operation meetings. This applies to the smallest local governments in particular, which lack knowledge on possible sources of financing and the way to undertake decentralised co-operation projects.

Twenty-six instances of decentralised cooperation training were detected during the year 2006, but it is to be expected that a similar amount must have escaped our attention. Among the more active countries in terms of training opportunities for decentralised co-operation, France, Italy and Spain show up in Europe. Mexico and Chile in Latin America developed training programmes this year addressed to local government officials, with the purpose of stimulating the establishment of international linkages and local project planning, with input from decentralised co-operation. In the organisation of these events the importance of interrelationships between the different national go-

vernment agencies is to be noted – as in the case of Chile, where a course was provided jointly by the Chilean Co-operation Agency, Subdere (the Assistant Secretary for Regional Development's Office) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – or among these and other actors, such as academia in the case of Mexico.

The training instances that took place during 2006 were aimed at improving the co-ordination of international co-operation activities of local entities, boosting direct co-operation between them, and familiarizing local technicians and elected parties in co-operation policies for development connected with migratory movements. Also sought was the optimisation of resources through the lines of international co-operation of municipalities. The public for these courses and workshops are mostly local government and central government officials.

The response for these training courses offered by the Observatory on Decentralised Co-operation in 2006 clearly reflected the present interest, in Latin America in particular, in accumulating knowledge and practical tools on this type of co-operation. Both for the attendance of training workshop on decentralised co-operation organised within the framework of VII CONFEDELCA (October), and for the first edition of the on-line training course of OCD (October 06-January 07) registration far exceeded expectations as could already be seen at the time of pre-registration.

4. Sources and information resources

We end this article with some references to bibliographic and electronic materials produced in 2006 that provide an analysis, reflection, data and new knowledge on decentralised co-operation.

4.1. Bibliographic materials

The electronic magazine PARINAS, "Revista de Cooperación Descentralizada, Internacionalización de las Regiones y Paradiplomacia". Creada por el Instituto de Estudios Internacionales (INTE) de la Universidad Arturo Prat, a petición de la Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Regional (SUBDERE). <http://www.inteunap.cl/parinas2006/>

- Boletín de asuntos internacionales de los gobiernos locales. Publicado por el Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de México. Proporciona informaciones sobre la acción exterior de los gobiernos locales. <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/enlacepolitico/images/boletin5.htm>

- Boletín Electrónico del Observatorio de Cooperación Descentralizada UE-AL. <http://www.observ-oed.org/novetats.php>

- Revista Observa del Observatorio de Cooperación Descentralizada UE-AL. <http://www.observ-oed.org>

- Anuario de la Cooperación Descentralizada Unión Europa-América Latina 2005. Publicado por el Observatorio de Cooperación Descentralizada Unión Europea-América Latina. Montevideo, 2006.

- Guide de la Coopération Décentralisée. Echanges et partenariats internationaux des collectivités territoriales. Publicado por la Commission Nationale de la Coopération Décentralisée (Comisión Nacional de la Cooperación Descentralizada) del Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de Francia. Paris, 2006, segunda edición.

- Pierre Laye. La coopération décentralisée des collectivités territoriales. Publicado por Territorial en la colección Dossiers d'Experts, número 454, octubre 2005, ISBN: 2-84130-579-1; 200 págs.

- Guía Práctica de Normas y procedimientos para la Ejecución de Proyectos Comunes (A y B) del Programa URB-AL. Pu-

blicado por CIDOB. Disponible en <http://centrourbal.com/portal/index.php?id=162>

4.2. Portals on decentralised co-operation

All portals included in this section have been created or up-dated during the year 2006. Faced with the diversity and mobility of data available on the web, this presentation does not presume to be exhaustive.

- Portal of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Regional Development of Chile (Subdere) devoted to promoting co-operation between Chilean regions and the world and that proposes an integral system for managing the external action of local governments. The Integrated System is a common space for institutional collaboration in public services, oriented towards fostering exchange between the regions of Chile and of other countries on the following subjects: scientific-technological, development and territorial management, cultural development, political-institutional and others that may signify an input to territorial development <http://www.cooperaciondescentralizada.gov.cl/1511/channel.html>

- Portal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mexico. With linkages to the main portals devoted to the external action of local governments. Also publish Boletín de asuntos internacionales de los gobiernos locales (see above). <http://portal.sre.gob.mx/enlacepolitico>

- The objective of the URB-AL Programme Documentation Centre (CDPU) is to recover, centralise, systematise and disseminate all common projects developed in the networks of the European URB-AL programme of co-operation with Latin America. It has available, accessible by means of a multivariable search engine, an excellent data base on good practices in the solution of common urban problems on social cohesion,

urban configuration, local development, tourism, natural resources, waste, governance, safety, information society, etc. <http://www.centrourbal.com/>

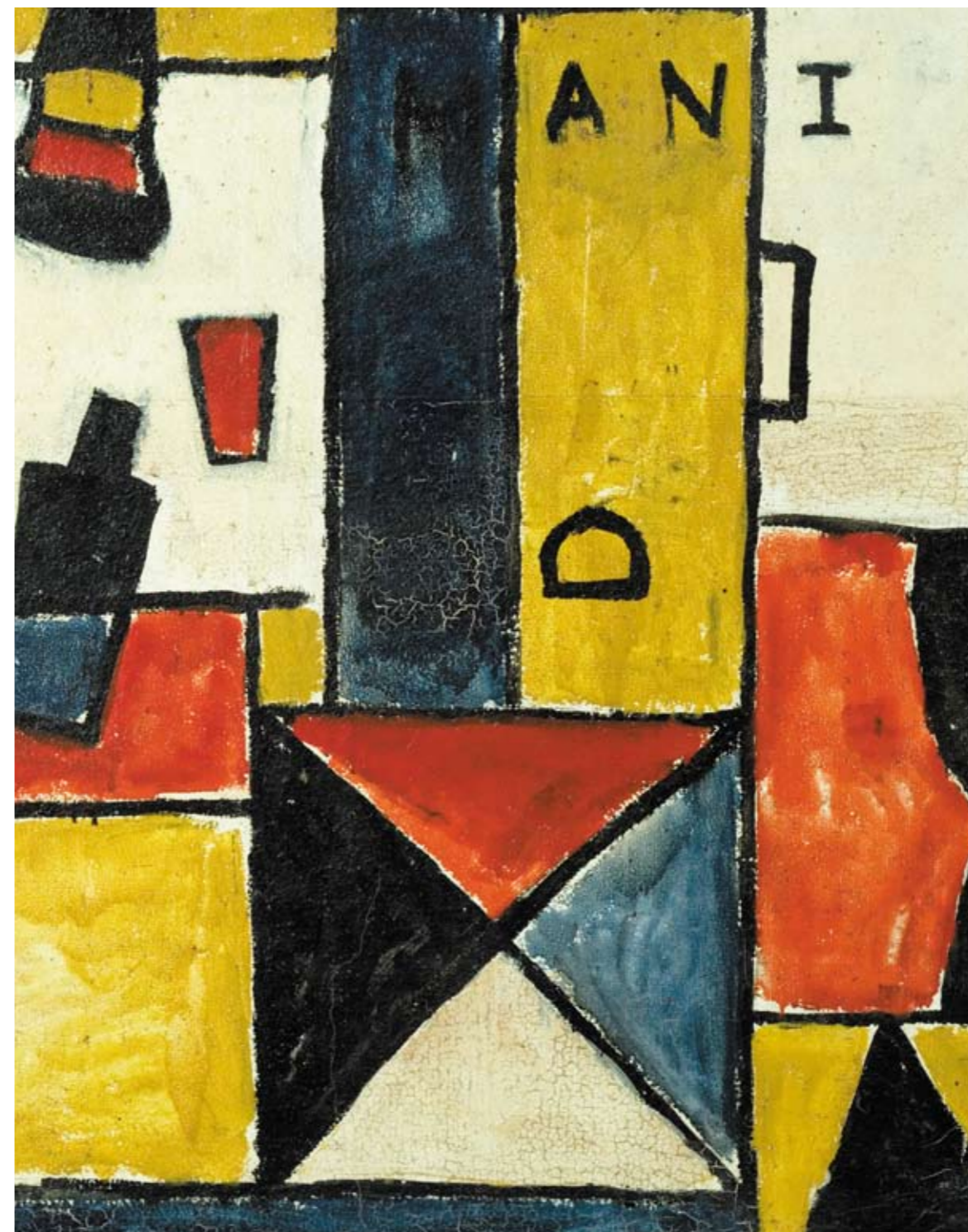
- AFCCRE, web site of the French section of the Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe. What stands out in particular is a Yearbook showing the twinning of local governments. www.afccre.org

- Italian site devoted to international co-operation focusing especially on decentralised co-operation. <http://piazzadellacooperazione.oics.it/>

- The Centre for Studies, Training and Information on Latin America-European Co-operation (CEFICALE) is a non-profit association created in response to the interest awakened in 2005 by the publication of the Guide on co-operation between Latin America and the European Union. The objective of CEFICALE is to encourage the development of relations between Europe and Latin America. It is addressed mainly to teaching institutions in both continents. <http://www.ceficale.org/>

- The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) is an initiative in which 15 member states of the EU and two city networks take part. The main objective of this network is to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences related to the urban environment. It has a library of resources on urban policy (economics, employment, environment, transport, inclusion and social integration, etc.) <http://www.eukn.org/espana/>

- The Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity (FAMSI) has a new website where current facts can be found, publications, articles and interviews, projects and campaigns carried out by Andalusian municipalities. It has one page of links to social organisations that collaborate with FAMSI, social research centres, NGOs, other co-operation funds and Spanish, European and international organisations. www.andaluciasolidaria.org



Social Cohesion and Poverty Reduction

Social cohesion represents a core dimension in the strategic association between the European Union and Latin America, which requires experiences to be exchanged between the two regions within a multi-sectorial, participative and decentralized focus, with the integration of the different government levels. Although in general instruments used for fighting inequalities and social exclusion are found at national level, every day local and regional governments are the ones facing problems connected to these issues. In spite of their budget limitations and sometimes scarcely consolidated institutional capacities, decentralization processes force local authorities to assume an increasingly major role in the fight for social cohesion.

In the face of this reality, one of the Observatory's core objectives is linked to accurately defining and disseminating the role which decentralised cooperation between local and regional European governments might have in order to strengthen these actors' capacities for promoting social cohesion through local public policies. Therefore, this section of the Yearbook offers information and analysis on the tools at government level which are closest to the people, in order to promote social cohesion and the ways in which decentralised cooperation helps strengthen these tools. A key aspect of social cohesion for the Observatory is gender equality, which is understood as a fundamental right for all people and a key value for democracy at local level, which not only must be acknowledged by the law but must be effectively exercised in all the areas of life, not only political and economic, but social and cultural as well.

The first article in this section analyses the new challenges presented by the current "social issue" –particularly those concerning migration and labour market transformations- and the capacities of sub-national Latin American governments for facing the same through promotion of local social cohesion policies. It then examines the strategic role of decentralised cooperation for opening areas allowing local governments to reflect on and identify strategies for reverting socio-economic recession processes within their territories by means of encouraging the development of social programmes based on partnership and exchange of experiences, which aids the redesigning of social behaviour of local governments around new areas.

This section then reproduces the "European Charter for Equality of Men and Women in Local Life" prepared by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in May of the current year. This document is based on the idea that European local and regional governments must play an essential role in the application of women's and men's right to equality, in all areas falling under their responsibility. This charter therefore represents an important statement of the collective commitment made by European territorial governments towards an unavoidable target which aids social cohesion, the deepening of democracy and the possibility of sustainable development.

Lastly, a brief summary of three decentralised cooperation EU-Latin American experiences as regard social cohesion and gender equality is offered.

Introduction





Decentralised Cooperation Policies and Programmes on Social Cohesion

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This article aims at exploring the challenges that local and regional European and Latin American governments face due to the serious social and urban problems deriving from the main features of the current “social issue”, in particular international migration and transformations in the labour market.. The relevance of the concept of social cohesion behind the social policies promoted by decentralised cooperation between these two regions is assessed and the differential capacities of these two regions’ local governments for promoting such policies are analysed. Likewise, an approach to the strategic role played by decentralised cooperation is presented, since it boosts social projects and programmes at local level, which helps to redesign social actions of local governments in new areas such as overcoming poverty, inequality and exclusion, the new local governance and the promotion of citizen participation. Finally, some observations and suggestions are offered in order to strengthen inter-regional decentralised relationships as regards social policies.

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1. Introduction ¹

During recent years great efforts have been made as regards decentralised cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Latin America in order to boost programmes and projects aimed at facing poverty, inequality and social exclusion so as to produce more social cohesion. Within the deep changes we may note in the economic and social life of both regions, governments of the twenty-first century cities are currently sharing experiences, taking part in inter-regional networks for knowledge transfers, deepening debates and proposals in international meetings and even jointly designing innovative and democratic social policies which allow for social cohesion to be restored and/or strengthened in local societies.

In this article the main features of the so called “social issue” are shown, among which two stand out: the intense international migration processes and the deep transformations observed in the labour market such as: unemployment, job instability and informal trade. In view of the effects caused by these processes the concept of social cohesion becomes more significant if, added to social policies which promote decentralised cooperation between local and regional governments of Europe and Latin America. The differential capacities of local governments for promoting social cohesion in public policies are also analysed. Within this framework the strategic role of decentralised cooperation for encouraging the creation and development of social projects and programmes in local environment is in-

troduced, which aids in the redesign of the social actions of local governments in new areas such as: overcoming poverty, inequality and exclusion, the new local governance and the promotion of citizen participation. Finally, a set of observations and suggestions for strengthening inter-regional relationships connected to social policies in the local environment is also presented.

2. The Social Issue and the Twenty-first Century Cities

Within the context of economic globalization, the application of neo-liberal policies, the weakening of the blue-collar workers and the restructuring of the welfare systems, the social issue in twenty-first century cities is marked by a set of economic, social and institutional processes, among which the most relevant for this paper’s aims are: 1) immigration and 2) the prevailing conditions in the international labour market: unemployment, low wages and informal trade.

2.1. Immigration

At the beginning of the Twenty-first Century the extent and characteristics of international migrations are factors affecting social cohesion, in view of the increased demand for new jobs and a whole set of public services (health care, education, housing) in the cities taking in this population. When faced with such demands local governments must design and implement new social policies in order to achieve more social cohesion in their cities, and undoubtedly this issue shall be one of the main areas around which decentralised cooperation in coming years shall revolve.

¹ | The authors would like to thank Oscar Torres and Cecilia Nieto for their support in the compilation and analysis of the information contained in this paper.



The American continent is undergoing intense migratory processes and the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC 2004) estimated that there are 15 million Latin American immigrants in the United States (USA), most of them Mexican and Central American, which amounts to half the total number of immigrants in the USA. These immigrants, who are mainly men, are in a situation of great personal instability and most of them lack documentation, which makes them illegal aliens and unable to access the labour market, therefore forcing them to accept low paid jobs and a set of personally unsafe situations in exchange for an income to guarantee their survival which allows them to send money to their families residing in their countries of origin. We must also point out that the strong presence of Latin Americans, mainly Mexicans, in US cities has added new traditions, values and cultural practices to this country's society

On the other hand, this Latin American immigration, unlike the one which took place in previous decades caused by political factors, is now caused mainly economic and is moving not only to the North and even to Europe, but to countries in the same region as well. Some Latin American countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Mexico and Venezuela have the largest number of immigrants coming in general from bordering or nearby countries. These workers must also accept low paid jobs and an face extremely difficult situations since besides the personal risk they assume when migrating in illegal conditions and without the required documentations there are adverse effects caused by the family's disintegration, increased responsibility for women who become heads of the family and lack of a father figure which is vital for the education of children and young people. Nevertheless, we must point

out that a feature of the most recent migration from Latin America to Europe is the increased number of women who leave their country of origin in the search for a job or solve families splitting up.²

In the case of EU countries, migratory movements due to economic factors are associated to countries such as Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. Domestic migration from counties within the community itself, is added to the above. Such is the case of Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland, whose citizens migrate to Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and the United Kingdom, since these countries have more economic development and/or better employment opportunities, although it has been stated that as from the nineties such process has been more moderate than in previous decades (Albuquerque, 1993). There is also intense migration of caused by political factors, due to conflicts which led to the disintegration of some national states, such as the former Yugoslavia, whose dissolution gave rise to an armed conflict in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The political and economic conditions of the last decades of the Twentieth Century in Latin America led to migration becoming more intense, in particular migration to Spain, and in a lesser extent to Italy. Undoubtedly, one of the main problems these immigrants face is learning another language and integrating into another culture and at the same time trying to preserve their own identity. In many cases they are descendants of immigrants who arrived massively in America at different times during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which allows them to obtain European citizenship and the possibility of moving through the European Union.

For the authorities of cities receiving these immigrants, from the social responsibility

viewpoint their presence of these immigrants is indeed a problem, since not only the demand for basic goods and services is increased but their multicultural origin thereof sets new challenges for social coexistence. In order to face this situation local governments design new public policies, particularly social policies so that cities may comply with their duty of being a platform for social and territorial integration (among others, see Cachón 2004).

2.2. The Crisis of the Blue-Collar Workers: Unemployment, Job Instability and Urban Poverty

Within the framework of globalization, the application of neo-liberal policies and the weakening of trade unions European and Latin American societies face deep changes. One of them is the crisis of the blue-collar workers and the different types of social welfare systems which were established after the war (Castel 1997). Thus, job instability and informality are prevailing trends in the urban labour market, as well as high unemployment rates. Therefore, one of the main consequences of these structural transformations is the increase of urban poverty and the appearance of new forms of social exclusion mainly affecting women and young people in our cities.

During the first years of the Twenty-first Century the regional unemployment rate was between 8% and 9%, but in twenty-five regions it amounted to 18%, it was twofold. If we consider gender we may note that the unemployment rate for women is higher than for men in two thirds of the regions, although there are great disparities (2004 European Union Newsletter 2004). On the other hand, in the case of European cities this employment situation affects the lifestyle of citizens since it prevents the proper operation of the mechanisms of unemployment insurance, which was originally designed for ex-

ceptional unemployment situations and provided temporarily unemployed workers with minimum income that guarantees survival of the worker and his or her family. These economic, social and demographic phenomena gave rise to crises in different social welfare systems which were established in Europe after the war, which were not fully developed in Latin America making the situation more critical there.

In the case of Latin America, estimates state that in the year 2004 a total of 9.4 million women in urban areas were unemployed (UN 2006). This situation also affects young people who currently experience more difficulties than in the past for gaining access to a remunerated activity and/or extending their stay in the educational system. The unemployment rate among young people in the region amounts to 15.7%, which is double that for adults, and also, among young people the unemployment rate for women is higher than for men by more than 50%. In 2002 it was estimated that a third of urban young people were poor (ECLAC 2004). In this sense, although the gender perspective which defends women's equality rights is now an incorporated feature in social policies, in the case of young people, as stated below, it was in 2006 when their issue began to be considered as a priority for social policies to be developed within the framework of decentralised cooperation.

Undoubtedly, the job instability prevailing in the urban labour market and the exclusion practices in both regions are the main cause of urban poverty. Particularly in Latin American cities the spatial expression of such processes is the massive existence of informal activities in city streets, creating the need for local governments to act in order to try and solve the increasing strain between the right to work and the right to the city that these processes produce. Pursuant to ECLAC (2004), in the year 2002, from a total of 221

² | *The United Nations (UN 2006) has made an estimate according to which from the 180 million immigrants in the world, 50% are women; in Latin America, according to ECLAC, three quarters of the immigrant women in the area are mostly young women in employment age, many of them family heads, whose final destinations are the USA, Spain, Japan, Canada and the United Kingdom.*

million poor persons, 66% lived in cities. This situation has led to the statement that an urbanization of poverty is taking place in the region. Nevertheless, the same source states that between 2003 and 2006 Latin America “has shown a significant economic and social performance”. This period has been the best in 25 years in terms of progress as regards poverty reduction, improvements in income distribution in some countries, decrease of unemployment and increase in the number of employment positions” (ECLAC 2006). But both in Latin American and European cities different forms of social exclusion may be perceived, such as discriminatory practices due to gender or ethnic reasons affecting different social groups, as well as obstacles for gaining access to justice, loans, basic services or a housing which constitute sources of social inequality. This has led the UN to state in recent years that the world is trapped within the inequality dilemma, since although economic growth is taking place in many regions, it is more unequal than ten years ago. Inequality is widely and diversely evidenced by economic and social differences existing between the countryside and the cities, between rich and poor regions, between the opulent lifestyles enjoyed by some sectors of the population and the destitution of most. In Latin America, the most unequal region in the world, certain social communities –natives, women family heads, senior citizens, disabled persons, young people from popular classes- pile up a set of economic, social and institutional disadvantages.

All these processes rupture the social fabric and cause negative effects on social cohesion. Thus, while in European cities it is accepted that there is certain social upheaval, in Latin American cities the situation is so serious that it is prone to insecurity and criminality, reaching previously unknown levels. Due to this, in spite of the type of problems which are linked to poverty, exclusion and in-

equality in the cities may be similar in Latin America and Europe, the intensity and extent of these processes in Latin America is much deeper and is one of the main challenges and focuses which have been assumed by decentralised cooperation, in order to work together and achieve more social cohesion.

3. Social Cohesion within the Decentralised Cooperation Agenda

3.1. The European Union's Strategies and Instruments of the EU

Since poverty, exclusion and inequality are complex processes which produce negative effects on society, provoking situations of extreme fragmentation and/or segmentation, social actions and policies aim at creating more equal conditions and thus achieve fairer societies, with the necessary mechanisms for obtaining more social cohesion. In this sense, social cohesion which has been included in the European Union's policies for several decades, has been revised by the **European Council of Lisbon**, which took place in the year 2000, where a global strategy for fighting social exclusion and poverty, for reducing the deep economic and social inequalities existing in the member states and/or regions was established. Such strategy defined three areas for action: creation of stable and high quality jobs, modernization of economic structures and reinforcement of social cohesion.

Currently, social cohesion is a regional policy aimed at reducing the differences between the development levels of the various regions and the backwardness of the less favoured regions of the EU. The main instruments used for achieving the same are the so called **Structural Funds**³, and the **Cohesion Fund**⁴, which are financial solidarity

instruments playing an important redistribution role and cause significant impact in competitiveness of the regions, assisting in the improvement of its citizens' lifestyles.

3.2. Original Proposals of Decentralised Cooperation

Within the field of Decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America social cohesion has been a concern during the last decades and as from 1995 the Commission disseminated a set of actions for strengthening such cooperation relationships in order to fight against poverty and social exclusion. Four years later, during the **Rio de Janeiro Summit**, the Commission stated its concern regarding the prevailing situation in Latin America, which is considered the most unequal region in the world, and pointed out the need for actions for counteracting this situation. But it was during the **Inter-Ministerial Institutionalized Meeting between the Río Group and the EU** held in March 2003 that the economic, political and social limitations which cause the destitution and social exclusion conditions prevailing in both regions were exposed.⁵

A shared diagnosis by both regions is included in the **Guadalajara Summit Declaration (Mexico)**, May 2004, where social cohesion became one of the priority issues since it is deemed that poverty, exclusion and inequality are an insult against human

dignity which weaken democracy and threaten peace and stability. This declaration states the need for measures to be taken as regards xenophobia and discrimination, especially those due to gender, race or beliefs, fighting against all types of violence, especially violence against women and within families, and for respect for cultural diversity to be guaranteed. Both regions also coincided in stating that such common concern should be turned into specific commitments by designing policies enabling poverty, exclusion and inequality to be fought in an efficient manner.

Areas included within these decentralised cooperation policies and programmes for more social cohesion to be achieved are: education, nutrition, health, housing, fresh drinking water, sewage systems, infrastructure development, intensive and decent employment. At the same time, a set of instruments which must be activated in order to achieve more social cohesion are identified: increase of public investment, development of innovative multilateral financial mechanisms, adequate level of public expenditure for social sectors, creation of a basic infrastructure, national solidarity funds, better access to social services and other activities which benefit the poor and marginal groups, avoiding excessive dependence on external financing for such policies. Likewise, economic policies are needed which encourage investment and a better distribution of income in order to reduce the existing gaps of inequality and lack of fairness, as well as fiscal policies enabling a better distribution of riches

³ | *The Structural Funds are: European Fund for Regional Development (ERDF), European Social Fund (ESF), European Fund for Agricultural Guarantee and Orientation – Orientation Section (EAGGF) – and the Financial Instrument for Fishing Orientation (FIPO). The structural funds catering for the social cohesion policy aim at the development and structural adjustment of the less developed regions (below 75% of the average per capita income for the EU). Almost 70% of the funds are allocated to this purpose. The first two have as explicit objective the economic and social reconversion of the areas with structural handicaps, while the European Social Fund aims at adapting and modernising education, training and employment policies and systems.*

⁴ | *The Social Cohesion Fund is targeted for those member States which have a per capita GNP lower than 90% of the community average. It concentrates its actions in environmental and common interest projects in the field of transport infrastructure.*

⁵ | *See the speech given by Commissioner Patten in Vouliagmeni, on March 28, 2003.*

and which guarantee adequate levels of social expenditure.

During the **Guadalajara Summit, Mexico, 2004**, social cohesion was declared to be a shared objective and a fundamental element in the relationships between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean (LACA) and the EUROsociAL Programme was created with the aim of promoting exchange of experiences, specialized knowledge and good practices in the social field between both regions, in particular in the education and health sectors, which are considered as essential for increasing social cohesion. A call was also made to the European Commission, the Inter American Development Bank, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the United Nations Programme for Development, the International Monetary Fund, the European Investment Bank and the World Bank for assistance so that these aims could be met.

3.3. New Proposals on Social Cohesion (2006)

3.3.1. The High Level Summit of Brussels

On March 27 and 28, 2006, following the European Union's initiative, a **High Level Conference** was held in Brussels on the fight against social inequalities, poverty and exclusion, in which not only members of the Commission and ministers from different countries from both continents took part, but also representatives of civil society, businessmen, trade unions, social organizations and universities. On this occasion, Vladimir Spidia, a Commissioner from the European Union in charge of employment issues, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities stated as follows: "No European or Latin American country may face by itself all the challenges posed by globalization, sustainable development and social cohesion. We must find original regional coopera-

tion formulas entailing collective support to the amendments, respecting the diversity of the countries. Latin America is taking the first steps in this direction and the EU may contribute its experience, -which has already been delayed- based on an integrated strategy aimed at growth and employment, as well as diverse instruments, from the definition of fundamental rights to an ambitious cohesion policy."

It was stated that the objective of such integrated policies should be equal opportunities, universal access to education and health care and promoting decent employment. They should also aim at eliminating discrimination and poverty. Governmental actions should be accompanied by a more extensive participation of all the economic, social and civil society stakeholders in order to build "a modern governance, capable of creating shared consensus as regards the necessary reforms for promoting sustainable development". The proposed strategic intervention lines are: 1) respect for fundamental rights and promotion of equality and social inclusion, 2) development of human resources, 3) productive employment and decent jobs, 4) regional integration and its financial instruments and encouragement of social dialogue.

It is also worth mentioning that during the meeting in Brussels in 2006, in acknowledgement of these issues, the European Employment, Social Affairs and Equality of Opportunities Commission proposed the creation of a **Social Cohesion Forum** as an excellent place where to address the major issues of social and human development, where public stakeholders and authorities, the civil society, the private sector and international, European and Latin American organizations would meet.

3.3.2. The Annual Conference on decentralised Cooperation EU-Latin America, Montevideo, Uruguay

From March 28 to March 30, 2006 the **First Annual Conference of the decentra-**

lised Cooperation Observatory was held in the City of Montevideo. In their final declaration the participants agreed to submit a set of recommendations before the Summit of Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, which was held in Vienna, on May 12, 2006, among which are those concerning social cohesion policies. The third item of the Declaration states that "during the last years several decentralised cooperation programmes, projects and actions between local entities from the European Union and Latin America -promoted by local institutions such as the European Commission itself- have made important contributions to urban development. We highlight the importance of continuing to support this kind of initiative, guiding the actions in particular towards reinforcement of the actions carried out by local governments within the scope of social cohesion, democratic governance and regional integration".

Likewise, the issues of poverty, inequality and social exclusion are considered as the most urgent issues to be faced by local and regional governments and it has been stated that initiatives aiming at European and Latin American local and regional governments play a major role in the promotion of social cohesion, and try to achieve a direct impact in Latin America. It is of particular relevance to promote those policies which aim at the integration of immigrants and promotion of equal opportunities between men and women, reinforcing the gender perspective in the various local public policies and in the promotion of women's active citizenship.

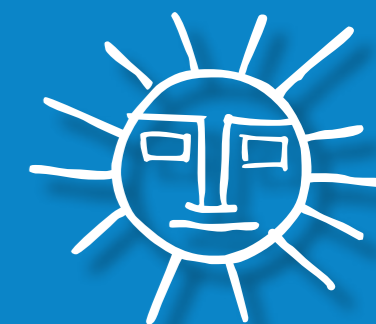
Such prior international debates contributed to the development of the dialogue at a the IV Summit Meeting in Vienna, Austria, 2006 during which the issues of poverty, exclusion and inequality were analyzed in depth and proposals were

made in order to achieve more social cohesion within the framework of cooperation.

3.3.3. The European Union-Latin America and Caribbean Summit, Vienna

In May 2006, during the **IV European Union -Latin America and Caribbean Summit** which took place in Vienna, for the purpose of facing poverty, inequality and social exclusion was reasserted, in order to achieve more integrated societies with more social cohesion; social diagnosis was deepened and new strategies as regards public policies were defined: encouraging the social responsibility of companies, boosting social dialogue and the participation of the civil society, as well as the respect for ethnical diversity.

In the Declaration of Vienna made on May 12, 2006 the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion of equitable and sustained growth, in order to create more and better jobs and fight poverty, inequality and social exclusion, and they likewise acknowledged the need to promote responsible public policies -fiscal and social protection policies- leading to a better distribution of wealth and of the benefits of economic growth. Likewise, the creation of decent jobs is regarded as a key element for sustaining economic and social development, special attention being paid to the issue of employment for young people, through -inter alia- the creation of technical capacities by means of education and professional training policies. Among the tools they mention the need for adopting general and integrated strategies and public policies for guaranteeing equality of opportunities and better life and working conditions for everyone, as well as better access to education, health care and employment, integrating the gender perspective therein and priority being



granted to the most vulnerable population groups, including the disabled. On the other hand, they acknowledged the need for creating specific public policies for protecting children and young people in order to prevent the spreading of poverty.

But as well as reaffirming the government's commitment, the importance of encouraging the **social responsibility of companies, stimulating social dialogue and the participation of all the relevant interlocutors** is encouraged, **including the civil society, as well as respect for ethnic diversity, in order to build more cohesive societies**. Within the context, the exchange of experiences between European and Latin American countries and regions constitute valuable opportunities in the search for social cohesion policies for the social upheaval typical of Twenty-first Century cities which serve to overcome.

4. Institutional Capacities of Local Governments

Faced with these difficult economic and social situations we must ask ourselves what the role of local (municipal) governments is as regards urban social policies at the beginning of the twenty-first century, so as to achieve more equitable and inclusive societies with authentic social cohesion. This is undoubtedly a hard question due to the different situations prevailing in European and Latin American cities. In Latin America, social policies have been generally concentrated in central and/or state (provincial) governments and only recently they began to be delegated in some countries, where authority and resources were granted for the development of public actions for the local government. Conversely, Europe has a tradition of social action carried out by local governments, in particular those of cities.

4.1. Differential Institutional Capacities

There exists a certain consensus as regards the idea that local governments of twenty-first century cities must perform a set of duties with different scopes, among which the most important ones are:

a) Economic duties: promoting the development of sustainable economic development, creating suitable conditions for attracting investment and creating decent jobs, facilitating the initiatives deriving from social economy and investing in the care for the environment and natural resources as well as the preservation and use of the historical heritage

b) Social and cultural duties: guaranteeing the full exercise of the citizens' rights to health care, education, employment, housing and culture, acting pursuant to quality and equity criteria as regards gender, ethnic origin, country or place of residence, acknowledging the existence of multiple cultures and the protection of the ethnic-cultural identity.

c) Institutional duties: acknowledging that the new responsibilities exert pressures on institutional and financial capacities (Declaration of the OCD, Montevideo, 2006), require a new local governance guaranteeing an efficient institutional redesign in order to cater for the citizens' demands and operating with transparency and accountability criteria with the authorities, and which in the design and management of public policies includes the different economic, social and civil stakeholders involved in these public affairs.

d) Political duties: consolidating and strengthening local democracy by extending the forms of political and social representation. Promoting the citizens' participation in public decision in order to combine and strengthen representative democracy with participative democracy practices. To achieve such aims it is essential for the local government to design and promote the citizens' inclusion, through

the creation of spaces for participation for citizens and instruments (Ziccardi 2003) and to boost its empowerment of local public actions (conf. Declaration of the OCD, Montevideo, 2006).

Several of the actions included in this set of ideas are fostered by decentralised cooperation; actions which ever since the creation of the Network 5 of URB-AL whose headquarters are located in the city of Montevideo, almost a decade ago, have called attention to the importance of designing and applying, within integral criteria, socio-economic and environmental policies for the local scope (conf. Bodemer, Coraggio and Ziccardi 1999). At the same time, it was stated that with such purpose local governments would have to introduce substantial innovations to their institutional structure and organization, as well as to the contents of public policies aimed at catering for social needs and demands.

It is exactly this aspect in which decentralised cooperation may play a strategic role, as local governments in Latin American cities may benefit from experiences which have already been developed by European ones. But we must point out that the institutional situation of local governments in Europe and Latin America are substantially different. In the old world local governments are governments with specific competences and which coincide with the other –central and middle- areas, and which above all exercise their governmental and administration functions governing the life of its societies and territories. Nevertheless, in Latin American countries, there are differential institutional development situations among the cities in the region, since the best capacities and resources are concentrated in capital cities (human, technological and financial resources), while most local governments face strong limitations mainly as regards issues such as: institutional designs reproducing the structure and operation of the central government;

dependence on the income deriving from central government and limitations for creating their own resources; personnel lacking proper professional qualification, and recruitment of workers according to their personal or group belonging; sectorial local public policies with scarce institutional coordination; restricted policies for the promotion of local economic development even when one of the major issues is urban unemployment; formal ways of citizen participation and in many cases apathy and lack of interest of most of the citizens for taking part in institutionalized spaces. All of the above does not favour the effectiveness of local governmental actions in order to achieve more social cohesion in local societies.

Due to these facts, decentralised cooperation is currently regarded as one of the ways in which to strengthen Latin America's local capacities through transfer of knowledge between local governments, without requiring that another government ti act as intermediaries. Progress along this line was made at the **IV Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion**, in Barcelona in May 2004, which was held following the establishment of a new organization of "Local United Cities and Governments", within which a Commission on Social Inclusion and Participative Democracy was created. In the Declaration, in which more than 300 cities from 44 countries took part, the establishment of a process for formalizing the **Network of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion** was established, wherein the different networks, forums and expressions from the local entities and the civil society may participate.

More recently, as stated above, the **Declaration of Montevideo made at the First Meeting of the Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation** in the year 2006, explicitly acknowledged this differential institutional development between local governments from both regions and proposed the creation of initiatives for the promotion



of social cohesion aimed them, but intending to create a direct impact on Latin America. Likewise, integrating immigrants, reinforcing gender perspective in diverse local public policies and promoting women's active citizenship were identified for top priority.

4.2. Local Policies and Relationships between Governments

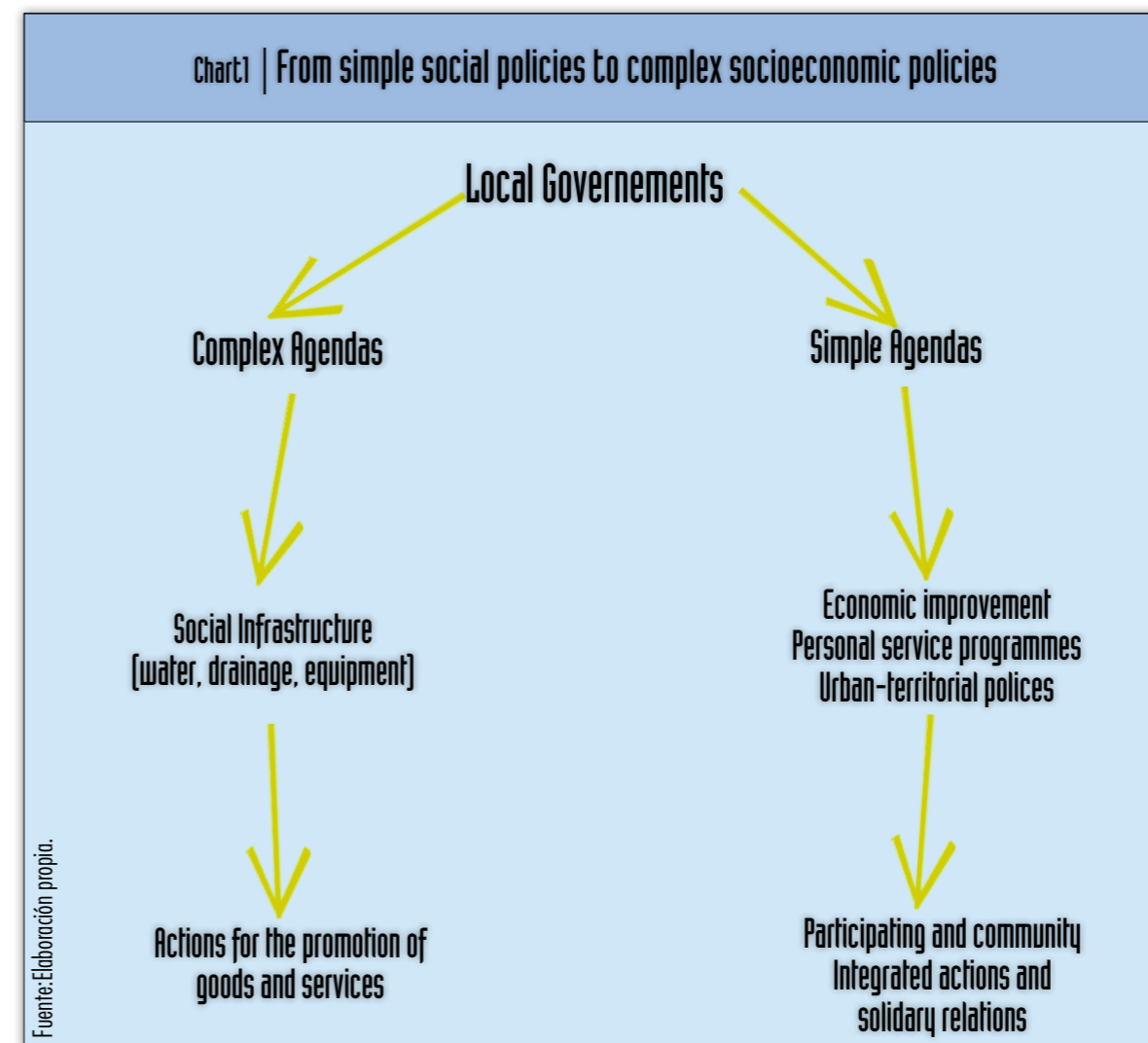
Public policies constitute ways of governance in certain areas of economic, social and political life in which active participation of the State is required. Nevertheless, it has been recently accepted that the public arena is a broader space for action, which may not be confined to the governmental scope but must include different economic, social and political stakeholders who are directly involved in the agenda of the nation's issues and affairs. Anyway, the areas of the central or federal, state or provincial, and municipal or local government are the main parties responsible for implementing public policies and these imply different stages which are necessarily consecutive: design, operation or management, follow up and assessment, in which other stakeholders may also take part.

Within the whole set of public policies, those called **social policies** are the ones whose main objective is creating conditions of social equity, as well as promoting and guaranteeing the exercise of citizenship rights. Among these we might mention policies on health care, education, housing, recreation, which are aimed at the whole population adopting a universal criterion because they are part of the State's social responsibility. Although the contents thereof vary from time to time according to the different social contexts, the common feature of all social policies is that they provide general guidelines for guaranteeing the whole population access to basic goods

and services which are considered part of the social rights, and are usually established in major laws of the states (Constitution of the Republic). But current governmental social actions tend to simultaneously combine and apply universal and focused policies (Cardoso and de Oliveira 2000).

A specific type of social policies are those called **social policies for attending, reducing or fighting poverty**, which have been designed and implemented in different cities in Latin America, and which tend to guarantee survival conditions by financial aid and in some cases creating basic capacities (health care, education). These policies as regards poverty, together with other social policies aimed at precarious or impoverished urban regions or zones and vulnerable social groups (single mothers, women family heads, senior citizens lacking resources, the disabled, persons with HIV, etc.) are generally policies in which different focusing criteria are applied and which imply a form of social intervention by the State which is essential for overcoming social inequalities. Therefore, these policies are also usually called **positive discrimination policies or affirmative action policies**.

Likewise, social policies –on education, health care and even those on housing and urban policies- were originally part of the national government's jurisdiction, but the decentralization processes of the last decades tended to transfer their operation and in a lesser way their design and assessment, to the middle governments (state or provincial governments) or local (municipal) ones. Therefore, according to Brugué and Gomá (1998), the main challenge faced by social policies, which in Europe were originally based on the welfare state which is currently undergoing radical retrenchment in order to guarantee its existence, is the construction of a complex agenda in which three acting areas are identified a) local economic



promotion policies; b) social welfare local policies, and c) urban and territorial policies. Thus, it is a question of promoting innovative public actions, which implies starting off from a simple agenda, carrying out a relational redesign of social policies, creating new relationships between the local public arena and society and applying new personal, community and entrepreneurial participation instruments. On the basis of the concepts developed by the mentioned authors and on the analytical framework

included in the base document of Network 5 of URB-AL the main elements included in simple social policies are shown in Chart 1, as well as their further step into complex socio-economic policies.

Indeed, within the framework of economic globalization processes there are more concurrences in the need to reaffirm the role which might be played by local governments in the design and implementation of public policies, particularly urban social policies. But they are public actions implying

moving from a simple agenda to a complex one and redesigning the social policies and programmes with equality criteria, stating the intention of building citizenship, strengthening the social capital and/or establishing the bases for the exercise of joint responsibility between the government and the citizens. This is also about establishing links between different public actions carried out by government institutions of the different government sectors (federal, state and municipal), proposing new personal, community and entrepreneurial participation instruments, which are tasks in which decentralised cooperation may have a key role to play.

5. Decentralised Cooperation for Social Cohesion

The major and most recent actions of knowledge transfers and decentralised cooperation experiences for social cohesion shared between the European Union and Latin America show that a new path is being followed due to the introduction of substantial changes in the decentralised cooperation paradigm. In the following section we have tried to place these changes in a historical context.

5.1. Changes in the Decentralised Cooperation Paradigm

The style of decentralised cooperation which is being followed in Europe and Latin America is closely linked to the development of paradigms which occur in each age and which affect the scope of the cooperation and the orientation of the exchange which take place. Starting out as from the model of assistance or aid essentially based on a centralist and state-centred conception, as per which the “tool of this classical model is the resource transfer made as subvention for lost funds or donations

without any consideration” from state to state (González-Badía Fraga and Ruiz Seisdedos 2003), a new one which is centred on “human development” is steadily being created and which demands, according to Romero (2006), a restatement of the terms in which cooperation was conceived and managed when the role of institutional strengthening and good governance were incorporated to the development processes, in the creation of conditions which allow for social cohesion to be achieved or re-established. Thus, it is widely acknowledged that the path to development entails much more than economic growth; it implies the progress of people, societies and territories. It is an integral process in which “a society maximises its benefits, making good use of the opportunities appearing within the institutional framework, as it would do with scientific and technologic state of the art in order to use human, natural, cognitive, economic and political resources in an effective way, and thus achieve the physical and emotional welfare of the majority of its members” (Brito 2002).

Within this global world, which is marked by severe inequalities, cities and regions have assumed a key role in this sense. Such local and regional initiatives are the ones which though not widely implemented throughout Latin America- facilitate and invigorate the development process positioning cities/regions in terms of competitiveness, productivity and solidarity. Therefore, the proposal made by Bodemer, Prats and Whitehead (2004) is relevant since they state that Europe should support a “Latin American network of local and regional powers” for the production of a favourable climate aimed at sharing governmental and local development strategies.

The new decentralised cooperation focus has overcome the donor- receiver model and is based on the so called “partnership relationship”, actions based on the exchange

between peers. We agree with Romero (2006: 53) when he defines local decentralised cooperation as the “set of official cooperation initiatives for development which, under the leadership of local authorities strives to stimulate the capacities of stakeholders within their territories and encourage more participative development [... and which] is basically supported by the principles of multilaterality, mutual interest and partnership”. It is an exchange system in which a plurality of diverse (public-private) actors takes part and concurs whenever an initiative which is advantageous for all is to be carried out. This is a type of voluntary agreement in which knowledge is exchanged and capacities connected to technical assistance, training of human resources and technological transfers are strengthened and financial resources are mobilized.

5.2. Horizontal Cooperation for overcoming Poverty, Exclusion and Social Inequality

It might be said that local decentralised cooperation has played a relevant role in the field of social cohesion in Latin America, since as from the nineties a set of initiatives (networks, observatories, seminars, databases) were carried out which evidence the interest in approaching complex situations not only in Europe, but in Latin America as well. In this way, meetings as regards the ways in which cities faced the issues of poverty and exclusion were held, as well as for sharing innovative practices cater for these social issues. All along these years local spaces have been finding occasions for reflection and identification of strategies for reverting processes of evident socio-economic recession within their territories.

In order to provide examples of the scope and contents these new decentralised or horizontal cooperation relationships have acquired, two experiences are described below,

whose main commitment is improving social cohesion in cities: the network made up by the International Association of Educational Cities and the URB-AL Programme.

5.2.1. International Association of Educational Cities (IAEC)

This network, which is a pioneer in the exchange between both regions and of which currently more than 353 European and Latin American cities are members, is committed to **extending educational spaces in the cities**. The principles stated in its Letter (1990) may be established within an integral perspective of human beings, local governments being in charge of responsibly assuming the commitment of training and promoting the lifestyle of their inhabitants. They should boost integral and participative public policies which clearly integrate its educational features, and which extend the formal learning and integration spaces. They should start off from assuming that traditional socialization institutions –schools and families- have been depleted, the potential of educators within the urban space being identified. Thus, from this point of view cities may become multiple scenarios for learning and strengthening of the civic culture.

The network was promoted by the government of the City of Barcelona and offers a set of services among which we highlight the following:

- The International Database of Educational Cities (BIDCE) which collects educational experiences from both regions as well as relevant documents in this topic.
- Thematic networks for exchanging “ideas and good practices” regarding issues such as: failure at school, schoolwork transition; education in values; information and communication technologies.
- Territorial networks which

group cities in the same countries establish common work agendas, having organized seven of which two operate in Latin America and five in Europe.

- Other tools for meetings which are promoted by the Network are the World Conferences which are held bi-annually and which operate as a place for acknowledgment and more closeness between the members which present innovative educational initiatives in local spaces.

This type of association is of mutual interest since it demands an explicit political will at the executive government level (municipal governors, *prefeitos*, mayors) and at legislative level as well (councils, chamber of representatives or *vereadores*). They try to achieve some kind of agreement which may extend beyond government periods since initiatives –aimed at working with educational components- demand integral and sustained actions.

The IAEC's agenda has evolved, which fact may be noted when revising the experiences incorporated to the BIDCE or the topics of its Conferences, among which a marked concern for recovering initiatives for the articulation between school and the labour market and production, may be noted, with the youth collectives as the focal concern; failure at school and the development of cooperation platforms between agencies involved in this issue; citizenship and citizen participation; gender, inter-culturality, diminishing of digital gaps as a means of fighting against exclusion.

In its recent political statement of Lyon-France, in September 2006, it was proposed: 1) to prioritize childhood and youth in education, together with the promotion of continuous education throughout a person's life; 2) to reinforce participative democracy, and 3) to reinforce cooperation between the educational cities and other networks of cities.

Two initiatives stand out: one concerning **youth**, which was a project of the IAEC -Latin America Office and another one of the General Secretariat connected to the use of **public space** for social participation and integration. The first of them systematized 17 local experiences of youth policies regarding issues such as health care, sports, recreation, education and participation. This was proposed as an initiative which might serve as an input for achieving future approaches of a more integral nature which consider young people as strategic stakeholders of development. The proposal established a selectivity criterion for identifying innovative practices which may stimulate new forms of relationship between the state, civil society organizations and youth.

The other initiative is linked to the **participative management of public areas** and gathers 21 experiences systematised in 2006. It recovered the way in which they have been designed for appropriation by the citizens, their civic use and the community's participation in their conservation, the visualization of new uses, as well as the coexistence of the different collectives. In this sense, **public areas** are understood as places for common things, for universal things, visualizing them as facilitators of increasing levels of social integration, as they allow for deeper links and associations between their members which are valuable when the incidence thereof is measured in the incorporation of dimensions for approaching poverty situations.

In such sense, we may state that Barcelona has always been a model for many Latin American cities as regards decentralization, citizen participation, strategic management of its territory, urban renewal, as well as in the organization of its social services. But currently many Latin American cities evidence interesting and innovative

citizen inclusion practices in public decisions or participative management of public budgets.

5.2.2. The URB-AL Programme

Ever since its beginning, this programme has been oriented to local development topics. Since its creation in 1995, more than 430 cities have been added, articulated through projects connected to issues such as: urban social policies, drugs, preservation of historical texts, participation, control of urbanization, democratization of cities, etc. European and Latin American cities and the civil society organizations which are part thereof find opportunities for exchange in the international seminars or meetings and in the participation in the networks through common projects (Gutiérrez Camps 2006).

The aims of the different Networks of the URB-AL include concerns regarding the need to create a more complex strategy as regards the fight against poverty. But in spite of acknowledging that the inclusion/exclusion processes in the cities are due to several causes, initiatives granting a privileged relevance to an integral focus are not present in the approved projects. Acting strategically in this field demands a global outlook integrating the largest possible amount of components acting in coordination, using the multiple available resources and making good use of the synergistic potentials of the territory.

Nevertheless, the qualitative leap implied by the transit of type "A" to type "B" projects is worth pointing out, as well as their favourable impact on the stakeholders involved. Type "A" projects add features for reflection, knowledge and diagnosis as regards certain issues, which allow for base lines to be established for comparing the achievement of the set objectives. This creates capacities which may be used in Type "B" projects, since

their problems have already been identified, measured and good progress has been made in the configuration of local situation charts. They are important milestones for expanding and deepening urban issues, as well as theoretical interest and practical levels of action by the municipalities. Said diagnoses were extremely useful for both regions, as well as the base documents created by the experts as input in order to achieve better understanding of the complex and dynamic social web.

One of the first decentralised cooperation experiences as regards social policies was the establishment of **Network 5** on "Urban Social Policies", coordinated by the city of Montevideo. The contribution made by the base document (Bodemer, Coraggio and Ziccardi 1999) helped to define social policy "as the set of measures and institutions which aim at the population's welfare". While economic policies aim at growth, profits and accumulation of capital, social policies concern social balances. But it is essential to point out that such difference is not clear since economic processes and policies produce social effects and structures as they transform or develop organizations, classes and social relationships. They even affect the appearance of new sets of values, views of the world and rights.

In the case of **Network 7** on "Management and Control of Urbanization", which was coordinated by Rosario, Argentina, there are two type "B" "SUMMARY" actions. An urban solution from an alternative outlook" and another one on "Urban Planning and Re-qualification Interventions: the multi-disciplinarian and integrated focus in the region of Tuscany, Italy which are within a more integral strategy.

Within this URB-AL Programme projects connected to gender issues are extremely relevant. **Network 12** on the "Promotion of women in local decision



making”, which was coordinated by the Diputation of Barcelona, adopted a transversal gender perspective and promotion of women’s active citizenship. It includes 13 type “A” projects on issues connected to topics concerning women’s insertion in the labour market, self-determination, processes for empowering women, women’s training and political education, among others. It only deals with the problems of immigrant women, coordinated by the region of l’Alt Empordá, Spain. The relevance of these initiatives within decentralised cooperation issues is connected to the organization capacities which women’s organizations have historically achieved, imposing the issue of gender equality in government agendas, as well as the professional level in their technical charts when submitting their projects for assessment and approval.

Only one project is currently being executed on the “Integration of immigrants in the city as a means of fighting poverty” coordinated by Granada, Spain, belonging to the **Network 10** “Fight Against Urban Poverty”, coordinated by Sao Paulo, Brazil. In this sense, both the IAEC and the URB-AL Programme have not focused on international immigrants other than in terms of serious social and political situations which has given rise to these processes and demands on local governments to provide answers on health care, housing, education, social promotion, respect for ethnic and cultural identity, in order to achieve basic living conditions for the integration of these new social groups in the society in which they live.

As regards interventions concerning childhood, the IAEC has a Thematic Network for Infancy coordinated together with Lyon, France. We must mention that there is a set of

resources concerning this topic stemming from other organizations and different government areas, but which do not occupy a central focus in the decentralised cooperation agendas; this is similar to what has happened with projects concerning senior citizens.

Within the URB-AL Programme Network **10** on the Fight Against Urban Poverty, strives to develop exchanges in order to improve the quality of social policies. Their aims establish the need for long term actions, since the eradication of poverty demands sustainability and commitments by the stakeholders involved. This network proposes knowledge and systematized information exchange in order to make decisions, supporting the work of many local administrations which implement new designs for their information systems. It is worth mentioning the **Proyecto Ciudad y ciudadanos/as por la inclusión social** (City and Citizens for Social Inclusion Project), coordinated by the Municipal Government of Montevideo, Uruguay, a type “B” project which arose from a type “A” project called “Methodologies and Tools for the Creation of Social Inclusion Observatories” in cities, which was coordinated by the Municipality of Saint-Denis during the years 2003 and 2004. Both initiatives kept the same partners in the different stages thereof.⁶

The following recommendations were taken into account: technical support for establishing observatories which are capable of managing geo-referenced social information systems; gaining access to joint discussion on the design of indicators showing the multiple-cause of local exclusion; carrying out comparative readings on aspects arising from the exclusion processes; promoting mutual and horizontal exchange between

stakeholders from academic sectors and, lastly, creating mechanisms for acknowledgment of the civil society organizations which carry out successful actions concerning poverty in local areas. Such recommendations have already been incorporated and show the partners’ interest in the need to make good use of the developed resources and to propose a task whose challenge is to place information at the service of local governments and the civil society. Within the objectives established for the second stage of the project, it was specifically proposed to “contribute a better approach by local governments and society at large, to the phenomena related to the issue of exclusion / inclusion both in Europe and Latin America” (see URB-AL 2005: 8).

The working proposal establishes three clear lines of action to be developed in a joint and complementary way based on working in a network of the municipalities involved: 1) “Increase of **knowledge** and understanding of current social inclusion and exclusion phenomena, allowing for a more effective definition and implementation of local public policies aimed at overcoming social issues connected to exclusion, 2) The operation of **Social Inclusion Observatories** as proper tools for systematization, processing and dissemination of relevant and updated information and which may be used by the various actors which are directly involved in its area of intervention, and 3) **Providing support to the civil society** in its efforts to improve living conditions in excluded population sectors. This implies providing opportunities for consolidation and development of initiatives currently in operation which are considered sustainable and innovative in the field of social inclusion” (Idem.).

The **Inclusion/ Exclusion Observatories** emphasize a style of monitoring and assessing the results of policies for fighting urban poverty with strong participative content. This initiative establishes the incorporation

of social stakeholders throughout the working cycle, both for defining and assessing the complex nature of poverty and for taking part in the interventions promoted concerning this issue. The implementation of an instrument to be used by organizations of the civil society for developing information by processing and visibilizing innovative social projects is specifically intended.

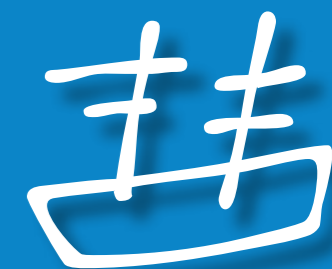
One of the first activities proposed, attuned to the creation of participation channels for the civil society, is the **Call for Submission of Social Inclusion Initiatives** aimed at strengthening participation through support to local civil society practices making contributions regarding issues such as social inclusion, coexistence in cities and public safety. One of the eligibility criteria deposited with the municipalities belonging to the Mercociudades network. This initiative is in the execution stage and the first actions which had been proposed are being carried out.

5.2.3. The New Local Governance and the Promotion of Citizen Participation

Horizontal cooperation promotes a management style in common projects which involves multiple agencies. The increasing complexity of our times not only demands the cognitive maps be renewed, but also the instruments enabling more governability to be granted to the territory. Local governments which are committed to improving the urban lifestyle are trying to create processes for transforming and consolidating their government and citizenship capacities.

The key strategies required for development are at least two: one is connected to granting the territory more democratic governability and the second one is to promote a style of **governance** which incorporates the relevant actors in this process. According to Sen (1999), development may be conceived as a process of expansion of the

⁶ | *Involved actors: Coordinating Municipality: Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo (Montevideo Municipal Government). Partner Municipalities: Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Autonomous Government of Buenos Aires), Porto Alegre City Council, Sao Paulo City Council, Barcelona City Council, Saint Denis City Council and the Andalusian Fund for International Solidarity (FAMSI).*



freedoms enjoyed by the individuals. These depend on other determining factors such as the social and economic institutions and those concerning political and human rights. From such finalist conception of development is established the need to eliminate the main sources of “loss of liberty”: poverty, authoritarian systems, scarce opportunities for employment, education, housing, low quality public services, unsafety, etc. Thus, the development process is attributed a set of standards which may foster and enable options for expanding social welfare.

Joan Prats’ contribution (2004) is relevant for the understanding between both terms. The notion of governability has to do with the transition from democracy and for democracy itself to be **governable**, not only for avoiding regression to authoritarianism but for making progress with and consolidating democracy improving its economic, social and democratic performance. He thinks that “what is at stake in many countries is not good government but governability itself, since if a territory becomes impossible to govern it becomes threatened by anomia and social disintegration”. Following this line of analysis, governability and governance are interconnected concepts. Governance is connected to the institutions and rules which are capable of attracting relevant institutional agreements, of establishing more horizontal relationships between networks of stakeholders on the quality of which depends governability. This type of challenge is international.

In such sense, decentralised cooperation has promoted links which do away with a hierarchic model of development management, creating networks of stakeholders –state and non state-, such as trade unions, universities, civil society organizations, which contribute to the construction of a more democratic social order, based on higher levels of exchange and mutual assistance among the stakeholders.

The two Network experiences selected have granted a key position to citizen participation in the initiatives carried out by them. Article 18 of the IAEC Letter states that “the city shall stimulate associations as a form of participation and civic joint responsibility, in order to channel acting at the service of the community and obtain and disseminate information, materials and ideas for the persons’ social, moral and cultural development, which at the same time shall contribute to the training for participation in decision making, planning and management processes which the practice of associations leads to.”

Local governments- European and Latin American- which are committed to creating and recreating a favourable context for renewal of public practices, have undertaken to modernize their institutions in order to have agile, transparent and effective governments. This strategy is supported by the capacities which the municipality has achieved in order to cause residents to participate in public affairs. A participation promoting social rights and citizen’ capacities, which is established as an area for collective learning, which makes local policies more effective and nurtures local politics with more democracy with the strong belief in the redistributive consequences of the government’s decisions.

As regards the URB-AL Programme, a key contribution in this area was made by **Network 9** on “Local Financing and Participative Budget” which aimed at identifying good local financing and participative democracy practices, as well as focusing its interest in the mechanisms and tools for obtaining financing for local development and creating participative democracy networks. Being aware of the fact that fighting against poverty and achievement of higher social cohesion levels not only imply effective, efficient and transparent public administration, but also the concurrence of

resources from the private sector and the civil society.

In line with the creation of a set of **Observatories** for covering gaps as regards systematized and reliable experiences enabling the design, comparability, assessment of quality policies, it is relevant to find out the impact caused by the **International Observatory of Participative Democracy (IOPD)** in social cohesion policies, coordinated by the city of Barcelona. This initiative was submitted and ratified in the year 2001 at the URB-AL Programme Network 3 meeting which was held in Belo Horizonte (Brazil) and at International Conference at Saint Denis (France). It was officially incorporated in November 2001 during the IOPD Conference, which took place in Barcelona from November 21 to 24, 2001, where its operations regulations were approved. The IOPD works together with the new world organization of cities, **Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos** (United Cities and Local Governments) (UCLG), and other networks of municipalities. Its main objectives are:

- Fostering cooperation between municipalities, based on the exchange of participative democracy within the municipality’s scope. For this purpose, a compendium of experiences was created.
- Cooperating with municipalities in the search for resources for the application and development of the experiences which are the objective of this Observatory. A resource bank was created for such purpose including economic, knowledge and any other type of resources which might be of interest.
- Preparing an agenda of activities for disseminating all the acts or programmes which might interest municipalities.
- Establishing a news area where all newsworthy features may be learnt.
- Progressing in the studies

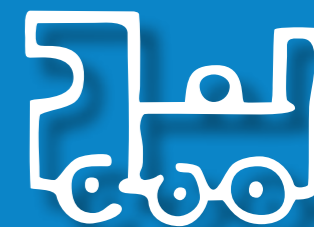
and reflection on participative democracy concepts and studies.

- Extending the territory to municipalities from throughout the world which are interested in cooperating in this process.

In the year 2006 the IOPD created the **Award for Good Practices in Participative Democracy**, which aims at encouraging the implementation of innovative experiences in the local scope and disseminating practices which favour citizens’ participation and implication in the preparation and implementation of public policies. The objective of this award is to acknowledge the new experiences in the field of participative democracy coordinated by the local governments, which may be replicated. On the other hand, one of the central issues addressed during the VI Conference organized by the IOPD and the City Council of Recife, which was held in November 2006, on “Strategic Participative Planning for the Democratic Construction of Cities”, were social inclusion and coexistence in cities.

A useful initiative of the IOPD is the creation of a set of **Observatories on Local Participative Democracy (LOPD)** in nine European and Latin American cities, the mission of which is learning and assessing the quality of the development of forms of participative democracy and being able to guide the experiences which are taking place in the region. This project is also framed within the European Commission’s decentralised cooperation URB-AL Programme of which IOPD is also a part, the LOPD being a type “B” project.

In this way a new line of action is being carried out, enabling the establishment of Local Observatories in the cities which are partners in this project, without abandoning the aim of creating a space for exchanging and reflecting on innovative citizen participation experiences for interested cities. This implies a qualitative leap at the impact level, since cities are placed



in the midst of the scene with the appearance of the Local Observatories. On one hand, own resources may be used for generating information and gathering experiences to be assessed later on by each city, and on the other hand, the International Observatory is provided with better experiences with the establishment and start up of the Local Observatories, as from the socialization of efforts and information available to all the cities. Such articulation of an initiative in other broader ones will enable learning of and comparatively assessing the quality of the development of forms of participative democracy in the future, for which purpose a set of indicators has already been designed by the IOPD. Another interesting feature for observation is how cities which are members of this project have incorporated the Local Observatory's activities to their management pursuant to the specific historical and social conditions and the progress made by public citizen participation policies.

Local appropriations of this initiative, both in European and in Latin American cities, are synthesised in Chart 1.

6. Some Recommendations for Strengthening Decentralised Cooperation for Social Cohesion

The capacities of local governments for designing and implementing social policies allowing for more cohesion to be granted to social and community life have found strong boundaries within the complex government systems in the national arena and central governments (provinces, states, communities). Therefore, it is important for local governments to be able to boost their capacities through participation in networks, projects, decentralised or horizontal cooperation experiences striving to answer

social issues which in daily life oppress local societies, learning to attract and combine knowledge and resources from different sources and extending the participation of actors from the civil society, so that social policies may be authentic public policies contributing to the strengthening of social cohesion. To a certain extent, and as has been noted in the last sections of this paper, it is clear that decentralised cooperation has fostered a set of projects and actions which are directly connected to the need for creating new conditions enabling social cohesion to be re-established, since they incorporate networks, projects, observatories and specific thematic actions directly linked to the fight against urban poverty and social exclusion, introducing equality and integral criteria, including the needs and demands of women, young people and children and citizen participation instruments which, alike the participative budget, establish new bases for democratic governance.

It is worth pointing out that the experience exchange between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean constitutes a path to progress for social cohesion. The EU's experiences for fostering social cohesion may be of great use for cooperation in Latin American and Caribbean countries, so that the countries in those regions may find their own methods of inequality, exclusion and poverty. Thus, the EU is able to offer its experience through dissemination of: 1) the multiple solution and positive experiences (different social protection systems, education, fight against discrimination and exclusion, etc) which are applied and carried out throughout its territory; 2) the coordination of practices and policies for fighting social exclusion and poverty between different member States and the benefits of cooperation at the European level, and 3) the proved methods in its regional policies for achieving the economic and social recovery of some European regions which are less developed than others.

CHART 1: Local Observatories on Citizen Participation in EU and Latin American Cities

Local Observatory at Barcelona–Spain:

dedicated to monitoring the “Normas Reguladoras de Participación Ciudadana” (RFCP) (Regulatory Framework for Citizen Participation) recently passed by the Municipal Government, which are a legal instrument enabling the observation, analysis and assessment of the quality of the city's participative processes. These Regulations resulted from a diagnosis of the situation, from the compilation of quantitative information for its latter qualitative assessment by incorporating citizen opinions and perceptions. Such participative diagnosis was articulated with the establishment of the LOPD for continuing with the follow up of the RFCP.

Local Observatory of Barcelona Provincial Council, Spain:

it provides a diagnosis of citizen participation and local democracy by observing the process carried out by city councils in the province of Barcelona. It aims at preparing a catalogue of good practices in participative democracy in order to encourage Citizen Participation Master Plans in other cities. This instrument may not only be replicated, but shall contribute to the professional training of the actors involved in the region's participative democracy.

Local Observatory of the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina:

it was coordinated with the City's government decentralization process aimed at all 16 neighbourhoods in the city, and was implemented through a local initiative called “Sueña tu barrio” (Dream your Neighbourhood), the main aim of which is to suggest that neighbours carry out a future visualization exercise with the City's Strategic Plan. The Observatory links those actors committed to local development, and it also makes use of and systematizes the already processed information.

Local Observatory of Donostia, Spain:

it is directly linked to the political will of carrying out a Municipal Participation Plan which fosters, from a relational perspective, complementarity and connections between actors, processes and areas for participation in San Sebastián. The Observatory provides a diagnosis of the way in which the San Sebastián City Council disseminates and promotes the right to participate. In this sense, participation is understood as a crosswise policy moving throughout the municipal organization.

Local Observatory of La Paz, Bolivia::

this initiative arose by assuming the political representation crisis local society is undergoing, as well as the constant demands for increased citizen participation in public affairs. Within this context, the Observatory appears as an area for overcoming, a common area for interaction and exchange among the different actors taking part in the participation processes connected to municipal management of the City of La Paz..

Local Observatory of Porto Alegre, Brazil:

it aims at analysing the results of the population's participation in the improvement of urban life quality levels, as well as their impact in the conformation of social capital which depends on the different neighbourhoods. It intends to expand the citizens' level of knowledge on their local reality, through support materials, social, economic, infrastructure and environmental maps, as well as an inventory of citizen initiatives at territorial level.

Local Observatory of Saint Denis, Brazil:

it focuses on accompanying and promoting people's participation in the Local Urbanism Plan which defines the developmental aims for the next ten years. The actors' participation shall affect the definition of the great lines of action and the city's planning.

Local Observatory of San Pablo, Brazil:

it carries out a series of citizen participation policies through the Special Bureau of Participation and Partnership, and through this means supports the Observatory's actions.



Finally, from the analysis submitted, here are some recommendations for the future of the horizontal or decentralised cooperation relationships:

- Training human resources for working in decentralised cooperation management, introducing this topic in the training of international affairs professionals and offering refresher courses for graduates and actors who have been incorporated to the system.
- Coordinating the agendas between the different cooperation agencies.
- Preparing a set of basic and common social indicators for the local governments to be able to systematise information, allowing for a comparative analysis within the region as well as out of it to be made in order to design innovative social policies for social cohesion.
- Creating fair distributive criteria for cooperation funds so all the cities from both regions may benefit, including small and middle size cities which are internationally well known but which may benefit by taking part in decentralised cooperation experiences.

- Strengthening and if necessary formalizing the joint actions which are currently taking place spontaneously between the networks, such as: IAEC-Latin America Delegation and the cooperation agreement with the Thematic Educational Unit of Mercociudades or the joint initiatives of IAEC-Latin America and the Youth Thematic Unit or the European Commission's URB-AL Programme and the Thematic Units of Mercociudades and the Network of Ibero-American Cities Linked for Urban Strategic Planning (CIDEU), among others.

- Guaranteeing the presence and availability of the initiatives which have entailed progress in the area of compilation and systematization of information, as well as the necessary resources, since it is extremely costly for many cities to keep such systems.

- Favouring, through decentralised cooperation initiatives, new interrelations which imply acknowledgement, acceptance and integration of the "complex nature" as an intrinsic feature of the political process.

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The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

Council of European Municipalities and Regions *

During its 23rd General Assembly held in Innsbruck in May 2006, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) presented its “European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life”. The aim of this Charter is for local and regional governments to commit themselves to use their powers and those of their partners to promote gender equality.

The Charter, which was published within the framework of a project carried out by the CEMR with the support of the 5th European Commission’s community action programme for the equality of women and men, is addressed to the local and regional European governments, inviting them to adopt a public stance as regards the principle of equality between women and men, and to implement the principles of the Charter in their territory.

This Charter is especially interesting for the Observatory, since it depicts the deep impact the combined efforts of sub-state governments of several countries might have over social cohesion. It also depicts the increasing acknowledgment of the fact that, in order to establish a society based on equality, it is essential for local and regional governments to fully implement the principles of gender equality in their policies, their organization and their practices.

Part one

Principles

E, who ratify this Charter for the equality of women and men in our local life, acknowledge the fundamental principles behind our actions, as follows:

1. The equality of women and men is a fundamental right

This right must be applied by local and regional governments in all fields where their responsibilities are exercised, which includes the obligation to do away with all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect.

2. In order to ensure the equality of women and men, multiple discrimination and disadvantage must be taken into consideration

Multiple discrimination and disadvantage, apart from the ones connected to gender, based on race, colour, ethnic and social origins, genetic features, mother tongue, religion or ideology, political opinions or any other opinion, belonging to a national minority, ownership, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation, sexual or economic level, are factors to be taken into consideration for addressing the equality of women and men.

3. Balanced participation of women and men in decision making is a requirement for a democratic society

The right women and men have to equality requires local and regional authori-

ties to take all the necessary measures and adopt all the corresponding strategies for promoting a balanced representation and participation of women and men in all decision making areas.

4. Elimination of gender stereotypes is essential for establishing equality between women and men

Local and regional authorities must promote elimination of the stereotypes and obstacles in which unequal conditions and positions for women and men are based, and which lead to inequalities in the assessment of the roles performed by women and men in political, economic, social and cultural issues.

5. In order to implement the principles of gender equality it is necessary to integrate them in all local and regional government activities

These principles must be taken into account in the preparation of the policies, methods and instruments affecting daily life of the local population– for example by means of techniques for incorporation of the gender perspective in all policies,¹ and by taking into consideration budget analysis.² With this purpose, the experience of women’s local lives, including their living and working conditions must be analysed and taken into consideration.

6. To implement equality between women and men, it is necessary to have action plans and programmes with adequate resources.

Local and regional governments must

¹ | *Mainstreaming: In July 1997, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defined the concept of mainstreaming as follows: “Gender mainstreaming consists in assessing the implication women and men have in all planned actions, comprising legislation, procedures or programmes, in all fields and at all levels. This strategy allows for integration of women’s and men’s concerns and experiences in the application, control and assessment of procedures and programmes in all political, economic and social fields, so that they may be equally benefited and inequality is not perpetuated.”*

² | *Gender budgeting: The integration of a gender perspective in the budgeting process is an application of the integrated approximation of equality between women and men in the budgeting process. This implies an assessment of the gender perspective at all levels of the budgeting process, as well as a restructuring of the income and expenditure, in order to promote equality between men and women.*



prepare action plans and programmes with the means and resources –financial as well as human resources- for the application thereof.

These principles are the basis of the articles set forth in the following Part Three.

PART TWO

Application of the charter and its commitments

WE, the undersigned, commit ourselves to take the following specific measures in order to apply the provisions of this Charter:

1. Within a reasonable term (not exceeding two years) after the signature, the local or regional government which signs this Charter shall prepare and adopt an action plan for equality and its subsequent application.

2. The action plan for equality shall present the aims and priorities of the signatory government, the measures it intends to adopt and the resources used for the Charter and its commitments to be effective. The plan shall also present the proposed schedule for its application. If the signatory has already prepared an action plan for equality, the same shall be revised in order to ensure that all relevant issues included in the Charter are addressed.

3. Each signatory government shall make extensive consultations before adopting its action plan for equality and shall disseminate the same after it has been adopted. It must also publicly and regularly of the progress made in the application of this plan.

4. Each signatory shall revise its action plan for equality, and should circumstances so determine it, prepare a supplementary plan for each subsequent period.

5. Each signatory undertakes, as a principle, to take part in the corresponding assessment system, which shall be prepared in order

to follow the progress made in the application of this Charter and for assisting European local and regional executive organizations in the mutual exchange of knowledge on the most effective means of achieving more equality between women and men. For this purpose, action plans for equality must be readily available, as well as other relevant public documents.

6. Each signatory shall inform the Council of European Municipalities and Regions in writing of the fact of having adopted the Charter, the date in which it was ratified and the contact point designed for ensuring all future cooperation regarding the Charter.

PART THREE

DEMOCRATIC RESPONSIBILITY

Article 1

1. The signatory government acknowledges that the right to equality is an essential condition for democracy and that democratic society may not allow itself to ignore women's capacities, knowledge, experience and creativity. For this purpose, it must ensure, based on equality, the inclusion, representation and participation of women from other places and belonging to different age groups throughout political and public decision making processes.

2. The signatory, in its capacity as the democratically chosen responsible party for promoting the welfare of its population and territory, therefore undertakes to promote and favour the specific application of this right in all fields of activity – to the extent it is a democratic representative of the local community, a service supplier and silent partner, the one which plans and creates regulations, and an employer.

THE POLITICAL ROLE

Article 2.

Political Representation

1. The signatory government acknowledges the equal right of women and men to vote, to be candidates and to be elected.

2. The signatory acknowledges the equal right of women and men to take part in design and implementation of policies, to hold public office and to occupy any position in all levels of the executive power.

3. The signatory acknowledges the principle of balanced representation in all the appointed institutions taking part in public decision making.

The signatory undertakes to take all the appropriate measures for defending and supporting the above mentioned rights and principles, including:

- Encouraging women to appear in electoral rolls, exercise their right to universal suffrage and to be candidates to elected positions and functions.

- Encouraging all political parties and groups to adopt and apply the principle of balanced representation of women and men.

- For such purpose, encouraging political parties and groups to take all lawful measures, including the adoption of quotas when these are considered insufficient, in order to increase the number of women who are chosen as candidates and later on elected.

- Setting the rules of their own procedures and behaviour rules, so that the elected candidates and representatives are not affected by stereotypes of behaviour or language, or any other means of harassment.

- Adopting measures which enable the persons elected as representatives to balance their private, professional and public lives, by ensuring, for example, that working sched-

ules and methods, as well as access to day care centres for their children and persons under their care, allow them to fully participate in their duties and functions.

5. The signatory undertakes to promote and apply the principle of balanced representation in its own decision making or consulting organizations as well as in its appointments to any external organ.

6. Nevertheless, where authority has not yet reached a balanced representation of women and men, it undertakes to apply the above mentioned principle in such a way that it may not be less favourable for the sex with minority representation, than in the current situation.

7. The signatory undertakes as well to ensure that no political or public position, for which it names or appoints a representative, shall be in principle reserved for a certain sex due to stereotyped attitudes.

Article 3

Participation in Political and Civic Life

1. The signatory government acknowledges that the citizens' right to take part in public affairs is an essential democratic principle and that women and men are entitled to participate equally in the government and public life of their region, municipality or local community.

2. The signatory government acknowledges that the citizens' right to take part in public affairs is an essential democratic principle and that women and men are entitled to participate equally in the government and public life of their region, municipality or local community.

3. The signatory shall be responsible for promoting active participation in the political and civic life of women and men belonging to all groups in the community, in particular that of women and men who are members of minority groups which might

otherwise be excluded.

Article 4 **Public Commitment to Equality**

1. The signatory, as democratic representative of its municipality or territory, must accept the public and formal commitment of applying the principle of women's and men's equality in public life, including:

- announcing this Charter, upon debate and ratification thereof by the highest representative institution;

- committing to apply the obligations contained in this Charter and publicly accounting for progress achieved during the term of application of the action plan for equality;

- the promise that the signatory and the persons chosen as authorities shall adhere to and maintain good behaviour as regards gender equality.

2. The signatory shall use its democratic mandate to encourage other public and political institutions, as well as public organizations and civil society organizations, to take measures ensuring the exercise -in practice- of men's and women's right to equality.

Article 5 **Working with Associate Entities for Promoting Equality**

1. The signatory shall be responsible for cooperating with all its associate entities from the public sector and the private sector, as well as those from civil society, in order to promote more equality between women and men in all aspects of life within its territory. For such purpose, it shall strive to cooperate with its associate social entities in particular.

2. The signatory shall refer to associ-

ate institutions and organizations, including associate social entities, for preparing and revising its equality plan, and other relevant issues regarding equality.

Article 6 **Avoidance of Stereotypes**

1. The signatory government undertakes to avoid and prevent, as far as possible, all prejudice, practices, use of verbal expressions and images based on the idea of superiority or inferiority of one sex or the other, or as regards stereotyped female and male roles.

2. To such purpose, the signatory shall ensure that its own -public and internal- communications fully comply with this commitment and promote positive images of both sexes, as well as equally positive examples.

3. The signatory shall provide assistance for its collaborators, by means of training or otherwise, so that they can identify and do away with stereotyped attitudes and behaviours and be guided accordingly.

4. The signatory shall carry out activities and campaigns aimed at raising awareness on the negative effect that gender stereotypes has on the fight for equality of women and men.

Article 7 **Good Management and Consultation**

1. The signatory acknowledges the right of women and men to have their affairs treated with equality, impartiality and justice, as well as within a reasonable term, including:

- The right to be heard before any individual decision concerning them and which might have a negative implications;

- The authorities' duty to provide grounds for their decisions;

- Their right to be informed regarding issues concerning them.

2. The signatory acknowledges that in all matters within its competence, the quality of its policies and its decision making would be surely improved if the persons affected by these policies and decisions had the chance of expressing their opinion, and that it is of the utmost importance for women and men to have -in practice- equal access to the relevant information and identical chances for acting.

3. The signatory undertakes to regard the following measures as appropriate:

- To ensure that the forms of communication and information take into account the needs of women and men, including their personal access to information and communication technologies.

- To ensure that whenever consultations are made, the points of view which are less likely to be heard may be fully taken into account in the consultation process and that positive lawful actions are carried out in order to ensure such participation.

- Where convenient, to carry out separate consultations for women.

GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR EQUALITY

Article 8 **General Commitment**

1. Within the scope of its duties and rights, the signatory shall acknowledge, respect and promote the relevant rights and principles of equality of women and men and shall fight any gender obstacles and discrimination.

2. The commitments defined in this Charter shall apply to the signatory, wherever they may be applied as regards its legal authority.

Article 9. **Gender Assessment**

1. The signatory shall be in charge of carrying out, within the scope of its rights and duties, a gender assessment as defined in this article.

2. For such purpose, the signatory shall establish a programme for applying its gender assessments pursuant to its own priorities, resources and schedules, which shall be included or taken into account within its action plan for equality.

3. Gender assessments shall take into consideration the following measures:

- Revision of policies, procedures, practices, models currently in use, in order to appreciate whether these include any discrimination, whether they are based on gender stereotypes, and if they consider in an adequate way the specific needs of women and men.

- Revision of resource allocation -either financial or otherwise- with the above mentioned aims.

- Identification of priorities and aims so that they deal with the relevant issues arising from these revisions, and identifiable improvements may be contributed in service supply.

- Application, from the beginning of the process, of an analysis of any significant proposal for the new or modified policies for procedures and changes in the new allocation of resources, in order to identify their potential impact on women and men, and to make final decisions in view of such analysis.

- Taking into consideration the needs or interests of those suffering from multiple discrimination or difficulties.

Article 10 **Multiple Discrimination and Obstacles**

1. The signatory government ac-

knowledges that discrimination due to sex, race, social or ethnic origin, genetic features, mother tongue, religion or beliefs, political opinions or others, belonging to a national minority, ownership, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation, is forbidden.

2. The signatory also acknowledges that in spite of such prohibition, many women and men suffer from multiple discrimination and encounter obstacles, which include socio-economic disadvantages causing a direct impact on their capacity to exercise the other rights which are defined and described in this Charter.

3. The signatory undertakes, within the scope of its rights and duties to take any appropriate measures for fighting the effects of the discrimination and obstacles, including:

- Ensuring that multiple discrimination and obstacles, as well as their gender assessments, shall be addressed in their action plan for equality;
- Ensuring that the issues created by the multiple discrimination and obstacles shall be taken into consideration in the application of actions or measures which appear in the other articles in this Charter;
- Taking specific measures to cater for the specific needs of immigrant women and men.

THE EMPLOYER'S ROLE

Article 11

1. In its capacity as employer, the signatory government acknowledges the equality of women and men in all matters connected to employment, including organization of the work and working conditions.

2. The signatory acknowledges the right to reconcile the workers' professional, social and private life, as well as the right to dignity and safety at work.

3. The signatory undertakes to take all necessary measures, including positive actions within the scope of its lawful authority, to establish the above mentioned rights.

Measures mentioned in point 3 comprise the following:

a) Revision of employment policies and procedures within its organization, as well as development of the "employment" area in its plan for equality, in order to address inequalities within the corresponding term and covering, among other issues:

- Equality of salaries, including the same salary for an equivalent job;
- Provisions allowing for revision of salaries and remunerations, payment and retirement terms;
- Measures to guarantee promotion and career opportunities in an equitable and transparent manner;
- Measures for ensuring a balanced representation of women and men at all levels, especially for correcting any uneven situations at higher and management levels;
- Measures for abolishing gender based professional segregation and encouraging personnel to apply for and hold non traditional positions;
- Measures for ensuring equitable hiring;
- Measures for ensuring appropriate working conditions, free from any health hazards and all kinds of safety measures;
- Carrying out surveys of employed persons and their unions, ensuring a balanced participation of women and men in the organizations which carry out surveys or negotiation.

b) Prohibition of sexual harassment in work places by means of a public statement on the unacceptable quality of such behaviour, to which support for the victims, introduction and application of transparent policies as regards the way in which the guilty parties should be treated, and the efforts made for

raising people's awareness in connection to this issue, shall be added.

c) The search for a personal composition at all levels, according to the social, economic and cultural diversity of the local population.

d) Assistance for reconciling professional, social and private life, through:

- Introduction of policies which enable, whenever convenient, working schedules be adapted and assistance provided to the employees' dependants;
- Encouraging men to make use of their rights as regards leave due to causes connected to persons in their charge.

PUBLIC TENDERS AND CONTRACTS

Article 12

1. The signatory government acknowledges that in the performance of its duties in connection to provision of goods and services, including product purchase contracts, service contracts and work contracts, the government shall be responsible for promoting equality for women and men.

2. The signatory acknowledges that this responsibility acquires special significance when it entails granting another legal entity the supply of a major public service, of which the signatory is responsible pursuant to the law. In these cases, the signatory shall guarantee that the legal entity which is awarded the contract (regardless of its legal status) shall be bound to ensure promotion of equality of women and men equality as the signatory would have done if it had provided the service itself.

3. Likewise, the signatory shall be in charge of applying the following measures, once they are deemed appropriate:

a) For each significant contract, to take into account gender implications and the opportunities offered by the contract for pro-

motion of legal equality.

b) To guarantee that the contract provisions take into consideration the objectives of equality for women and men.

c) To ensure that the other terms and conditions of the contract consider and show such objectives.

d) To use the powers granted by the European laws on public tenders for defining the performance conditions as regards social considerations.

e) To raise the awareness of workers or advisory staff regarding their responsibility for dealing with public tenders and lease agreements with reference to the demands of their positions as regards gender equality, including ensuring equality of women and men.

f) To guaranty that the terms of the main contract include a provision stating that all subcontractors must abide by the relevant obligations for ensuring women's and men's equality.

THE SERVICE PROVIDER'S ROLE

Article 13

Education and Ongoing Training

1. The signatory government acknowledges the right to education of all persons, as well as the right to access professional and ongoing training. The signatory acknowledges that the right to education plays an essential role in all stages of life, so that authentic equal opportunities may be guaranteed, essential job and life skills are developed and new opportunities for professional development are opened.

2. The signatory shall be in charge –within its scope- of ensuring or promoting equal access to professional and ongoing training for women, men, girls and boys.

3. The signatory acknowledges the need to do away with any stereotyped concept of

the roles women and men roles in all forms of education. For such purpose, it shall be in charge of making or promoting the following decisions, as deemed convenient:

- Revising educational material, school curricula and others, as well as teaching methods, in order to guarantee that they all fight against stereotyped attitudes and practices.
- Applying specific actions for promoting the choice of non conventional careers.
- Specific inclusion of items in civic education and citizenship courses which highlight the importance of an equal participation of women and men in the democratic process.

4. The signatory acknowledges that the way in which schools and other educational centres are run is an important model for children and young people to follow. Therefore, it shall be in charge of promoting a balanced participation of women and men at all management levels in educational centres.

Article 14 Health

1. The signatory acknowledges the right of all women and men to benefit from a high level of physical and mental health, and states that their access to health care and quality medical treatment, as well as prevention, is vitally important for establishing such right.

2. The signatory acknowledges that in order to ensure equal opportunities for women and men to enjoy good health, medical and health care services should take into account their diverse needs. It also acknowledges that such needs do not arise solely from biological differences, but also from different living and working conditions, as well as from stereotyped attitudes and assumptions.

3. The signatory undertakes to carry out, within the scope of its responsibilities, all necessary actions to promote and ensure the highest health level possible for its women and men citizens. For such purpose, the signatory undertakes to complete or promote the following measures:

- Addition of a gender perspective in planning, allocation of resources and supply of medical and health care services.
- To guarantee that activities aimed at promoting health, included those aimed at good nutritional habits and the importance of physical exercise, lead to the recognition that women and men have different attitudes and needs.
- To guarantee that people who work in the health care sector, including those working for the promotion of health, acknowledge the ways in which gender affects medical and health care and to bear in mind the different experience that women and men have of such care.
- To guarantee that women and men shall have access to accurate information on health issues.

Article 15 Care and Social Services

1. The signatory government acknowledges the right to access the necessary social services available and to benefit from social service assistance in case of need.

2. The signatory acknowledges that women and men have different needs which may derive from diverse economic and social conditions, as well as from other factors. Therefore, in order to ensure women and men have equal access to social assistance and social services, the signatory organization shall take all necessary measures in order to ensure:

- Addition of the gender perspective in planning, financing and provision of social assistance and social services;

• That persons in charge of providing social assistance and social services acknowledge the ways in which gender affects such services and take into account the different experiences women and men have of such services.

Article 16 Care For Minors

1. The signatory government acknowledges the essential role played by good quality care systems for minors, which are affordable and accessible to fathers and mothers and other people with children under their care, regardless of their financial situation, for promoting the equality of women and men and their ability to reconcile their professional, public and private lives. The signatory also acknowledges the contribution made by the care of minors to economic and social life, as well as to the construction of a social link within the local community and throughout society.

2. The signatory undertakes to prioritize the supply and promotion of these care systems, either directly or through other service providers. Likewise, it undertakes to promote provision of these services through other agents, including those provided by local employers.

3. The signatory also acknowledges that the education of minors requires a shared responsibility between men and women and society at large, and shall be in charge of challenging gender stereotypes pursuant to which children's care is mainly women's responsibility.

Article 17 Care For Other People

1. The signatory acknowledges that women and men are responsible for the care of persons under their charge as well as mi-

nors, and that such responsibility may affect their capacity to fulfil their role in society in full.

2. The signatory also acknowledges that such responsibility disproportionately corresponds to women and therefore acts as an obstacle for the promotion of equality of women and men.

3. The signatory shall be in charge of facing such inequality as deemed convenient:

- By including among its priorities the execution and promotion of care systems, directly or through other providers, which are high quality and affordable;
- By enabling support and promoting the necessary opportunities for those suffering from social isolation due to their responsibilities in such sense;
- By carrying out campaigns against the stereotypes pursuant to which caring for people in their charge is a primarily woman's responsibility.

Article 18 Social Inclusion

1. The signatory government acknowledges that everybody is entitled to be protected from poverty and social exclusion and, that in general, women are more likely to suffer from social exclusion because they have less access than men to resources, goods, services and opportunities.

2. Therefore, the signatory undertakes –within its whole range of services and responsibilities- and working together with partners, to take measures for a globally coordinated approach for:

- Promoting, for those who live or are likely to live in a situation of social exclusion or poverty, effective access to employment, a dwelling place, training, education, culture, information and communication technologies, social assistance and health care.



- Acknowledging the specific needs and the situation of women suffering from social exclusion.

- Promoting the integration of immigrant women and men, taking into account their specific needs.

Article 19 Housing

1. The signatory acknowledges the right to a dwelling place and states that access to good quality housing is one of the fundamental needs for an individual and his/her family's welfare.

2. The signatory also acknowledges that women and men often have specific and different needs as regards housing, which must be taken into consideration in full, since:

a) In average, women have lower income and less financial resources than men and therefore need housing according to their means;

b) Women are heads of most single-parent families, and therefore have the need to have access to social housing;

c) Men who are vulnerable are often over-represented among the homeless (HP).

3. The signatory undertakes to:

a) Enable or promote access to housing of adequate size and level, in an adequate place, where essential utilities are available;

b) Take measures for preventing homelessness, in particular enabling assistance to persons who lack housing, based on need, vulnerability and a non discrimination criteria;

c) To intervene, as far as possible, in the price of housing so that it may be affordable for those who do not have enough financial resources.

4. The signatory shall also be responsible for ensuring or promoting equal rights for men and women to become lessees,

owners or tenants of a property or any other form of ownership and undertakes to use its influence in order to ensure women have the same access to loans and other forms of financial assistance in order to purchase a dwelling place.

Article 20 Culture, Sports and Recreation

1. The signatory acknowledges the right of women and men to take part in cultural life and enjoy artistic activities.

2. The signatory also acknowledges the role played by sports in developing the community's life and the guarantee of the right to health, as set forth in article 14. It acknowledges that women and men are entitled to equal access to the activities and cultural, sports and recreational facilities.

3. It acknowledges that women and men have different experiences and interests as regards culture, sports and recreation and that these may derive from stereotyped attitudes and sex-oriented actions. It therefore undertakes to implement or promote, whenever it should be deemed convenient, measures for:

- Ensuring women, men and children may have the benefit of equal access to sports, cultural and recreational facilities and activities;

- Encouraging women, men and children to take equal part in sports and cultural activities, including those which have traditionally been considered mainly as "female" or "male":

- Encouraging artistic, cultural and sports associations to promote cultural and sports activities which criticize a stereotyped vision of women and men;

- To encourage public libraries to criticize gender stereotypes through their book catalogue and other documents, as well as other promotional activities.

Article 21 Safety

1. The signatory acknowledges the right of all women and men to personal safety and freedom of movement and the fact that such rights may not be fully or equally exercised, either in the public or the private sector, if women and men are unsafe or deem their safety is threatened.

2. The signatory also acknowledges that women and men, in part due to their different obligations and lifestyles, must often face different problems connected to safety and that these must be treated accordingly.

3. The signatory therefore undertakes to:

a) Analyse, taking gender into account, statistics connected to volume and type of incidents (including serious crimes against the safety of women and men, and where convenient, to assess the level and nature of the fear of crime and other sources of feelings of lack of safety);

b) Develop and apply strategies, policies and actions, including specific improvements in the condition or configuration of the environment (e.g. points of connection between transport services, parking space, public lighting), in order to ensure police surveillance and other related services, for increasing the safety of women and men safety in practice and trying to reduce their feeling of being unsafe.

Article 22 Gender Violence

1. The signatory acknowledges that gender violence, which affects women disproportionately, is an infringement of a fundamental human right and a crime against dignity and the physical and moral integrity of human beings.

2. The signatory acknowledges that gender violence arises from the idea that the attacker has the superiority of one sex above the other within an unequal power relationship context.

3. The signatory therefore undertakes to establish and reinforce policies and actions against gender violence, including:

- Providing or assisting in the creation of assistance and aid for the victims;

- Enabling public information, in all languages regularly used in the local area, as regards the possible available assistance;

- Guaranteeing that professional teams have been formed for identifying and assisting victims;

- Promoting awareness campaigns and educational programmes aimed at current or potential victims, as well as attackers.

Article 23 Traffic in Human Beings

1. The signatory acknowledges that the crime of traffic of human beings, which affects women and adolescents disproportionately, is an infringement of a fundamental human right and a crime against dignity and the physical and moral integrity of human beings.

2. The signatory shall be responsible for implementing and reinforcing policies and actions aimed at preventing traffic of human beings, including:

- Information and awareness campaigns;

- Training programmes for the professional teams in charge of identifying and aiding the victims;

- Means for promoting demand;
- Proper measures for aiding the victims, including access to medical treatment, a good and safe dwelling place and interpreters.



SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Article 24 *Sustained Development*

1. The signatory acknowledges that as regards strategy planning and development for the future of its territory, the principles of sustainable development must be fully complied with. That these must include a balanced integration of the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimension, and that they shall also include the need equality of men and women.

2. The signatory therefore undertakes to take into consideration the principle of women's and men's equality as a fundamental dimension of all its planning, or the development of strategies, in every issue connected to sustainable development of its territory.

Article 25 *Urban and Local Planning*

1. The signatory acknowledges the relevance of the development of its area, its transport, its economy, as well as that of its policies and plans for use of the soil, in order to create the conditions in which it might be easier to achieve the right to equality of men and women.

2. The signatory undertakes to guaranty that in the conception, drafting, adoption and application of these policies and plans:

- The need for promoting real equality in all aspects of local life shall be fully taken into consideration;
- They shall duly take into account the specific needs of women and men, for example, as regards employment, access to services and cultural life, education and the exercise of family responsibilities based on relevant local data or others, including gen-

der assessments carried out by the signatory organization;

- Large adaptations shall be made considering the needs of women and men.

Article 26 *Mobility and Transport*

1. The signatory acknowledges that mobility and access to means of transport are essential conditions for women and men to exercise a great number of their rights, jobs, activities, including access to employment, education, culture and basic services. It also acknowledges that sustainable development and success in a municipality or a region largely depend on the development of an infrastructure and an efficient and high quality public transport service.

2. The signatory also acknowledges that women and men often have in practice different needs and habits as regards movements and transport, based on factors such as income, responsibilities in connection to sons and daughters and other persons in their charge, or their working schedules, and therefore, women use public transport more than men.

3. The signatory therefore undertakes:

a) To take into account the respective needs for mobility and the ways in which women and men use transport, including public urban and rural transport;

b) To act in such a way that transport services offered to citizens in their territory help to respond to specific needs, as well as the common needs of women and men, and to achieve a real equality of women and men in local life.

4. The signatory also undertakes to promote a steady improvement of public transport in its territory, including inter-modal connections, in order to address the

specific and common needs of women and men as regards transport. Such service must be regular, affordable, safe, accessible and aid sustainable development.

Article 27 *Economic Development*

1. The signatory acknowledges that the achievement of balanced and sustainable economic development is a key component of the success of a municipality or region and that its activities and services in this area may significantly promote progress towards equality of men and women.

2. The signatory acknowledges the need to increase women's employment level and quality and also acknowledges that the poverty risk connected to long term unemployment and non-remunerated employment is especially high for women.

3. The signatory undertakes, as regards its activities and services in the field of economic development, to take into account needs and interests of women and men, as well as opportunities which allow for progress to be made towards equality and to take the necessary measures to achieve the same. Such actions may include:

- Assisting and encouraging women entrepreneurs;
- Ensuring that in the support provided to companies, not only financial but other types of support as well, equality of men and women is promoted;
- Encouraging women that are being trained to acquire the necessary skills and qualifications for obtaining jobs which are generally considered as "male jobs" and vice versa;
- Encouraging employers to hire women students or students on apprenticeship who are skilled and qualified for jobs generally considered as "male jobs", by offering them such jobs, and vice versa.

Article 28 *The Environment*

1. The signatory acknowledges its responsibility in improving the quality of the environment within its territory, including local policies regarding waste, noise, air quality, biodiversity and the impact of climate changes. It also acknowledges women's and men's legal right to benefit from the signatory's environmental services and policies.

2. The signatory acknowledges that in many places the lifestyles of women and men are different, that women and men usually make different use of local services and outdoor areas, or even face different environmental issues.

3. Therefore, the signatory undertakes, as regards development of its environmental policies and services, to take into full and equal consideration specific needs connected to the respective lifestyles of women and men and the principle of solidarity among the different age groups.

THE ROLE OF REGULATIONS

Article 29 *Local Governments as Regulators*

1. The signatory government, when performing its duties and authorities, in its capacity as regulator of the relevant activities within its territory, acknowledges the importance of the role of effective regulations regarding consumers' protection for keeping the safety and welfare of the local population, and that women and men may be affected in different ways by the activities which must be regulated.

2. When performing its regulation duties, the signatory undertakes to take into account the specific needs, interests and conditions of existence of women and men.



TOWN-TWINNING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Article 30

1. The signatory acknowledges the value of town-twinning and cooperation of the local and regional communities for bringing citizens together and promoting the exchange of knowledge and mutual understanding beyond national borders.

2. The signatory undertakes, as regards its town-twinning and European and international cooperation:

- To encourage participation, in equal

terms, of women and men from different horizons;

- To use its town-twinning relationships and European and international partnerships as a platform for exchanging experiences and issues on equality of men and women;

- To integrate the principles of gender equality in its decentralized cooperation actions.

* | *With the cooperation of the following partners: National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria, Union of Cypriot Municipalities, Union of Cities and Municipalities of The Czech Republic (SMOCR), Finnish Association of Local and Regional Powers, French Association of the CEMR (AFCCRE), German Section of the CEMR (RGRE), Central Union of Greek Cities and Municipalities (KEDKE), National Hungarian Association of Local Authorities (TŐOSZ), Italian Association of the CEMR (AICCRE), Tuscan Federation of the CEMR (AICCRE), Syndicate of Luxembourgian Cities and Municipal Governments (SYVICOL), Association of Polish Cities (ZMP), Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), Association of Basque Municipalities (EUDEL), Municipal Government of Cartagena (Spain), Municipal Government of Valencia (Spain), Municipal Government of Frankfurt am Main (Germany), Municipal Government of Saint-Jean de la Ruelle (France), Municipal Government of Vienna (Austria), Time and Mobility Agency of Belfort-Montbéliard (France), and Permanent Committee for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of Local and Regional Organizations (COPPEM).*





Analysis of experiences: Decentralised co-operation, social inclusion and gender*

One of the main objectives of the experiences in decentralised co-operation studied by the Observatory deals with the creation of areas for social inclusion, which aim to reduce poverty, fight social exclusion and the fragmentation of social fabric in participating communities. Among these experiences, projects concerning social cohesion which contemplated the gender perspective are worth mentioning. These projects help individuals restore their ordinary social roles, contribute to the integration of citizens, reconstruct the original social fabric, as well as strengthen pluralism and credibility of the political institution are among other goals. To sum up, the main idea is to reconstruct social and individual abilities at local community levels, to achieve strongly based organizations, network systems and public-private alliances.

Thus, the following article intends to present three different outstanding experiences in the field of decentralised co-operation which seeks social inclusion with a gender perspective. The first experience shows the Alianza Madriz-Madrid (AMM- Madriz-Madrid Alliance), a successful example of a kind of decentralised co-operation which lies in a municipal network of co-operation for development and represents a new model of decentralised co-operation based on an open and participative system which is in turn grounded on a municipal approach to mitigate poverty and attain sustainable development. Co-operation between Santa Cruz de Tenerife and the Regional Government of Canarias with the Montevideo Municipal Government represents the second experience, and it provides a good example for the strengthening of city council programmes in the field of health assistance, which are grounded on a non-traditional approach for assisting users and providing services. The third and last experience was carried out by the Municipalidad de Intendencia, which evidenced the actions city councils can undertake in order to strengthen local development, social inclusion and poverty reduction through co-operation and the strengthening of bonds.

* Selection and narration of experiences by the OCD Antena Latinoamericana. We are thankful to William Moreno Arce, Head of International Co-operation at the Municipalidad de Independencia.

1. Madriz —Madrid Alliance (Nicaragua-Spain)

1.1 The Alliance

The Madriz-Madrid Alliance (AMM) is a city council network designed to co-operate with development projects which aim to allocate resources in the most efficient way. The AMM is simply defined as a useful instrument which reinforces city council authority and power, which strengthens the capacities of Madriz local authorities to fight poverty and aim to achieve sustainable development, improve governance, achieve democratic transparency, and at the same time involve citizens and organizations so that they can share responsibilities in these kinds of undertakings.

The Alliance, originated in April 2002, is sponsored by the Federación de Municipios de Madrid (Madrid City Councils Federation – FMM), with the collaboration of the Comunidad de Madrid (Madrid Community) and the Asociación de Municipios de Nicaragua (Nicaragua City Councils Association – AMUNIC). Furthermore, the Instituto Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (Union Institute of Co-operation for Development ISCOD) also contributes to the implementation of this project, as the Presidency of Nicaragua, the Agencia Española de Cooperación en Nicaragua (Spanish Co-operation Agency in Nicaragua), the Instituto Nicaraguense de Fomento Municipal (Nicaraguan Institute for City Council Development) among other Spanish and Nicaraguan institutions. Today, the Alliance is made up of nine municipalities in Madriz and 21 city councils in Madrid.

1.2 Alianza Goals

The AMM's mission is to strengthen the Madrid city councils authority so that they

themselves can plan and monitor co-operation for the development of their communities' in a holistic way, which would in turn lead to strengthening the Alliance.

By aiming to involve as many city councils as possible, the primary objective of the Alliance is to enhance development and the institutional improvement of Madriz city councils alike, so that they have the resources and powers they need to receive and manage resources coming from foreign co-operation in agreement with civil society, and they can also endeavour to incorporate cooperation agencies, institutions and NGOs. Hence, the Alliance appears to be a good example of local decentralised cooperation which involves other local organizations and reaps the benefit of their participation.

1.3 Outstanding Projects

The Alliance represents a new model for decentralised cooperation which opens up to all community-based NGOs, agencies, entities and organizations that evidence participative visions and city council approaches. Thus, the AMM intends to overcome some of the current shortages at the city council decentralised co-operation level.

Among the different projects executed by the Alliance, two outstanding experiences concerning child and youth care were selected:

1) The Line of Action originated at the Madriz city councils level for the development of efficient solutions in the field of child and youth care, which was basically aimed at eradicating begging, child labour and promoting school integration of boys and girls and youngsters between 10 and 16 years old. This project aims to create mechanisms through which local authorities can be fortified, especially in terms of their technical skills to meet the needs of this population sector at local and province/state levels and to implement



actions and programmes which contribute to eradicating poverty and child marginality.

2) The present undertaking by the FMM, with the collaboration of the Fundación Comparte (Share Foundation), the Fundación Febretto (Febretto Foundation) and the AMM is devoted to sponsoring girls and boy of Madriz, refugees and victims of natural disasters and wars. HYPERLINK "<http://www.apadrinamadriz.org>"

1.4 Participating City Councils.

In Madriz: Somoto, San Lucas, Telpaneca, Totogalpa, Las Sábanas, Palacagüiña, San José de Cuzmapa, San Juan de Río Coco, Yalagüiña.

In Madrid: Alcobendas, Alpedrete, Aranjuez, Arganda del Rey, Becerril de la Sierra, Boadilla del Monte, Cadalso de los Vidrios, Collado Villalba, Fuenlabrada, Getafe, Laganés, Madrid, Móstoles, Parla, Rivas Vaciamadrid, San Martín de los Valdeiglesias, San Martín de la Vega, San Sebastián de los Reyes, Torrejón de Ardoz, Torreldones, Valdemoro, Villnueva de la Cañada, Villanueva del pardi.

For further information:

Alianza Madriz-Madrid-HYPERLINK "<http://fm-madrid.com/proyectos.php>"

2. "Strengthening the Municipal Health Programme in the Montevideo Neighbourhoods" - Montevideo Municipal Government - Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Canary Islands Regional Government.

2.1. Summary of the project

The programme, which is financed by the Santa Cruz City Council together with

the Canary Islands Regional Government and implemented by the Montevideo Municipal Government (Intendencia Municipal de Montevideo - IMM), intended to strengthen the municipal health programmes in the neighbourhoods of Montevideo. This programme spread from January to June 2004, although similar experiences had already been put into practice by IMM for a decade.

The programmes specific target was to improve health assistance services in the different neighbourhoods of the cities, which are directly provided by the IMM with the contribution of local actors. Hence, throughout its two stages, the project was concerned with assisting the poorest population of the city of Montevideo, who require health care service at both health care centres and mobile polyclinics. In this way, the project aimed to cause a qualitative impact on the population that would benefit from this service, since these people belong to impoverished sectors of the population and live in informal urban settlements where unemployment and social exclusion rates are high. The programme directly benefited around 200,000 out of 1,000,000 people who live in the city suburbs, and it likewise indirectly benefited a further 600,000.

2.2 Goals

The programme goals were the following:

- 1) To spread health care services to those areas which don't have permanent health care centres by means of providing "mobile polyclinics" mechanism, which apply alternative "non-hierarchized" health care methods for the promotion of health and for primary and secondary prevention purposes alike;
- 2) To incorporate equipment and material for educational purposes;
- 3) To outfit municipal polyclinics;
- 4) To instal the Health Information System in these centres to favour the right management of processes and evaluations, reporting

on epidemiological and essential coverage variables for primary health care services, and the appropriate complementarity with the national services which are run at territorial division levels in Uruguay (known as departments);

5) To organize educational actions and strengthen the "Comisión de Apoyo al Programa de Atención de la Mujer" (Women Health Care Supporting Committee).

2.3. Beneficiaries

It is worth mentioning that the project managed to improve health care assistance for the population in most need – especially women, children – by strengthening paediatric, gynaecological, nursing, family doctor and dental care services. For this purpose an alternative model was applied in terms of education, health care services and prevention, which ignored the traditional hierarchized systems. Hence, the programme focused on pregnant women and adolescents, contraceptive methods, cancer detection and prevention, etc.

2.4 Outstanding Projects

The following good practices have been selected:-

- 1) The programme's ability to support the initial stage of a private-public funded joint initiative which had already been implemented by the IMM, was in need of support and reinforcement in order to guarantee the provision of these health care services;
- 2) The programme's emphasis on prevention and education, in addition to providing health care services at the primary health care level;
- 3) The construction of an interesting mechanism for managing health care systems, which brings together public institutions, privates enterprises, NGOs, organizations and international co-operation which can be replicated in other areas of the world;

4) To incorporate the concept of mobile health care services by means of "mobile polyclinics", which resulted in wider coverage in health care services and ensured their access by the poor sector in the population who inhabit city suburbs. Thus, the needs of vulnerable sectors such as the elderly, pregnant women, newborns and youngsters (the latter due to drug related problem, unwanted and non-accepted pregnancies and contagious diseases) were met;

5) To build up a new programme model based on a flexible infrastructure, so that it can be adapted to and reproduced in order to respond to the priorities needs of population and the field equipments available;

For further information:

Santa Cruz City Council-<http://www.sctfe.es/aytos/>
Canary Islands Regional Government
-<http://www.gobcan.es/>
Montevideo Municipal Government –
<http://www.montevideo.gub.uy/>

3. Social Development with International Co-operation – Independencia City Council (Peru)

3.1. The initiative

With the purpose of generating and supporting local development, in 2003 the Independencia City Council created the International Cooperation and Project Design Unit aiming to take part in different projects, and sign town-twinning and co-operation agreements. As a matter of fact, it is widely known that the national government fails to offer financial support to the Independencia City Council and at the same time the latter accounts for high poverty rates, Something



rather typical in a number of Latin American municipalities. However, Independencia has aimed to respond to this reality with a strategic plan from 2003 to 2006 to generate local development by improving international co-operation.

3.2. First actions

One of the first actions carried out by the Co-operation Unit was to include Independencia as a member of the thematic networks comprising the URB-AL Programme of the European Commission. Thus, the already existing bonds between Latin American and European cities were consolidated. By means of example, in 2003 the “Women Self-determination through Local Employment” project was approved, as it happened later with other projects such as the “International Observatory on rights and opportunities for women head of household (Latina City Council); the “E-Budget” (City of Esjberg); “Women Participation in the Participative Budget” (Recife Municipality) and “Collective Safety and Self-Protection” (Santa Cruz de Tenerife City Council).

3.3. Strengthening networks

The strategy for local development was complemented by the municipal lines of action at local government levels which are focused on inclusion, such as the Organización Iberoamericana de Co-operación Intermunicipal (Inter-Municipal Co-operation Iberoamerican Organization - OICI), Ciudades y Gobiernos Locales Unidos (Cities and Local Governments United), the Federación Latinoamericana de Ciudades (Latin American City Federation), Municipios y Asociaciones (City Councils and Associations – FLACMA), as well as the Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (Spanish Municipalities and Provinces Federation), apart from the signing of several town-

twinning agreements with European and Latin American cities.

3.4. Town-twinning and co-operation for social inclusion

Based on the idea that international co-operation provides excellent opportunities to promote local development and strengthen the municipal government, Independencia has established two decentralised co-operation agreements: one of them with the Trápaga city council (Vizcaya, Basque Country) and the other one with the Comuns de Eubens, Gieres y Poisat (France) for the generation of waterways and sewage systems in the urban settlements, among other actions concerned with social inclusion. Despite the financial aid not being significant in terms of figures – as the Independencia City Council itself has stated – it generated an important social impact by enabling to meet the population’s basic needs in the poorest areas of the municipality.

Since French co-operation, through the Comuns de Eubens, Gieres y Poisat, has been financing waterworks and sewage of seven informal urban settlements in the district, and so far, it has invested 80,000 euros during the current municipal administration. This financing began 10 years ago and throughout these years it has been improved and redesigned thanks to the contribution of the Unidad de Cooperación de la Muncipalidad de Independencia in agreement with the French Consulate in Peru. This projects is characterized by involving other co-operation actors, such as SUM-Canada (a Canadian NGO currently working in Peru), which manages the French funds and executes the works, apart from financially contributing to cover some of the project’s costs. Therefore, these projects involve four different sources: French co-operation, SUM-Canada, the City Council and the benefited communities themselves.

Likewise, the agreement with the Trapaga City Council in 2003, which has financed the waterworks and sewage in the informal urban settlements, including the construction of a network and residential service connections for 60 families, has also contributed to creating inclusion and recreational areas for the municipality’s children in need. It is worth mentioning that the Trapaga City Council will act as the contact in Spain to expand the solidarity bonds to benefit the Independencia City Council, what enables exchange of information and experiences on the development levels achieved by both municipalities in terms of urban, socio-cultural, productive, trade and development and tech-

nical assistance issues.

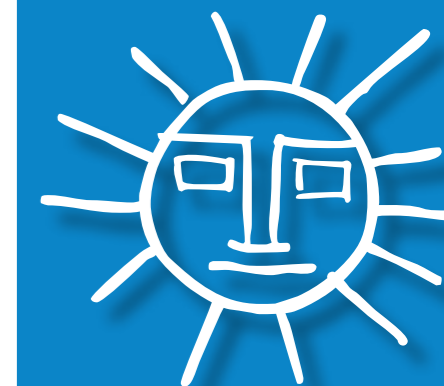
For further information:

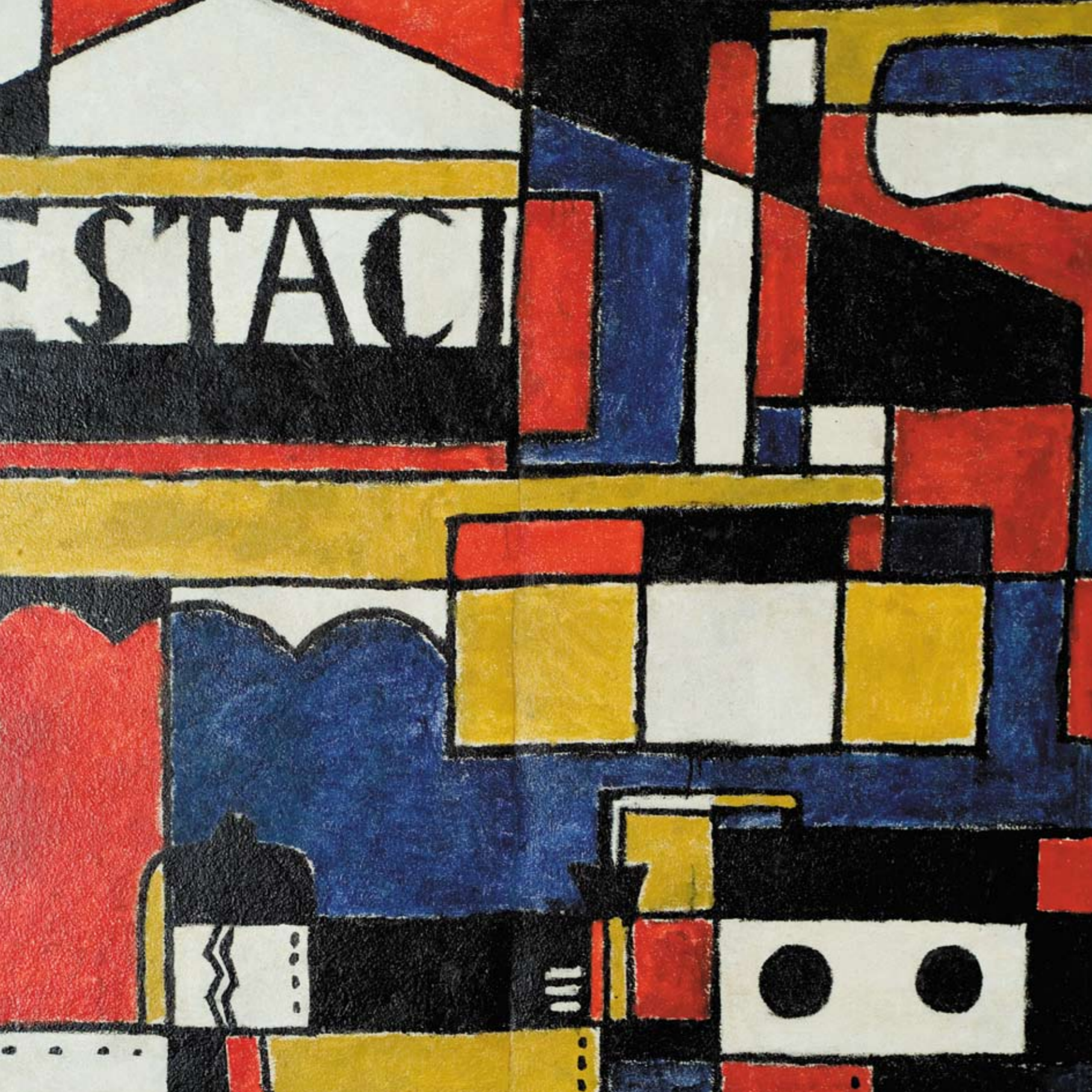
Municipalidad de Independencia <http://www.muniindependencia.gob.pe/>.

Ayuntamiento de Trápaga <http://www.valledetrapaga-trapagaran.org/index2html>

Comuna de Eybens <http://www.ville-eybens.fr/>

Comuna de Gieres <http://www.mairies-gieres.fr/>





Governance and institutional strengthening

Some of the main impacts of decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America may be found within the sphere of governance and the capacity-building of its participants. This section is dedicated to analysing precisely these types of initiatives within a field in which the “horizontality” of decentralised cooperation is probably observed with most clarity.

The articles included in this section are centred on identifying the impact of decentralised cooperation on the capacity-building of local governments in the North and the South. Capacity-building is of special importance to the Observatory, since it deals with one of the most prominent features on what we understand by decentralised cooperation. For a decentralised cooperation initiative to be considered successful, it is essential that it has a positive effect on Sub-State governments’ capacities for management. The first article in this section specifically centres on analysing what impact decentralised cooperation has on the reinforcement of management capacities. This type of impact may assume different patterns: it usually offers instruments that improve local governing capacities, although it also opens up new political spaces for Sub-State governments.

The second article deals with a specific aspect of governance: citizen participation, the bridge between civil society and public powers. This concept is essential when analysing processes through which societies participate in the design and implementation of decentralised cooperation initiatives, especially taking into account that the Sub-State governments are those closest to the citizens.

Finally, this section includes a paragraph containing some decentralised cooperation initiatives regarding governance and capacity-building. It obviously does not try to be an all-embracing description, but it does illustrate some interesting initiatives and important efforts detected within this sphere.



Introduction



Decentralised cooperation and institutional strengthening of local governments in the North and the South

Carlos Hernández Ferreiro*
Carlos Illán Sailer**

KEY WORDS

Decentralised cooperation |
Capacity-building |
Local authorities |
Latin America |
European Union |
New territorial policy |

This article analyses the impact of decentralised cooperation on the capacity-building of local authorities in both the North and the South. Our starting point is that synergy relationships are created through decentralised cooperation. These relationships have a beneficial impact on the consolidation of local institutions, which is manifested through two fundamental mechanisms. In the first place, decentralised cooperation programmes have aided local authorities by providing different instruments with which to improve their governance and management capacity, especially in the South. In the second place, cooperation opens a new space for local politics, which has achieved the consolidation of local institutions as political actors in a context in which the structures of political authority are becoming increasingly diffuse.

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1. Introduction

Some years ago, during an informal interview with a Cuban international employee in Rome, he made the following assessment on the role of decentralised cooperation: “Decentralised cooperation is the cooperation that truly works. I have seen projects operating at local level, projects on human development in Cuba, and how synergies originated between the participants at both ends. You know, decentralised cooperation works because it goes further than just distinguishing between assistance donors and receivers.” Independently from the importance we may wish to grant decentralised cooperation within the global framework of development cooperation policies, there is no doubt that decentralised cooperation has increased as an ever more vibrant body, with improved management and greater resources with which to carry out projects.

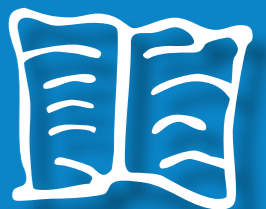
In this article, we are attempting to assess the role of decentralised cooperation on local authorities’ capacity-building and governance, in both the South and the North. We shall view capacity-building from a broad perspective. That is, to view it as a group of processes which strengthens local institutions’ capacity to perform those functions entrusted to them. This capacity-building process has a political-institutional dimension through the strengthening of local autonomy and local democracy. In addition, capacity-building has a technical-

administrative dimension when attempting to improve the impact of local authorities on the paths followed by citizens of life of the citizens in a specific territory, by incorporating new public policy models or improving local public administration structures and human resources.¹

Our starting point is the fact that through decentralised cooperation, Sub-state entities from the North and the South establish relationship patterns that are complex and multi-directional. In other words, as our interlocutor was saying, relationship models are articulated to go much further than the traditional distinction between donor entities and receiving entities. Rather, synergies are created, bringing about positive effects for the institutional articulation of local authorities both in the South and in the North. These synergies are articulated through different “mechanisms”: In the first place, through the initiatives of decentralised cooperation within the specific scope of capacity-building. Local authorities and entities, especially (although not exclusively) in the South, have been able to obtain access to resources and models for the “articulation” of their public policies which would otherwise have been unattainable to them.

In many Latin American countries, decentralised cooperation has had a positive impact through the export of best institutional practices for specific public policy management. It has also contributed to develop the local authority actions that are increasingly accomplishing the integration of the area’s Sub-State

¹ |In any case, it would be convenient to have the quantitative input of assistance rendered by each local government and the percentage that is aimed at the governmental sector and civil society, using the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) classification system, in which sub-sectors linked to capacity-building may be found, even though it does not appear as such. In a recent study carried out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2005), but with data gathered for 2002 and 2003, the following X-ray may be taken of European decentralised cooperation: according to the figures issued by the different member States of the European Union, OECD estimates that the allotted to Official Assistance for Development (OAD) in the year 2003 reached 1,149.9 million United States dollars (USD), both directly and through NGOD and other organisations. These documents give an estimate, albeit with great precaution, of the amount of resources that could have been earmarked for Latin America in 2003: between 250 and 450 million USD (Male 2006). Using this same approach, the reduction of the amount allotted directly by decentralized public administrations to an average of 30% has been proposed; this would represent a volume of resources close to 150 million dollars.



governments' interests, within the framework of complex decentralisation processes which, in most cases, are accompanied by important processes to reform public administration and democratic the institutions.

There also exists, however, what we could call an "indirect mechanism" through which decentralised cooperation relationships have allowed the capacity-building of Sub-state entities. Centralised development cooperation has therefore opened new spaces from which to organise the institutional political action and thus strengthen its role before society and other institutional agents.

Since the mid eighties, a new form of understanding politics is being built at local and regional levels, in both the North and the South. Territorial politics stop using the State as their only reference point, attaining new naturalisation papers through new interaction patterns with other Sub-State agents, supra-national organisations or with the social movements. As we shall attempt to show further on, the development of decentralised cooperation as praxis within the sphere of international development cooperation has created an unequalled framework for this new way of understanding politics at a Sub-state government level.

For many Sub-state entities, decentralised cooperation has become the framework through which to articulate dialogues with civil society associations, as well as their participation in different public initiatives. In addition, increasingly complex programmes for foreign projection of Sub-State governments are structured through decentralised cooperation, especially in the case of decentralised cooperation carried out by European regional governments. Moreover, municipal entities are strengthening their institutional role against other government levels through decentralised cooperation in both the South and the North.

Our aim in this article is to analyse both mechanisms and illustrate their operating patterns with some choice examples. We have there-

fore divided the article as follows: In the first place, we shall analyse the impact of decentralised cooperation on Latin American municipalities. Local governments in this region are facing profound changes. Decentralisation processes that began taking place in the region in the eighties, added to processes of transition and democratic consolidation, have altered local authorities' roles in the context of Latin American institutionalities. Latin American municipalities have tried to consolidate themselves within the framework of the deep reforms that have taken place in the region, by participating in decentralised cooperation programmes in the sphere of capacity-building. Decentralised cooperation has also aided the progressive internationalisation of Latin American municipalities, strengthening their role as development agents.

In the second place, we shall analyse the impact of decentralised cooperation programmes on municipalities of north. In this case, the strengthening of local authorities comes about mainly through the indirect mechanism we have mentioned above. Municipalities of the north have been able to place decentralised cooperation within a wider framework of a wider process to redefine local political area.

In the last part of the article, we shall attempt to present some final remarks on decentralised cooperation as an instrument for capacity-building.

2. Decentralised cooperation and capacity-building of local authorities in the South

2.1. Capacity-building of local authorities in Latin America

In Latin American countries, decentralisation and the formation of citizens are two prime issues in the parallel processes of eco-

nomical modernisation, the fight against poverty, and democratisation. In this context, strengthening municipal capacities appears as a conditioning factor to improve the degree of "openness" of the country's institutions and their susceptibility to reform. Likewise, this role is generally acknowledged by central governments, international organisations, and society as a whole, as a requirement for the participation of civil society in the development process.

One should thus take into account that when talking of capacity-building, one must also mention the framework in which this practice is situated: that of decentralisation processes undertaken in the last century in Latin America, at the end of the eighties and mostly at the beginning of the nineties. In fact, trying to specify the role of capacity-building, one must remember that in the end, the objectives of any local authority in the sphere of public politics are: on the one hand, efficiency in rendering services along with accountability to the users, and, on the other hand, promotion of democratisation, that is, citizen participation and accountability.

In the following sections, we shall analyse the impact of decentralised cooperation programmes in two fields of local authority capacity-building in Latin America. In the first place, we shall analyse the relation between decentralisation and democracy, and the role local authorities can play as catalysts for political participation and as a space for the promotion of a more egalitarian society in the exercise of citizens' rights.

In the second place, we shall analyse the impact some decentralised cooperation initiatives have had on the capacity of local institutions of turning into catalysts for the communities' socio-economic development through different technical assistance and training projects.

Finally, we shall analyse some of the indirect effects decentralised cooperation between

the European Union (EU) and Latin America have had on regional municipalities. To sum up, we shall attempt to explain how, through the participation in decentralised cooperation programmes, Latin American cities have been able to develop new governance models with which to meet some global challenges.

2.2. Decentralisation, democracy and the strengthening of local institutions in Latin America

One of the main issues that have arisen from the decentralisation processes in Latin America is the capacity of local authorities to strengthen the development of democracy in the countries of the region.

Although in most cases the decentralising processes have not ended the centralist political culture persisting in the region, we can say that decentralisation processes have developed within the framework of wider reform processes that intended not only to improve public administration performance in these countries, but also to bring democracy closer to the citizens and to open up political systems to greater participation.

From this point of view, Andrew Selee (2004) states that the development of the decentralisation/democratisation binomial offers dissimilar results in the area. According to this author, the impact of decentralisation on strengthening citizen participation and capacity to control institutional actions is still an elusive element, since there is empirical evidence that would allow us to sustain both the hypothesis that decentralisation strengthens the settlement of democratic institutions, as well as the opposite hypothesis.

While decentralisation in a country such as Guatemala has had beneficial effects on the political participation of the indigenous community, or while in Mexico the local level has become a truly competitive political arena, the reality of exercising political power in the region shows us that local authorities also become inserted into networks that exercise political power in an al-



Chart 1 | Maximizing women's participation in Escazú, Costa Rica

A project is underway in the Escazú City Council, regarding gender equality and women's empowerment in the local sphere. The objective of this project is to maximize women's capacities to exercise their citizenship rights, as well as to improve gender equality, maximizing local government capacities to integrate women's needs and interests and to improve their living conditions. Among the main results to be highlighted we find: the improvement of instruments for the incorporation of women to the labour market, the creation of an entrepreneurial culture while consolidating the role of women in the municipal sphere in defence of their interests and needs, and of a culture of gender equality.

Source: URB-AL Programme

most patronizing way perspective, transforming local institutions into one more resource in the structure of interchange between power and specific sectors of society (O'Neill 2005).

Decentralised cooperation has thus had quite a discreet impact in this area. Decentralised cooperation programmes destined to promote local democracy have directly tended to establish and develop participative decision processes (such as participative budgets) or to improve the conditions for participation in public life of socially marginalised groups such as indigenous people, women, etc.

The construction of more inclusive and more democratic political systems is a matter that still remains in the realm of different national policies and of the development of comprehensive reform processes that will allow narrowing the inequality gap existing in Latin America regarding the exercise of citizens' civil rights.

Decentralised cooperation is contributing to the construction of more genuinely democratic spaces at a local level; however, the future development of a democratic culture

and the inclusion in a framework of exercising citizens' rights as well as their exercise, are still open items in a global political scenario in which the forms of authority are increasingly fluid.

In the following example, the incorporation of information technologies to local democracy operations is viewed as an important instrument with which to improve the democratic quality of local authorities in Latin America.

2.3. Decentralisation, strengthening of local autonomy and decentralised cooperation

The second issue that has arisen with decentralisation processes in Latin America is up to what point local authorities can act as political agents in the development of public policies and the rendering of basic services to society, aimed at having a positive impact on the life paths followed by citizens.

Chart 2 | E-democracy and the development of local democracy in Latin America

The E-ágora programme, coordinated from the French Issy-Les-Moulineaux City Council has attempted to explore the use of new technologies in the democratic experience of local communities. This initiative, financed by the European Union URB-Latin America programme, has attempted not only to improve citizen access to information technologies that could ease their political participation, but also to assess the measure in which these new technologies help to improve controlling capacities and public opinion formation processes in a local political context. From the comparative experience in several city councils, the E-ágora programme has been able to establish diverse patterns and alternative paths to improve the quality of local democracy through the use of new information technology.

Source: URB-AL Programme

Starting in the eighties, models have been elaborated to show how local authorities can play the part of catalysts in economic growth and in improving communities' living conditions. Without entering into details on the different models offered, the arguments provided by specialised literature are centred on local entities' capacity to reduce costs and asymmetries of information, giving way to more efficient and effective public policies to promote economic development.

In addition, the increasing globalisation of economic exchanges and the development of new production methods that operate on a scale ranging from global to local, in which States no longer hold the capacity to act as intermediaries between the economic sphere and the territories, have placed authorities at the centre of a global debate on new modes of economic development and the impact of globalisation dynamics on territories and communities.

In this context, local authorities all over the world have wider authority in terms of rendering of public or social services or in the development

of economic planning instruments, which will allow them to act on these dynamics and effectively promote the socio-economic development of their territories.

Latin America is no exception. If we compare local public administrations' level of presence in today's Latin American societies with those twenty years back, we can agree with literature on the topic, that decentralisation processes have placed resources in the hands of local authorities so that they can manage their own socio-economic development (Selee 2004, Helmsing 2001, Oxhorn, Tulchin and Selee 2004, Montero and Samuels 2004).

This greater presence of local administrations in the life-paths followed by citizens has, however, had significant adaptation costs. The need to create new models of public policies and, of adequately training staff working in public administrations, the need to develop new, more efficient policy instruments, all within the context of decentralisation processes that in many cases do not clearly define what we could consider to be the municipal area of political autonomy.

Chart 3 | An example of twinning-cooperation in local authority capacity-building - Amsterdam and Managua

Town-twinning of Amsterdam and Managua City Councils, signed in 1984 and ratified in October 1997, seeks to reinforce local governments and local democracy, as well as to promote citizen participation and social welfare. Among its specific objectives are:

- *To stimulate the support of technical and financial aid from different groups, social organizations, and municipal offices from Amsterdam for their counterparts in Managua.*
- *To promote informative, educational, and awareness activities that will contribute to a better social and cultural understanding between the citizens of both cities.*

Within this town-twinning framework, the Managua City Council has developed the following projects: Central Area Master Plan (PMAC), Solid Waste Management Plan for Managua, Ciudad Sandino Watershed Management Plan (PlaMaCs) and Nueva Vida Arborisation. The General Municipal Development Plan (PGDM) is currently under execution.

Source: URB-AL Programme

In this context, the sponsored town-twinning and technical assistance programmes, from a perspective of decentralised cooperation, have had a positive impact on the capacity-building of local authorities as regards services and matters directly affecting the development of better standards of living for the citizens.

The evolution of the town-twinning programmes between European and Latin American local entities is marked by an increase in the actions destined to maximise the municipality's integral development.

The involvement of the private corporations in European programmes and the formation of municipal networking is manifested as a generalised tendency, which shows that town-twinning may be under constant evolution and serve as the frame for any novelty,

remaining open to social transformations and to the development of international relationships.

The so-called town-twinning co-operation arises as a result of this evolution, to strengthen, from a solidarity angle, the cooperation between municipalities, channelling their activity to development cooperation projects through economic inputs and technical advice, while at the same time articulating reciprocity links.

In this same way, over and above town-twinning, the town halls and municipalities have been developing ample technical assistance activities in the sphere of municipal strengthening.

Those programmes fulfil diverse objectives, among which are: the export of best management practices, improving local admini-

nistration staff training, developing specific programmes for local resource management and improving instrumental planning for economic growth.

An innovative example in this aspect may be the project "Practicar: un laboratorio para el intercambio de experiencias y la capacitación en políticas públicas específicas". ("Practice: a laboratory for the exchange of experiences and training in specific public policies.") This project was created within the framework of the URB-AL Programme, Network 10; it is coordinated by the Rome City Council, and developed by 15 member cities. The general objective is designing instruments and the dissemination of "best practices" to strengthen public policies in the fight against the new urban poverty, in a vision that unites research and action.

2.4. The internationalisation of Latin American cities as a collateral effect

One of the capacity-building spaces that has most gone unnoticed in literature on the topic is that of the globalisation of Latin American cities.

The changes undergone in worldwide economic and political spheres cause relations between the different levels of government to operate less under the paradigm of sovereignty and more under the idea of autonomy. In other words, our idea of politics has changed from a hierarchical order, where the State sovereignty principle was the key element when defining different patterns of relationships within the system, to a new order in which sovereignty is questioned as a ruling principle and gives way to new, much more flexible, forms of political authority.

The group of activities by which cities and regions acquire international dimension for their policies, known as Sub-state government globalisation, becomes a leading

political instrument at the time of meeting the challenges posed by an increasingly globalised world, in the economic aspect, and in which the sources of power are subject to change.

Although we shall be analysing this phenomenon in detail further on, when we speak of the impact of decentralised cooperation on the capacity-building of municipalities of the North, it will suffice to say that the institutional consolidation of both municipalities and regions goes through the management of globalisation programmes to cope with the above mentioned challenges, as well as to ensure the territory's better governance. In this way, local democratic authorities have been creating and strengthening relationship networks among themselves and with the group of inter- and supra-national organisations.

Independently from the use made of other globalisation strategies, Latin American municipalities have succeeded in making contact with other actors operating in the international arena through their participation in different development cooperation and decentralised cooperation programmes. Among others, supra-national organisations such as United Nations (UN), the World Bank, or the European Union, philanthropic foundations, non-governmental organisations, public foundations, and also cities and regions of other countries.

Multidiscipline international co-operation has eased Sub-state entity access to international development assistance programmes. Since the nineties, the sphere of cooperation has been opened to participation of diverse actors in an attempt to bring it closer to citizens, both in the donor and recipient countries of the assistance programme.

Decentralised cooperation programmes have had an increasingly important role in the development of cooperation agendas



of various multilateral organisations (UN, World Bank, and European Union, among others). These programmes have seen a way of ensuring sustainability and efficacy of the assistance programmes through the participation of cities, as well as a way of promoting an economic development model that is closer to the citizen and therefore more participatory.

In this context, Latin American cities have mobilised using diverse patterns. In some cases, municipal institutions respond to pressure from Non-Governmental Organisations for Development (NGOD) that operate within the territory and that are generally linked to other NGOD and networks that operate in other parts of the world. In other cases, cities and municipalities make contact directly with international organisations in search of funding to develop projects in the territory.

Another way of implementing international co-operation is through different modalities of political pressure, within the framework of negotiation processes of different international assistance programmes between the State and international organisations or other States, achieving a direct impact of these programmes on the city or municipality.

Finally, Sub-state governments and Latin American cities have been able to take advantage of the links established by the flow of immigration and emigration to establish relationships with other cities around the world.

Latin American cities, above all those located in rural areas (that do not have access to other means for their globalisation), have found in the implementation of and participation in development cooperation programmes, a niche through which to incorporate themselves to the logic of a policy in which transition between global and local is less and less aided by other traditional institutional structures.

The increasing participation of local entities in the international sphere through the different fields of international cooperation has resulted in a progressive expansion of the role of municipalities within the framework of increasingly complex global political agendas. As shown in the following example, these are attempts to contribute from a local institutional point of view, to the development of said debates and to the implementation of public policies from the territorial levels of the government.

This case is about the application of indirect mechanisms through which Sub-state governments of the region improve their position and their access to decision levels where global agendas and problems are managed, thus improving the capacity of local authorities to meet said challenges.

In the above example, the mobilisation of Latin American municipalities within the frame of international agendas on sustainable development is clearly evident. As we shall see further on, by means of mobilisation in the sphere of important international agendas, local authorities endow their political autonomy with new contents, in a context in which public performance takes place in an increasingly complex structure of authority.

In the above-mentioned case, through commitments accepted in the sphere of the global environmental sustainability agenda, local authorities are able to attract the attention of international organisations, turning themselves into fundamental partners with agendas to be implemented. This is also the way they achieve access to resources, both economic and know how, essential when directing their public policies (such as planning and territorial usage strategies), improving the institutions' output and their capacity to respond to the challenges that globalisation poses for local institution governance.

Chart 4 | Local governments and sustainable development in Latin America - Excerpts from the Nuñoa Charter

Mayors, aldermen and alderwomen, city council employees, civil society representatives and experts from Latin America answered the call from the Nuñoa City Council and the Regional Secretariat of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) to discuss a regional proposal for the implementation of the agreements of the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from August 25 to September 4, 2002. The meeting took place in the Nuñoa Casa de la Cultura (Chile) from October 17 to 19, 2002, as the first post-Johannesburg conference of Latin American local authorities: "Commitments for Sustainable Development, from agenda to action."

The document was based on the Local Government Declaration before the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the IULA/FLACMA Latin American Municipal Agenda and the Document for Dialogue prepared by local authorities: "In pursuit of sustainable development: local action makes the world move forward."

Source: URB-AL Programme

3. Decentralised cooperation and capacity-building of local governments in the North

3.1. Introduction

The participation of European municipalities in international development cooperation projects is not new. Within the European Union framework, back in the seventies municipalities from various countries, in collaboration with NGOs, began developing projects of international development cooperation in different countries of Africa and Latin America. At the time, these activities seemed to be more the result of internal pressures than a consistent approach to the phenomenon of poverty and its consequences.

As of the mid-eighties, municipalities (and regions) began to develop a more active profile in the sphere of international cooperation. Thus, the experience accumulated in the cooperation with NGOs, managing a rhetoric of economic development that centred on the role of institutions and specifically on the development of local governments, the development of supranational initiatives (such as the EU) and of a model of cooperation that stimulated local and regional entity participation in an attempt to take development that much closer to citizens, have been traditionally found among the elements that have collaborated with the development of a more active role for municipalities and regions in the scope of international cooperation (through the development of what we now know as decentralised cooperation).

Without going into a detailed analysis

of the different experiences, decentralised cooperation in Europe can be defined as a growing sphere. The development of better management techniques and the evaluation of cooperation projects must be added to the increase of resources negotiated by Sub-state entities since the first decentralised cooperation initiatives began to develop.²

However, to understand the phenomenon of decentralised cooperation in all its complexity, and particularly the impact it is having on the capacity-building of municipalities in the North, we must analyse some significant changes that have taken place within the sphere of territorial policy in Europe and have turned decentralised cooperation into a new sphere from which to develop new ways of understanding local issues as a space for politics

3.2. Decentralised cooperation and the changes in territorial policy in Europe

ince the mid-eighties, territorial policy has suffered a series of progressive changes that have altered our way of understanding the political, institutional and economic role of local authorities in Europe.

In the first place, the growth of a globalized economy causes the States to start losing their traditional mediating role between markets and Sub-state entities. Likewise, the logic of a globalised economy places local authorities face to face with the actors of an increasingly globalised market and therefore with the rationality of strategic decisions taken by said actors. This results in the revitalisation of the territorial dimension of the

economy; planning becomes an essential instrument when attracting flows of capital, new development and modernisation patterns begin to evolve, placing the territorial entities in a framework of absolute competition with other territories for foreign capital investments.

In the second place, the process of European integration and the changes that took place in the international arena have altered the way in which local and regional entities' political autonomy was traditionally being defined.

The traditional hierarchical order, which placed the territorial entities in subordination to the State Administration, has been subverted through the relocation of decision making capacities in supranational spheres, as well as in local and regional spheres. The autonomy of local and regional entities is not defined exclusively before the State; it is situated in a milieu of inter-institutional relationships in which actors of different levels interact in the framework of increasingly complex decision making processes (Keating, 1992).

The development of decentralised cooperation has generated a new structure of opportunities for the development of innovative policies, through which municipalities and regions faced conditions imposed on them by the new European political order in terms of political autonomy and its development (Hernández Ferreiro, 2005).

In the coming sections, we shall try to briefly analyse some mechanisms through which this capacity-building process is manifested at a Sub-State level. We shall thus dis-

cuss how municipalities have been developing an active policy of globalisation through their participation in various decentralised cooperation programmes. In the second place, we shall briefly see how articulation and participation in decentralised cooperation programmes has enabled municipalities to consolidate the municipal political space.

3.3. New spaces for municipal politics. Internationalisation of municipalities in the North

We have already spoken of the importance of internationalising municipalities in Latin America. Similarly, the participation of municipalities of the North in decentralised cooperation programmes has opened up the possibility of improving their globalisation strategies.

The globalisation of cities and municipalities, as we have already explained, is an expanding phenomenon that is linked to new ways of understanding politics in context of increasingly diversified authority. Changes in the structures of authority, expansion of democracy, and decentralisation, have facilitated Sub-State government access to the international arena. In fact, the growing development of transnational social movements (such as the NGOD) has transformed Sub-State spaces into a forum for political debate and mobilisation. On the other hand, increasing interdependence and supranational integration, both economic and political, have generated new spaces and opportunities for the mobilisation of Sub-state actors' political mobilisation, as well as new challenges to be met by cities and regions through new forms of political mobilisation.

However, we can also identify a series of specific motivations that impel Sub-State actors to develop different globalisation programmes; therefore, we can express that Sub-State entity governance is taking on an increasingly international dimension.

In the first place, Sub-State governments

view globalisation strategies as a way to meet the pressure derived from the impact exercised on the territory due to changes in the productive system. In the second place, Sub-State governments view foreign action as a means to meet those challenges derived from local governance that require the participation of different agents, in the so-called cross-border housekeeping. In the third place, Sub-state governments view acting beyond their national borders as a way to protect the political autonomy space within the context of increasingly diffuse political authority (Keating 1999, Kincaid 2003).

The globalisation of Municipalities has had a very important impact on the evolution of decentralised development cooperation programmes.

On the one hand, municipalities access international organisation resources and programmes for the execution of international decentralised cooperation activities. In addition, municipalities establish specific frameworks for interchange with other municipalities in other areas of the world, through town-twinning programmes and other technical assistance and cooperation initiatives.

Likewise, through the participation in different cooperation initiatives, international municipal networks are formed and strengthened, and with them, their capacity to act in the international arena, mobilise their interests before international and supranational organisations, and their capacity to attract resources for their own cooperation programs.

We can say that in general through these activities, municipalities not only assist with the development of other communities, but they also generate new spaces where local politics take on a new lease of life. That is: through decentralised cooperation, municipalities of the North become consolidated in the international arena as relevant actors and therefore in a way expand their capacities.

The message we get from the above

² [The authors acknowledge that this is a general definition. This work attempts to study local institutional strengthening from a broad perspective, emphasizing the improvement of local authorities' possibilities of having a positive impact on the life-paths followed by citizens. In a way, it goes further than the distinction between institutional strengthening and capacity-building. We understand that, in a certain measure, both dimensions are intimately linked. Without an adequate definition of local authorities' capacities and responsibilities, these cannot carry out the public policies demanded by their citizens. However, defining local autonomy instruments should be understood as a means to be complemented with local authority capacity-building in order to satisfy citizens' demands through their political autonomy. The implications of this definition for the implementation of decentralized cooperation projects are discussed in the conclusions of this article. We wish to thank the members of the Observatory Antennas for bringing these matters to our attention.]

Chart 5 | "Our message to United Nations and the international community"

The following appeal was made in the Final Declaration of the XXXIV IULA World Congress:

"35. The municipalities hereby acknowledge and support the increasing awareness and possibilities for cooperation on the part of international organizations. Notwithstanding, if the challenges faced by humanity are expected to be solved with success, local governments must and will assume an essential role. We hereby request the appropriate acknowledgement of said function and the sincere collaboration in all spheres in order to guarantee the successful management of our interests, challenges and common tasks."

example illustrates how municipal participation in the different decentralised international cooperation programs sponsored by international organisations and United Nations, is perceived as an instrument for the improvement and acknowledgement of the role of municipalities within the new global governance frameworks. This is not only about collaborating with international organisations but, essentially, about guaranteeing that local authorities are acknowledged as key actors in the global governance processes and therefore expanding the concept of local governance further than the limits set by the principle of sovereignty.

Likewise, some municipalities have been able to exploit decentralised cooperation programmes to underline some concrete aspects of the municipality's identity. Cities and municipalities, through their commitments in specific political spheres, succeed in developing a model with international projections. That is, they are able to create a specific image abroad.

We could say that the cities' answer to the challenges posed by the increasing globalisation of political, social, and economic changes is a function that not only belongs to the nature of these structural changes, but

also to elements of domestic policy that determine how the actors represent these changes and act accordingly.

These representations are built through a continuous process of constitution and change, by which agents represent the cities' space, its borders, and the possibilities of altering its frontiers, giving way to specific models of foreign projection. In the following chart, we shall analyse the example posed by the city of Florence.

The municipality's foreign image is a symbolic value that can be exploited in the different international fora, allowing for the development of a holistic policy for city and municipality globalisation. In the above example, the city of Florence has succeeded in becoming an important partner in the evolution of various EU projects in diverse areas of strife, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, but also in Latin America.

If we understand, as we have done above, that local governance increasingly acquires a more international dimension or, in other words, that the relevance of globalisation strategies is increasingly important for the development of a successful local governance model, then we must acknowledge the important impact decentralised cooperation

Chart 6 | "A city for peace"

The important presence of the pacifist movement, with a tendency towards the left wing but also to Catholicism, positively contributed to the participation of local leaders inspired by the values of these movements, has traditionally led the city of Florence to develop immense "diplomatic" and cooperation activities towards the promotion of peace and the resolution of conflicts. Ever since the time of Mayor La Pira, when the city began to develop its first initiatives to promote peace during the Cold War, until present times, when the Florence comune carries out important activities to promote peace in the Middle East and the South of the Mediterranean, the different political leaders have steadfastly guided the city's foreign activity, creating the city's image as a "city for peace" and a "meeting point for the Mediterranean cultures," above all within the current international context of the fight against terrorism.

has on capacity-building in the North.

As we have already stated, decentralised cooperation offers a framework for the development of globalisation strategies on the part of the municipalities. These strategies are more important within the framework of increasingly diverse structures of power and authority. However, globalisation strategies are not the only aspect in which decentralised cooperation has influenced the sphere of capacity-building in the North. The cooperation experience in different European cities and municipalities shows how decentralised cooperation has had an impact on the consolidation of local issues in the democratic political sphere. These aspects will be briefly analysed in the next section.

3.4. The value of decentralised cooperation in the consolidation of local political space

In the prior section, we have analysed the impact of decentralised cooperation on globalisation strategies of municipalities. In this sec-

tion we shall briefly analyse how decentralised cooperation has served to consolidate local issues in a political space.

In the first place, decentralised cooperation has served to bridge the gaps between public administration and civil society, and NGOD in particular. Since the seventies, when the first experiences in international cooperation from the municipalities are recorded, the NGOD, especially those which have a local or regional profile, have played an important part in the definition of performances of this type.

We could say that it is only through the NGOD mobilisation and its capacity to "territorialise" debates on international cooperation and development that these matters begin to gain importance on the municipalities' political agenda. The NGOD succeeded in adapting these debates to the municipalities' political codes, using diverse mechanisms, but fundamentally by linking some problems currently on the local political agenda with problems derived from poverty and economic underdevelopment of important parts of the planet, making their demands intelligible to local poli-

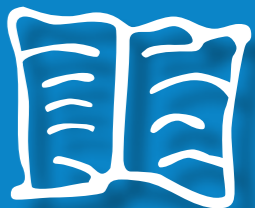


Chart 7 | To "territorialise" the debates

In the early seventies, some Tuscan NGDO began working towards the integration of immigrant communities in the territory, and in the city of Pisa in particular. As of the mid seventies and even more strongly during the eighties, cooperation programmes were created between the Comune di Pisa (the Pisa City Council) and the NGDO to carry out specific integration programmes. Thanks to the NGDO mobilization, these programmes soon included intervention frameworks in the immigrants' countries of origin, thus launching a model of cooperation with the joint participation of NGDO in the territory, immigrant associations, and local institutions.

ticians who, in general, were rarely familiarised with problems of this type.

The NGOD predominant role in the start-up of decentralised cooperation programmes, from the point of view of the control of some public policy key resources, has generally been transferred towards implementation of models in which the NGOD has been turned into a key element, especially when developing projects in the target countries, though also when identifying areas of priority for intervention.

The special characteristics of this public policy have maintained it open to social agents' contributions from the beginning, in both the design and the implementation stages, thus being consolidated as an area of exchange between institutions and civil society.

Nowadays, the "participatory nature" of decentralised cooperation has somehow been converted to a defining element for policies of this type, especially compared with the development policies carried out by state cooperation agencies.³

Municipalities create an image of the municipal political space as an open and democratic space, but also as a space in which civil society's demands are met, thus strengthening the relationship between municipalism and democracy, possibly going further than the strict boundaries of decentralised cooperation.

However, the role of decentralised cooperation in the consolidation of local political space goes further than reinforcing the relationship between municipalism and democracy. In the second place, decentralised cooperation has served to strengthen the institutional role of municipalities before other institutional actors.

In a recent work, Negriér and Vion (2002) highlighted how, through the participation in decentralised development cooperation programs, French municipalities have been able to consolidate themselves as actors in the institutional scene of French international cooperation.

This process of consolidation of the municipalities within the sphere of specific

³ | We should underline the fact that there is an intense debate in the sphere of decentralized cooperation between those who continue to defend the main role played by the NGOD and those who champion a more direct participation of municipal cooperation or institutions.

Chart 8 | Municipalities and the consolidation of their institutional role in the sphere of decentralised cooperation

Recently constituted in 2002, the Local Cooperation Development Fund of Extremadura (FELCODE) has quickly joined the Extremadura cooperation sphere through a process of material specialization subsequently approved by the Extremadura Cooperation Act. Thus, FELCODE takes care of all those projects designed for municipal capacity-building and promotion of local democracy. This is because municipalities have known how to give value to their prior experience in this sphere. They have thus been able to consolidate themselves as an institutional level for development cooperation within the Extremaduran cooperation sphere before the Autonomous Community Government. The municipalities participating in this Fund have been able to maintain a differentiated profile for their cooperation, while joining the rest of the regional institutional actors to offer a coordinated policy of international cooperation for development.

public policies has positive effects on the affirmation of municipal political autonomy and on the development of municipalities as institutional actors.

In the example we have shown above, it is clear to see how municipalities can consolidate their own space for their institutional development within the framework of decentralised cooperation policies.

In the case of Extremaduran cooperation and the participation of municipalities associated in the Local Cooperation Development Fund of Extremadura (FELCODE), this has been achieved thanks to the specialisation of the activities carried out by the municipalities in the sphere of cooperation for the strengthening of local institutions and the reinforcement of local democracy in the target countries. In other cases, such as that of the Comune di Pisa which we have mentioned above, the sphere of specialisation has been immigrations.

In general, participation in decentralised cooperation initiatives has strengthened

the image of municipalities as political spaces, from which it is possible to efficiently manage certain issues affecting the development of different political agendas that play an important part in the development of the South.

Municipalities thus normalize the contents of local political autonomy, strengthening its institutional role and its actual presence before other institutional and non-institutional actors.

4. Conclusions: prospects on decentralised cooperation and capacity-building in the North and the South

In this work, we have attempted to analyse the impact of decentralised cooperation programmes on capacity-building in both the North and the South. We have thus identified various mechanisms. In the first place, direct mechanisms; that is, de-

centralised cooperation programmes that approach issues linked to the development of local autonomy and capacity-building.

As we have stated above, in Latin America, decentralised cooperation in the sphere of capacity-building has had a positive impact on the exportation of best institutional practices for the management of specific public policies. It has also contributed to develop the municipalist movement that is increasingly accomplishing the management of the area's Sub-State governments' interests, within the framework of complex decentralisation processes which, in most cases, are accompanied by important processes to reform public administration and democratise the institutions.

In the second place, we have identified indirect mechanisms through which participation in decentralised cooperation programmes has a positive impact on Sub-State institution operations.

As we have shown above, for many Sub-State entities, decentralised cooperation has become the framework through which to manage dialogue with civil society associations, as well as their participation in different public initiatives. In addition, increasingly complex programmes Sub-state governments implement abroad are structured through decentralised cooperation, especially in the case of decentralised cooperation carried out by European regional governments. Moreover, municipal entities are strengthening their institutional role before other government levels and before citizens in both the South and the North through decentralised cooperation.

However, although the account we have presented in these pages is mostly a story of successes, we do not wish to close this article without introducing some elements on which to reflect, which should be kept in mind if we wish to strengthen the virtuous circle between decentralised coo-

operation and capacity-building.

Decentralised cooperation is facing a series of challenges that are inescapable (see Azcueta et al., 2004). In the first place, the increase in the figures of decentralised cooperation over the last years increasingly requires substantiating up to what point the objectives of policies of this type are being fulfilled.

In this sense, experience confirms that the emphasis on the generation of capabilities will not be translated into a greater long-term development of local autonomy if it is not coordinated with policies that improve the quality of local autonomy regulations, citizen participation, or the instruments used to manage the relationships between the State and Sub-State governments.

In the second place, a reflection should be made on the actors that intervene in this model and the "agreement mechanisms" between those belonging to the public sphere and those from the private sphere. These mechanisms have yet to give answers to subjects as important as the establishment of an accountability system, the promotion of citizen participation, and the support of initiatives carried out at different government levels.

In the third place, the financial limitation itself that characterises this cooperation model has opened up an intense debate between the need to adapt actions to the realities and possibilities of the actors involved, and the consequences derived from this challenge on small projects that are more costly in terms of management, control, follow-up and viability. Thus a deep reflection is required on the development of action planning models of decentralised cooperation.

In our globalised world, the globalisation of the economy, the increasing urbanisation of our planet, the importance of the local dimension in economic development, as well as the demands of citizens for new

spaces for political participation and public debate, are transforming cities in the locus of a new governance paradigm that has exceeded the traditional limits of sovereignty and attempts to offer innovative solutions in a fluid political area, in which the traditional ways of understanding political authority structures have less and less capacity to respond to the challenges posed by contemporary societies.

Without delving too deeply into the implications of the debates we have mentioned above, it is important to advance towards a cooperation that will improve its planning capabilities, that will put its stake

on efficient control instruments that will serve to measure not only the adherence to regulations for the implementation of public funds, but also to emphasize the impact of the projects on the target communities, through innovative valuation mechanisms, and that it be integrated in more widespread frameworks of performance designed to strengthen local institution autonomy.

Only in this way will a development model be consolidated in the long term which, through capacity-building in the South and the North, will make these have a positive and increasingly important impact on the life-paths followed by citizens.



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Decentralised cooperation and citizen participation

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In today's context of universalisation and globalisation, local issues have been acquiring an increasing importance, both from an individual point of view and that of society, economy, welfare, and social relationships, as a whole.

On the other hand, evaluations of international cooperation carried out from various angles, also conclude that the presence of territories and Sub-state governments of both donor and recipient countries is important for the greater efficacy of the cooperation projects. This is why more attention is paid to decentralised cooperation as an instrument of solidarity between countries and communities.

In this global context, citizen participation acquires new dimensions and is projected to new spaces, from local to international, since it is one of the uniting elements between citizens of the donor country and the receivers of the cooperation. Therefore, strengthening these new social actors, awareness as a key element in human development, information, and transparency, already form part of a new conception of international cooperation, which is being enriched by decentralised and participant cooperation, both in theory and in practice.

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1. Introduction

Well into the 21st century, notwithstanding the advances, the failures and the successes of the globalising economic model, a general dissatisfaction is present in both highly developed societies and societies of the so-called South, regarding concrete results on general welfare of the people and on the international relations between nations and peoples. In both aspects, and in the midst of an increasing impersonalization on a worldwide scale, citizens feel an increasing need to question the causes of existing differences in the exercise of our rights and in the influence on power; to be active actors and agents in social and political processes; and to assume that all the peoples on the planet have a shared responsibility in the solution of the great problems humanity is undergoing today.

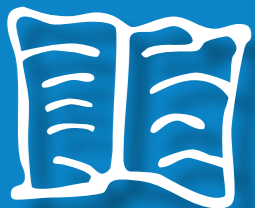
In this sense, the construction and strengthening of citizens' notions and actions raise the demands for participation in different societies. And international cooperation does not escape that new impact on social relations.

"The problems derived from the narrow perspectives that define the bureaucratic mechanisms for cooperation management, such as the social outreach of the effects of under-development, and the requirements for effective cooperation in accordance with the nature of the challenges faced by worldwide society. This makes necessary a fundamental change in the interrelation of civil society and the realities (spaces) to be connected" (AECI, 1997).

It is convenient to underline that this process is found, as noted above, in both realities: that of the donors and that of the recipients of cooperation, compelling a change not only in the models of cooperation but also in their management. In the recent past, there has been an increase in the presence of Sub-State government levels (regions, city councils, commonwealths) and in non-governmental organisations (NGO) specialised in financing cooperation in donor countries, as well as in the greater participation of civil society and similar entities and organisations (regions, municipalities, NGO, etc.) in recipient countries.

All these issues inspire the debate around the worldwide development model, foreign affairs, objectives and development cooperation practices and, in each and every one of these aspects, the citizen's role and direct participation in said processes. Participation is precisely what contributes a different qualitative value in the elaboration and development of these models and processes. With the participation of citizens from all countries and continents, the economic model would definitely be more just, equitable, and adequate for the needs and demands of the majorities. With citizen direct participation, an authentically universal culture can be constructed in the 21st century, accepting the specific contributions of each population. Thus decentralised cooperation, which by definition infers the presence of local actors, must promote participation in those development projects it is inspiring, which is manifested in greater citizen awareness in both the donor and the recipient societies.

¹ | The study made by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency (AECI 1997), just like the URB-AL (González Zúñiga and Romero 2004) publication contain very valuable information and reflexions about the issue of the present article.



2. Decentralised cooperation and citizen participation: Going beyond "trends"

A quick overview of various decades of development cooperation reminds us of the way its unilateral nature has been changing, probably with the best of intentions, but far from what is now called the concertation for development with responsibility and participation, as well as the advances and retreats regarding the definition of its objectives.

One of the problems encountered when channelling foreign aid from donor countries is that different priorities have been set at different times. This has finally caused its loss of specificity. In the eighties, the aim was to concentrate cooperation on poorer regions, emphasizing the support for rural development and production of foodstuff. Cooperation was granted mainly at State government levels. In 1992, the importance of promoting human rights was already being insisted upon. Diverse programmatic lines have progressively and successively been approached in the areas of health, integration, child protection, food safety, support for structural adjustment processes, environment, gender, ethnic minorities, antidrug programmes, emergencies, job creation, support to intermediate cities, or fighting poverty. However, it has not been possible to integrate these different conceptions in a coherent structure; "trends" are maintained and "models" forgotten.

This situation is also reflected in multiple assessments carried out by donor NGOs and the governments themselves, as well as by most analysts concerned about quantitative and qualitative levels of development cooperation and, specifically, by its level of efficacy.

On the other hand, the notorious fiascos of international cooperation –although not only of international cooperation, to

be sure- in the fight against poverty in the South, demand profound changes in the relations between countries and, especially, in the objectives and methods of development cooperation, giving shape to the so-called decentralised cooperation.

As far back as 1985, for example, at the time of the 25th anniversary of European cooperation, the report presented by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded:

"The most worrying deficiency in the assistance for development has been its limited measurable contribution to the reduction –in contrast to the relief- of extreme poverty, especially in rural areas of countries with medium and poor income." (DAC 1985, document 28-990).

This affirmation was officially presented in 1985, but it is not alien to the present and one could say that, after the crises undergone in Latin America during the fifteen subsequent years, poverty and inequalities continue to be structural problems in all the countries of the region.

At the same time, the political-administrative decentralisation process was strengthened in developed countries. As a consequence, the transfer of resources and competencies to regional and local governments allowed the appearance of new cooperation policy actors.

Decentralised cooperation from European regional governments, autonomous communities, or provinces and municipalities gains importance. The activities of the German "länder" (states), the cultural-linguistic Belgian communities, and the Spanish autonomous communities, and more recently, of the regional governments of Italy and France, stand out with this form of cooperation. (Valderrama 2004: 111).

As Schejman and Berdegué state: "It is about assuming participant and decentralised cooperation at a local government level as an

alternative model that will allow overcoming the evident limitations shown by the cooperation from one central government to another. In other words, to strengthen Sub-State government's decentralisation and increasing responsibility processes with regard to the development to which Latin American countries are committed, within the strategic framework of territorial development based on the productive and institutional transformation of certain localities " (Valderrama 2004: 91).

It is essential to improve the evaluation of cooperation for development as a whole, its objectives, its mechanisms, and its methodology, in a context in which poverty and inequality are increasing in Latin America, as has been insistently indicated, year after year, in the reports presented by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter American Development Bank (IADB), the World Bank, and the European Commission itself

Thence the importance of strengthening democratic institutionalities in Latin American countries as a firm basis for governance and development, acknowledging local actors as valid counterparts of such cooperation.

Decentralised cooperation therefore has a two-way road: actors and Sub-State institutions from both donor and recipient countries, transforming it into a new and rich experience of solidarity and construction of a model of foreign relations, sharing objectives and values in spaces, territories, and societies with different levels of economic development, but participating together in universal objectives, each offering its own local contribution for the construction of a new international order. It is not possible to think that this strategy implies less concern for national and international dynamics: on the contrary, to avoid fragmentation of aid and relations-

hips between cooperating parties, decentralised cooperation must be assumed within the national development and cooperation strategies that each country may wish to apply, and within a regional and global context that impacts both on national and local policies.

However, it is not the only challenge to be faced: Due to its nature, decentralised cooperation can result in executing small projects over short periods of time, without medium and long term sustainability. It is thus fundamental to assume a shared integrating focus of the local, regional, and national development policies in the short, medium, and long term. This also implies new forms of application: that the projects are opportunities of joint action between different levels of government, that capacity-building be inherent to each cooperation project, that the interchange of human resources be as important as the other resources, and that the society's participation and organisation be an essential activity to each project.

There is a concrete example in the past few years: a North-South concerted effort has been made by establishing the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The first MDG proposes reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and also reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, by the year 2015. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, 40% of the countries would not achieve this aim with their current distribution of resources (ECLAC 2003).

Decentralised cooperation must take into account not only the MDG, an accepted basis of common goals, but also the levels of inequality and efficiency in the management of cooperation resources, both by State governments and by all other government levels.

The example of concerted effort achieved through the production of and commitment to the millennium goals inspires us

to better value citizen participation in cooperation projects, acknowledging that the citizens in democratic States and societies have the right to know and participate in the different processes in which our future is being determined.

It is for these same reasons that we maintain that decentralised cooperation is an opportunity and a challenge to break “the cooperation trends” and enter a new era of relationships and shared tasks for long term development at a global level and, through participation, the joint responsibility for our societies’ development.

2.1. The relation between decentralised cooperation and citizen participation

Together with the democratic model extension in both Europe and Latin America, citizens increasingly demand the improvement of public services, surveillance and accountability of resource usage and, although with less intensity, the direct management of many projects by the citizens.

The UNDP report on democracy in Latin America concludes that: “A better design of institutional mechanisms and incentives could greatly improve the performance of democracy. An important proportion of these responses show that the political reform should build new channels to facilitate the participation of organised civil society. The apathy of citizens and mistrust toward the institutions can be reverted by improving participation channels and enlarging their number and scope” (UNDP 2004).

We know that the level and quality of participation has had and still has its ups and downs, and this has happened in European countries (from the famous neighbour associations in democratic Spain at the end of the seventies, to the experiences of just trade and environmental defence in Holland,

in Denmark, etc.) and in countries on the American continent (notorious experiences in the Canadian cooperatives, minority rights defence in the United States, participant budget in Peru and Brazil, trade barter actions in Argentina, or contributions for education in Chile). One should recall the experiences that have taken place over the last 30 years until reaching the environmental mobilisations for peace or anti-globalisation that join citizen movements on all the continents. With all of these, with the successes and the failures, the concept of **participation** itself has been deepening without falling into the trap of “localism” but rather linking it with national and international contexts, with the prevailing neo-liberal economic model in the last decades.

Citizen participation, to our way of understanding, is joined to awareness, to the development model, to democracy, and to power. This is the framework in which we propose to understand and assess the relationship between decentralised cooperation and participation.

It is clear, in the first place, that there is no participation without awareness, without being aware of the objectives that are expected to be attained, of the actors who carry out the processes, of the rights and duties of both parties. Awareness also involves sharing a vision of the world, or at least sharing parts of that vision, which would allow carrying out joint cooperation projects. The ideal is that this level of awareness be extended to the greatest possible number of persons of both spaces (donor and recipient) and not only to the managers and persons responsible for the project.

It is clear, then, that awareness is the basis for participation. Since awareness is essentially individual and is only transformed into being social when shared with others, the relationship between citizen participation and the models of economic development and democracy are

more easily understandable. The changes and the crises in these fields are manifest. “What democracy most needs is a significant number of men and women who are prepared to think politics and talk at meetings, participate in manifestations, but only if they have a formed opinion on what’s written on the banners they are carrying” (Walzer 2002: 318).

It goes without saying that this is valid not only for political participation but for all citizen participation in general. Likewise, the awareness of participation is not isolated; it has a local dynamics that materialises in a global context. “What currently represents the live force of the democratic spirit is my wish to participate in globalised world economy and, at the same time, to defend my own cultural identity. This is only possible if I am able to reconstruct a political framework. Today, democracy’s first defence consists in stating that it is false to think that the globalisation of one part of trade or finances destroys society’s capacity to configure its own future. It is, of course, false in all spheres. To understand this, one only has to see the press, which differs greatly from one country to another” (Alain Touraine in UNESCO 2002: 119).

Having entered the 21st century, we find that the comprehension of participation has been extending to other fields as a consequence of the model crises and the deepening of individual awareness of the system’s standardization and unidimensionalism.

Notwithstanding the changes produced in the world, and always taking local experiences into account, we can conclude that **participation is power**. It becomes much more definite when we analyse the cooperation programmes and projects:

a) **The ability to define the objectives** jointly, not having them imposed by only one of the parties. This signifies a shared view, dialogue between the parties, mutual respect, and the wish and ability to share in the construction of something new.

b) **The ability to define the methods**, since many times participation is sought and achieved in the definition of objectives, but a specific methodology is imposed. This has and does occur in recipient countries and localities, with the direct responsibility of many project executors.

c) **The ability to utilise the resources**, supervising their use, with absolute transparency and information by and for all the actors, citizens of both parties.

d) **The ability to assess the projects**, with public accountability of figures and results, not only material but also social, cultural, etc., disseminating this evaluation with its positive and negative aspects.

e) **The ability to change**, to introduce modifications, since on many occasions, one of the deviations of the cooperation programmes and projects is the permanence of objectives, methods, and actors, without venturing to change what has been demonstrated as useless or that does not correspond to the new circumstances

3. Initiatives of decentralised cooperation regarding citizen participation

3.1. Cooperation programmes

One cannot speak of decentralised cooperation without acknowledging the evolution and importance of municipal institutionality in those countries belonging to the European Union. Not only because European local authorities have followed historical paths, but also, European countries are currently undergoing a “second decentralisation process” whose very chore are these local authorities. With which, in addition, they will increase their role in the international sphere, including that of cooperation.

It was precisely with the democra-

tic municipalities that, various decades ago, cooperation between cities was initiated, a true basis for decentralised cooperation. And as time goes on, by taking into account each experience and each organisation, we can discover advances in the participation and, more important, in how the different participant actors and individuals are becoming involved in cooperation programmes and projects. Representatives of local authorities from all continents have been participating in the organisations detailed hereunder.

3.1.1. International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)

With the foundation of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) in 1913, a new era opened up for international municipal relations. The creation of IULA signified the regularisation and formalisation of contacts between municipal associations.

At present IULA has seven Regional Sections that develop training and capacity-building programmes for the local authorities. The Sections have information and documentation systems and carry out research work and advisory and capacity-building services, while fostering international cooperation between municipalities.

For many years, in IULA the emphasis was placed on municipal technicians and officials, who were the people who preferably participated in cooperation projects.

3.1.2. The World Federation of United Cities: FMCU

The FMCU originates in 1951, in the years of the “cold war”, when a small group of French people decide to foster relationships between the peoples who were divided during the Second World War. The Fédération Mondiale de Cités Unies (FMCU, World Federation of United Cities) is founded after some specific experiences in 1957. The first town-twinning, highly symbolic for that time,

was that formed between the cities of Dijon (France) and Stalingrad (Soviet Union).

Actions are thence multiplied with the objective of “constituting a force that is capable of making all human voices heard,” taking the autonomy of local authorities as a basis.

The 1967 Congress of Paris was important, having adopted the principles of decentralisation and freedom of action for local authorities in their relations with other cities in other countries; citizens’ rights to move and meet freely notwithstanding ideologies; the permanent fight against all forms of racism, fascism, imperialism, and discrimination; and finally, the detention of the arms race.

The main instrument is the **town-twinning** between cities of different countries, cultures, and levels of development.

The incorporation of Latin American municipalities began in the decade of the eighties, when the term “cooperation-twinning” was born, with specific aids and shared financing for local development projects.

We find that, together with the United Towns organisation (UTO), democratically elected local authorities assume the main role in cooperation projects, producing an interchange of experiences and mutual acquaintance that, in our opinion, has greatly influenced decentralised cooperation and the weight of citizen participation in the elaboration, execution, and evaluation of the projects.

We should keep in mind that in May 2004, both organisations, IULA and FMCU, agreed to consolidate to create the **United Cities and Local Governments**, a type of municipal United Nations Organisation (UN), with its seat in the city of Barcelona, which will surely have repercussions on international relations and decentralised cooperation itself.

3.1.3. The intermunicipal cultural cooperation: UCCI

The United Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), founded in the year 1982, is defined as a non-governmental, municipal, non-profit, international organisation.

It gathers the following 26 Ibero-American cities: Asunción, Barcelona, Bogota, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Caracas, Guatemala, Habana, La Paz, Lima, Lisbon, Madrid, Managua, Mexico, Montevideo, Panama, Rio de Janeiro, San Francisco de Quito, San José de Costa Rica, San Juan de Puerto Rico, San Salvador, Santiago de Chile, Santo Domingo, Sao Paulo, Sucre and Tegucigalpa.

The 9th UCCI Plenary Assembly (which took place in Rio de Janeiro in July, 2000), demonstrated the validity of the organisation’s fundamental objective: to search, from the union of interests, for similar solutions to problems that are common to all cities.

In the UCCI’s experience, the participation of cultural agents increases together with the aldersmen and alderswomen and main officials of the member cities, especially in the first years. It subsequently extends to other political and social actors.

3.1.4. The intermunicipal integral cooperation: URB-AL

URB-AL is a European Commission programme for economic cooperation, **decentralised and horizontal**, on key subjects of urban policies. It purports opening possibilities to the local European and Latin American communities to convert into direct actors of international cooperation.

In the URB-AL programme, prior experiences are gathered and a holistic participation is fostered in the cooperation projects. A scheme is assumed in which democratically elected local authorities, technicians and officials, together with representatives of the citizens in their

different dimensions, participate directly in the projects, including the financial aspect that reaches a minimum of 30% as the economic contribution of the cities in each project.

Based on the experiences of each one of the member countries and the European Commission itself, in the year 2000 the contents of decentralised cooperation were better defined as a new paradigm that preached on participatory development and the assumption of roles by local agents.

Opening cooperation to a wide range of agents has been a difficult task. But the challenges posed by globalisation and the fight against poverty break down the barriers between agents and nurture the search of new public-private associations. More sophisticated decentralised cooperation programmes have appeared. It is considered that decentralised cooperation is proposing to contribute **“the instigation of a real long-term change in the European Union procedures regarding cooperation.”**

As we can see, decentralised cooperation has greatly enriched the practice and reflection on citizen participation with concrete contributions in different political, social, cultural, and economic spaces. It has thus contributed more and better to strengthen citizenship in both donor and recipient communities.

The agents are also in the core of the debate and the EU has undertaken to promote a pluralist association and decentralised cooperation.

Another aspect to be taken into account when analysing the relation between decentralised cooperation and citizen participation is the surge of new actors such as the women’s movement, indigenous communities, base organisations, small enterprises, youth groups and the NGOs themselves, an issue which was object of a prior work published by URB-AL (URB-AL 2004: 231).

3.2. A concrete experience: Decentralised cooperation and participation in Villa El Salvador (Peru)

Villa El Salvador is a district in the metropolitan area of Lima, the capital of Peru. It began as an immense neighbourhood in 1971, similar in many ways to others in Latin American capital peripheries, although with its own characteristics that gave it an identity and produced a particular development process, which is not the subject of this article. In 1983, Villa El Salvador officially becomes a district municipality. During its first period, which began in 1984, and at different moments, town-twinning with European cities are signed in Villa El Salvador. These generated a rich process of decentralised cooperation with citizen participation that is still maintained today, notwithstanding the ups and downs, the years that have gone by, and the political changes that have taken place in the different cities.

The cities with which Villa El Salvador twinned are Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Spain), Rezé-Les Nantes (France), Amstelveen (Holland) and Tübingen (Germany). Each of them committed, according to their possibilities, to a financial cooperation aimed at a specific sector of Villa El Salvador's reality which achieved the participation in the process not only of the mayor and the aldermen and alderwomen, but also the neighbours of the five cities.

Summarising this process: the Santa Coloma cooperation was aimed at youth programmes, the Rezé cooperation at water and sewage projects, the Amstelveen cooperation at improving environment and cleanliness service, and the Tübingen cooperation at education.

The participation was carried out in both realities: youth groups; women's associations; entrepreneurs; schools and institu-

tes, both technical and professional; theatre, folklore, and music groups (both Peruvian and classical, with an orchestra); depending on the cooperation projects and the social dynamics of each city, be it European or of Villa El Salvador itself. An exceptional example was that of the citizens of Rezé, who accepted the increase of five cents in each home's monthly water bill in order to increase the amount of cooperation for water and sewage works in Villa El Salvador.

Definitely, when decentralised cooperation is joined with citizen participation, it is not only more efficient but it also achieves common objectives, common spaces for action, common projects, and an authentic exchange of ideas, practices, values, which are the basis for authentic cooperation.

3.3. Priority intervention vectors

Experiences such as Villa El Salvador and many others that are being carried out within the framework of decentralised cooperation have been especially designed under three priority vectors with regard to citizen participation:

As a support for the decentralisation process to promote the appearance of legitimate and efficient local governance systems. The actions in this sphere could be directed towards the reinforcement of local or territorial communities and their capacities, towards the promotion of participative management systems for local development, towards the capacity-building of the population to participate in these new institutions, and towards the promotion of new associations between the State, the local authorities, and decentralised agents.

As a support for local development initiatives and dynamics to guarantee the coherence on specific actions (micro-projects, NGO actions, town-twinning) within a specific framework. In this respect, the actions

could be referred to the development of promising dynamics and spaces for the action between agents, to the support of formulation and application of development plans, to the strengthening of services with viable and perennial bases, and to the availability of flexible funds to reinforce enterprising and creative social initiatives and dynamics.

As a support for political and social dialogue in order to guarantee the early participation of decentralised agents in the formulation of programmes and policies. The actions in this sphere could contemplate the networking of decentralised agents at a State or regional level, the strengthening of structures and capacities of intermediate organisations to participate in the dialogue, the promotion of processes and mechanisms for formal or informal dialogue, and the organization of sectorial round tables.

These priority vectors are intimately linked, therefore the challenge is in interrelating citizen participation with local development and decentralisation based on the situation of each country, region, or locality. In the countries embarked on a profound decentralisation, the EU could favour the entrance of direct support for local institutions. In those countries where political will/capacity is lacking, it would be necessary to lean on civil society.

As we have already indicated, it is fundamental for Latin America to acknowledge the role of local democratic governments and new local development agents that are key to the success of decentralised cooperation.

4. Challenges of decentralised cooperation in the sphere of citizen participation

We acknowledge that the concept of decentralised cooperation is an innovative answer to the limitations that prior interna-

tional cooperation phases underwent. The proposal of cooperation sustained on territorial decentralisation and on the direct relationship with local agents as a complementary strategy (since it is not proposed as a substitute of cooperation between States) to achieve development, has been recognised almost unanimously by the different cooperation agencies, when considering local spaces as places for experimentation to attain the MDG, as indicated above.

This approach, however, assumes a series of consequences that are not always taken into account by all the parties involved. In the first place, it implies the urgency and obligation of a determination or political will of the local authorities regarding the new role they must fulfil in the field of international solidarity and development cooperation. Assuming international cooperation as a policy of the corporation itself, linked and closely bound to the rest of the municipal or regional policies, is not only required of donor entities, but also of recipient Sub-State governments who must place particular emphasis on broadening a frequently localist vision and assume a global perspective. Only thus is it possible to define common objectives and practices in the different cooperation spaces.

A subsequent consequence is that decentralised cooperation cannot be bound to one sole model of intervention. But there is no doubt that the diversity of experiences, realities, and levels of evolution in the different spheres requires acknowledging multiple variants in the forms of cooperation. It is also clear that we cannot go to the other extreme of the specificities which can derive in an immense chaos. This is a danger from which we are not exempt, considering that various authors acknowledge the difficulty, if not impossibility, of knowing or calculating the volume of the cooperation.

Finally, it is absolutely necessary to break away from the cooperation model of

assistance (due to which the matter is not viewed as one's own but rather as a collateral commitment) and reach a resolved culmination of the so-called transit from "twinning" to "partnership." We acknowledge that an excellent method is the construction of city networks for local interaction. However, these should not be focused only on local works or services in themselves, but should be managed to avoid undermining economic growth, which would cause political and social instability, and affect governance and democracy that would really require strengthening

On the other hand, a greater influence on public opinion is necessary and useful to generate favourable currents in European citizens. Obviously, a prior problem must be resolved first: achievements cannot be made known if there is no precise information. One shortfall is the fact that only very disperse data exist. This prevents having an exact idea of how much the cooperation levels represent in quantitative and qualitative terms. It is true that decisions are already being taken to find solutions in this aspect, such as the EuropAid Co-Operation Office, the URB-AL Documentation Centre, and the EU-Latin America Observatory. However, we cannot wait to have all the duly systematised information and experiences before starting to have better communications with public opinion.

Cooperation management in recipient countries has a crucial matter to resolve: the management capacity of local agents. They do not have specialised staff, and there is a generalised limitation of human, institutional, technological, and financial resources that reduces management capacity.

Starting with the assumption that cooperation makes sense if it fosters the capacity of local communities to generate endogenous development processes, we must acknowledge that, in the case of Latin America,

the weight of State policies is still very strong and it can, and many times has, obstructed local community action. Recently, in Peru for example, a hostility campaign has been underway against non-governmental development organisations. Although it began as a localised conflict (the mining enterprises and the environmentalist NGO), it spread, affecting the freedom of association and expression of these entities without any doubt.

This requires a more complex vision of the cooperation actors' performance. It requires a greater involvement of local entities in the international arena to generate alliances and support that increase the impact capacity; the concerted action between all the cooperating agents to achieve a benevolent if not proactive State environment in favour of decentralisation or municipal action; and to allow the interrelation of capacities and experiences at a national development level, with regional and local resources, to boost their own development and to improve the synergy between local actors, those who frequently act or place themselves according to the political or social dynamics at a State level.

The assessment on cooperation carried out by different authors is that in their management, local authorities generally do not have a specific interest in incorporating citizen-participative methods in their projects.

Notwithstanding being repetitive, we should make this reflection in both spaces, in both societies (developed or not, North-South, donor or recipient) that make a cooperation process possible. This is precisely one of the fundamental aspects of decentralised cooperation, the real and concrete possibility of finding and sharing common goals and practices over and above the existing socio-economic differences and distances.

It is true that the subject is beginning to be faced (which implies the opening of the political actors to the field of citizen participation) but in reality there is still a long way to go.

This evidence makes it necessary to state the following premise: The political and operative responsibility of incorporating the participative dimension in their respective operations belongs with the local authorities, not the citizens. Although it takes us almost immediately to the role that political communities should play when preparing the government staff, we feel the cooperation should be more acute in the institutional modernisation processes of local entities, since the limitations are not only in the political leadership's participative theory and practice, but also in the regional and municipal bureaucracy.

The existence of a municipal organisational culture that does not facilitate the expansion of participation in all the local institutionality is not a novelty. Which is why it is essential to train and prepare municipal human resources in participative management and skills for the generation of consensus with citizens. Training plans in Public Administration and Management are required for more specialised levels of labour teams.

But the greatest encouragement for a local management participative vision arises with the new challenges that must be faced by regional and local governments. Decentralisation, the new socio-political agendas, and the fragmentation of the social fabric, can be assumed as opportunities for the incorporation of new participative management methods in municipal structures. Thus, local problems in their new complexities are attended and resolved more efficiently, democratically, and transparently, with strategies shared with local actors.

Therefore not only the presence and participation of new local actors becomes indispensable, a requirement that must be included in the cooperation projects (there are new problems that assail diverse communities or population sectors); it is also vital

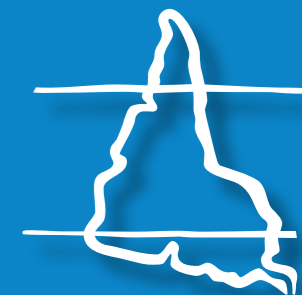
to delve in what we could call a participative methodology, that is, the implementation of strategies that facilitate the incursion in the field of citizen participation and participative management throughout the whole execution of the cooperation process.

Finally, and partly through our personal experience, we consider that cooperation must be aimed at prioritising the experiences linked to local economic development, in which citizen participation acquires a double dimension: that of citizens and that of producers, which enriches and empowers the interventions. The new projects must be spaces conducive to incorporating participation methodologies with the citizens and at the same time, generators of a productive vocation based on local economy that will generate specific resources for the population. Neither should the importance of the new information technologies in local development projects be dismissed.

In conclusion, a strategic interrelation between regional and local governments and civil society (and I would add the private sector) for citizen participation, would increase the success ratio of local interventions, foster creative answers to local problems, and guarantee the sustainability of each locality's development actions and programs.

5. Conclusions and Perspectives

One of the most important aspects of the verification of the new decentralised cooperation practices and of citizen participation is that it appears in both spaces, territories and societies, for which, undoubtedly, it is possible and necessary to define common objectives and practices in both cooperation spaces. One cannot separate decentralised cooperation or citizen participation from a vision and concept of development (local, national, and global). On the contrary, the



conditions are ever more favourable to elaborate common projects surpassing frontiers and unequal economic situations.

It is necessary to **strengthen democratic institutional** with the different decentralised cooperation projects. This is a qualitatively different aspect that must be assessed and assumed by all the parties involved in the cooperation projects. In a globalised world, with centres of power that are at the same time omnipresent and diffuse, the local democratic institutions are a real fortress so as not to succumb to massification and the lack of spaces for direct participation. Democratic institutionalisation guarantees the continuity of personal participation, medium and long term objectives, for a better evaluation of the cooperation itself. In this case, it means the strengthening of local institutions and organisations.

Incorporating new **social actors** and their leaders in decentralised cooperation projects, fostering interchange with different territories and societies. The direct acquaintance between local men and women leaders, the internships in common projects and practices have been most beneficial for both parties, generating higher levels of knowledge and citizen awareness of development problems and their alternatives.

Starting with that same citizen participation, and **to delve in the participative method** of cooperation projects: this would mean a start since, as we have stated in the preceding pages, there has been a real interest and concern to consider the opinion of the parties involved regarding objectives; however, this has not been so in relation to the methods applied in each and every one of the projects. Those responsible on both sides should also consider participative

methods in the process as a whole, not only at the beginning and at the end.

Prioritise experiences linked to **local economic development**. Without abandoning social, educational, cultural, etc., projects, it is essential to support processes that activate the local economy with direct citizen participation, since they inspire the presence of these very processes from a local to a national and global vision, incorporating the entrepreneurial sector of both societies, which has been absent or separated from the development cooperation.

Another important vector in the relation between decentralised cooperation and participation is the support of **campaigns with international dimensions** which can influence development models. With this vision, it is important to join decentralised cooperation with international or global programmes such as the Millennium Development Goals, proposed by the UN, Agenda 21, or the Fight against Poverty, since they contribute to strengthen a solidarity awareness surpassing the frontiers of all our countries, developed or not.

Include **new information technologies** as an objective and aid to the participation in decentralised cooperation projects. By now, nobody doubts this great necessity. When we speak of development and of participation, information and communications are absolutely necessary for the democratisation of our societies, and it all starts at a local level.

From both sides of the cooperation process, we must anticipate the progress and consequences of technology in all its dimensions with a holistic view, since its growth, expansion, and development, is influencing our societies and the quality of participation.

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*Analysis of the experiences: Initiatives of decentralised cooperation and governance**

This section aims to analyse some of the experiences in relation to governance and capacity-building. These are experiences that have achieved capacity-building or that have resulted in improved management capabilities for local authorities, as well as efforts to decentralise functional roles. This article describes a series of experiences that, due to the inputs and their special level of recording, can be indicated as concrete manifestations of interventions that have first awakened and then developed local interrelations or capacities in the territories.

* Choice of experiences and editing in charge of the OCD Sub-Antenna for Central America and Mexico.

1. German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) Program in Support of Decentralized Public Administration and the Struggle against Poverty (PADEP): The case of Colquechaca City Council

1.1. Background

The Department of Potosí (Bolivia) taxation court condemned a Mayor of the Colquechaca Municipality to pay around 1.5 million dollars in lawsuits against him, due to a series of irregularities in the management of municipal resources.

The legal proceedings proved that the municipality had suffered losses due to a series of illegal payments and reimbursements as well as the disappearance of various municipal properties. During the proceedings, a series of institutional weaknesses were found in the sphere of administrative and financial control, which facilitated these acts.

Due to this and other irregularities that were being carried out in the municipality, the National Programme for Transparent Transition supports an initiative by the local government of Calquechaca. This programme is executed by the Ministry of Popular Participation and the Program in Support of Decentralized Public Administration and the Struggle against Poverty (PADEP) together with other cooperation agencies and institutions such as the Support Programme for Municipal Democracy (PADEM), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Programme for Rural and Community Development financed by the World Bank, UNICEF, Democratic Development and Citizen Participation (DDCP) with USAID, Medicus Mundi, and The Centre for Research and Promotion of Farmers Communities (CIPCA) subordinated to the Catholic Church.

Thus, the main objective of Transparent Transition is to improve institutional and administrative conditions in which the municipal government carries out the transition processes, contributing to the improvement of documentation recording and management, and to the avoidance of anomalous situations.

1.2. Objectives

- To create a work portfolio, in order to establish the criteria for organizing municipal documentation and to facilitate the hand-over of government to new authorities.
- To allow external audits of governmental entities, such as the General Treasury of the Republic, and of civil society organisations.
- To generate mechanisms that will promote the establishment of a procedure by which outgoing authorities transfer municipal administration to the new authorities in a transparent manner. At the same time, to create the procedure of the government management report (five years) both on the part of the municipal council and the executive.

1.3. Activities

The misappropriation of municipal resources generated a high degree of mistrust toward the municipal institution, its executive bodies, and the Municipal Council's unauthorised actions and difficulty in governing. Colquechaca municipality's losses amounted to over 1.6 million dollars. For two years, the local government was not able to present reports on budget efficiency; their accounts were frozen, and no programmes or projects could be executed.

Through PADEP and the National Programme for Transparent Transition, this experience allowed the setting up of procedures with which to establish the bases for a public policy designed to prevent theft, the destruc-



tion of goods, and the historical records of the municipalities, which occur during the authority changeover process following the municipal elections.

The creation of the so-called “Portfolio for Transparent Municipal Transition” rendered a group of tools, guidelines, and instruments aimed at training local and state officials in good and transparent management for the control of municipal administration.

The outgoing local authorities can now transfer all the documentation and municipal assets to the new authorities in portfolios with supporting records of the outgoing administration’s respective backups, in the presence of a notary public and the community.

This procedure means that each person must demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and commitment in the responsible and transparent management of municipal resources, as well as the creation of controlling mechanisms and internal accountability.

In Colquechaca, all participated in the management of the programme with the communities, elected authorities and municipal officials. Its aim was to regulate the financial information, improve the capacity to execute municipal investment, avoid corporate clientelism, and build capacities and responsibilities of the municipal council and the committees controlling the executive. Finally, an inventory was carried out of the council infrastructure.

1.4. Lessons learned

The experience shows the relevance of simple and easy instruments for internal use, in strengthening the decision-making, follow-up, and transparency processes of the local administrative body.

The creation and implementation of these internal control instruments ensure that

follow-up can continue once local authorities have left their positions; they also generate an initial action and management framework for the new local authorities.

The setup of internal instruments such as the Portfolio can only be achieved if this action has local institutional backup, with the political will to end activities that have been weakening the government’s internal administration for years.

2. Project to Strengthen the Aguacatán Municipality (Guatemala)

2.1. Description of the Aguacatán Municipality

Aguacatán is one of the 31 municipalities in the Department of Huehuetenango.

It is located 177 miles (285 kilometres) to the northeast of the city of Guatemala.

The municipality adjoins Chiantla (Huehuetenango) and Nebaj (Quiché) to the North, Sacapulas to the East, San Pedro Jocopilas to the South (both in the Department of Quiché), and with Huehuetenango and Chiantla to the West.

It extends over 116 square miles (300 km²) and has a demographic density of 399 inhabitants per square mile (154 inhabitants/km²). There are 80 inhabited centres scattered around the territory (hamlets, small villages, cantons and neighbourhoods) in addition to the municipal headquarters. According to the last census carried out in 2001, there are a total of 45,465 inhabitants in Aguacatán, 8,193 of who live in the urban centre.

2.2. Background

On June 27, 2002, the Córdoba Deputation and the Action and Interchange Movement for the Central American Zone (MAIZCA) signed a collaboration framework agreement for three years, in order to strengthen the muni-

cipal services and prepare a municipal development programme for the Aguacatán Municipality (Guatemala).

The first two projects to be executed were, on the one hand, a strategy to modernize and strengthen municipal services, and on the other hand, the intervention to strengthen citizen organization and participation.

The strategy to modernize and strengthen municipal services arose from a mutual interest between the municipality and the Council, to collaborate in decentralisation processes that are being carried out in Guatemala. In this context, the municipality assumes the challenge of improving its services and finding adequate methods for the planning of its performance and investments. The modernization in rural municipalities such as Aguacatán basically meant the purchase of computerized equipment, specialized software for accounting management, and training in technology management.

2.3. Objectives

To develop the local power as a formula to democratize Guatemalan society.

To maximize community participation in the municipal administration.

To decentralise services and social benefits.

To develop municipal projects which allow the municipality’s development and increase citizens’ quality of life.

To prioritize the collaboration of indigenous communities in the Aguacatán Municipality, since this is one of the most vulnerable and underprivileged groups in Guatemalan society.

2.4. Development of capacities, technical resources, and local rural governance

The main investment of this municipality consists in updating municipal adminis-

tration through the donation of equipment and software for the following municipal departments: The Municipal Secretariat, the Municipal Treasury, and the Legal Residence and Registry Office. Likewise, furniture was provided to the Municipal Forestry Office and the Municipal Technical Unit for the best performance of their functions.

The main contribution when facing the challenges posed by currently sustained reforms regarding Guatemalan decentralisation signifies a challenge regarding competencies and good administration of the local entities. This will be even more difficult if the municipal corporations have equipment that do not use computer technology as a main tool for the management of procedures, recording of formalities, and others.

Computers were acquired as a consequence of this initiative. Thanks to this, most of the internal processes diminished the time required for good management of traditional municipal services, such as legal residence registration, civil registration, identity cards, payment of municipal fees, among others.

2.5. Lessons learned

- The modernization of rural type of local governments many times implies initiating changes in the traditional manner of offering services and recording municipal activities.

- The local leadership (communities, local governments, town halls, and others) is of vital importance for good management and for the adequate use of minimum technological resources for the good administration of municipal activities.

- Approaching strategic local problems requires that local corporations have the technical support, material and human support, to offer and improve their capacity in the face of community demands.

3. Development cooperation between the Herent, Flanders Municipality and the Cahabón Municipality, and the regional town halls of Nimlahacoc, Salacuim and Santa Lucia belonging to the Cobán Municipality, Guatemala

3.1. Background

Flemish authorities have traditionally promoted development cooperation in the local arena very actively. Various municipalities in this region have already signed cooperation agreements with local administrations and have named a councillor or official for development cooperation. In many cases there is also a municipal council, a political document, or a separate budget assigned for development cooperation. There are numerous local initiatives in which the public administration and local associations collaborate.

The objective of this decision is to give local entities a strong stimulus, offering additional financial incentives for the municipal initiatives that can be included within a certain quality framework. With this attitude, the Flemish authorities join the international tendency through which, for the first time, local administrations are invited to take part in part of the development cooperation process. This comes under the worldwide tendency towards the increased decentralisation of decision-making and the setting of policies.

3.2. Town-twinning

The town-twinning agreement arose after a visit by Herent, Flanders Municipality officials to the Cahabón Municipality, and the regional town halls of Nimlahacoc,

Salacuim and Santa Lucia in Cobán.

The agreement is aimed at fostering cooperation between the municipalities in order to strengthen the local democratic process, encourage citizen participation, and increase the municipal body capacity. In this sense, the agreement will also foster the creation of a cooperation network between these municipalities.

3.3. Objectives

To stimulate local administrations to become fully-fledged actors within the political field of development cooperation. We are not only referring to internal municipal initiatives, but possibly also to collaboration with those countries that figure on the OECD-DAC list of developing countries, with the exception of the European countries that are part of that list. A debate should be encouraged regarding sustainable development and North-South relationships through a greater commitment of the different local actors – in the first place the municipal council for development cooperation- and the administrators. Also, the local population must of course take part in this local debate on development cooperation. This awareness –both within the town hall and among the population in a broad sense- constitutes a fundamental objective.

Another key subject is capacity-building for administrative management and conceptual development of local policy, in relation to development cooperation. In this case, this can mean sufficient staff and infrastructure, although it may also include possible training courses, intellectual processes around policy making, advisory structures within the municipal body, and the participation of the municipal council for development cooperation and the local population in the broadest sense. The

cooperation between the Belgian and the Guatemalan municipalities aims at being a long lasting process, since the cooperation efforts are included in the agreement between the Flemish government and the Flemish municipalities. Both aspects emphasize participative issues and the importance of a truly horizontal interchange.

3.4. Lessons learned

- Cooperation is a vital element for specific capacity-building that will contribute to a good local government administration.

- Through initiatives of this type, it is possible to combine the internal management efforts of the local government institutional capacities with the active participation of people and communities in the design of local public policies.

- The international links should be used advantageously in a joint manner. On a regional level, cooperation considers regional work to be more beneficial. In the same way, decentralised cooperation should be utilised, either jointly or through local municipal groups, in order to maximise local links between various municipalities.





Regional integration processes



Introduction

In this edition of the Yearbook, this section's analysis is mainly centred on regional integration processes in Latin America, although European integration serves as a reference to show some challenges and successes with regard to local authorities' participation in and contribution to those processes.

The first article evaluates the current situation of the Latin American integration process within the context of a world which is increasingly globalised, aimed specifically at MERCOSUR. Likewise, some reflections are proposed on the possibilities still offered by regional integration as a path towards development for Latin American countries. Within this general scenario, the author describes the participation that local governments have had in MERCOSUR, and reflects on the possibility of their having greater incidence in the integration process.

Cooperation between borderland regions and cities is an important part in the regional integration processes. The second article in this section centres on the multiple cross-border cooperation experiences which are taking place within the framework of Latin American integration processes. This section explores the impact of globalisation and the formation of trade blocks on functions and relations that take place at the region's boundaries, and it reflects on the contribution of public decentralised cooperation to the cross-border cooperation processes.

Finally, the last article gives a brief description and evaluation of the three most outstanding decentralised cooperation initiatives regarding regional integration, which were detected by the Observatory.



Reflections on the integration processes in Latin-America: the case of MERCOSUR

Álvaro Padrón*

Among the multiple challenges of Latin-American societies, perhaps the most important is to overcome the integrationist rhetoric through a viable and consistent regional integration strategy that will allow them to acquire a dimension that is sufficient to influence the globalization tendencies. This necessary integration shall be sustainable only if conceived and constructed in all its dimensions, the economic-commercial definitely among them; but also and mainly, the social, cultural, political, and productive dimensions.

The way, in which this process is developed, as well as how its content is revealed, are of vital importance. Thus, to widely promote social participation in this process is indispensable for its legitimization. It also allows the gathering of initiatives and involving the effort of actors. For its construction, they adopt a supranational dimension and assume common interests that overcome the viewpoints of the States themselves and their corresponding institutions. Among others, local governments that have extended their responsibilities and presence in public policies over the last decade, find in regional integration a new scenario in which to interrelate, cooperate, and finally resolve part of their inhabitants' problems. The challenge laid before these actors is to define a correct strategy capable of influencing these processes, which claims their institutional presence and channels citizen participation. Their future will surely depend on the way they meet this challenge. This article hopes to contribute to the referred task through a brief characterization of the context, some reflections and some modest suggestions.

KEY WORDS:

Citizens |
Local Development |
Globalisation |
Integration |
Participation |

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1. The general context of integration

The globalization of the economy implies that the agents make their economic (commercial, productive, financial) decisions in accordance with the world market and not with the local markets. The empirical analysis of the determinants of this globalization process shows, as its central result, the importance of enterprises' expenditures on technological development and research. In other words, the growing technological competitiveness requires enterprises to seek broader markets in order to depreciate the costs of research and development.

Companies no longer take the national market as a reference when making decisions; the reference becomes the global market. The internationalization and transnationalisation process, together with the development of telecommunications and transportation systems, facilitates this logic.

However, the globalization of the economy poses a menace on the agents' positions of power in their respective national markets. This in turn generates protectionist reactions on the part of the governments. This contradiction is being solved in practice with a gradual transit towards market openness through sub-regional integration mechanisms. The globalization of the economy is therefore accompanied by protectionism on the part of regional blocks. Intermediate accumulation spaces between the local and the global markets are thus constituted. The groups that dominate the different markets thus control the destruction of the productive systems that is generated due to market openness and technological competition itself, the motor of the accumulation process.

In this sense, the tendency of world economy also refers to technological globalization. Not only economic decisions are

taken with the global referent. The scientific-technical systems also break national barriers and become interdependent. Cooperation thus becomes a necessity and at the same time becomes a strategic instrument to achieve objectives which would be more costly and slow for each country or each company to achieve individually. Technological globalization is thus accompanied by a growing importance of sectorial cooperation and cooperation between companies and states.

Another tendency of the world economy is connected to the centralisation of decisions in eight countries in the world. These concentrate the productive, commercial, financial, and technological decisions that affect the rest of the world. This centralization of the decisions does not only correspond to the governments (the most visible due to the periodical summit meetings of the Group of Eight). It also corresponds to the enterprises. In effect, most of the multinationals that have dominating positions in their respective global markets are in those eight countries.

Finally, the world economy is increasingly characterized by short-term attitudes. Technological competitiveness generates new products and new processes more and more rapidly. Therefore, the agents' decisions have an ever decreasing temporal horizon. Their accumulation plans are corrected and reformulated every year. Technological competitiveness is thus accompanied by lack of stability in the agents' plans.

1.1. Latin America in particular

In political and economic terms, Latin America cannot regionally be considered as a whole, in concept or in action. Its five sub-regions (Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean Region, and the Southern Cone) have divided into two groups since the Cold War. These groups are



clearly distinguishable in their economic and international insertion aspects, divided by the Panama Canal, some to the North and others to the South. In both cases, the geopolitical decisions draw profiles that are increasingly differentiated.

Central America and the Caribbean are linked through multiple and complex interdependencies to a North American community that has been slowly developing. South America, on the other hand, has been formed under a Brazilian leadership that is not yet clearly defined. This is a new regional subsystem with political and economic development agenda that is still the object of strong controversies among the countries in the region.

The recovery of democracy, together with the impact of open economies brought about in response to globalization in the past twenty years, has facilitated a broad political modernization. It has also generated a direct impact on the economic and productive structures in the region. However, compared to other regions, this process has contributed very little to Latin America's development. Income distribution has been worsening in almost all the region, which is why Latin America is pinpointed as the most unjust region in the world.

Democracy has only been minimally consolidated in most countries. The deception and disenchantment around the scarce social awareness in most of the national elites has provoked radical changes in the population's electoral behaviour. As a consequence, in various cases "progressive" governments have come into power, while in other countries a pronounced political division has taken place between the electoral blocks.

This is the reason why an insufficient democratization, together with the effects of globalization, has contributed to exacerbate the governance crisis in the different countries in the region. Traditional political parties are

facing increasing problems in offering governance models apt for consensus in strongly polarized societies. Indigenous populations and other historically discriminated sectors have increased their political awareness. This fact, plus the activities they have been carrying out due to their greater participation, will require adapting the political systems to these new social values. In some cases, changes may also come about in the ruling elites.

These tensions within each country are directly reflected on their foreign policy. Over the past few years, it has been transformed into a main scenario in which to express the changes promoted by the new political forces, many of them already in government, in answer to the phase the region is now undergoing. Since the end of the Cold War, and more recently since the 11th of September, 2001, the United States' interest in Latin America as a whole has abated noticeably, this has definitely contributed to open this new space in foreign policy. The historical difficulties to reach consensus on joint policies among various countries and the heterogeneity of the initiatives in this regard not only hinder interregional cooperation and endanger existing integration mechanisms. They also convert Latin America and its important countries into unpredictable partners regarding foreign policy.

Almost all the societies in the region are societies under transformation that have not yet concluded their process of formation as a state and a nation. This is the reason why the current political, economic, and social instability, as well as the international implications brought about by an accelerated and simultaneous globalization process, constitute an expression of historic normality. However, the violence potential of the state is, with very few exceptions, too limited to generate international concern, partly due to the considerable advances made in the protection of human rights and also to the relatively low levels of military expenses.

The weakening of the state in the region, caused mainly by neo-liberal policies but also by insufficient and badly focused democratization, has brought about the privatization of important state areas. As a consequence, those social functions of the state that are essential to social stability have been paralyzed or diminished. As a result, both delinquency attributed to poverty and organized crime, have reached unimaginable dimensions in Latin America, having become a fundamental factor in the ungovernable nature of the region.

State action is required, not only to contain criminality, corruption, and violence, but also to facilitate the integration of minorities -which many times constitute majorities of the population in the society and the economy- as well as to improve education, public health, and basic services. However, given the current economic structures and conditions, and notwithstanding the favourable contingent growth rates, it will be difficult to achieve these goals if redistribution measures are not drawn upon. The interests established in the national and international sphere are opposed to a redistribution of this type. However, the evolution of the population's electoral behaviour in the past years seems to consolidate the tendency towards political proposals asserting this type of reforms.

There is a historic stability in the region that today characterizes both the controversy around redefined development models (neo-developmentalism) and the debate on the necessary functions of the state. The resulting potential for conflict is considerably intensified by the role played by energy policies and management of natural resources within and between countries. Therefore, implications for the international system may be expected, especially as a result of certain leaderships. This sector thus becomes one of the cases to promote regional integration, transcending traditional commercial formulas. At the same

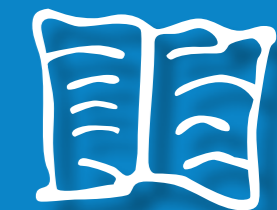
time, it generates strong international interest, transforming the region into a global actor with certain key role to play.

1.2. Regional integration alternatives

There are basically two different international insertion strategies in the region towards which the real process may tend. Free trade treaties (bilateral agreements in general) on the one hand, and integration processes on the other. The first strategy restricts the area of cooperation and responsibility to the commercial sphere of the economic process. The second enables broadening the areas of economic cooperation (in addition to its political, social, and cultural dimension) to the productive, technological, and financial spheres. In summary, in a world in which strategic alliances constitute a central instrument for the development of public and private agents, only the integration processes -in the measure in which these are deepened- are capable of fostering such a type of alliances. The choice of one path or the other is determinant to the viability and relevance of sectorial strategies.

After the come down suffered by the United States initiative to advance the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) during the Mar del Plata Summit (Argentina, 2005), the tendency to sign Free Trade Agreements (FTA) bilaterally with the North American power, without concern for size or content, has been accentuated.

Various Latin American countries plunged into the negotiation of this type of treaties in a race to see who arrived first, assuming the costs derived from them in exchange for small and fractional improvements in the access of primary products to the United States market. As a counterpart, issues such as governmental purchases, intellectual property, services, and investments, are conceded, together with a broad openness to industrial goods from North American companies. All



of this condemns developing countries to remain permanently in that peripheral productive specialization.

At the other extreme, the regional integration aimed at changing the development strategy and make it viable through a type of international insertion, is the path capable of attaining such objectives. Resistance to this hegemonic attempt on the part of the United States government in representation of FTAA was installed in the Southern Cone of Latin America, formulating the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) regional integration process as an option. This dispute is still valid, no longer with the FTAA scheme but with bilateral agreements, and both sides have had triumphs and defeats for their respective strategies. Once again the historic fragmentation and disintegration of Latin America is transformed into a regional characteristic and into one of the main barriers for its development.

Integration in Latin America has a long history if we refer to conventional rhetoric policy, but it has few concrete achievements. The first important attempt to promote it took place in 1960 with the creation of the Latin America Free Trade Association (LAF-TA). Due to its deficient performance, two decades later it was substituted for the Latin America Integration Association (LAIA)¹ with somewhat better, but not very remarkable, results. There are also various sub-regional attempts at integration, such as the Central American Common Market (CACM) as of 1960; the Andean Pact (today the Andean Community of Nations) and the Caribbean Community as of 1969; and MERCOSUR as of 1991. The first three have had some initial achievements, but subsequently became stagnant or declined. On the other hand,

MERCOSUR has been considered the most successful case of integration in the region.

The Treaty of Asunción, signed on March 26th, 1991 between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, formally created MERCOSUR. The Protocol of Ouro Preto, agreed in 1994, concluded the transition period and gave MERCOSUR an institutional structure that has remained practically intact to this day. The Protocol also awarded international legal capacity to MERCOSUR and defined its legal precepts. However, notwithstanding its name, MERCOSUR has not even become a common market yet. Over the last few years, there has been debate between the consolidation and improvement of the customs union or the retreat towards a simple free trade zone. The Treaty of Asunción and the Protocol of Ouro Preto, together with three other protocols, constitute the institutional framework and legal backbone of MERCOSUR. They deal with economic integration (content) and organizational structure (form), but not with other aspects that would broaden the reach and depth of integration, such as regional citizenship, social cohesion, the democratic decision-making, or the advance towards supranational schemes. However, these issues were and are more so today, present in all the debates on the evolution of MERCOSUR.

Recently, and particularly after the global and regional financial crises in 1994-1999, together with the political changes in most of the member states of the block, MERCOSUR was considered an association of developing countries that was incompatible and against the hemispheric area of free trade fostered by the United States (FTAA). Thus for the new progressive governments, integration took on importance as an instru-

ment for international insertion capable of allowing the sustainability of the new development strategy in search of not only economic but social objectives.

1.3. Conditions for real integration

Taking into account the disappointing results of Latin American integration history, and with the reference of the most significant and transcendent attempt made regarding regionalism represented by the European Union, it is fitting to formulate some conditions that will allow focusing strategies to advance regarding regional integration.

1) Regional integration is a process and not a product, and must endure independently from countries' political changes.

2) Regional integration requires finding a focus -rather than a reason- that will imply an agenda of priorities, methodologies, and action programmes. For this, it is essential to promote the collective solution to specific problems in a positive way, not only eliminating obstacles but rather creating common policies to regulate and distribute the benefits.

3) Regional integration is not linear nor is it exempt of conflicts. The existence of these is inevitable and may be positive, since without them the process would not advance. What is important is to have mechanisms and instruments for its solution.

4) Regional integration is boosted by the convergence of interests, not by the creation of an identity. The fact that a group of countries have a common history and culture does not seem to be sufficient to prevent their fragmentation and conflict, and thus disintegration (as shown by Latin America). The concept of complementarity between economies is not easy to implement, since the progress made in integration generates new specializations and transforms division of labour. What is important is that the countries

united among themselves with converging motivations, even if they are not identical.

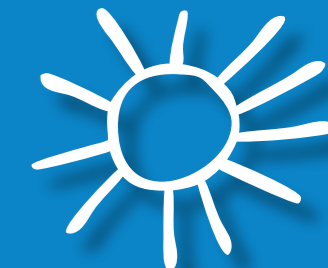
5) Regional integration must begin with a small number of member states, promoting new incorporations from there, constituting a system of concentric circles in which the nucleus not only does not dilute but strengthens.

6) Regional integration inevitably covers countries of very different sizes and power. The conflict of interests, that are natural in the integration process, have one of the keys in the relative size and asymmetric level of development of the countries. The objective must be to equate "upwards," promoting mechanisms that redistribute integration benefits to favour the weakest partners (creation of structural or cohesion funds). For this, regional integration processes must have leaderships represented by actors capable of taking initiative and willing to pay for it.

7) Regional integration requires bodies that transcend national agendas and promote common policies. This does not prevent member states from being central actors in the process. They set the conditions of the initial agreement, even though they cannot exclusively determine the dimension and magnitude of subsequent changes. The logic of this process inevitably makes state governments become increasingly involved in regional issues and end up by solving their conflicts, conceding greater authority and more faculties to regional institutions they themselves had created.

In most Latin American experiences, the intergovernmentalist approach has put a permanent check on integration evolution. The need to think and act with a regional perspective is also a challenge for non-governmental actors. In many cases in the region, these have constituted supranational networks with integrationist vocation and orientation, which contribute to strengthen the creation of regional awareness. Including these ac-

¹ | *The Protocol of Brasilia (signed in 1991, which establishes a system for solving controversy), the Protocol of Ushuaia (signed in 1998, which incorporated the democratic clause), and the Protocol of Olivos (signed in 2002, which created the Permanent Court of Appeal).*



tors in democratic and relevant institutional structures at the time of influencing decision-making would be part of the strategy to attenuate the democratic deficit that all Latin American integration processes present.

2. Importance of the sectorial dimension

The fact that sectorial dynamics are so compartmentalized and differentiated, notwithstanding the regional openness and integration process, determines that the economy's dynamics as a whole are not altered with respect to their historic tendency. Altering this tendency therefore corresponds to the State (at its different levels) by supporting the reconversion of threatened sectors and maximizing those sectors that present opportunities so as to eliminate "compensations" in sectorial tendencies, thus increasing the dynamism of economy as a whole.

As already stated, globalization, centralizing decision-making, and short-term attitudes, tend to weaken society's autonomy in each nation. It is necessary for the state, as the society organiser, to assume the role of strategist. Due to the instability of private agents' plans (short-term attitudes), the state is responsible for establishing the rules of the game within the framework of a long-term development strategy. This role of the state becomes even more important in peripheral countries or regions. In effect, due to centralism, the instability of private agents' plans is even greater in the periphery.

On the other hand, the fact that technological competition is the motor of the accumulation and globalization processes compels the states to redefine their role. This is of special importance to Latin America. When currently industrialized countries implemented sectorial policies (from the decade of the sixties onwards), Latin America did not.

Today there are voices in the region pro-

moting the formulation of policies such as those established in developed countries, especially in Southeast Asian countries, in the sixties. It does not seem reasonable to do today what should have been, but was not, done thirty years ago. The tendencies of world economy show the need for a new role regarding sectorial policies.

In effect, a sectorial policy for the present should take the following elements into consideration:

1) The need to coordinate public actions in the broadened accumulation space constituted by each regional block.

2) Technological competitiveness generates uncertainties on the path for growth of the different productive sectors. Sectors and products that currently appear as potentially dynamic may collapse in a few years due to technological innovation.

3) The preceding element is directly linked to the instability of comparative advantages when faced with technological competitiveness. In fact, advantages based on factor endowments are more easily modified today than they were thirty years ago. One may follow a similar reasoning regarding the possibility of developing dynamic comparative advantages through the evolvement of plant sizes that will allow the exploitation of economies of scale. An innovation that breaks with economies of scale in a specific sector is enough to transform years of incentives for its development into more years of transferring resources to sustain it or avoid its crisis.

Finally, the tendencies of the regional economy at a medium and long term justify state intervention as much as world economy tendencies do. It is natural to foresee that whatever the scenario faced by the regional economy, the results in terms of economic dynamism do not vary substantially from the average tendency of the economy over the last twenty years. Experience shows that faced with the integration and openness process, the future of

each sector varies. In this sense, and notwithstanding the above, vertical cut sectorial policies can be useful and necessary to reconvert threatened sectors and to boost those sectors presenting opportunities. In the case of the sectors called heterogeneous, a reconversion and export promotion programme may even imply enterprise policies.

2.1. Attempts and intentions, the experience of MERCOSUR

MERCOSUR already presents various attempts to establish sectorial policies under the concept of complementary production activities that have received different names over the years (value chains, sectorial agreements, productive chains, etc.). Most of these efforts were developed within the MERCOSUR institutional structure, particularly the Working Subgroup SGT 7 (Industrial Policy) and SGT 8 (Agricultural Policy). Tripartite sectorial meetings (governments, entrepreneurs, and workers) were held in SGT 7 for the sectors: textiles and clothing; iron and steel; wood, and manufactures of; Furniture and manufactured goods; Graphics; Cellulose and paper; Footwear; Motorcycles, mopeds and scooters. In SGT 8, the interrelation with the private sector was channelled through Agro Industrial Seminars held with the agents directly involved in the production. They were born at the initiative of Argentina and Brazil. Delegates from the four countries for each productive chain participated, and the members of the different sectors presented their difficulties, such as: trade barriers, non-tariff restrictions, technical standards, etc.

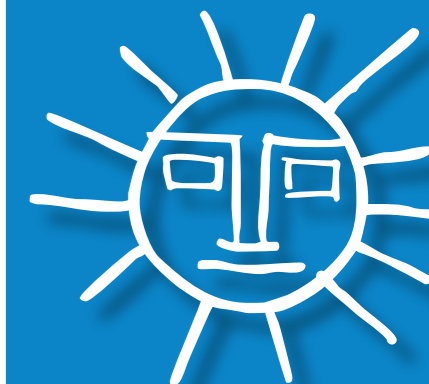
Regarding vertical policies or chain policies, a document was drawn up consolidating the results of the official meetings in which private sector representatives had participated, indicating the existing policies for each product. This document is con-

tinuously updated by SGT 8. Agreements were signed between the private sectors of: rice, dairy, bovine meat, forestry; all of them regulated by Decision 3/91. These agreements, thought up to advance integration in some sectors where this was possible, basically served to exchange information; however, in practice they were not operative.

The sectorial agreements were thought up with the principal aim of accelerating integration and favouring rationality in intra-sectorial specialization, based on the respective comparative advantages, on intra-market complementation, and on association to compete efficiently in third markets. Although various Sectorial Agreements were signed at a private level, these were not approved because in most cases they did not comply with the requirements established in the above Decision 3/91. The only one that received institutional approval by SGT 8 and the Common Market Group (CMG) was the rice agreement, although it did not receive LAIA protocol.

In 1999, in its line of action SGT 7 established holding sectorial competitiveness meetings with the active participation of the private sector and an agenda focused on the analysis and addressing of actions tending to improve competitiveness in the sector conceived as a productive chain, to produce complementation and cooperation opportunities, and to define the regional specialization process.

Following this experience of sectorial competitiveness meetings carried out fundamentally during 1999 and part of 2000, a new way of approaching the matter of productive chains was found by attempting a more structural way of addressing these issues. In the XLV CMG meeting, Uruguay presented an alternative proposal to the Competitiveness Forums, boosting the creation of Entrepreneurial Forums. Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay considered that the issues that



were the object of these forums could not be addressed without the participation of the workers and the governments. According to this proposal, a Programme on Competitiveness Forums of MERCOSUR Productive Chains would be created.

The political orientation of the programme would be given by the Meeting of the Ministers of Industry and the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture. They could indicate the creation of specific forums for each productive chain within the sphere of the programme, which are constituted with representatives of the governmental areas involved in each chain and the representative bodies of entrepreneurs and workers.

With these guidelines, the countries agreed to commence competitiveness forum activities with a Pilot Project in the Wood-Furniture Productive Chain. This experience is currently in progress, and at the last Summit in Cordoba (Argentina), the Presidents instructed the Ministers pertaining to areas connected with production to define the guidelines that will conform the Plan for Regional Productive Development and Integration, that must be presented at the next Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

3. Local authorities and decentralisation

The problems shown by the region to advance in regional integration are diverse. However, there is no doubt that one of the main ones is the type of political-administrative structure existing in these countries on a geographic level.

Latin America is characterized by a high level of centralism in the countries' institutional structures and in general, by a socioeconomic development that revolves around the metropolitan area. In this sense, it is clear that this type of development is socially inequitable

and economically harmful, essentially conspiring against a true democratization of these societies. To revert this by privileging a form of decentralised development that intentionally seeks a fair balance between the different social sectors and geographic areas involves a global and gradual process. It must involve public policies as a whole, and commit the active participation of civil society, at least of those sectors that are capable of demanding and carrying out local participation.

This centralised organization, historically formed through successive models of development in the countries, also determines a strongly centralised institutionality. An institutionality which, in exists in a dialectic relationship with its socioeconomic surroundings, contributes to reinforce the predominance of capital cities. Local governments were historically weak, strongly conditioned to central powers and with low incidence in the face of public policies fostered by ministries and other state organizations.

These local governments were structured on a hybrid conception with provincial and municipal government features, moderately fulfilling the attention to communal needs. The state, on the other hand, adequately solved the essential demands of national society. But as the state apparatus begins to lose its capacity for response, having undergone an economic and political crisis, the unsolved demands begin to hit local authorities, who are not in a condition to assume –at least not without a deep reconstruction- such a challenge.

The inefficiency of centralism in this gradual deterioration of the state managing capacity has opened the doors to a strong questioning of the current institutional model, and therefore to a Decentralising demand that is however up to now more rhetoric than results. A decentralising policy that intentionally tends to revert these centrifugal tendencies cannot be conceived as a policy that is autonomous or isolated from the rest of public policies. On

the contrary, rather than configuring a policy in itself, the search for decentralization should be understood as a feature that is permeable to the group of public policies, in such a way that each one of them, within their subject but in synchrony, is directed at promoting Decentralising dynamics.

It is therefore a feature that must characterize the development model as a whole, regarding not only its economic, but also its social and political aspects. Therefore, as has been indicated, a Decentralising policy involves legal modifications that will allow the generation of a strong local institutionality, but simultaneously the implementation of public policies capable of stimulating the surge of new economic bases and social dynamics, on which to affirm a relocation of the productive activity and a more balanced redistribution of income. Otherwise, a decentralization that only affects the institutional basis without simultaneously involving the social basis can finally strengthen the centralist tendencies it is trying to fight.

From this viewpoint, it is important to implement a series of systems for local action: neighbourhood, entrepreneurial, cultural, etc. These, together with the political-administrative action, form a network of local dynamics that maximize each other and have the capacity to generate local autonomous development movements in each of the sub-systems.

This new approach to each country's socioeconomic conditioning requires an adequate knowledge of regional and local potentials, as well as a correct choice of the options to address, taking into account not only the physical characteristics of each region, but also their social and cultural virtues. Decentralising policy cannot therefore be uniform. Self sustained dynamics capable of converging positively in a global development process can only be generated by respecting and taking advantage of their own peculiarities. Rather than imposing a local development proposal "from the top," Decentralising policy must stimulate and

direct local energies, supporting the initiatives selected by the actors themselves as the most adequate.

In this sense, before expecting concrete results, impacts must be generated to unleash the Decentralising dynamics or rather, the Decentralising dynamics whose profile and rhythm will vary according to the peculiarities of each context.

Since the smooth operation of the group is a basic requisite for integrating local development, it is important to situate these dynamics within a global framework to simultaneously interrelate the separate parts. The coordination of economic promotion policies, searching complementarity in the different stages of production and distribution of goods and services in local areas, ensuring greater rationality in the definition of priorities and rhythms of public and private investment stimulating methods, are all part of the strategies to be analysed within the framework of a decentralised policy that respects local autonomies, but at the same time clearly shows the way.

3.1. Decentralisation and integration

It is not possible to design a Decentralising policy dispensing with the external framework in the phase through which our region is currently undergoing. The economic openness policy already referred to in this article is an inescapable factor in any development project. In particular, the regional integration processes fostered all over Latin America established determinant factors that must be prioritized when designing a territorial and sectorial decentralised map.

Integration is breaking the historic fence that isolated the interior of the countries from the rest of the world. The importance of capital cities as the only entrance and exit is being increasingly diminished. At the same time, increasing physical integration with bordering countries, and the corresponding commercial

and cultural interchange that is being born, project new connections with the exterior. Connections that are also resized according to the importance they have in the intense relationships that are developing between countries. In this context, border policy acquires increasing importance. This is why borderlands have recorded greater population growth over the past few years, and have proposed the most resounding autonomic demands.

The impacts of this situation –that are not reduced to economic issues, since they also directly influence political, social, and cultural levels- have been improving the conditions for a serious territorial rearrangement in the countries in which a Decentralising tone prevails.

This resizing of regional and local policies within the integrationist frames of reference is already notorious in Europe. Together with the surge of supranational spheres that are increasingly assuming areas of competence, and acquiring some sovereignty that formerly belonged to the nation-state, local institutions have become stronger and the support to regional policies has been acquiring importance in national and community credit lines and priorities.

It is true that the options regarding local development are not –according to the high degree of autonomy with which they are processed- dissociated from the macroeconomic lineaments defined by each State, and from the profile with which they intend to gradually become inserted in the regional framework. Therefore, the gamble each country makes regarding productive development, export lines to promote, services to offer to the exterior, physical integration with its neighbours, and ultimately, the role it expects to play in an increasingly internationalized -but also more specialized- world, must be reflected in the Decentralising proposal.

The success of local dynamics depends

on their insertion in global dynamics, which is also conditioned to the luck of the former and to their capacity to respond to the challenges confronting each country as a whole.

3.2. New role for local governments

Any Decentralising scheme proposed is conditioned to the strengthening of the role to be fulfilled by local governments. The essentially municipal function, which is the one local governments have assumed up to now, must be associated with a more active role in the definition, elaboration, and execution of public policies affecting the territory. Therefore, local governments must have greater incidence than up to now in the formulation of economic and social policies and in the interrelation developed by central governments –the Executive Power or other state areas- with which they are projected in local or even regional spheres.

This resizing of the traditional role of local governments is closely linked to the strengthening of their autonomy and to the substantial advance in the levels of political and administrative decentralization. The modernization of the administrative mechanism and management methods, as well as the opening of new social participation channels, will also be determinants for this transformation.

It is ultimately not only about broadening areas of competence, but rather about a transformation in the nature itself of local institutions. This demands a redistribution of roles in the whole state organisation, a new relationship among these institutions, and a reconversion of their structure, as required by a different type of operation.

Lately, some initiatives along these lines are already being experimented. Many of the region's local governments have adopted a more incisive and continuous action in the field of urban social policies. Even though local governments have always had participa-

tion in specific social areas such as housing, health, hygiene, culture, etc., it has generally been subordinate to the State that directed at addressing specific or particularly critical situations.

It is not only about being introduced into new social areas such as the environment, or into those connected with particularly underprivileged sectors. It is now also about formulating longer term programs tending to address the fundamental problems of each sector, in coordination with other public or private organizations, be they national, regional, or extra regional.

Concern has also been noted over assuming economic promotion policies based on production, some directed at using their local resources in another way, such as the industrialization of waste, and others directed at fostering private productive activity, both in urban and rural spheres.

Likewise, there have been various local government experiences, many times with outside assistance and cooperation, oriented to the generation of employment by promoting small and medium-sized enterprises and facilitating the constitution of cooperative groups to support certain municipal public services.

3.3. New role for local governments in integration: The Mercocities experience

At present, nobody denies the need of involving local governments in the construction of a regional integration process. It is clear, on the basis of concrete examples, that this participation favours the deepening of the process, brings citizens closer, strengthens the legitimacy of actions and decisions, and strengthens the capacity to apply effective regional policies in the territory.

At the same time, the formation of local government networks contributes to the building of a regional identity, since unlike

state governments, they think and act more easily on a regional note, prioritizing cooperation and complementarities over the logics in areas of competence and the defence of national interests.

In the case of MERCOSUR, shortly after its creation, local authorities with integrationist vocations formed the Mercocities Network in 1995, substantiating this committed approach with a joint interrelation on regional and international policy. The declaration made by this network in the city of Asuncion in November 1995 cannot be clearer when it declares “the right of cities to take an active and autonomous role in the state, and in areas of regional integration” and claimed “the formulation of an integrated model that corresponds to the institutional structure established by MERCOSUR and which will thus become the insertion of the group of cities in the regional system.”

At that time, this last issue became the new association's permanent concern and claim, seeking institutional acknowledgment of their participation in the block's decision-making process. Five years were needed for all that pressure to result in a slight advance, with the creation of the Specialized Meeting of Municipalities and City Councils (REMI) by the Common Market Council (CMC). The lack of political will to truly include the local government perspective in the management and construction of MERCOSUR was thus expressed. Local governments were placed in a marginal institutional figure within the structure of MERCOSUR, a universe that is chaotic in thematic issues and concentrated in decision-making. Local governments thus divided their efforts between the new instance of institutional representation and the dynamic agenda of a network that did not stop growing, notwithstanding its difficulty to be acknowledged and utilized by the MERCOSUR leaders.

Using its own legitimacy and its evi-



dent capacity for politics and action, this network maintained its regional and international presence, leaning on the functioning of Thematic Units that fostered horizontal cooperation and interchange among its members. As could be expected, seven REMI meetings were sufficient to once again take up the demand for greater local government representation in MERCOSUR institutionality, even in its own sphere. This is illustrated in the last REMI resolution that states: “to review the participation of cities within the institutional structure of MERCOSUR, contemplating the political value they have in the effective development of the regional block” (REMI Minutes 04/01).

With a new political climate and a different valuation of the local role in the midst of the new governments, the CMC approves the creation of the Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federated States, Provinces and Departments of MERCOSUR. In 2004, formed by the Committee of Municipalities, and the Committee of Federative States, Provinces” and Departments. The increasing political dimension of the integration process is reflected in this decision, as is the need for coordinated actions and the convenience of local authority cooperation among themselves and with the state.

The Forum goals are: to stimulate dialogue and cooperation between authorities of MERCOSUR member states at a municipal, state, province, and departmental level; to propose measures directed at coordinating policies to promote the welfare and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Municipalities, Federative States, Provinces and Departments in the region; and to formulate recommendations through the Common Market Group.

The main challenge as of that moment has been to add content this new integration instrument and set it in motion, against enormous contradictions and a general pes-

simistic climate in the entire MERCOSUR. It has been surprisingly difficult to take the minimum steps to start up the Social and Economic Consultative Forum of the Mercosur, which will only be possible within the framework of the MERCOSUR Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in January 2007.

Such a difficult beginning is not an impediment to hope that this new actor (the Committee of Municipalities in particular) that will lean on the shoulders of Mercocities, will contribute to the necessary shake-up MERCOSUR requires in order to emerge from a contradictory programmatic rhetoric with scarce concrete progress.

4. Current challenges, difficulties and opportunities

It seems clear that the main difficulty is the distance between MERCOSUR announcements and its concretions. Political will is a necessary condition, and it is present as never before since the very creation of the block. However, even though it is necessary, it is not sufficient, since the MERCOSUR institutional structure and way of operating correspond to the integration model of the nineties, where the only aim was to increase commercial interchange.

The institutional structure, even with specific and isolated advances, puts a brake on the democratization and deepening of MERCOSUR. On the other hand, notwithstanding the expectations created by the irruption of governments of similar political identity that allowed integration to take a leap in quality, the result is worse than poor. This shows that the importance of state agendas and the centrality of interests in regional relations at this level are greater than the aforementioned integrationist vocation and political will. The irruption of bilateral conflicts, the difficulty to advance in negotiations with other regions,

the internal lack of compliance with basic and original agreements of the process, as well as unbalances in economic, commercial, investment, etc. aspects, have been the normal currency that transforms MERCOSUR in the collective imaginary more as a problem than as a solution.

Regarding opportunities, we can point out that as never before in recent history, there are conditions for an advance in the construction of an authentic and potent regional block in this part of the world. In particular, from the standpoint of local government action opportunities, we can determine the following challenges/opportunities:

1) The progress at institutional level represents the first achievement and at the same time the most complex challenge for local governments, that have ranked regional integration on their international policy agendas. It implies an important risk since they will have to demonstrate whether they really do contribute to modify the current state of MERCOSUR, with all the potential and contributions they have made when demanding this participation. The design of an agenda which is, concrete, viable, and innovative, is the first step, together with the definition of the way of functioning, the composition, and the authorities of the Consultative Forum, that must be established in the future regulations. It is time for local governments to demonstrate in practice, the importance of their active presence in the daily construction of integration.

2) A second chance, key to maximize the preceding objective, is the capacity these local governments may have –individually and as a network- to construct strategic alliances with other sectors that, interested in integration, have also remained marginalized or with little influence on the dynamics of the regional block. It is thus that networks of social, labour union, entrepreneurial (especially small and medium-sized enterprises, and

cooperatives), NGO, etc. organizations, can contribute to an innovative participation imprint on the integration process, which many of these local governments have established in their specific sphere and that they should bring with them in this new institutional presence they are to develop. In this same way, and also within the logics of horizontal cooperation, it is strategic that local governments do not become isolated in the institutionally “entangled” and can interrelate themselves with bodies such as the MERCOSUR Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Social and Economic Consultative Forum of the Mercosur, and in particular the recently created MERCOSUR Parliament, which shares the challenge of needing to be strengthened and validated within the integration system. The platform “We are MERCOSUR” has been excellent proof of what can be moved and transformed when wills from different spheres are united and the community approach is prioritized.

3) It is necessary that local governments do not become prisoners of issues typically within their responsibility. These being unavoidable and to be solved on a regional level, the orientation of the Consultative Forum must have the aim of addressing and discussing all the interaction subjects, viewing themselves as actors in the entire process. A good combination between both dimensions can quickly show results and bring prestige from the start to the local government dialogue. As an example on a traditional scale such issues as border policies, physical integration, transportation, tourism, etc. may be mentioned. But it is more important that the Consultative Forum –and the Committee of Municipalities in particular- claim responsibilities to decide and implement key issues of integration such as the Fund for structural convergence and strengthening of MERCOSUR’s institutional structure (FOCEM). Under the reasonable concern to alleviate the asymmetries

between the countries of the block, another reality that shows more profound and dangerous asymmetries between regions is left aside. This can be an excellent reason for local governments to present initiatives that will transform FOCEM in a real integrating lever, also guaranteeing a community approach and the capacity for management and transparency by which local issues are characterized.

4) The new boost given to the strategy of complementary production at a sectorial level must be another priority of local governments, which have been assuming this type of authority in state spaces and must reflect the same tendency in the integrated space. Most of the private sector decisions regarding investments, delocalization of companies, etc., already have the broadened market as a main referent. This means that

renouncing to being actors that participate in this process leaves local governments with the only role as administrators of opportunities that subsequently appear.

5) Finally, local governments must debate and influence the external relationship strategy that MERCOSUR adopts, both in central aspects and new memberships (that has immediate repercussions due to the entrance of new regions and cities together with the new countries), and with the link with other regions and countries in the world, since the orientation of international insertions is functional and determinant of the direction that the regional block itself will ultimately adopt. Most local governments have ample experience in international relations and cooperation which can be transformed in another relevant asset to contribute to the integration process as a whole.

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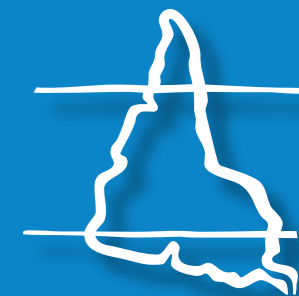
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Cross-border cooperation in Latin America and the European Union: Contributions to the regional integration process

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KEY WORDS:

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At present, the vast extension of borders existing in Latin America and Europe are an active part in the processes of regional integration and cross-border cooperation. This article examines the cross-border cooperation relationships between State and local governments in the Latin American and European regional integration processes and the contribution of public decentralised cooperation to the strengthening of those processes. Cross-border cooperation in Latin America is a priority. It is pertinent to clarify that there is informal cross-border cooperation in Latin America. It is carried out spontaneously by municipalities and communities. However, this type of cooperation has little dissemination and therefore it is most difficult to collect this type of experiences.

The article concludes by stating that functions and relationships produced on the border are currently facing a new scenario, in which they are being transformed by globalisation processes and trade blocks. The idea of borders being areas that are permeable for relationships, that foster regional integration, and where there is a wide history of cross-border cooperation, is advancing with the new millennium.

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1. Introduction

In Latin America, setting international borders has given way to enormous tracts of borderland. Within its 20 million plus square kilometres (around 8 million square miles), there are 36 borders, with boundaries extending along more than 40,000 kilometres (24,854 miles). In the European Union (EU), internal borders represent one quarter of the territory. Territorial importance and the increasing economic, social, and cultural importance of borders turn them into a subject that is increasingly present on regional integration agendas.

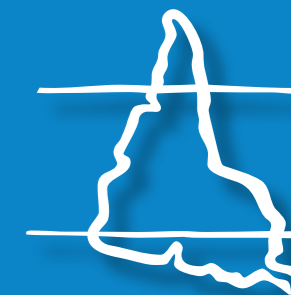
Borders today are no longer perceived as the State boundaries. Due to the intense cross-border relationships carried out in these spaces, they have become strategic areas for integration. As an example, one of the aspects that best represents these cross-border interactions are the 66 hydrographic basins shared by two or more countries in Latin America (UNEP 2002). The Amazon Basin and the Guaraní Aquifer are two of the largest sources of water on the planet, and both are politically divided. The Amazon Basin alone incorporates eight South American countries within its more than five million square kilometres (1,930,000 sq. miles), and it demarcates over 8,000 km (4,970 miles) of boundaries (Robagiati 2004). The Guaraní Aquifer, on the other hand, is shared by four countries and extends over more than one million square kilometres (386,000 sq. miles) (ProDiversitas 2006).

The aim of this article is to examine the role of cross-border cooperation relationships between local and regional governments in the Latin American and European regional integration processes, and the contribution of public decentralised cooperation to the strengthening of those processes. In order to achieve this, the document has been divided

into various sections. The first covers the characteristics of boundaries in Latin America, the territorial fragmentation process, and the challenges represented by attending to social, economic, political, and environmental vulnerabilities on the borders. The second and third sections of the document refer to decentralised and cross-border cooperation as an option for Latin American and European border problems. In addition, it approaches the subject of cross-border relations as a way of fostering regional cooperation and integration. The fourth and fifth sections cover the relevant cross-border cooperation experiences in Latin America, and the incidence of local authorities on integration agendas. Finally, the last two sections approach EU-Latin America decentralised cooperation and, as a conclusion, the subject of territorial cross-border cooperation in Latin America.

Therefore, rather than studying political boundaries, this article is about borderlands, conceived as areas of intense interchanges that give way to regional cooperation and integration activities. It involves such aspects as territorial, political, social, cultural, and environmental factors, without forgetting the role of political borders as sovereignty separators. In the case of Latin America, borderlands and their role in regional integration will be analysed by considering the case studies of the Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region, the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, the Trifinio Plan and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. In the case of the EU, the Interreg initiative will be described.

It is necessary to stipulate that informal cross-border cooperation does exist in Latin America. It is carried out spontaneously by municipalities and communities without the existence of State agreements. However, due to its informal nature, this type of cooperation has little dissemination, which renders collecting this type of experiences most difficult.



2. Latin America and its borders

Latin America, as a geographical region, has an extension that represents almost 4% of the emerged surface of the planet, and it has a population of over 500 million inhabitants (CIA 2006). In other words, it is inhabited by 8% of the world population. This vast region, which begins with the northern border of Mexico and extends to the end of Tierra del Fuego in Argentina, has 41,120 kilometres (25,550 miles) of boundary lines that separate 18 Latin American countries (CIA 2006).

The configuration of these political boundaries in Latin America have a long

Table 1 | Latin America Bordering municipalities

Regions and countries	Number of bordering municipalities
Mexico	40
Guatemala	44
Honduras	51
El Salvador	42
Nicaragua	26
Costa Rica	10
Panama	8
Mexico and Central America	221
Colombia	74
Ecuador	25
Venezuela	26
Brasil	82
Perú	26
Bolivia	30
Uruguay	14
Paraguay	67
Chile	60
Argentina	84
South America	488

Source: CIAT 1998.

history of conflicts and wars that have in many cases propitiated tense international relations between the Latin American countries, which still persist today. Such is the case of the differences between Costa Rica and Nicaragua due to the interpretation of the border treaty regarding navigational rights on the River San Juan.

The political constitution of States and their subsequent administrative political division have originated 709 borderline municipalities, of which 40 are in Mexico, 181 in Central America, and 488 in South America (See Table 1). As regions, borders can vary according to the extension of the areas influenced by these interchanges. However, this analysis will specifically consider the borderlands demarcated by political-administrative divisions; in other words, it will include the seven hundred odd Latin American borderline municipalities.

The border has its own nature, determined by the system of intense relationships occurring on either side of the boundary; these in turn originate cross-border cultures and economies. Concrete awareness of this type of cross-border relationships and regional integration processes conform the bases from which one may begin to understand Latin American borders as spaces for cooperation.

Current configuration of the dynamics to which borders are subjected, such as the creation of new commercial networks, of trade blocks, and the challenge on global technology, all have caused some of them to lose their traditional nature as security zones and containment for activities carried out within the State. There are many examples that help illustrate this, such as consignments, electronic transfers, migrations, and virtual education aids that, together, generate society dynamics that can no longer be spatially contained. It is now possible to observe greater flexibility on some borders for

the movement of people. Such is the case of the North of the region, with the so-called CA-4 Agreement, which opened and unified migration procedures between Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua; or in the South of the region with the Andean Community, of which Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are members. However, the application of new migration barriers such as the case of Costa Rica-Nicaragua can also be observed. This definitely has an impact on bordering communities, since it can restrict or maximise cultural and economic interchange. In the case of Nicaraguan migrants with children born in Costa Rica, it makes it more difficult to visit Nicaragua due to the additional cost of a visa. The importance of free circulation in the life of bordering communities is not only reflected on their social and cultural interchange, but also on their economy. For some communities, such as the Trifinio Region, it is better to sell products to neighbouring countries where they can obtain better prices than to sell them on the internal market (López, Vega, Hernández and Ramírez 2004).

3. European experience with cross-border cooperation

In the EU, internal borders shared by member countries cover 27% of the territory and hold 18% of the population (European Commission 2002). There are zones for prioritized attention to European regional policy in these territories: the so-called Structural Funds Objective N°1 regions. Some of these are characterised by being areas with low population density, as happens in the North of Sweden and Finland, in rural areas such as the southern part of the border between Spain and Portugal, or in urban spaces oriented to traditional industry, as is the case of the border between the Benelux countries and between

these and Germany (European Commission 2002).

It is relevant to indicate that EU borderlands present problems associated with their peripheral condition, their geographical location on coasts or mountains, limited transport infrastructure, low density of inhabitants, and a lack of harmonization of cross-border ecosystem management, especially those connected with water and air resources (European Commission 2002).

3.1. Territorial cooperation initiatives in the European Union

Processes called Community Initiatives are developed in the EU. They are programmes proposed by the European Commission and executed by the member States to complete the Structural Fund interventions that finance activities to reduce economic and social inequities in the EU. In the period 2000-2006, there are four Community Initiatives currently active in the region: Interreg, URBAN, Leader+, and EQUAL (European Commission 2002). Among the four, priority will be given to Interreg, since it has three components, one of which is directed at cross-border cooperation.

Interreg is one of the most important territorial cooperation initiatives in the EU. It strengthens social and economic cohesion through cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation; and favours the integration, and the harmonious and balanced development of the European territory (European Commission 2002). Two stages have already been executed, and a third, which will finalize in 2006, is currently being carried out. They are financed with funds from the member States and the European Commission.

The Interreg Community Initiative stages were started in 1990. Their aim is to direct the assistance to cross-border structures



instead of channelling it through the States or specific regions. The Euroregions have therefore been the object of this programme's intervention, a very much developed concept among Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, and France (European Commission 2002).

Chapter A of the Interreg initiative, under the name of Cross-Border Cooperation, was aimed at fostering an "integrated regional development among neighbouring borderlands, including regions located on external borders and certain maritime zones, in order to establish social and economic cross-border cooperation through assistance to joint development strategies and programmes" (European Commission 2002:46). This Chapter A has assigned assistance to 64 programmes for the period 2000-2006, (OCD 2006).

According to the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-Latin America (OCD 2006:25), the spheres of action of Interreg III A are the following: Fostering urban, rural, and coastal cross-border development.

Promoting entrepreneurial spirit and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, and local initiatives for development and employment.

Fostering the creation of an integrated labour market and social inclusion.

Increasing cooperation in the spheres of research, technological development, education, culture, communications, health, and civil protection.

Encouraging environmental protection, increasing energy efficiency, and promoting renewable energy sources.

Improving the basic infrastructures of cross-border interest.

Developing legal and administrative cooperation.

Promoting cooperation among citizens and institutions.

Facilitating technical assistance.

The issues developed in the sphere of cross-border cooperation are formulated within the needs and difficulties of the local and Sub-State governments that are addressed by the initiative (OCD 2006). One of the main achievements of this initiative has been the capacity to generate relationships between Sub-State authorities of different countries and the contribution this has made to social and economic cohesion in Europe.

3.2. Lessons learned and progress made in territorial cooperation in the European Union

The development of territorial cooperation actions in the EU is visualized as a fundamental factor for the development of regional integration processes, of social and economic cohesion, and of progress. This integration process has been boosted by the sole market, the economic and monetary union, and the programmes for regional development and cross-border cooperation.

The development of cross-border projects has faced a void of spontaneous cooperation experiences and joint work experiences on different levels of power or competence (European Commission 2002). Advances have been achieved such as the dissipation of prejudices of historic origin. However, there are differences that must be overcome, such as the case of political institutions, administration systems and procedures, legal frameworks, technical and environmental regulations, cultural and linguistic differences, and geographic conditions that act as natural barriers with the presence of mountains, seas and rivers (European Commission 2002).

According to the European Commission, the Interreg Initiative can be catalogued as a success of cooperation, since it has strengthened the EU experience in this field (European Commission 2002). The need to establish true joint cooperation structures and to overcome practical cooperation obstacles, such as the le-

gal and financial aspects, still persists today.

One of the main strengths of the activities undertaken within the framework of these cooperation activities is that their thematic guidelines are generally part of the regional or local government agendas, and are thus converted into the institutional capacity-building of these levels of power (OCD 2006).

The decisive processes for Sub-State unit capacity-building as cooperation agents are the following (See Chart 1):

4. Cross-border cooperation in Latin America

The Latin American borders possess a great ethnic, cultural, and environmental di-

versity. Intense dynamics of economic interchange may be found in them. The union of these factors and the relationships so derived stop the borderland from being contained only in the territories of border municipalities. Thus, it could be as large as the extension of these dynamics in the State territories. Understood in this way, the border appears as a zone of great permeability, that can be very extensive, and in which cultural, social, economic, and natural interchanges take place. These interchanges define the interrelations between communities and natural spaces that transcend the boundary and consequently generate the conformation of social and environmental dynamics peculiar to borderlands.

In Latin America, the more visible pro-

Chart 1 | Processes and results for Sub-State unit capacity-building as cooperation agents in the EU

Process	Results
Formulation and implementation of political treaties	Boosted European construction.
European initiatives and programmes	Facilitated access of municipalities and regions to Structural Funds in order to finance local development projects.
Transnationality as a compulsory condition	Obligated to establish cooperation relations.
Transnational exchange within the framework of community initiatives	Created new relations, especially at local and regional levels. New projects brought about stable cooperation dynamics nurtured from Structural Funds.
Relations between transnational partners	Fostered agreements and stable relation frameworks between local/regional partners from various States, some with legal recognition.
Cross-border cooperation development	Determinant factor to reach agreements. Cooperation has been spread among local and regional territorial units of different States with common features, either in relation to problematic issues, local identity characteristics, or shared strategies for the future. Cities and regions have created cooperation networks in a great variety of cooperation spheres.
Cooperation practices within community initiatives and transnational programmes	Created cooperation state structures and networks in which different local and regional actors, interlink in different thematic spheres, not always financed with community resources.
Capacity-building	Derived from this participation and implication.
Dynamics created by community initiatives, interlinking local and regional partners from different States.	Established cooperation dynamics set aside from the existing financial funds specific for this purpose.

Source: OCD 2006 (Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation).

motion of cross-border cooperation activities is carried out through the main integration agendas: the Central American Integration System (CAIS), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Andean Community (ACN). These agendas and the integration processes they promote have been characterised by the development of state of the art agreements, which embrace free trade zones, customs unions, and even the creation of common markets. The Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean (INTAL) is one such case which has been stimulating these integration agendas (INTAL 2005a).

At present, the environmental, social, economic, and political imbalances that affect Latin American borders are developed in scenarios that are rich in nature and culture. Both elements propitiate interchanges that have not necessarily been formally structured in State policies between close local governments and communities. A cross-border meeting on tourism was carried out on the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua in August 2006. Therein, local actors and institutional representatives from both countries manifested their interest in maximising cross-border cooperation and an axis for local development, and signed agreements to give the initiative continuity (CEMEDE/UNA 2006). This meeting was convened by the National University in coordination with both countries' tourism institutes as a forum of local actors connected with tourism activities in the Costa Rica-Nicaragua dyad. This initiative had its first follow-up meeting in the month of November. At the time, it was found that, in order to form a Bi-national Commission, representation and communications between the parties interested in cross-border tourism needed improving.

In the same way, cross-border projects are carrying out cooperation activities in search of the interconnection of the com-

munities on either side of the border. Several of these cooperation experiences along Latin American borderlands are developed with financial support from the EU and organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and non-governmental agencies, among others (European Communities 2004, IDB 2006). Some examples of these projects are: "Strengthening of Local Management of Natural Resources of the basins of Patuca, Negro and Choluteca Rivers" financed by the EU, the Acoyapa - Costa Rican Border Road Integration Program, recently approved by IDB, and the projects for Cross-border cooperation in Central America, carried out with funding from the Ford Foundation (European Communities 2004, IDB 2006). A typology of the cooperation actions on Latin American borders can be established by identifying three subjects: the environment, assistance for development, and regional trade initiatives.

4.1. Cross-border cooperation and the environment

The acknowledgement of the internationalisation of environmental problems has encouraged different Latin American States to search for joint solutions to these problems, especially those of a borderline nature. This has allowed the development of actions dedicated to the protection, extraction of natural resources, and community education on environmental matters. Two examples connected to environmental protection that will help to illustrate this type of projects are being carried out on the borderland shared by Costa Rica and Nicaragua. These are the El Castillo-San Juan-La Selva Biological Corridor project, which has been developed for 14 years and is dedicated to the protection of the Ara ambigua and the El Manatí (*Trichechus manatus*) project, as a tool for the integrated conservation of the San Juan River wetlands and forests and the Tortugero plains. Both projects are initiatives of non-governmental organisations that have involved

the resident communities on the borders. The following achievements may be highlighted: diagnoses of the habitat and population of these species, and bi-national campaigns for their protection (Eco-index 2006a and 2006b). Three of the main challenges these projects must overcome are: a) the diagnoses stages, b) to create knowledge and socioeconomic conditions that will allow the community to participate in the conservation, and c) to obtain funding in order to continue with the activities.

In the area of borderland natural resources, "the countries are making an increasing effort to establish an adequate legal, political, and institutional framework to regulate the development and management of water resources. In order to support these efforts, the Sustainable Development Unit of the OAS, the United National Environment Programme, the World Bank, the IDB, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), have provided the countries with mechanisms for intergovernmental dialogue and cooperation (especially regarding cross-border issues). They have fostered the exchange of information and experiences and have helped to design, formulate, and execute projects related to the integral management of water resources and the development of hydrographic basins" (Robagiati 2004).

4.2. Cross-border cooperation and human development

International assistance aimed at creating better conditions for human development on the borders constitutes a long-term contribution to generate better quality of life for the population. An example of this is the Trifinio Transborder Regional Development Plan, which has been carried out since 1989. One of its most relevant achievements is the consolidation of a Tri-national Commission. The Plan has been able to carry out actions, enable sustainable agriculture, and increase trade articulation of bordering populations, where the

Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala borders adjoin. One of its most important results is having achieved an increase in the participation of civil society. Forming associations during the belligerent conflicts in some Central American countries would have had negative political implications. As a consequence, in some cases this brought about a civil society lacking organisation (Montufar 2002 cited by López et al.2004).

The main challenge in these proceedings consists of getting civil society to organise and generate sufficient capacities to enable them to lead and manage the projects in the region. This is relevant in the borderlands, since not only are they affected by poverty but also by the highest percentages of illiteracy. In the case of the Trifinio Plan, installation over a decade ago of the ATRIDEST is an example of how to promote participation within a State project. The ATRIDEST are civil society organisations integrated by farmers, environmentalist teacher associations, and cultural and social integration and development associations. In addition, the Trifinio Plan was able to promote the creation of an international regime that allows the coordination of the three participating countries.

This last point is most relevant, since when MUGOLFO was originated in 1997 as an organisation of the Golfo de Fonseca coastal municipalities, shared by El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, one of the main obstacles was giving a formal setting to an organisation on the borders and how this could be understood within the context of each State's foreign policy. In the case of Trifinio, this was solved with the creation of an international regime.

4.3. Cross-border cooperation and regional trade

The latter has been viewed as one of the fundamental matters in regional integration and plays a prominent role in the Latin American regional land borders. For example, the growth of the natural gas market in

South American borderlands. This market mobilises large investments for exploration and exploitation, gas processing plants, ducts, installations, and electric generation based on gas, among others. Taking the geographical distribution into consideration, in many cases cross-border cooperation is necessary to support gas producing countries (especially the bordering communities who own this resource) in their processes for the insertion of their production in adequate markets, the commercialisation of natural gas, and adequate production systems.

The extension of the neo-liberal reforms in the region during the decade of the nineties, the most recent free trade movements (with the military control initiatives and systematic governance that accompany them), and the increase in the world market demand over the past year, have made natural resource exploitation (intensive, aimed at exportation and, in a good part, under the control of transnational capitals) one of the core powers for the recovery of regional economic growth (Seoane 2005).

In addition, cross-border cooperation connected with regional trade also includes the construction of new highway networks to link the economic regions of the Latin American States or a section of these. This is the case of the construction of the highway between Acoyapa (Nicaragua) and the border with Costa Rica, which purports to join both countries' approach to the Caribbean.

In summary, these three approaches of cooperation show how, at present, the functions and relationships produced on the border are facing a new scenario, where the globalisation processes and the construction of trade blocks are transforming them. In the new millennium, the idea of the border as a permeable area for relationships, that fosters regional integration and where there is a wide history of cross-border cooperation, is ad-

vancing. It is important to say that, in terms of access to funding, the main initiatives are conducted by States and non-governmental organizations. In this sense, the decision to generate more opportunities for cross-border territorial cooperation management would be marked by the organisation of mechanisms to disseminate problems, possible solutions, sources of funding, and lessons learned from this type of cooperation processes that have been carried out in Latin America and other parts of the world, such as the EU.

4.4. How does cross-border cooperation assist in overcoming social, economic, political, and environmental imbalances on Latin American borders?

Applying cooperation on borderlands has begun to positively impact on the capacities of those local governments that have participated in this type of interchange. Decentralised cooperation is just in the first stages of conformation and, in many cases, such as that of Central America, it has been propitiated by the action of non-governmental agency projects, such as FUNPADEM and IUPN (Progolfo 1998). Both organisations have carried out projects in the region that have propitiated the formation of municipal organisations on the borders and have collaborated in these organisations' follow-up meetings. Although there are still many challenges to generate local participation and be able to develop joint cross-border projects, the Latin American borders and their populations are showing greater local conditions to maximise their own development. This is a consequence of the fact that the projects that have been carried out up to now, although mostly conceived by actors foreign to the borders, have allowed diagnoses processes and improving infrastructure. They have also generated changes in the way capital cities perceive the borders.

These efforts on borders have also been accompanied by regional agreements that show the need to acknowledge borders as areas for the union of interstate cooperation efforts, of great natural and cultural riches, and with a local system of social relationships that can be utilised as a mechanism for the sustainable development of these regions. Thus two agreements were formulated and implemented over ten years ago in the North and the South of the Central American isthmus: The Trifinio Plan (Trinational cross-border regional development plan Trifinio), signed by Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in 1988 (López et al. 2004) and the Cross-border cooperation agreement between Costa Rica and Panama, ratified by Panama in 1994 and by Costa Rica in 1995. In South America, agreements have also been signed to address and solve a variety of needs or problematic situations connected to natural issues, in an integral way. These include water resource

management, sediment control, deforestation, river pollution, soil degradation, and the use of biodiversity (see

With these instruments, cross-border decentralised cooperation relationships are becoming a great force for the performance of joint plans to assist in alleviating development imbalances. However, in Latin America many cross-border cooperation efforts and alliances are still pending, since there are more borders in discord or lacking formal cooperation initiatives than there are with cooperation agreements between the countries that share them.

5. Relevant cross-border cooperation experiences in Latin America and the incorporation of local authorities

Although it is true that at present programmes and projects being carried out on Latin American borders coexist, there are four

Table 2 | Example of the main sub-regional agreements/mechanisms affecting phytogetic resources in South America

País	MERCOSUR	Acuerdo de Cartagena	Amazon Cooperation Treaty	Parlamento Amazónico
Argentina	X	-	-	-
Bolivia	-	X	X	X
Brazil	X	-	X	X
Colombia	-	X	X	X
Chile	-	-	-	-
Ecuador	-	X	X	X
Guyana	-	-	X	X
Paraguay	X	-	-	-
Perú	-	X	X	X
Suriname	-	-	X	X
Uruguay	X	-	-	-
Venezuela	-	X	X	X

Source: Koohafkan 2006.

cases that have been chosen as relevant for analysis, because they have a great regional impact, they are not traditional models of assistance, and they exemplify the type of project or initiatives that are being generated due to regional integration processes. These cases do not specifically correspond to territorial cross-border cooperation initiatives; however, they allow visualising how cross-border cooperation is being accomplished in the region. They are also useful, even though they have not been promoted by the local authorities, since these consider themselves to be very important actors and are incorporated to the implementation of these regional projects and plans in varying degrees.

The cases described are: the Trifinio Plan and the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor, in Central America and Mexico. For South America, two relevant cases are the Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty. The four cases are initiatives with the common characteristic of maximising regional integration in the areas in which they are developed.

Trifinio Plan. For over a decade, the Trifinio Plan has been executed with the aim of “contributing to Central American integration, through the joint action of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, tending towards the integral, harmonious, and balanced development of the bordering region of the three countries” (Tri-national Commission of the Trifinio Plan 2006) (see Figure 1).

This project began its activities in 1992 with EU funding. Its main achievement has been to consolidate an international system for the integration of participating countries’ actions, the creation of the Tri-national Commission, the creation of local institutions called Associations for Sustainable Development in the Trifinio Region (ATRIDEST) and the Consultative Committee of the Trifinio Plan formed by 45 mayors, the governors, and the

ATRIDEST. This committee formalises local authority participation in the Trifinio Plan. A dialogue forum has been formed which has given local governments greater participation (López et al. 2004).

The consolidation process of this international regime has essentially been manifested in four aspects (López et al. 2004):

There is a governmental integration process between the participating States, which has



been formally expressed through the countries’ Vice Presidents.

This plan has integrated the local bordering communities, manifested through the decision made regarding development project planning and execution.

The investment in local infrastructure has encouraged regional trade development in the zone.

The Trifinio Plan has achieved recognition and projection of its activities in the Cen-

tral American region, which has propitiated the exchange of experiences and lessons learned with the execution of this integration project.

Even though the advances regarding regional integration of the Trifinio Plan have been many, great challenges had to be faced in order to reach these achievements, such as the reliance on external funding or international cooperation, and the difficulties to define tri-national agendas and cover a wide, diverse, and politically fragmented geographical space (López et al. 2004).

The great strength of the Trifinio Plan is that it has demonstrated that it is possible to overcome the challenges of State coordination required to develop a tri-national integration process in the Central American region. In this sense, one of the most successful steps taken within the framework of this project is the legitimization of its activities through the Treaty on the Execution of Trifinio Plan between El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, ratified between 1998 and 1999.

The Trifinio Plan is ongoing. Activities are being carried out connected with the promotion of water administration as a regional public good in the upper basin of the Lempa River; the definition of the legal, institutional, and administrative framework for the Management of the Montecristo Trinational Protected Area; the sustainable development project for the upper basin of the Lempa River; and the regional programme for participative implementation of plague and agro-forestry management with small and medium scale producer families (CTPT 2006).

5.1. Mesoamerican Biological Corridor (MBC)

It constitutes one of the most important efforts for the conservation of biodiversity in Mesoamerica (for this initiative, it includes Central America, Panama, and the five southern states of Mexico). This initiative hopes to counteract the environmental problems it is facing,

especially the fragmentation of ecosystems. It has been defined as: “A system of territorial planning containing areas under various forms of management, including core areas (protected areas), buffer areas (areas surrounding protected areas), multiple use areas (areas that will not be dedicated to conservation), and interconnected areas (specific patches that connect different protected areas). They are organized in order to provide important environmental services to the Central American and the global society” (Millar 2001). It has been estimated that the MBC surface (to 2001) is of 321.103 km² (123,978 square miles) for all Mesoamerica; 48.7% corresponds to already declared protected areas, 3.9% to proposed protected areas, and 47.4% to corridors or interconnected areas (Zúñiga et al. 2002).

The initiative has been promoted by the State governments, as a response to the commitments generated with the Central American integration efforts, specifically with the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development (CAASD), which declared the establishment of a system of biological corridors interconnecting the main protected areas of Mesoamerica as a priority for the region.

The MBC coordination is performed on two levels: regional and State. On a regional level, the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD) coordinates the creation of links between each country’s conservation efforts, generating the capacities for coordinated regional work, in addition to assisting with the work guidelines and principles for local and State actions. This phase of regional work is in the preparatory stage, which commenced in the year 2000 with the project “MBC Consolidation”.

However, it was considered that the definition of strategic zones in which to develop biological corridors should be given at a State level, where each country identifies its conservation priorities and the way it will carry out the objectives and commitments contracted

by accepting to be part of the MBC, thus decentralising their implementation. There has been an attempt to incorporate the governance principle and practice with this initiative's actions. This principle promotes the participation and distribution of responsibilities and rights among the different actors, including the local authorities.

Since the attempt has been made to decentralize the implementation of the MBC, there has been no formal coordination with the local authorities at a regional level; rather, the participation of these actors has been promoted in each priority area in which biological corridor projects are being developed. The case of the El Castillo-San Juan-La Selva Biological Corridor exemplifies how local authorities are becoming involved and contributing their own initiatives to the biological corridor objectives, in addition to helping to generate cooperation among border communities (see Chart 2).

One of the important changes that have been generated with the MBC in the region is

that it has helped to change the form of implementing biodiversity conservation actions towards more holistic strategies, where the emphasis is not only on the biological interest in conservation, but also to provide the means to generate economic activities (with the system of payments for environmental services) to promote the sustainable development of this region. The integral strategies for development and conservation prove indispensable in this region which, with the exception of Costa Rica and Panama, has very low ratios of human development; Nicaragua and Honduras, together with Haiti, are the poorest countries on the American continent.

This change of viewpoint has influenced the MBC's support of conservation actions with direct benefits for the communities; therefore, different social actors have taken an interest in participating in this initiative.

This is evidenced with the surge of initiatives with systems of payment for environmental services fostered directly by the municipalities,

for the protection of water sources that supply the communities. One example is the experience of the Municipal Water Bureau of Campamento Municipality, Honduras. This municipality, with the aid of the PASOLAC regional programme and other institutions, has carried out the economic valuation studies of the water resource and initiated the process to allow charging users for the environmental water protection service, to be distributed to the owners of the forests that are being conserved to protect the water sources. Another similar experience is that of the Municipal Water Agency of Tacuba (CCAD-PNUP/GEF, GTZ 2004).

Regarding concrete actions of the MBC at a regional level, focus is being placed on the development of biological corridors in protected cross-border areas. There are at least 11 cross-border biological corridor initiatives at present, some in a preparatory design stage, and others already being implemented (see Chart 3).

Most of the borderlands where MBC activities take place are areas that present certain levels of unrest, especially political due to border demarcation and recognition of the States (as in the case of Belize and Guatemala), or due to shared resources (as in the case of Costa Rica and Nicaragua with their dispute over the San Juan River). These conflicts, in different measures, are affecting local border development. It is interesting to note, however, that these cross-border initiatives are influencing not only the rapprochement of various States, but also of different social actors that were in conflict over conservation actions, such as farmer and indigenous organisations, the private sector (small, medium and large banana and coffee producers), also attracting and generating synergies with the ecotourism sector. As well as incorporating local authorities that, although not in conflict with the conservation actions developed by environmental ministries or NGO, were not

Chart 2 | Bi-national Biological Corridor El Castillo-San Juan-La Selva

This biological corridor is located in the border zone between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. It seeks the following areas' connectivity: Fuerte de la Inmaculada Concepción de María, Indio Maíz Biological Reserve, and Río San Juan y Maquenque Wildlife Shelters. One reason for this is the need to increase the habitat for endangered species such as the Great Green Macaw and the almond tree, connecting degraded areas, specially on the Costa Rican side, with Indio Maíz Reserve, which is in a good conditions.

Even though the initiative has a strong biological emphasis, it has been carried out with a holistic approach, incorporating local communities, mainly from municipalities (El Castillo in Nicaragua and San Carlos in Costa Rica), to environmental education processes, payment schemes for environmental services, municipal development, and ownership of land, among others. El Castillo municipality has planned boosting projects to reforest and for forests conservation by paying for environmental services. Local authorities shall pay landowners for their conservation efforts. These plans are still in a preliminary phases, but it is interesting to know that local authorities have shown great interest in promoting conservation in their area of influence.

An outstanding feature this initiative is that even though it is developing in a context of strong political strife, this project is bringing different organizations and government institutions together to work on environmental issues, generating collaborative work and environmental cooperation processes.

Source: López and Jiménez 2006.

Chart 3 | Cross-border conservation projects in Central America and Mexico

Project	Countries	Protected areas involved
Mayan forest	Mexico-Belize-Guatemala	Maya RB (Gua) / Calakmul RB (Mex), Río Bravo Conservation Area (Bel)
Barra de Santiago-Monterrico	Guatemala-El Salvador	Monterrico (Gua), Barra de Santiago (ES) Ramsar Sites
Merendon-COBIME	Guatemala-Honduras	Copan-Barra del Motagua (Hon), Quirigua-Manabique (Gua)
CB Atlantic Coastal Marine	Guatemala-Honduras	Manabique (Gua); Cusuco, Omoa (Hon)
Trifinio	Guatemala-El Salvador-Honduras	Montecristo PN (ES), Trifinio RB (various protected areas in the three counties)
Gulf of Fonseca*	El Salvador - Honduras - Nicaragua	Bay of La Unión (ES), Pasaquina (ES), El Infiernillo (ES) / Bay of Chismuyo (Hon), El Jicarito (Hon), La Berberia (Hon) / Estero Real (Nic), Cosiguina Volcano (Nic), Estero Padre Ramos (Nic)
Heart of MBC (Mesoamerican Biological Corridor)	Honduras-Nicaragua	Plátano River RB (Hon), Patuca PN (Hon), Tawahka RB (Hon) / Bosawas RB (Nic)
El Castillo-San Juan-La Selva Biological Corridor	Nicaragua-Costa Rica	Indio Maíz R Biol (Nic), Maquenque RV (CR)
Wetland Corridor	Nicaragua-Costa Rica	Las Camelias (CR)-Caño Negro (CR), Guatuzos (Nic), Solentiname (Nic), San Miguelito (Nic)
La Amistad International Park	Costa Rica-Panama	La Amistad (CR-Pan), Cahuita PN (CR), Hitoy Cerere R Biol (CR), Gandoca Manzanillo RV (CR).

*Contains 26 protected areas, only the largest ones are mentioned here.

RB: Biosphere Reserve. PN: National Park. R Biol: Biological Reserve. RV: Wildlife Shelter

considered relevant actors for this type of action.

The MBC was not designed as an initiative for cross-border cooperation; however, the positive externalization of its implementation is allowing the creation of conditions in which to develop the type of institutions needed to mitigate cross-border environmental problems and to generate cooperation schemes.

5.2. Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region

The borderland between Peru and Ecuador is a relevant example of local development processes and regional integration with the participation of national and international cooperation, of both State and private organisations.

The Peru-Ecuador borderland encompasses a bi-national territorial surface of 420,655.54 km². The region has a population of over four million people, of whom almost three million are Peruvian. All the population lives in low social and economic development conditions when compared to the rest of the territories in both countries (Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006). This borderland has been affected by conflicts between the governments of both countries, which have brought consequences such as the closing of the border and the scarce support from the national government for the growth of local economies and local institutions. With the signing of the 1998 peace agreement, the cross-border development of that zone was made a priority.

As a result of the peace agreement, the “Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region” was formulated with the mission of increasing the quality of life of local cross-border populations in the Department of Tumbes in Peru and the Province of El Oro in Ecuador (North and Northeast of Peru, and South and East of Ecuador). This Plan set out strategies for integration and coo-

operation between the two countries, through varied projects including the development of basic infrastructure, social and productive development, adequate and sustainable management of natural resources, strengthening of the cultural identity of the native communities, among others (Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006).

The execution of the Bi-National Plan is foreseen for a period of ten years (2000-2009). The plan contemplates the execution of diverse projects in order to achieve the zone’s progress. It is formed by four programmes that complement each other to attain an integral development (Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006).

Bi-national Programme for Social and Productive Infrastructure Projects (in zones that share resources or have complementary economies).

National Programmes for the Construction and Improvement of Productive and Services Infrastructure (works that will facilitate cross-border transit, sustainable development of zones with productive capacity, and the construction of physical infrastructure that will foster local productive and commercial interaction).

National Programmes for the Construction and Improvement of Social Infrastructure and the Environment (works covering health, education, sewage and urban development, basic services and the environment).

Programme to Promote Private Investment (to identify investment areas and opportunities in which the private sector can participate in the execution and financing of projects).

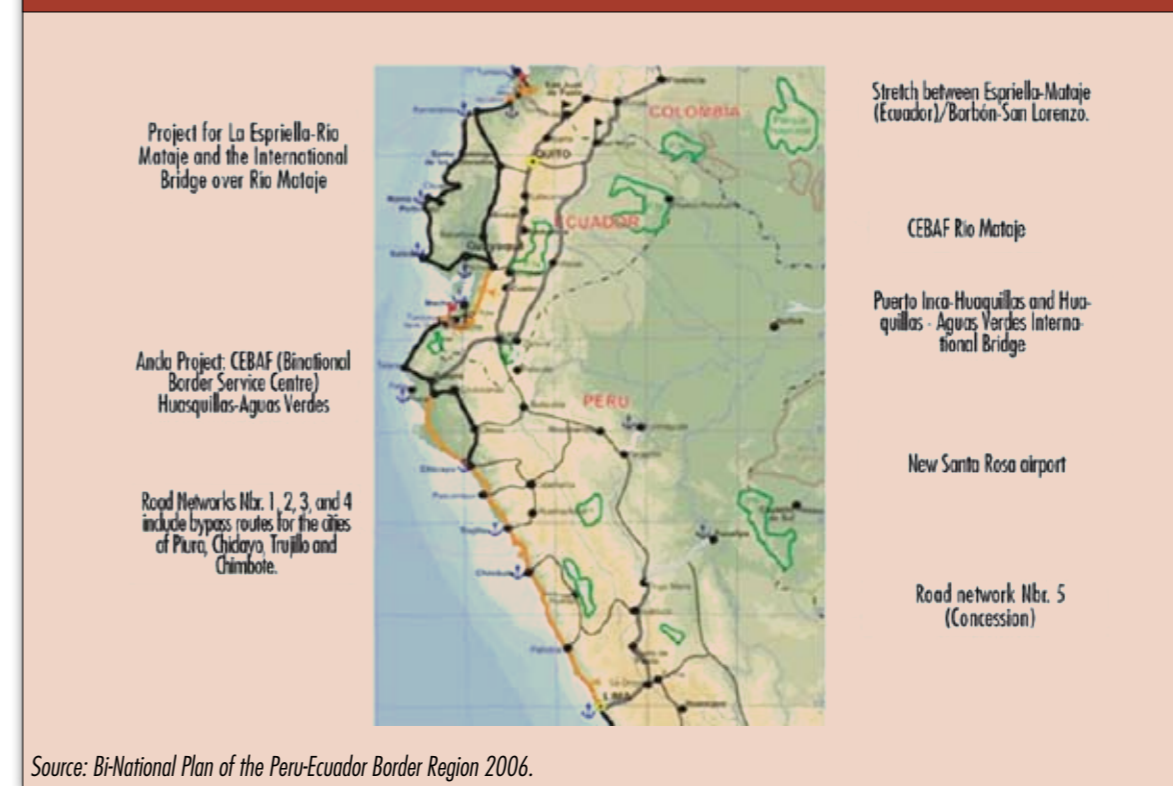
This initiative was first promoted by the State governments due to the strong political conflicts between both nations. However, since the Bi-national Plan promotes the construction of small infrastructure works, attention to the demands made by organised groups in the

communities, and support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the borderland, other social actors are currently participating, among others local governments from bordering communities.

Examples mentioned in an article written by the Mayor of San Ignacio de Cajamarca (Peru)¹ are the agreements signed by this Plan’s Bi-National Fund with the provincial and district municipalities, with which projects have been carried out for amounts of up to US\$ 50 thousand, to build schools, colleges, health centres, productive infrastructure for coffee, bridges, cable pontoons, mini-hydroelectric plants, and highways. In July 2005, the EU formalised a

cooperation agreement with the States involved for the financing of the infrastructure project “Piura-Guayaquil Road Axis No.1,” considered one of the most important projects that have been carried out in the framework of the Peru-Ecuador Bi-national Plan. The project includes the construction of the new international bridge, the construction of the Bi-national Border Services Centre of Huaquillas-Aguas Verdes, and the improvement of the Santa Rosa-Huaquillas highway. It is important to highlight that for the “integration” international bridge, complementary efforts were made by the State governments, the provincial and district municipalities including that of San Ignacio (Peru),

Figure 2 | Andean Axis - Colombia-Ecuador-Peru Connection



Source: Bi-National Plan of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006.

¹ | See article in: <http://planbinacional.rreec.gob.pe/domino/nsf/planbinacional.nsf/0/7683E08AD075160505256EC900721EC8?OpenDocument>

and public organisations of the zone, as well as non-reimbursable cooperation received from the Brazilian government.

This project is expected to have positive impacts on the transit of people and vehicles, to increase trade, and to reduce the vulnerability of the infrastructure in the face of natural phenomena. The project is connected with the integration process of the coastal zone of Colombia (Puerto Tumaco)-Ecuador (Puerto Esmeralda-Guayaquil)-Peru (of the Andean Axis group), with the aim of maximizing trade and tourism relationships of these countries' neighbouring coasts (Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006) The projects for 2007 are along the lines of intervention, such as: electrification, road infrastructure, water, drainage and sewage, health and education, local productive infrastructure, irrigation, construction and rehabilitation of small piers. The above require Executive Entities (EE) that may be public institutions, among them local governments or private sector organisations that fulfil the legal requirements and coordinate with the municipalities. The EE must address community demands, the elaboration of technical reports and complementary studies of the works, the execution of the projects, and they are responsible for delivering the completed work to the final beneficiaries (Bi-national Plan for Development of the Peru-Ecuador Border Region 2006).

5.3. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty

The Amazon basin is an ecosystem shared by eight countries: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela. It has great socioeconomic and environmental importance for these countries who, in different degrees, depend on the resources from this basin for their de-

velopment. Acknowledging the dependence and interest in the protection of this basin's resources, the adjoining countries signed the Amazon Cooperation Treaty in July 1978. This treaty is a cooperation agreement with the aim of coordinating efforts to protect the Amazon basin and promote its development (Colombian Ministry of the Environment, no date). Its aims include, among others, the free commercial navigation on the Amazon and shared international rivers, the respect for each country's sovereignty for the use of resources, the coordination of efforts for the use of water resources, and the interchange of information. It is insisted that the exploitation of Amazonia should generate benefits that directly serve the Amazon countries, calling upon the strong role of participating States. This reiteration is due, in part, to the interest of the international community in preserving this zone as a world heritage, proposal which is not shared by some sectors in these countries (Gudyans 2004, Figueredo 2002). With this treaty, various declarations are formulated on the future of cooperation for development and protection of the heritage of their respective Amazon territories; for example: the Amazon Declaration in 1989 and the Declaration of Manaus in 1992, in which a joint vision is established for the Rio de Janeiro Convention on Biodiversity.

The participation of local or regional border governments is being stimulated in many of the development programmes within the framework of this Treaty. In addition to seeking to strengthen the local governments, these programmes incorporate measures such as the creation of an Amazon municipality network to address the issue of the Amazon basin management² (See document on this initiative).

This treaty and its declarations have

been overshadowed, since the pressure of traditional exploitation of land is so strong, and in most of their forms they are not environmentally sustainable nor do they assure benefits to the local communities as expected with the Treaty (Gudyans 2004). In addition, the issue of security in Colombia, with the problems of narcotics and guerrillas, affects the coordination of efforts. Notwithstanding the above, efforts to activate and implement this Treaty are still in effect. The Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation (ACTO) was created in 1998. It is a permanent organization that is working toward the implementation of agreements to achieve the sustainable development of the Amazon basin on which all the participating countries are agreed.

5.4. Challenges for the development of borderlands that make cross-border cooperation necessary in Latin America

The difficulties encountered by regional integration processes all over Latin America are originated in the need to overcome traditional views on sovereignty, to stop perceiving borders as marginal areas of development, and to overcome the lengthy border disputes that have marked foreign relations between the countries. The creation of regional institutions such as the Central American Integration System, MERCOSUR, and the Andean Community, guides us to the reflection that borders are visualised as territories for regional cooperation and integration.

Two of the great challenges faced by this new vision of borders that is emerging are how their populations' quality of life can be improved as a result of development plans, and how to manage the issue of migrations within the region. Paradoxically, while Latin American borders are becoming more permeable to commercial exchanges, in some countries of the region migration controls have been increasing, a fact that hinders people's entry to

the different countries. This regulation that is being imposed on human migration is greatly explained by the social and economic heterogeneity of the countries in the region, which causes some to become poles of attraction for immigrants. Such is the case of Argentina, Mexico, and Costa Rica (Villa y Martínez 2001).

Temporary manpower mobility, which is very much linked to the harvesting time of agricultural products such as sugar cane and coffee, must be added to the above processes of person mobility on the borders. Border mobility, which connects border populations, has existed for a long time. Such is the case of the flow of Guatemalan workers who periodically travel to the Mexican State of Chiapas, or of the Guaymí ethnic indigenous population that moves from Panama towards Costa Rica to work the coffee harvest, or of the Nicaraguans who travel to Costa Rica in search of work opportunities.

The new imaginary of Latin American borders must acknowledge that social and economic cross-border structures already exist in them, and that these may become the pillars of the new economic networks that are being propitiated as part of the border development processes. Great cooperation opportunities exceed commercial issues and market integration. It is increasingly evident that the awareness of the importance of natural units divided by boundaries is growing, and that these may only be conserved if joint actions are promoted.

5.5. Advantages and difficulties of territorial cross-border cooperation in Latin America

In Latin America, most cases of cross-border cooperation are conceived and promoted by the State. In some cases, as alternatives to solve political conflicts between countries, such as Peru and Ecuador; or as part of strategies to attack common problems, such as the

² | See <http://www.wsp.org/iquitos/Acuerdos%20de%20Iquitos%202006.pdf>



Mesoamerican Biological Corridor with the ecosystem fragmentation problem; and also in a common search for development alternatives for the borderlands, such as Trifinio.

The cooperation experiences present great challenges, since the participating States normally put their individual interests before regional ones, causing some of these experiences to stop advancing in the quest for their objectives, such as the case of the Amazon Cooperation Treaty.

The participation of actors such as local authorities is fundamental to carry out cooperation actions in practice. However, the great organisational weaknesses historically presented by these actors have made their role less influential in the initial defining stages of these cooperation experiences. At a regional level, there have been some efforts to strengthen local authorities by fostering decentralization processes, in part so these may be valid referents for the different development projects and cooperation initiatives among countries. The fact that the above experiences have local government participation is, on different levels, an indicative that there are changes in capacity-building for coordinated inter-institutional work, at least in some local borderland governments.

6. Local borderland authorities: actors for cooperation and integration?

Latin American borderlands have been characterized by the little attention they receive from the authorities. They are zones that, until two decades ago, have historically been marginalized from the State economic development processes. Human development and the conformation of productive structures are now being placed on regional agendas, based on the advantages offered by agriculture, cattle raising, trade, services, and mining, in these areas.

The municipality shares with the State the characteristic of being an entity with total and general objectives, which brings about the possibility of carrying out a series of dissimilar activities. This characteristic, added to the fact that the municipal space is simultaneously State space, on which an endless amount of institutions with different degrees of competence are projected, makes it inevitable that there be an overlapping of tasks and friction regarding jurisdiction. This demands municipal participation with high coordination and leadership, with the capacity to articulate programmes and projects linking borderlands in order to achieve the maximization of resources and greater effectiveness of cooperation projects, both national and international.

Local border authorities, notwithstanding their constitutional importance as being responsible for maximizing and administering local development, show voids regarding intervention in local problematic issues. Recurring problems are the lack of public services and more accentuated social lagging indexes than in other zones, added to other characteristics that make one reflect on the wished participation of local border authorities as real agents to improve the communities' quality of life, thus fulfilling the objectives for which they are responsible.

The role of local authorities in Latin America is becoming more important, since it requires involving all the sectors of society in a level of awareness of its closeness to the neighbouring country, so that cultural, economic, and social aspects of mutual interest are acknowledged and valued as a maximizing element for the successful outcome of cross-border cooperation.

Border municipalities' socioeconomic problems can worsen if intervention is not effectively and opportunely carried out. A factor that hinders the intervention of municipalities and cooperation projects in these zones is the weak associative organization. This makes

communal education or awareness training necessary, with actions that foster an associative culture and leadership of the private productive sector, supported by public investments, mixed activities (public-private), and decentralized cooperation (Bustamante 2005).

Unemployment, poverty, and low wages, among others, are frequent subjects in many Latin American borderlands. Overcoming them implies it is necessary to invigorate the economy in these zones. However, this requires investments in road infrastructure and in public services so that producers and investors can perform under competitive conditions. Local border authorities are summoned to be the agents that will attract investments for public works and that will improve social and productive organization in the borderlands. Both actions would allow increasing local production, generating employment, increasing municipal and people's income, and would propitiate a positive impact on the population's quality of life.

The environmental issue is considered in these municipalities' priorities. The bad management of solid waste produces negative impacts on the quality of life of those people who inhabit this zone. The policies are directed at addressing these problems; however, the participation of national or international agents is required.

Regarding the community perception and confidence required for the integration processes to be successful, there are groups in the community with high expectations, in contrast with groups that show high levels of mistrust and suspicion. According to Bustamante (2005), municipalities must address the integration process with education, but also with the evaluation of political actors, in order to keep a medium and long term direction in accordance with the vision of local development.

Borderland intervention necessarily requires coordination with the municipalities. However, there are programmes, such as those

for international cooperation, which require a greater degree of formalization of coordination relations.

6.1. Incidence of Latin American local border authorities on regional integration agendas

The regional integration agendas (CAIS, MERCOSUR, and the Andean Community), although designed and negotiated by the central governments of the participating States, have been acknowledging the importance of decentralization processes and the predominant role of local authorities to promote good territorial governance, especially in borderlands. The incidence of local border authorities on these agendas is variable, in accordance with each context; it will therefore be addressed separately.

CAIS: In Central America there are various second-degree organizations that join municipalities on a national level; for example, national municipality associations or federations. At a regional level, there is a federation that gathers the majority of these national organizations: the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA), that joins around 1,200 municipalities in the region. FEMICA is a member of the Consultative Committee of the Central American Integration System (CC-CAIS), a body of the regionally organised civil society that operates supporting the integration process (FEMICA 2003a).

FEMICA has attempted to foster within CAIS, the importance of generating processes that promote municipal decentralisation and capacity-building as an important element for regional integration. As part of its performance, FEMICA fosters regional consensus on the essential elements that must shape Central American municipalities and the contribution each local government must make to attain the objectives of integral and sustainable development (FEMICA 2003a). To this end, in coor-

dination with each country's municipal sector and with the support of international voluntary workers, for over a decade FEMICA has debated on the essential issues that contribute to a better local public administration, particularly at the periodical meetings that have been held as part of the political dialogue network that has been institutionalized by the Federation.

FEMICA has developed a Work Plan that corresponds to the priority issues on the Municipal Agenda defined by the Central American Mayors and local authorities. The general priority items defined are: Transparency and Probity, Local Economic Development, Local Risk Management, Citizen Security, and Municipal Finances. The Plan also adopts as a reference framework, the commitments made by the Region's governments at the Summit Meetings of Heads of Government regarding decentralisation and strengthening of local democracy (FEMICA 2003b).

MERCOSUR: Mercosur has three instances connected with border community development, which allow local authority participation in the decision-making process within the integration agenda (INTAL 2005).

One instance is the Ad Hoc Group on Border Integration, created in 2002, subordinated to the Common Market Group, which is coordinated by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and composed by high level representatives of the technical bodies relevant to the specific issues to be addressed in the agenda. Among the functions of the Ad Hoc Group is the elaboration of proposals of regulating instruments or other courses of action destined to facilitate relationships between border communities. These proposals shall be referred to commercial exchanges between border localities of the MERCOSUR States Parties and to the aspects of health, education, labour, migration, transport, economic development, and others that tend to encourage integration

among border communities (INTAL 2005).

The remaining two instances are connected with the Mercocities initiative. This initiative was created in 1995 by the government authorities of the cities of Buenos Aires, La Plata, Rosario, Cordoba, Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Curitiba, Florianopolis, Porto Alegre, Salvador, Asuncion and Montevideo, with the aim of achieving municipal participation within MERCOSUR and at the same time of encouraging the interchange and cooperation between the cities of the region (Mercocities 2006). It is currently MERCOSUR's main network of municipalities and the main referent of the integration process regarding local governments. It has 123 associated cities in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, and Bolivia, with a total of over 72 million citizens. It has a Permanent Technical Secretariat, in charge of managing cooperation projects for the complete network (Mercocities 2003).

Within its orientations, Mercocities has a border policy aimed at improving the development conditions of border communities and at contributing to solve problematic aspects regarding trade, customs, border traffic, epidemiological and sanitary aspects in general, and migration and sociocultural issues. Mercocities promoted before the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Executive Powers, the creation of an organization for local government participation in MERCOSUR. After six years of negotiations, the Specialized Meeting of Municipalities and City Councils (REMI) within the MERCOSUR was created in 2001. It is worth mentioning that this institutional space was obtained through the work, interest, and persistence of the local authorities themselves, encouraged by their conviction that the integration process must transcend Foreign Ministries and integrate actors in different spheres closer to the people's daily lives.

The new economic outlook felt in MER-

COSUR following the IX Mercosur Summit of Heads of State – Montevideo-2003, during which the integration process was reactivated, incorporated a new agenda that opens a promising, but demanding, outlook for the cities. It is promising because many proposals put forward by cities are starting to be considered by main leaders of the block. It is demanding because these new times require cities to develop specific policies with audacity and creativity in order to address the solution to their citizens' most serious problematic issues.

Regarding specific borderland actions, most of the efforts within the context of MERCOSUR are connected with health issues, especially epidemic prevention. An example of this type of actions is the project "Regional Co-operation and Integration in the Area of Health, Proposal of an Integrated Health System for MERCOSUR" which attempts to solve health problems of border municipality population using the Brazilian Unified Health System as a referent. Even though there is not much funding at present, support is being requested, especially from IDB (MERCOSUR 2004).

Andean Community : The Andean Community has had a Border Development and Integration Community Policy since 1999. This is an essential component for the strengthening and consolidation of the integration process and the holistic development of borderlands. Two forms of making border development operational are conceived within the framework of this policy: the Border Integration Zones (BIZ) and the Bi-national Border Service Centres (CEBAF). In addition to these, the Border Development Projects Bank has been developed within the Andean Community General Secretariat (Taccone et al. 2005).

The BIZ are border territorial spheres adjoining Andean Community member States, in which plans, programmes, and projects

will be executed to encourage their development in a joint, shared, and coordinated manner. Some of the actions to be taken are:

Committing participation of social actors, entrepreneurs, workers, private foundations, and civil associations.

Stimulating local, national, bi-national, and foreign private investments.

Promoting encounters and the interchange of initiatives between local authorities, regional development organizations, and legislature representatives of the member States.

Up to now the following BIZ have been established: Colombian-Ecuadorian BIZ, Colombian-Peruvian BIZ, Bolivian-Peruvian BIZ. The instrument used to develop these BIZ is the Border Development Projects Bank (Taccone et al. 2005). Border municipalities participate, jointly with other social actors, in the projects developed within the framework of border integration and development policy.

The Bi-national Border Service Centres (CEBAF) are operational centres that gather the installations located in one portion of territory of one or two adjoining Andean Community (ACN) countries, next to a border crossing with integrated control of the flow of persons, baggage, merchandise, and vehicles, as well as complementary facilitation and customer services (Andean Community, no date). The idea that helps CAN integration is that these centres have general development and operational standards; however, the participation of local authorities in the operations of these centres is unclear.

With the exception of REMI, in MERCOSUR, which arose as a local authority initiative, their incidence on the integration agendas has been limited, since State governments have planned and negotiated the agendas and have defined the importance of incorporating local authorities and other actors for the integral development of borderlands.

There are initiatives, however, that have arisen from local authorities and different second-degree organizations, which are included but not necessarily directly connected with any official integration agenda. One example is the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Authority Associations (FLACMA), that subscribed the Latin American Municipality Agenda in 2003, as the result of the different National Associations of Local Authorities. The guidelines to promote decentralization and good governance through the strengthening of local governments are shown on this Agenda. An interesting aspect of this Agenda is that it highlights the role of these local governments to promote and facilitate national and international integration. There is a broad consensus regarding the problems that affect local governments and communities in the region, as well as on the objectives and commitments they must make in order to achieve them (FLACMA 2003).

7. EU-Latin America decentralized cooperation and territorial cross-border cooperation in Latin America

European Union decentralized cooperation towards Latin America is a priority issue for local authorities in the region, especially when analyzing the socioeconomic problems of Latin American countries and borderlands, which renders greater importance to the territorial dimension of regional development and integration.

The Latin American development agenda defines local development and regional integration programmes and projects, valuing the role of Sub-State governments as coordinating agents and executors of specific support actions to communities with social and economic lagging. This is the case of communities that reside in borderlands.

However, commercial and economic liberalization processes introduced over the past years carry opportunities and threats for all the communities, leaving behind those having competitive limitations for production and interchange.

European Union decentralised cooperation in Latin American border communities is analysed as an integrating alternative, considering the territorial dimension of regional development and integration as a path to address necessities with the participants from different countries, in which border community organisations show commitment and formality to subscribe coordination agreements that will make the efforts effective.

One of this year's prototype experiences shows a tendency to redefine the role of local governments. Such is the case of cross-border territorial cooperation with the border municipalities of Cúcuta (Colombia), and Bolívar and Pedro María Ureña (Venezuela). These municipalities have experience and tradition in the production of leather goods such as bags, jackets, purses, and shoes. The present condition of production is identified as a weak productive chain with a great lack of coordination and difficulties to operate. The municipalities are attempting to articulate and coordinate the productive process, integrating private and trade union entities in order to achieve the integrated work of all the parts of the productive chain and the conformation of clusters (Bustamante 2005).

Another specific territorial cross-border cooperation experience has arisen from the idea of creating an international network of regions to promote the integration of South American bi-oceanic corridors through the use of instruments of information, training, and technical assistance on territorial development. These are processes such as the Central-west South American Integration Area (ZICOSUR) (that includes regions of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay

and Peru); the South American Central Bi-oceanic Corridor Regions Forum (that includes regions of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay); the internodal bi-oceanic network that joins Brazil, Bolivia and Peru; or further North, the integration possibilities between Colombia and Venezuela. In terms of decentralized cooperation policy priorities, the proposal will value all those spaces of regional integration that are currently in construction. Foreign collaboration can contribute great added value to this network, by availing South American counterparts of the collaboration experience gained with other countries in similar processes, on some of the issues considered as priority by all the Latin American authorities, such as local development, economic integration, foreign trade, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the environment and sustainable development, and technological innovation and development. The European experience can also be useful in relation to transversal issues such as the consolidation of Sub-State institutions, support to territorial internationalisation, and interregional and cross-border cooperation.

All territorial cross-border integration and cooperation actions consider the possibility of receiving financial support from EU decentralised cooperation. For this reason, all their postulates propose deepening the coordination between the EU and Latin America, renewing the strategy applied in the last decade.

Relations between both regions have been strengthened over the past few years. The European Union is the first foreign investor in Latin America and the first provider of funds in the region, as well as being the first commercial partner in numerous countries, those from MERCOSUR in particular. Political relations are consolidated thanks to initiatives such as the three EU-Latin American Summits (Rio de Janeiro in 1999, Madrid in 2002, and Guadalajara in 2004). On their

part, most Latin American countries have adopted democratic systems and have undertaken ambitious economic and social reforms in search of economic recovery, based on processes of integration and cooperation. The region has natural resources with great development potential, and it is gaining a more and more important role on the international scene. Even so, Latin America must overcome the high levels of poverty (40%) and the lack of economic, social, and political stability that still persist and can affect decentralized cooperation relationships and internal processes of territorial cross-border cooperation.

8. Where is cross-border cooperation going in Latin America? Some conclusions and recommendations

Cross-border cooperation in Latin America is a process that is just germinating. Although it is true that there have been experiences of local cooperation and relationships at either side of the region's boundaries for a long time, these many times depend on the decision of the foreign ministries in order to be formalized and acknowledged. In this regard, one can affirm that Latin American legal frameworks have conferred the State with exclusive jurisdiction on international cooperation. However, there is an increased participation of other sub-regional agents and local authorities in activities of an international nature (OCD 2006). According to the OCD (2006:21) in "just a few cases (as in Argentina), they are legislative and constitutional modifications." In other cases, these are initiatives developed by local/regional authorities and agreed to (explicitly or implicitly) by the State, even though the former lack formal jurisdiction."

In this scenario, Latin American local authorities located on the border face great challenges, mainly to consolidate greater au-



tonomy for territorial administration and for the creation of alliances with neighbouring border municipalities that will allow them to address the needs of their inhabitants. This is fundamental to start changing the economic and environmental scenario of most border municipalities, marked by low conditions for production, lack of infrastructure, lack of local training to exploit the comparative advantages of these borderland communities, and the need to address conservation of the natural and cultural riches they enclose.

Although the problems and needs in the borderlands are many, decentralized cross-border cooperation is directed at the execution of projects with high socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural impact. Communities with high levels of social and human development lagging are the focus for decentralized cooperation, which seeks to improve the capacity to produce goods or services that will generate local benefits for the poorer sectors of the population. In this sense, the interest in communal works of general usage prevails: the creation of road networks, bridges and aqueducts, that will provide the community with the means to increase competitive capacity for local production by improving trade conditions with the rest of the country and with the cross-border communities.

Issues connected with the environment are generating new cooperation alliances at the borders, due to the greater acknowledgement of relationships of interdependence and the internationalization of environmental problems that affect shared natural resources and are of interest to the States and local communities who depend on these resources. When States perceive that joint actions will bring greater benefits to prevent common environmental problems, the probabilities of generating cooperation schemes increase, as is the case of MBC. This project has achieved the political acknowledgement of the importance of harmonizing actions to diminish the problem of ecosystem fragmentation and of finding joint solutions to promote better quality of life for their inhabitants. Specific actions which put this initiative into practice are taken with State participation, but in most cases civil society organizations, with the participation of local authorities, set these initiatives in motion, such as in the case of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. This is probably one of the most relevant lessons to be learned from this example.

Finally, it is clear that in the different visions of regional integration, local governments are being consulted and acknowledged more as important actors, especially since cooperation between States is accomplished in the borderlands.

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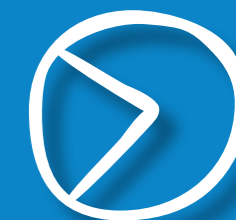
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Analysis of regional integration experiences*

The aim of this section is to analyse some of the most outstanding decentralised cooperation initiatives detected by the Observatory in relation to regional integration. These are experiences aimed to create tools that allow facing common problems in a regional way, creating increasing and significant benefits and improving Sub-State government capacity-building. One should keep in mind that, as several experts have already affirmed, regional integration is not a goal in itself, but a political instrument to achieve sustainable economic growth and therefore, to work for equality and poverty reduction.

A series of experiences that shall be taken into account for their contribution to Latin American regional integration processes are described below: The cooperation initiative between Argentine and Brazilian regions; the Central Bi-Oceanic Corridor Forum, integration space for Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile; and the Institute for Local Development of Central America (IDELCA), organization made up by Central American organizations with support of European local governments to create spaces in order to train local leaders and to foster the Central American integration processes. These experiences were selected because they show the richness of decentralised cooperation in the sphere of regional integration.

**Choice of experiences and editing in charge of the OCD European Antenna.*

1. CRECENEA-CODESUL

CRECENEA-CODESUL is a cooperation initiative of the Northeastern Argentine provinces (Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, Misiones, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe), gathered in the Foreign Trade Regional Commission of Northeast Argentine CRECENEA;¹ (Río Grande do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catalina, to which Mato Grosso do Sul was subsequently incorporated) that are part of the Development Council of South Brazil (CODESUL). The region is spread over 555.040 square miles (1.437.546 km²), it has 33.039.127 inhabitants, and a gross product of 176.571 million dollars.²

Since the Argentina-Brazil Integration Agreement (July, 1986), both regional organisations have been carrying out joint work, which was studied in depth in the Permanent Work Group of the Regional Border Protocol N° 23 framework (signed in 1988 by Argentina and Brazil at the proposal of CRECENEA-CODESUL).

The Xunta of Galicia, Spain, has been supporting this initiative by signing cooperation agreements, especially through I+D cooperation promotion actions and technological innovation from Galicia to the CRECENEA-CODESUL region.³

1.1. Objective

The CRECENEA-CODESUL Agreement was signed in 1995 aiming at the holistic and balanced development of the region and its area of influence. The core goals of this initiative are the region's foreign trade development, the attainment of joint border investments, and the impulse of strategic infrastructure works for regional development⁴

1.2. Structure

After the formal acknowledgment of the initiative by the State governments of Argentina and Brazil, an institutional structure was established integrated by the CRECENEA-CODESUL Governor's Forum, the Executive Secretariat, and the Thematic Integration Groups.⁵

The Thematic Integration Groups define the cooperation sphere of the initiative. These are: border aspects, infrastructure, science, professional associations and councils, technology and technical cooperation, education, culture, environment, safety, health, and tourism.⁶

1.3. Activities

The main outcome of this initiative is continuous work aimed at the integration of these border territories. The agreements defined in the Joint Release of the CODESUL and CRECENEA Mayors must be taken into account:⁷

¹ | CRECENEA was created on June 8, 1984, by joint agreement between member provinces, aimed to promote the integration of this region with regional border governments, especially Brazil.

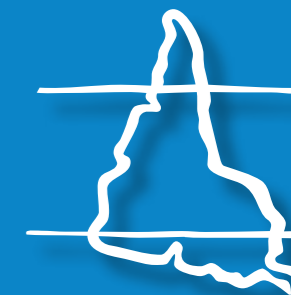
² | Year 2004 data, from the Ministry of Production of the Santa Fe Province Government (2005), Santa Fe is integration, Santa Fe, Argentina.

³ | Foreign action and cooperation for development, Xunta of Galicia (http://www.xunta.es/galicia2004/es/25_05.htm).

⁴ | <http://www.crecenea.org.ar/html/marco.htm>

⁵ | The Sub-regional Joint Parliamentary Commission is subsequently created, through an agreement of the CRECENEA Legislative Forum and the South Parliament (which integrate the Legislative Assemblies/Bodies of the States of Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Mato Grosso do Sul).

⁶ | Within these thematic orientations, the Executive Secretariat regularly prioritizes work spheres for each period. In the last meeting held in October, 2005, three subjects were prioritized: environment, tourism, and culture.



To consolidate energy integration and a common policy within the regional energy market context;

To support a bi-lateral physical integration project;

To support establishing a Cultural Co-operation Programme aimed to strengthen the union of the region's peoples.

To emphasize the importance of border integration in order to process the adoption of measures connected with housing, education, labour, and health, together with the relevant bodies of the Federal Government.

To create levels of police and legal cooperation in federal, provincial, and municipal spheres.

To intensify the agenda of meetings held by both CODESUL y CRECENEA Councils, addressing the necessity and importance of cooperation and exchange between the participant governments in defence of their shared interests.

Likewise, in May, 2005 during the X CRECENEA Littoral Governors' Forum, participants agreed to start working on a series of decisions in order to delve in this initiative. Prominent among them are:

To develop Paraguay-Paraná, Paraná-Tieté and Uruguay River Waterways.

Start up of Belgrano Norte Railway and strengthening of General Urquiza former railway.

Construction of Northeastern Gas Pipeline and infrastructure works to consolidate the regional energetic scheme.

Improvement and execution of the road network and complementary infrastructure projects for regional physical articulation and connectivity.

In general, it is about outreaching initiatives aimed to foster interaction and exchange

between regions in order to maximise regional integration.

For further information: www.crecenea.org.ar/html/crecenea-codesul.htm

2. Central Bi-oceanic Corridor Forum

The Central Bi-oceanic Corridor Forum (CBC Forum) was created in 2001 to establish an ample integration space between Sub-State governments in the strip comprising the Brazilian States of Santa Catarina, Río Grande, Paraná and Sao Paulo; the Argentine Provinces of Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, Córdoba, San Luis and Mendoza; the Montevideo City Council, Uruguay, and the Valparaiso Region, Chile. This region generates large interregional trade flows and approximately 70% of the Southern Cone economic activity.

2.1. Objectives

The association's objectives originated from "the need to maintain and increase the validity of this space for South American continental integration, deepening entailment between governmental and non-governmental sectors in their states, provinces, regions and municipalities, as well as disseminating activities and specific experiences along the length and breadth of its territory, strengthening institutional frameworks and intergovernmental relations, deepening the association and town-twinning of spread out and decentralised autonomous political unions, networking and coordinating multi-purpose actions."⁸

2.2. Structure

The CBC Forum has an organisational structure composed by an Executive Committee, a permanent Executive Secretariat, and Thematic Areas (political and social aspects of integration, Infrastructure, Territorial Planning, Customs, Ports and Borders, Culture and Universities, and Commercial and Entrepreneurial Aspects).

Its structure aims to the future construction of a Regional Network. With this purpose, it will find the points of convergence between the signatory parties, taking into account their respective internal regulations and exploiting the autonomy that they are capable of developing to higher or lesser degrees.

2.3. Activities

Up to now, the CBC Forum activities have been focused on the identification and establishment of measures to facilitate the regional integration process. Prominent among them are:

The creation of internal operating structures (Executive Secretariat and Coordinating Committee)

The elaboration of studies to assess the establishment of new or regular lines between ports (Forum 1)

Building up a Regional Network for the Central Bi-Oceanic Corridor (Forum 2)

Establishing thematic work areas: Infrastructure, Culture, University, and Business Centres and Interregional Cooperation.

Finally, it is important to point out that institutions such as the Centre for International Political Studies and the Italian-Latin American Institute, in collaboration with Chilean institutions and Italian regions, are analysing the creation of a regional international network to promote the integration of the existing South American Bi-Oceanic Corridors.

For further information: www.forocbc.org

3. Central American Local Development Institute

The Central American Local Development Institute (IDELCA) is an initiative promoted by a group of organizations, with the support of local European governments that have vast experience in local development and organisation matters. These institutions are looking for answers to a rising regional demand for local leader capacity-building areas, with skills to foster new conceptions, methods and local development experiences, as well as to promote the Central American integration process.

3.1. Background

Swift and profound political, social, and economic transformations have been taking place in the region over the last two decades. In the mid-eighties, the region underwent multiple processes associated with the transformation of economies and with several modalities of State administrative reform. Decentralisation and local development were issues that began to appear in Central American political agendas. In the nineties, this tendency was much more evident, and became a central academic issue in the political debate.

The region has made important progress in the comprehension of local development problematic issues, in the political positioning of the subject, but it has especially improved in terms of the implementation of management and development models and citizen participation. These constitute valuable experiences to define new intervention strategies at regional levels.

3.2. Objectives

The core goal of IDELCA is to boost the Central American integration process, incorporating new issues and actors to the regional agenda by means of preparing leaders, applied research,

⁷ | Joint Release of the CODESUL and CRECENEA Governors (http://www.crecenea.org.ar/pdf/comunicado_de_los_gobernadores_del_codesul_y_crecenea_7-7-2003.doc).

⁸ | The information in this paragraph has been taken from the following website: www.forocbc.org

and political incidence in local decentralisation and development areas.

Among the specific goals are:

To contribute to capacity-building of a new local leadership to guide State decentralisation and local development processes in Central America.

To influence decision-making centres, key actors, citizens, and public opinion, aiming to promote local development and democratic decentralisation as strategic factors of Central American integration.

To generate new knowledge that will contribute to know the Central American region better, its problems, tendencies, and future, and to identify the best way to successfully face the challenges of democracy, State reform, development, and globalisation.

IDELCA's basic organisational structure is formed by a general meeting, a board of directors, a regional chief executive office, three advisory councils, and a board of trustees.

3.3. Activities

IDELCA has established four programs to comply with its strategic goals. Each one of them is composed by a series of projects with specific objectives.

Programme 1: Institutionalisation of IDELCA

Establishment of the institute's management and execution structures

Political and institutional positioning of IDELCA

Communications and information strategies

Financial sustainability strategy of IDELCA

Programme 2: Capacity-building of local leadership

State and balance of the institutions and capacity-building programs in

Central America.

Capacity-building of local/municipal leadership for the change.

Design and promotion of IDELCA Quality Certificate

The municipal commonwealths as a new local leadership expression.

Design and execution of courses on local development management.

Training researchers.

Design of IDELCA capacity-building permanent Plan for the 2008 - 2010 period.

Programme 3: Impact strategies on local development and State decentralisation.

Lobbying and impact on Central American legislative organisations, political parties, and the media.

VI Conference on Local Development in Central America (CONFEDELCA)

Biennial report on the state of decentralisation and local democracy in Central America

Central American meeting of local authorities

Programme 4: Applied research on local development and State decentralisation.

Establishment of the base line for the research on local development and State decentralisation in Central America.

Promotion of municipal best practices.

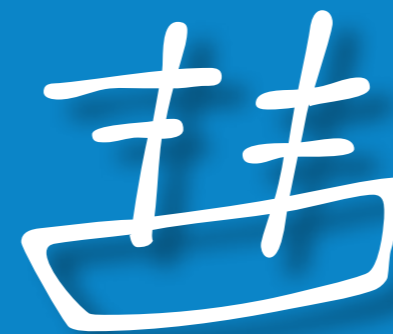
Central American municipal atlas. State Associations of Central American Municipalities.

Promotion of research on local development and State decentralisation in Central America.

For further information: www.idelca.org



Cases studies: Practices, models and instruments



Introduction

Decentralised cooperation, understood as an “approach in the cooperation relations seeking to establish direct relationships with local representation bodies and to stimulate its own capacity to project and carry out development initiatives with direct participation of interested groups of people, taking into account their interest and points of view on development,”¹ has its own mechanisms and goals.

Notwithstanding the specific characteristics of the phenomenon, the international activity of Sub-State governments also depends on the framework in which they are. That is why it is pertinent to speak of decentralised cooperation of a specific country because, to a certain extent, the international activity of its municipalities and regions has similar characteristics due to the fact that it operates in a common legal framework and has similar traditions.

Section 5 of the Yearbook 2005 presented the reality of the French case in detail. France is one of the most active countries in decentralised cooperation with Latin America. On this occasion, the Italian and the Mexican cases are analysed.

Decentralised cooperation of the Italian Sub-State government has some similarities with the French case, even though it is probably characterized by giving more importance to the regional level. On the other hand, a decentralised cooperation study in Latin America is initiated with the Mexican analysis. In this country, immersed in a decentralisation process, decentralised cooperation has often been directed at maximising capacities that did not exist at a local level.

Both articles offer a precise description of the reality of decentralised cooperation at a local level and of the specific characteristics of this phenomenon in their respective political, legal, and institutional frameworks.

¹ | European Commission (1992). *Decentralised cooperation. Objectives and methods*. Brussels: European Commission.



The Case of Italian Decentralised Cooperation in Latin America

Marina Izzo*
Andrea Stocchiero**

This essay analyses the scenario of Italian decentralised cooperation by examining the regulatory frame of reference and the main institutional mechanisms utilised by local Italian authorities to carry out this type of activity. A particular approach to cooperation initiatives in Latin America was taken at local level of Italian public administration. Its link with the foreign policy of the Italian government in relation to this area has also been emphasized. In this sense, this work will show how the lack of a true foreign policy on the part of the Italian government towards Latin American countries has deeply affected the decentralised cooperation activities in Latin America, while comparing the latter with the actions taken by local Italian authorities in other territories, such as the Balkans and the Mediterranean Basin.

Moreover, the motivations that are the basis of the international action of local Italian institutions have deepened. Actually, a close bond is being established between decentralised cooperation and other goals of international action by local Italian organizations, such as paradiplomacy, the internationalisation of the territories, the relationships with the Italian communities overseas, migration, and the territorial cooperation conducted within the framework of community-led programmes.

Finally, special attention has been paid to certain quantitative data of the Italian decentralised cooperation. With respect to the Latin American area, some case studies referring to local Italian authority initiatives have been analysed

KEY WORDS:

Italian communities |
Decentralised cooperation |
Cross-border cooperation |
Fight against poverty |
Migration(s) |
Paradiplomacy |

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1. Introduction¹

The official definition of Italian decentralised cooperation is among the “Direction Guidelines and Action Methods of Decentralised Cooperation for Development”, enacted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in the year 2000. It is defined as the cooperation action for development carried out by local authorities in partnership with counterpart organizations in developing countries and with the participation of the respective territories (Stocchiero 2000).

In the face of this general definition, the scenario of Italian decentralised cooperation appears as extremely heterogeneous and complex, since it presents different characteristics in accordance with the different territorial realities of the country. Decentralised cooperation is seen by some local authorities as a mere support to non-governmental cooperation (through contributions to non-governmental organisations –NGO- and to solidarity associations of the territory), others exercise a strong power of orientation and direct intervention, while yet others try to shape the structure of territorial cooperation systems in close partnership with the various social and economic subjects.

However, the leading actors of Italian decentralised cooperation are, above

all others, the Regions, because they have larger resources at their disposal –both human and financial- which can be allocated to international relations and cooperation. Second, because of the increasing importance of the role played in this sphere by the Presidents of the Autonomous Government (also called “governors”). Some of them appear particularly committed to international relations (paradiplomacy), and therefore, to decentralised cooperation. Thirdly, because the Regions who are the local authorities and who have, over the past years, been working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in programming certain activities to be carried out in this sector. Furthermore, also at a European level, regional administrations are acquiring a relevant function in this sector: in the European Union - Committee of the Regions and also in representative spaces, such as the Conference on Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CRPM) or the Assembly of European Regions (AER).

With regard to the local organisations, the activities of Metropolitan Cities² and Middle-sized Cities are specially pointed out. They carry out relevant cooperation initiatives thanks to the role played by Mayors and the territory’s actor systems.

Finally, a chaotic scenario can be noticed in the hundreds of cities and tens of provinces that carry out true cooperation projects, most often through the work of

¹ | We wish to thank the invaluable collaboration of many operators and researchers in this article: Mr. Gildo Baraldi, Director of OICS; Mr. Marco Bellardi, Director of the International and Community Relations of the Region of Marche; Ambassador Alessandro Serafini and Ms. Maria Grazia Rando (both working in the Coordination of Decentralised Cooperation for Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Ms. Franca Dalvit, Director of the Migration and Solidarity Service and Ms. Francesca Baldessarelli, responsible for the management of the Solidarity Fund of the Province of Trento; Mr. Juan Velázquez, COPEI; Ms. Francesca Marinaro, advisor to the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Massimo D’Alema and to the State Under-Secretary, Mr. Donato Di Santo; Mr. Marco Angioni, of PROMOS, the special enterprise of the Chamber of Commerce of Milan for international activities; Mr. Dario Conato, Coordinator of the Area for Development Projects of CeSPI; Ms. Raffaella Coletti, Mr. Daniele Frigeri, Ms. Elisenda Estruch and Mr. Alberto Mazzali, researchers of CeSPI.

² | The metropolitan areas are cities of relevant dimensions, generally the result of an urbanisation phenomenon through which the settlements of several municipalities have relations of close territorial integration in the economic and social spheres. For example, metropolitan cities are the Municipality of Turin, Milan, Venice, Genova, Rome, Bologna, Florence, Bari and Naples.

NGOs and local organisations. Although aware of this fragmentation, these cities and provinces are trying to establish coordination and relations with better integration to the Regions and the MFA's programmes.

2. The political, legal and institutional frame of reference of Italian decentralised cooperation

Before addressing the legal and institutional aspects of Italian decentralised cooperation, one should briefly explore the history of Public Aid to Development (Aiuto Pubblico allo Sviluppo, APS) in Italy, in particular since the enactment of the framework law 49 in 1987, which is still in force.

Since the end of the eighties, the Italian APS has been gradually undergoing a transformation. During the eighties, cooperation activities were not directly oriented towards the fight against poverty (for example, the food assistance programmes to which extraordinary emergency programmes were aimed).

They were preferably oriented towards economic and infrastructural growth of the poorest countries in the world.

However, since 1989, the Italian APS changes substantially. The trend of increasing the resources allocated to this sector reaches its apex. A new stage of Italian cooperation begins when Italy joins the G7, thus becoming this country's tool for foreign policy and foreign economic policy. The geographic priority of the cooperation shifts from Africa to Asia (China) and Latin America (particularly to Argentina and Brazil).

In the early nineties, the opening of judicial investigations implicating the Italian political and ruling class –accused of corruption- triggers the “bad cooperation” scandal. Numerous felonies were unveiled, as well as enormous amounts of money injudiciously spent which did not contribute to achieve any positive results (for example, the building of mega infrastructure constructions in developing countries, which later proved to be totally useless).

From that moment on, centralised coo-

peration underwent a deep crisis that led the MFA to prefer the multilateral to the bilateral channel. Over the last years resources decreased, despite the political commitments at a multilateral level (Millennium Development Goals) and in the European Union (EU).³

Decentralised cooperation marks its appearance in this framework of involution of Italian cooperation policy for development (see Figure 1). There is also an awareness-rising on the need to seek a larger integration between central and local levels.

At the regulatory level, the assistance policy for development in Italy is based on Law 49/1987, the so-called “New Italian discipline regarding Cooperation for Development”. This law –and the implementation of regulation (DPR. N 177/1988)- officially acknowledges the function of local authorities in the proposal-making processes and actions regarding cooperation activities for governmental development. This is clear when it states that the MFA Directorate General for Development Co-operation (DGCS) can utilise “the public structures of the Regions, Autonomous Provinces and local organisations” to carry out specific cooperation activities identified by this law. The envisaged actions are as follows: launching of course studies; building facilities and infrastructures; hiring qualified staff for technical assistance tasks; professional training and the social promotion at local level of citizens from developing countries; the support to NGO projects and interventions, as well as the specific interventions in favour of women and children and finally, the promotion of education programmes on development issues, also at school, and initiatives that aim at intensifying the cultural exchanges between Italy and the developing countries (Stochhiero 2005).

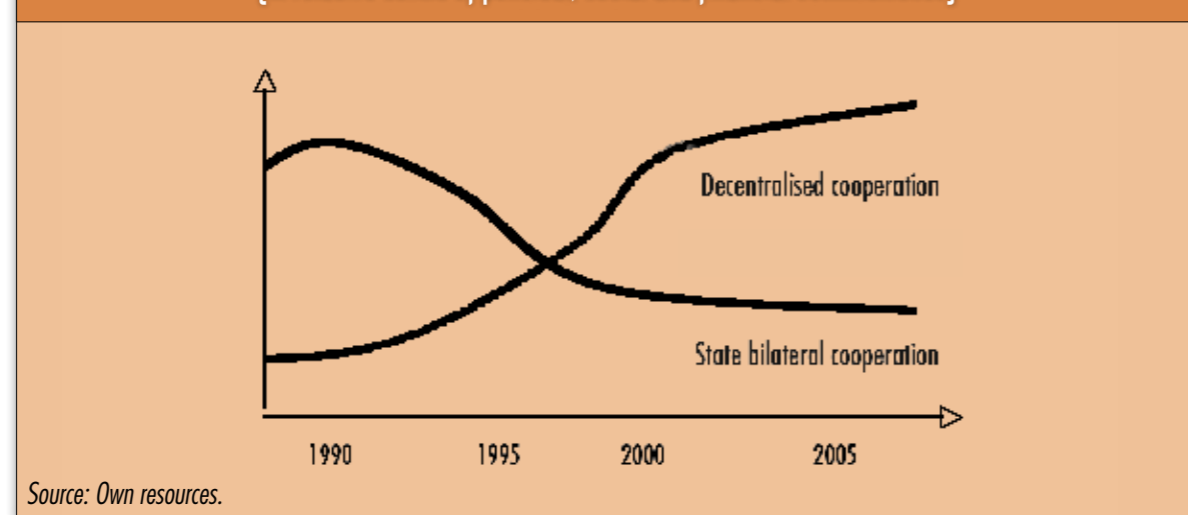
Regardless of the fact that Law 49/87 acknowledges local authorities' function of propo-

sal making and action in the cooperation for the development sector, there was no direct relation between cooperation activities carried out at central level and those promoted by local Italian authorities until the late nineties. That was mainly due to the lack of a specific regulation. On the contrary, coordinating both realities was done at a multilateral level, especially within the frame of reference of the human development programmes at a local level. They were promoted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the assistance of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

In the year 2000, especially after the increase in the number of decentralised cooperation activities and after the humanitarian emergency in former Yugoslavia, the Italian MFA decided to promulgate “Direction guidelines and methods for action.” Through these, it proposed the participation of the Regions and Local organisations in programming and evaluation activities. In addition, it established a Coordination Unit for decentralised cooperation in the DGCS itself. The innovative aspect of this text refers to the recognition of the decentralised cooperation role and its legitimacy on the part of the central administration (Stochhiero 2005).

The document acknowledges the concept of decentralised cooperation as “the cooperation action for development by local authorities, conducted in an isolated manner or in consortium, with the contribution of the organised civil society in this territory of partial administrative areas of competence, through a partnership with the developing country counterpart organisations, while favouring the active participation of the different representative sectors of the civil society of partner countries in the decision-making process oriented towards the sustainable development of their territories.” This definition makes clear that the action of local authorities is a “conditio sine qua non” of

Figure 1 | Evolution and involution of Italian cooperation
(in relative terms of political, social and financial commitments)



³ | In percentage, the APS/PNL Report in 1989 was 0,42%, in 1999 0,15% and in 2003 it was 0,16% (source: Aiello y Zupi (2005)..



decentralised cooperation. However, one of its most innovative aspects is the plurality of the involved actors, both at a local level in Italy and in the beneficiary country, as well as its partnership relations system (Stochhiero 2005)

The relationship between the DGCS and the local authorities underlines their condition of equity with respect to decentralised cooperation initiatives.

In order to appropriately understand the increasing role of cooperation initiatives promoted and conducted by local Italian authorities –and recognised at a central level–, it should be noted that the Italian State has undergone a gradual process of administrative decentralisation since the late nineties. That process culminated in 2001 with the passing of the constitutional Law 18-01-2001, n. 3. Actually, that law reviews the Title V of the Second Part of the Italian Constitution in relation to the role of Regions, Provinces and Municipalities and their relations with the central level. Said law was enacted with the aim of facing the need to abolish some rules inspired by centralism that were present in Title V. These rules were incompatible with the mainly regionalist organisation of the legal regulations over the past years.

In effect, local organisations are endowed with “full” autonomy, only limited by the insurmountable principles established by the Constitution. This full faculty of self-government influences, in particular, Article 117 of the Constitution that refers to the legislative autonomy of Italian Regions and local Organisations. Based on the revision of this article, the State legislates exclusively on 17 matters, while the Regions can enact laws on issues that are not specifically reserved to the State, in compliance with the subsidiary principle. International relations, relations with the EU, and foreign trade are among the concurrent legislation matters.⁴

The role of Regions in international relations is especially referred to in June 2003 in the La Loggia Act, which precisely sets in motion the Article 117 of the Constitution,

was passed. This law states that, in relation to matters on which they are authorized to exercise legislative autonomy, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano “can establish agreements aimed at fostering the economic, social, and cultural development on a joint basis with other internal territorial organisations of another State. Moreover, they can carry out activities of international relevance, by informing the President of the Council of Ministers and the MFA of their contents prior to the signature. In addition, they can establish executive and implementation agreements deriving from international agreements presently in force, with other States. Likewise, the same can be done in relation to technical/ administrative or programmatic agreements aimed at fostering their economic, social and cultural development”.⁵

This increasing participation of the sub-state governments in international activities is called *paradiplomacy* (Keating, 1999). In relation to the Italian case, its main goals and objectives include the economic internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises of the territory, as well as the international cooperation issue in sectors of social, cultural, and environmental interest.⁶ *Paradiplomacy* has been developing over the past 15 years as a consequence of the progressive decentralisation of the Italian state.

Within this framework, a political debate opens with the following questions: in what place should decentralised cooperation be? Should Italy’s foreign policy be exclusively managed by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs or by the international relations affairs of local authorities? However, in real terms, decentralised cooperation appears increasingly linked to or complementary with *paradiplomacy* and the economic interests of the Italian Regions. Therefore, in order to understand where Italian decentralised cooperation is headed, it is necessary to look at it within the broader framework of the international relations of local authorities.

In order to carry out specific activities in the international cooperation sector, local Italian authorities have several institutional mechanisms at their disposal. In the first place, Departments or Bureaus that are part of the administrative structure with the aim of managing international relations, cooperation activities in particular.

In relation to regional administrations, in general they are structures that have a restricted number of employees and which depend from the Presidency or Vice-Presidency of Regional Autonomous Governments, and from the Town Council only in certain cases. These bureaus or departments are responsible for implementing the policy stated by the Autonomous Government in that sector. In general, the strategic guidelines of the regional government in the sector of international cooperation are outlined in the ad hoc pluriannual plans. These successively transform into annual specific orientation documents. The structure in question implements the guidelines outlined in the documents and assumes the coordination between the different actors participating in the cooperation activities.⁷

The community level presents a similar organisation: many local organisations have established small offices for the management of cooperation activities. They also have an annual programme which, in most cases, is implemented through contributions to NGO and associations in their territory (Stocchiero, Frattolillo, Gonella 2001). However, in metropolitan or medium-sized municipalities, it is not unusual to find several town councils carrying out international

relations activities without the coordination of the corresponding office. There is a lack of an effective and efficient mainstreaming of international relations and decentralised cooperation in the administrations. As a consequence, the initiatives and the scarce available resources are wasted.

The provincial level is different: this typology of local organisation, defined as intermediate between municipalities and the Regions, started to become interested in international cooperation with some delay in relation to the other local authorities. In effect, approximately from the year 2000 onwards, the provinces began to be provided with adequate structures for the management of this type of activity. However, with respect to the field of international cooperation, most Italian provinces generally play an information role along their territory, a management role regarding foreign relations, and a participatory role in networks. Only a small number of these local organisations play a mostly operational role through the projection, implementation, and monitoring of interventions, and the allocation of resources. Some provinces implement cooperation projects directly on the basis of their own authority, such as territorial planning and protecting and giving value to the environment.

In addition to their own structures, local Italian authorities also have collective institutional mechanisms for international cooperation, such as the Interregional Observatory for Development Cooperation (OICS Osservatorio Interregionale Coope-

⁴ | In concurrent legislation matters, the legislative power is the area of competence for the Regions, with the exception of defining fundamental principles, a capacity that belongs to State’s legislative power.

⁵ | available in: <http://www.parlamento.it/leggi/031311.htm>

⁶ | About the issue of economic internationalisation of the Italian Regions, see also the Research programme of CeSPI (Coletti and Stocchiero 2003)

⁷ | With the exception of Campania, Calabria and Sicily, all Italian Regions have laws that rule on cooperation and/or emergency relief activities. To this purpose, see Stocchiero (2000)

razione Sviluppo)⁸. Established in 1991 on the initiative of the Italian Regions and Provinces Conference, the OICS represents a common organization to all Italian regional bodies. It is responsible for the promotion of cooperation for development and supports the internationalisation processes of the territory. OICS is a private association of public organizations; all the Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces are its ordinary members which contribute with an annual fee⁹, thus also ensuring the Observatory's operations in the financial aspects. Besides the ordinary member status, there is also the status of observer member. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI), the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI), and the Italian NGO Assembly take on the role of observers within the Observatory.

The National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) has an ad hoc department, responsible for coordinating their members' international relations and decentralised cooperation activities.¹⁰ Considering the problems that coordinating international activities of approximately 8.000 municipalities entails, this department has decided to coordinate these activities through specific cooperation projects. One such example is the "IB" project, "Italian and Balkan Municipal Partnership". Its objective is the modernisation and improvement of basic public services in the Balkan countries (territorial management, water, gas, waste collection and disposal), to be carried out through technical and operational qualification and training activities aimed at municipal officers and local technicians.

The budding international cooperation activity of Italian provinces is reflected on the

organizational structure of the UPI. In effect, this association does not yet have a specific department or office to deal with the coordination of this type of activity, although there is an increasing interest towards this sector on the part of the organisation.

Furthermore, some networks are based on the geography (such as, for instance, the network of Italian provinces along the Adriatic or the Latin-Mediterranean arches; the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies working in the Balkans; the municipal cooperation committees belonging to a same geographic area, provinces in particular). Other networks are thematic (the Agenda 21 municipalities and the Coordination of Local Organisations for Peace working in the Middle East in particular). Some networks gather small local organisations (municipal solidarity network), as well as others that create a very rich, albeit chaotic, group.

In relation to the coordination with the central level within the MFA, in addition to the above mentioned Coordination Bureau of the DGCS, we can find the Office III of the Directorate General for European Integration that engages with the local authorities and a wide number of subjects through a coordination table on the perspectives of EU cooperation with third world countries. The Directorate, jointly with the Ministry of Finance, further manages a programme that supports the internationalisation of the least developed Italian regions. Its resources come from structural funds, earmarked for decentralised cooperation (together with the Directorate of Cooperation for Development) in the Mediterranean. This programme is being implemented and it is envisaged to allocate approximately 28 million Euros.

In relation to the issue of the internationalisation of the territory, which represents one of the main bases of local Italian authority paradiplomacy activities, it is interesting to mention the link between the latter and the Ministry of International Trade. This Ministry funds economic projects of the Regions with Chambers of Commerce and associations of SME.

Finally, the Ministry of the Environment is also working to liaise with the Italian Regions in the sphere of international cooperation. On account of its areas of competence, it limits the field of action of decentralised subjects and does not offer the latter any kind of financial contribution for international cooperation activities (cfr. CeSPI 2005). However, this ministry can appear as a partner of the local authorities in certain initiatives, as in the projects funded through Law 84/2001 for rebuilding the Balkans, or in some EU twinning projects.¹¹

Latin America, as seen in these last notes, is not among the priorities of Italian cooperation. In the next item we will try to explain the goals and the role of decentralised cooperation.

3. Italian Foreign Policy and Decentralised Cooperation for Latin America

Over the last forty years, Italian foreign policy towards the Latin American sub-continent has experienced an oscillating and progressively decreasing tendency. In the sixties, the Italian/Latin American relations were at the peak of their cycle from the economic, cultural, and political viewpoint. Those years represented the economic boom of Italy. The country developed at a very rapid pace thanks to the growth of the great industrial groups

(FIAT, Olivetti, Pirelli), which fostered this process to a great extent. Making the most of the favourable economic juncture, these companies embarked on their own internationalisation, which pushed them to seek new foreign projections. Due to the widely spread import substitution policy¹² in almost every country of the sub-continent, Latin America meant a big opportunity to these industrial groups which started to invest consistently in this region.

In order to tighten the bonds of this new bi-regional alliance, at a diplomatic level it was decided to found the Italian-Latin American Institute (ILAI), with the aim of liaising with both realities (Rhi-Sausi 2005). This period of strong political, economic, and cultural links between Italy and Latin America is generally known as the "twin continent age." That referred to the priority bestowed by Italy to the relations with this geographic area.

This agreement phase was brought to a standstill in the first half of the eighties due to the deep crisis experienced by Latin American economies. The crisis drove those countries to open to international markets, especially the North American market. In addition, the entry of Spain and Portugal into the European Community took away from Italy its role as mediator of European interests in Latin America. This role went to the countries of the Iberian Peninsula.

The spread of dictatorship regimes in the sub-continent, particularly in Chile and Argentina, contributed even further to the fact of Italian interests growing apart from Latin America. Later on, resuming the Italian-Latin American bi-regional relations was glimpsed as a faint possibility. That happened by the end of the dictatorship regime in Ar-

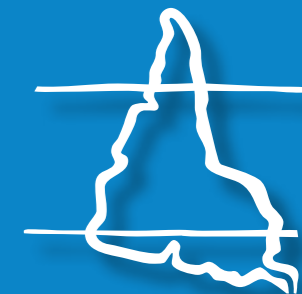
⁸ | www.oics.it

⁹ | The quota is composed of a fixed percentage, equal for all members, and of a part that is measured in relation to the number of inhabitants (www.oics.it).

¹⁰ | ANCI is a non-profit organisation, based in Rome. Its main objective is to watch over the interests of Italian municipalities before the central government. See also www.anci.it

¹¹ | Law 84/2001 will be analysed in the next paragraph

¹² | Import substitution policy, originated in the structuralist Latin American thought, implied the countertrade between goods produced abroad and imported in Latin America and local products, thus transforming consumer goods imports into capital goods and defending the emerging local industries.



gentina, which led to an opening to the privatisation of large public companies (especially during Menem's administration). In 1987 the Italian-Argentine Specific Association Agreement was signed. It envisaged an Italian investment of 5,000 million dollars per year in Argentina.¹³ Moreover, the beginning of the peace process in the Central American region seemed to renew Italian interests in the sub-continent. It was considered that the country played a major role as mediator, especially within the framework of the UN Programme PRODERE (Development Program for Displaced Persons, Refugees, and Returnees in Central America and Guatemala). It was aimed at the local development and relocation of populations that had migrated on account of the armed conflict that ended in 1996).

This renewal of Italian-Latin American relations presents news elements. On the one hand, by the end of the decade of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, an ample use of the APS resources is recorded. Its aim was to foster the internationalisation process of Italian companies in the area. On the other hand, an increasing relevant role played by NGO and private actors in cooperation initiatives can be noticed, to the detriment of the central and governmental level (Rhi-Sausi 2005).

Nevertheless, the nineties are considered as the period in which Latin America appears as the "forgotten continent" by Italian foreign policy. The reasons for such oblivion are multiple. First and foremost, a general reduction of the APS occurs, mainly in relation to the Latin American region. In the second place, a gradual displacement of the attention paid by the NGO towards the Balkan region, due to the international emergency that area was undergoing.

The new millennium did not start with the best prospects regarding the Italian-Latin American relations either: September 11, 2001, was responsible for a shift in the

priorities of the world security agenda. Latin America was relegated to the last places of the geographic priorities of European and Italian foreign policy.

Over the last years, few relevant Italian initiatives on Latin America can be seen. One of these refers to the passing of Law 1/2000, which modifies Art. 48 of the Constitution and establishes a Foreign Constituency for the election of the Chambers, in favour of Italian citizens residing abroad. Later on, Law 459/2001 was enacted. So-called "Rules for the exercise of the vote of Italian citizens residing abroad", this law sub-divides such constituency in four districts (Europe; South America; North and Central America; Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Antarctica). In each of these, "a Member of Parliament and a Senator are elected, while the other electoral tables are distributed among the same sections, in a proportional number to the number of Italian citizens residing there."¹⁴ The above mentioned law has strong repercussions in Latin America, as the largest Italian communities live in this region.¹⁵ As we will see further on in relation to the Latin American region, Italian cooperation, whether central or decentralised, is mainly aimed at the countries that have a strong presence of descendents of Italian migrants in their territories.

Another important development of Italian foreign policy in the sub-continent during the period hereby examined refers to the Italian initiatives in the Andean area. These were concretised above all with the cancellation and the reconversion of these countries' debt (Rhi-Sausi 2002). Based on the commitments of the bilateral agreement of June 3, 2002, signed by Italy and Bolivia within the framework of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative sponsored by the World Bank, approximately 74,3 million Euros in credit to that Latin American country were cancelled. In addition, the Italian government partially reconverted Peru's

concessional debt (127 million dollars in five years) based on a bilateral agreement between both countries. This established funding for projects on the fight against poverty (with the participation of civil society), of national programmes for relaunching Peru's economy and the expansion of the alterative crops of coca. Also in Ecuador the Italian government decided on the reconversion of the debt derived from earlier loans of financial assistance, thus transforming it into programmes of poverty reduction designed with a strong participation of civil society.

All in all, Italy has been supporting Argentina after the deep economic, financial, and social crisis suffered by this country in December 2001. In February 2002, the Italian cooperation approves two major assistance credit initiatives. The first one supports Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through projects that have a strong impact on the occupational field; its funding amounts to an equivalent of 75 million Euros. The second initiative supports the public health system and its funding amounts to 25 million Euros.

However, these are isolated actions and are not included within a broader framework of specific measures, formulated and implemented in different sectors by the central government, and aimed at Latin America as a whole.

The action of local authorities fills in this "empty" space left by the central level. Local Italian authorities particularly notice this lack of a specific policy at a central level in relation to Latin America. Surely, the absence of a frame of reference for national regulation influences the formulation of ad hoc policies for Latin America by local authorities

to a great degree. That framework should also institute adequate financial tools to support decentralised cooperation and the internationalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises in Latin America. Furthermore, many local authorities complain about the lack of an Italian foreign policy at a central level, aimed at the capacity building of Latin American countries. This would allow for an evolution towards the administrative decentralisation of those States, which in turn would enable Italian regions to establish a dialogue with strong partner institutions.

On the other hand, this regulation framework was drafted for the Balkans area through Law 84/2001, which regulates the forms of Italian participation in the "stabilization, rebuilding, and development process of Balkan countries".¹⁶ Among the foreseen typologies of action, we find the windows for decentralised cooperation by the Regions and local authorities that should be essentially oriented to qualification and training, as well as technical assistance. A "Fund for Italian Participation in the Stabilization, Rebuilding and Development of the Balkans" was established to support these interventions. The actors that promote projects for cooperation and the promotion and development of enterprises can benefit from this fund.

In relation to the Latin American region, however, the lack of similar tools can be noticed, whether at a ruling or a financial level. Up to this day, MFA's indications on the possibility of providing a possible frame of reference for the international activity of local Italian authorities, refers to this Ministry's purpose to stipulate bilateral agreements between Italy and Latin American countries.¹⁷

¹³ | *TELECOM, the colossus of Italian telephone companies, enters in the Argentine market in this period.*¹⁴ Cfr. L 459/2001, art. 6, comma 2.

¹⁴ | Cfr. L 459/2001, art. 6, comma 2.

¹⁵ | *After Europe, South America is the second electoral area abroad.*

¹⁶ | Available in : <http://www.balcanionline.it/legge84.aspx>

¹⁷ | *In particular, the cooperation agreement signed by four Italian Regions (Marche, Umbria, Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna), plus Piemonte, with the Brazilian government in 2004 (See the corresponding chapter)*

The main objective is to find a solution to the problems deriving from the conflict regarding the functional roles in central and the local levels. These stem from the signature of agreements by some Italian regions to support decentralised cooperation activities with the central governments of certain Latin American countries.² From this perspective, bilateral agreements between central governments should provide a general frame of reference for the promotion of economic and cultural cooperation between both countries, while introducing decentralised cooperation as one of its main tools.

Before bringing this issue to a close, it is important to highlight that the new administration of Prodi, elected in April 2006, seemingly has the purpose of relaunching Italian foreign policy for Latin America, as expressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Massimo D'Alema. He reaffirmed the importance of valuing the multilateral dimension of Italian foreign policy and mentioned that Asia and Latin America were among the new world protagonists.

In particular, in the hearing of the Commission of Foreign Affairs of the Chamber of Deputies on July 11, 2006, the new Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, MP Donato Di Santo, affirmed how important it is for Italy to “perform an active role in favour of democratic stabilisation and the affirmation of regional integration processes” (See interview in Annex 2). In the Under-Secretary's opinion, one of the tools that should be activated would be strengthening the ILAI. This should be relaunched both from a financial perspective and in terms of operational capacity so it would be able to fulfil its original function of liaising between the Latin American and the Italian realities once again. Moreover, Di Santo finds it particularly relevant to promote specific actions in the cultural field in Latin America, on the part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the mid-term,

these actions could be accompanied by initiatives to support economic cooperation.¹⁸ Also in relation to decentralised cooperation policies possibly coming to fruition in the Latin American region, it is important to pay special attention to how these programmatic orientations evolve in operational terms.

4. The motivations of the growing international relations of local authorities, territorial partnerships and cooperation models¹⁹

In order to understand the priorities and trends of Italian decentralised cooperation and the opportunities to build relations with the Latin American continent, it is necessary to take into account the different motivations driving the international activity of local Italian authorities, as well as the ongoing international events and processes. Six motivations can be identified. They are interwoven in the international processes that have determined the orientation of Italian decentralised cooperation.

Above all, the first motivation refers to the solidarity aim of cooperation and especially to the major issues of fight against poverty, endogenous sustainable development, the defence of the rights of the most vulnerable, the indigenous cultures. These were the issues on which Italian decentralised cooperation was initially centred, placing the geographic priority in Africa and Latin America (as seen in Chapter One). In general, the role of local authorities in this type of cooperation was simply concretised in contributions to non-governmental cooperation which was usually promoted by NGO. The awareness on the political and institution building role of local authorities in international relations had not yet been raised. The support used to go to autonomous initiatives of civil society, without pro-

gramming exercises and direct commitment within the framework of cooperation agreements with the partners of the South. Later on, the role of local authorities became stronger, and over the last years there were attempts to implement network projects, interconnecting the different actors of the territory in initiatives to support local development. These initiatives valued the roles of local organisations and of structures, such as development agencies, qualification and training institutes, and multi-utility enterprises. The role of local authorities particularly succeeded within the framework of the programme for human development at a local level in Cuba, sustained by UNOPS and UNDP, with co-funding from the Italian cooperation and territorial development actions carried out by decentralised cooperation in Central America, Brazil and Argentina, albeit not in a coordinated manner.

The priority of the fight against poverty and sustaining the emancipation struggles of Latin American people is still present, although not so widely spread as in the early nineties. Some administrations of local Italian authorities are politically sensitive to these motivations and respond positively to the encouragement of the civil society. Furthermore, they follow with a marked interest the experiences of participatory policy seen in several Latin American local authorities committed to new courses of social and economic development. The World Social Forum movement and the Porto Alegre gathering have attracted different local Italian authorities and social organisations. However, there are also other motivations and urgencies.

5. The fight against poverty: “100 cities for 100 projects Italy-Brazil”

“100 cities for 100 projects Italy-Brazil”,²⁰ is a network of cities, entities and local Italian governments, active in the Italy-Brazil cooperation. Its general objective is the support to administrative decentralisation policies and participatory democracy of Brazilian government. Many of the actions executed by this “containing” programme point out to the promotion of social inclusion of disadvantaged groups suffering the existing inequalities – especially in terms of income – in Brazil. Therefore, it can be affirmed that one of these initiatives' goals is the fight against poverty.

The coordination of this initiative is in charge of the Cooperation Agency of Local Organisations (ADEL). This agency was established by initiative of the Province and Municipality of Turin and 35 municipalities of this same province, organised in the Coordinamento Comuni per la pace. Its aim is to provide technical assistance to the local organisations to carry out and manage some community initiatives, such as, for example, the Twinning programme. Thanks to the expertise acquired in this field, ACEP supports the programme “100 cities for 100 projects Italia-Brazil” as its Secretariat.

The adopted methodology to implement this programme refers to an exchange of experiences in issues of local governance, and to the debate on the acquired know-how of Italian and Brazilian local organisations in the sphere of their participation in the URB-AL programme. It also refers to the dissemination of the ripe experience of Italian administrations around

¹⁸ | In this sense, the Under-Secretary also wishes the strengthening of the Istituto per il Commercio Estero (ICE), SACE and SIMEST, particularly in relation to the cooperation with Brazil.

¹⁹ | To access quantitative data of Italian decentralised cooperation, see Annex 1 at the end of this article.

²⁰ | <http://www.progetto100citta.it>

the issue of regional, national and European programming (territorial pacts, INTERREG, etc.). In addition, a particularly interesting aspect of the programme's methodology is the active participation of the so-called public utilities, that is, the public companies of services, in the initiatives promoted by "100 cities for 100 projects Italy-Brazil." In relation to the intervention sectors, the programme is organised on the basis of thematic priorities, the so-called thematic tables, regarded as strategic by Brazilian partners. There are five tables: infancy and youth, women's rights, management of hydrographic resources and waste, housing policies, and urban mobility. Each one of these thematic tables has a coordinator, both in Italy and in Brazil.

In a Latin American country, the structures of reference for the implementation of the "100 cities for 100 projects Italy-Brazil" programme are as follows: the Frente Nacional dos Prefeitos (FNP), the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Cities, and the Cooperation Agency of Brazilian Municipalities (ACMB) –whose areas of competence are equivalent to ACEL's in Italy-. Naturally, the Brazilian municipalities also participate in this initiative.

In effect, it can be affirmed that Italian decentralised cooperation has taken a major dimensional step forward, particularly in relation to the goals of humanitarian intervention and rebuilding, and especially in relation to the responses to the crises and the support to peace processes of the neighbouring countries (the crisis in former Yugoslavia in the nineties, and the crisis in the Middle East). The "war in the threshold of one's own home" has driven hundreds of local authorities to commit individually to humanitarian and rebuilding actions, jointly with civil society organisations. The crisis of former Yugoslavia has raised the awareness on the existing close interdependence between international events and the local level, above all in terms

of geographic proximity. This awareness-raising has been strengthened by the drawbacks in the peace process between Israel and Palestine and the outbreak of a new crisis in Lebanon. Thus, over the past ten years the commitment of local Italian authorities has been growing noticeably. They carry out small cooperation initiatives and participate actively in framework programmes, defined with the Italian Cooperation in the Balkans and in the Middle East.

Furthermore, some Regions have launched their own framework programmes that aim at building long lasting relations of interaction between the local development of the "here" and "there" territories. In this case, the relevant component of the action consists in the capacity of mobilizing the different actors, not only with humanitarian initiatives, but mainly in the post-conflict stage. The issues to be tackled in such a phase are popular diplomacy-related matters, local welfare, territorial planning, the development of small and medium-sized enterprises; thus, an effective coordination is achieved. It is evident that the crises have a greater impact in Italy when the neighbouring countries, instead of Latin America, are involved. Nevertheless, in some emergency cases caused by natural disasters, such as the floods caused by El Niño in Central America, the local Italian authorities organised the collection of donations and assistance.

In the third place, one of the most important reasons that drives the Regions and local authorities to project themselves increasingly in the international arena is enterprise internationalisation – the internalisation of companies present in their own territory. This refers to a complex phenomenon that includes direct foreign investment in and out (IDE). In turn, it can adopt different methods, such as the productive localisation process of factories and joint ventures in other countries. It also includes the traffic of active and passive

perfection of semi-manufactured industrial products, and the international trade of goods and services. This process has undergone a marked acceleration in the nineties, particularly from Italy towards Eastern Europe and Asia.

In relation to Latin America, the major target of enterprise internationalisation of Italian companies was historically the Southern Cone of the sub-continent, especially Argentina and Brazil. However, the deep difficulties experienced by the integration process of MERCOSUR, caused by the financial and monetary crises, first in Brazil (1998/99) and then in Argentina (2001/2002), resulted in the withdrawal of Italian investment in the area. As a consequence, the foreign economic policy of local authorities gradually lost interest in that area. In spite of that fact, as analysed in Chapter One, the support to the internationalisation process of Italian small and medium-sized enterprises is still one of the core guidelines of Italian decentralised cooperation in Latin American countries.

6. Internationalisation of the territory: The case of the Region of Lombardy²¹

The case of the Region of Lombardy has a major relevance as an example of paradiplomacy, as it is based particularly on the motivation of economic internationalisation of territories. One should bear in mind that Lombardy is the Italian region with most population, and it is the financial and economic driving force of Italy. Indeed, this region can be compared with

some European States, such as Holland or Belgium.

Along the course of the VII legislation (2000-2005), international relations assumed a leading role in the Region of Lombardy. The main promotion of these activities was provided by the political commitment of President Roberto Formigoni. Among other things, he was re-elected as president of the Region in the administrative elections of June 2005.

This commitment is also seen in the organisational structure the Region has built over those five years regarding international matters. All the offices working for the coordination of the town councils in relation with international matters were placed within the Directorate of the Presidency: from institutional relations to the internationalisation of economy, from cooperation for development to relations with the Lombards living abroad and European integration. The decision of placing all international activities in the core of the Presidency also results from trying to regard the different spheres of the Region's foreign operationally as elements of only one strategy, thus fostering the activation of synergies and their coordination.

In the 2000-2005 period, the Region of Lombardy paid special attention to Latin America through numerous activities of high level missions and meetings, signature of protocols, events²², creation of a network of "Lombardy focal points" for the internationalisation in several Latin American countries, decentralised cooperation²³, emergency relief and assistance to the Lombards living abroad.

Among different projects, the project on the "Development of Industrial Districts

²¹ | This case study has been prepared by Ms. Raffaella Coletti, researcher of CeSPI.

²² | The Region of Lombardy held in Milan, in March 2003, the 44th Assembly of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). Moreover, the Region, jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, promoted the National Conference for Latin America, aimed at relaunching the European-Latin American dialogue (Milan, October 2003)

²³ | The cooperation activities are mainly carried out through contributions to NGOs based in the Lombardy territory. Latin America is first in the priorities of the cooperation for development of these five years, whether in relation to the number of projects or to the amount provided by regional contribution (5.232.200 euros, 35% of the total amount).



in Brazil” stands out (2000-2006). Since the year 2000, –in collaboration with Promos, special enterprise of the Chamber of Commerce in Milan for Internationalisation– the Region of Lombardy activated a project for development of sectoral centres and industrial districts in Brazil. This was carried out with the cooperation of SEBRAE –Brazilian Support Service to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises– and the Inter-American Development Bank. From some time, the latter has instituted the Multilateral Investment Fund, with the aim of funding development initiatives of South American small and medium-sized enterprises, in close contact with governmental institutions of the participating countries.

The four production centres involved in this initiative are as follows: female undergarments in Nova Friburgo (Rio de Janeiro); shoes and leather in Campiña Grande (Paraíba); wood and furniture in Paragominas (Parà); clothing and textiles in Tobías Barreto (Ergipe). The objective of the project is to transform these four centres into clusters, or, ideally and in the long-term, in industrial districts according to the Italian definition, by creating an atmosphere in which a group of enterprises share values, know-how, and strategies that have repercussions also at the cultural level. To this end, the action revolves around three specific objectives: institutional consolidation, information and access to the market, and organisation of the production. The results of this initiative turned out to be more than satisfactory for the involved actors, to such a great extent that, in the present stage (October 2006) of formal closure of the project, the hypothesis of replicating the adopted methodology in other Latin American contexts is being discussed. For the time being, the most concrete opportunity is to implement the project with SEBRAE Sao Paulo (with which Promos will have to sign an agreement shortly). Financial

support to this project is being negotiated with the IADB.

The fourth motivation driving the international action of local Italian authorities is the migration phenomenon. This comprises the relations with the Italian emigrants, as well as the emerging issue of the link between immigration and the development of the countries of origin (over the last years the role played by immigrant communities with their countries of origin has been increasing in importance).

The relation of local authorities with the Italian communities residing abroad was affirmed, as mentioned, especially after the enactment of Law 459/2001 for the exercise of vote of Italian citizens residing abroad. This relation concerns Latin America in particular. It is a known fact that the descendants of Italian emigrants establish a bond with the territory of their Region of origin (Friuli, Marche, Véneto, Piemonte, Trentino, Campania). This is the strongest bond that unites them with the land of their parents, even more than with Italy in an abstract sense. They find it more natural to create cultural and economic links with those areas. The political class at central and local levels has glimpsed the opportunity to foster the expansion of Italian influence in those countries through these communities. They also take into account the fact that part of the ruling political and economic class of many Latin American countries is of Italian origin.

There are different types of actions aimed at this group, and the investments have been made in several spheres, going from the cultural to the economic aspects, and social support, especially after the deep economic crisis that affected Argentina, the Latin American country with the highest percentage of population of Italian origin. It should be noted how the initiatives taken to benefit Italian communities have often also had a positive impact on the entire population.²⁴

7. Italian Communities Abroad: The Province of Trento²⁵

In the decade of 1870-1880, and after the First and Second World Wars, the Autonomous Province of Trento experienced a strong emigration phenomenon. The Trento emigrants set out to different destinations; however, Latin America was one of the privileged goals. In this sense, the issue about the relations with Italian communities abroad is markedly felt in this Province.

The legal foundation of all activities carried out in favour of the Trentine community residing abroad is the provincial Law 12/2000, called “Interventions in favour of the Trentine population that emigrated abroad and their descendants”.²⁶

In relation to solidarity, since 1988 the Autonomous Province of Trento has set in motion an annual assistance plan, called the Solidarity Fund, aimed at young Trentine descendants living in precarious socio-economic conditions. The subventions obtained by this means fund subsidies in favour of families in precarious conditions, and scholarships for young Trentine descendants, so that they can receive a proper education in their present country of residence. The Fund is not limited to the Latin American region alone. It is also aimed at the Trentine community living in Eastern Europe, especially in Serbia, Rumania and Bosnia, although the major part of Trentine emigrants’ descendants lives in South America.

The volume of the funding allocated annually varies according to the different States. In Latin America eight countries resort

to this fund: Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay. In 2006 the Solidarity Fund had a 1,100,000 million Euros funding. Approximately 130,000 Euros were allocated to Eastern Europe, while approximately 950,000 were earmarked for Latin America.

In relation to Argentina in particular, an Extraordinary Plan was set up after the 2001 financial crisis, with a four-year duration and an independent management from the ordinary Solidarity Fund. A structure with ten social workers was established in order to manage the Extraordinary Plan. They were responsible for looking after the people who were most affected by the 2001 financial crisis in the whole country. From 2003 to 2005 almost six million Euros were allocated to this end.

In addition to the Solidarity Fund and the Extraordinary Plan for Argentina, the Autonomous Province of Trento assigns a specific chapter of its budget to fund cooperation projects aimed at Trentine communities residing abroad, always based on Art. 11 of the provincial Law 12/2000. Regarding the Latin American countries, these initiatives in general are related to the development of agriculture, commerce, education and cattle raising, particularly in Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Chile.

While in the case of the Solidarity Fund and the Extraordinary Plan for Argentina the management of the promoted activities is fully in charge of the regional administration, in the case of cooperation projects aimed at the Trentine community residing abroad, the Autonomous Province of Trento nurtures from the support of private organisations, such as the World Trentine Association.

²⁴ | See the case of decentralised cooperation projects of the Province of Trento in the next Chapter.

²⁵ | Part of the information contents of this paragraph were kindly provided by Ms. Franca Dalvit, Director of the Migration and Solidarity Service, and by Ms. Francesca Baldessarelli, responsible for the management of the Solidarity Fund of the Province of Trento.

²⁶ | *Idem*



The immigration-cooperation relation is specifically stated in the adoption, on the part of decentralised cooperation, of the co-development concept, which acknowledges migrants' role of actors in the development of the host country and the country of origin. This counts on the participation of migrant communities coming originally from different Mediterranean countries, Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. The Latin Americans residing in Italy and especially those who come from the Andean area (representing circa 80% of the Latin American immigrants in Italy), are increasingly playing a role in the trans-national relations with the country of origin, above all through remittances. Nevertheless, up to this date the projects promoted within that sphere are rather presented as a work hypothesis and a future orientation on the role of decentralised cooperation.

8. Migrations and development: COPEI and the Andean Solidarity Fund²⁷

At the beginning of 2006 there were 238,882 Latin American immigrants in Italy, of a total population of foreign immigrants of 2,670,514. As above mentioned, circa 80% of Latin American immigrants in Italy are Peruvians and Ecuadorians. Beyond the existing integration problems, over the last years this community has become an interlocutor of decentralised cooperation. This is not a strange fact. In effect, the immigrant associations apply for financial contributions to provincial and municipal administrations of the territory in which they live, with the aim of funding small solidarity projects in their countries of origin.

One meaningful example in this sense is the Coordination of Peruvian and Andean Professional Entrepreneurs (COPEI). COPEI is a non-profit association that seeks to value the potential of the Peruvian and Andean immigrant communities in Italy and Europe, es-

pecially in the professional and entrepreneurial fields. Actually, one of COPEI main objectives is to create a platform frame of reference to carry out activities of decentralised cooperation with Peru. These activities should envisage the Peruvian immigrant community residing in Italy as the main mediator. The activities promoted by COPEI refer to the support of food programmes and school education for working children in the Andean area. They are also aimed at facilitating Italian donations (in particular on the part of municipalities and provinces) to the Peruvian health sector, especially to public hospitals, which undergo a serious situation of financial deficit in this Latin American country.

In 2005, for instance, COPEI, jointly with the Province of Arezzo in Tuscany, ATAM –the public transportation company of the Municipality of Arezzo–, and the Municipalities of Civitella, Sansepolcro and Monte San Savino, organised the trip to Italy of Yehude Simon, President of the Peruvian Region of Lambayeque. In the course of his visit, Mr. Simon described the deplorable conditions of Chiclayo city's Public Hospital, being in the capital of the region. After his visit, COPEI called on the different above-mentioned actors to donate an ambulance to the Peruvian health structure. ATAM donated a vehicle; the Province of Arezzo provided the necessary equipment for the transport of patients, while the three other municipalities donated some medicines. The transport of the ambulance to Peru was paid by the region of Lambayeque, with the co-funding of the Province of Arezzo.

At present, COPEI is the promoter of an interesting initiative regarding the institution of an Andean Solidarity Fund that envisages establishing a financial fund to support solidarity projects in the Andean area. The fund draws its inspiration from the 3X1 scheme of the Citizen Initiative of the Federal Mexican Government. On this basis, the Federal, State, and Municipal Governments contribute with one peso for each peso sent by Mexican emigrants. These

amounts subsequently converge into a fund aimed at financing development projects in the towns of origin of the immigrants. In the case of the Andean Solidarity Fund, the three partners of the emigrants are not public, but private, institutions. Two Peruvian and one Italian banking institution would be involved in this project. Currently, this is an ongoing initiative, and has the adhesion of 16 associations of Ecuadorian, Peruvian, Colombian, and Bolivian emigrants present in Italy. The Region of Lombardy is being encouraged to join the Fund.

In the fifth place, the interlinking of these processes and motivations has led to the evolution of the *paradiplomacy phenomenon*. That is, the growing role of the Regions and their “governors” in international relations. In the course of the second half of the nineties, the activity of Italian Regions in the international scenario gradually acquired an increasing relevance due to the impacts of globalisation (internationalisation of economy, increase of the differentials of social welfare and migratory fluxes, environmental crisis, cultural relations, and contaminations). They have modified the relations of power between the different geographic-economic, social, and political scales, giving rise to new relation networks between different actors. Indeed, in the past the national level prevailed in relation to the regulation of the economic and political power. However, with the globalisation phenomenon, the supranational level and the sub-national level acquire a new and important role, as well as the economic and social autonomous forces. A shift in some regulation functions is noted, that is, the transfer of authority and responsibility from the Nation-State to the central government, be these upwards –to supranational forms of government and governance–, be these downwards –to

sub-national forms of government and governance (Stocchiero 2005).

In the Italian case, the passing of constitutional Law 18-01-2001 n.3, which revises Title V of the Second Part of the Constitution, has without a doubt accentuated this process even further by bestowing upon the Regions the faculty of enacting laws on issues not expressly reserved to the State, such as international relations and the European Union.

9. Paradiplomacy: Collaboration Agreement between four Italian Regions in Brazil²⁸

This project has a particular relevance within the framework of cooperation initiatives launched by Italian Regions, and not only in relation to the Latin American area. In effect, the importance of this programme is based on the fact that, for the first time local Italian authorities have signed a collaboration agreement with the central government of another State. This is an absolutely innovative aspect in the scenario of the actions carried out in the international sector by Italian regions. Foreign policy is of exclusive competence of the Italian State, and it is therefore not foreseen that Regions can sign agreements with organisations at a higher level. However, that happened in the case of this initiative, since resorting to certain legal files enabled local authorities to avoid a direct conflict with the central level, as we will see next.

In 2004, the Italian Regions of Marche, Umbria, Tuscany, and Emilia Romagna signed a protocol of agreement with the Presidency of Brazil (the first agreement of this type at an Italian level). It was ratified by the Presidency of the Council and by the Italian Ministry of

²⁷ Part of the information contents of this paragraph were kindly provided by Mr. Juan Velázquez, member of COPEI, and by Mr. Daniele Frigeri, researcher in CeSPI.

²⁸ Part of the information contents of this paragraph were kindly provided by Mr. Marco Bellardi, Director of the International and Community Relations of the Region of Marche.



Foreign Affairs. It is interesting to highlight the detailed selection of the terminology used in the agreement document. Indeed, since in Italy cooperation is considered a tool of the State foreign policy and, on account of this very fact, an exclusive prerogative of the central government, the MFA suggests the use of the expression “reciprocal and equivalent collaboration”, instead of the term “cooperation”, with the aim of avoiding possible conflicts in the areas of competence at local and central levels.

The programme is based on four thematic guidelines: economic development (led by the Region of Umbria); social policies (led by the Region of Marche); culture (led by the Region of Tuscany); corporativism (led by the Region of Emilia-Romagna). For each thematic guideline there is an Italian Task Force, responsible for the development of the initiatives in each sector. The working groups or Task Forces are composed by expert officials with specific skills in the selected issues. Each one of them is coordinated by an Italian Region, but with the collaboration of the other Regions.

The initial financial endowment was of 1,332,000 Euros; 50% was provided by the Italian regional administrations, while the other 50% was provided by the Brazilian government. From this amount, 509,900 Euros were allocated to economic development, 242,927 to social policies, 180,000 to corporativism, and 45,185 to economy of culture. This budget was assigned to provide financial coverage to those activities closely linked to the initiative, such as workshops, seminars, and studies. On the other hand, the implementation of the above mentioned thematic guidelines require the identification of the subventions through private institutions, such as banks or foundations.

The Four Regions Agreement signed in 2004, has three-year duration; the project finishes in July 2007.

In the sixth place, a convergence bet-

ween decentralised cooperation and territorial cooperation can be noted over the past few years. This was born within the framework of the European Union internal policy on regional development. The reform of foreign assistance to the neighbouring countries, from Eastern Europe to the Mediterranean, for the first time considers the component of the cooperation between EU territories and the neighbouring and adhering countries, on account of the increasing interdependence of the foreign and domestic policies. Territorial cooperation is mainly about policy design and common actions between bordering territories (cross-border cooperation), and belonging to the same geographic basin (transnational cooperation). As a consequence of territorial cooperation spreading out the frontiers of the EU and to the neighbouring countries, the regions are connecting it to decentralised cooperation. Up to this date, this has been done only with the Mediterranean and the Balkans. In this case, the exclusion of Latin America is clearly patent. On the other hand, as we will see in the next chapter, the methodology and the contents of territorial cooperation may represent a new tool for action that Europe can offer to Latin America.

10. Cross-border Cooperation: The Interregional Network Project for Territorial Development and South American Integration ²⁹

One of the most innovative aspects of the reflection upon the socioeconomic evolution of Latin American countries is most surely the relevance acquired by the “territorial dimension” in development and in macro-regional integration. Among the priorities of Latin America’s agenda, the territorial approach includes the need to define programmes and supporting tools for local development and integration, while giving value to the role of sub-

state governments, even in the international scenario. The territorial dimension of development and the supranational integration assign new functions and roles to sub-state institutions. From this viewpoint, the experience of cross-border and interregional cooperation of the regions and European local administrations become especially significant and useful. The Italian experience is particularly interesting, above all on account of the role played by these policies and tools in defining the integration policy of the European Union. The interest in promoting Italian-South American interregional cooperation can influence the decentralisation processes of South American countries.

By establishing contacts and exchange with the institutions in consolidated relations with CeSPI³⁰, the idea of conducting a study that verifies the conditions for the creation of an international network of regions was born. Said network can promote the integration of the Bi-oceanic South American Corridors through tools for information, qualification and training, and technical assistance. The initiative is proposed as an agile tool for permanent and systematic dialogue between the state and sub-state institutions of South American countries. In this network, the Italian Regions can put at the disposal of their South American partners the same collaboration experience they have had with the neighbouring countries of North Africa, Middle East, and the Balkans. The issues seen as a priority by all South American governments are local development, economic integration, foreign trade, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the environment and sustainable development, technological innovation and development. The Italian experience can also be very useful in relation to crosscutting issues such as the consolidation of sub-state institutions, the support of territorial internationalisation, and cross-border and inte-

regional cooperation.

The study has focused on three cross-border areas: the provinces of South Ecuador and North Peru, the frontier between Chile, Bolivia and Peru, and finally the frontier between Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The integration processes are in different stages of progress. The Chile-Bolivia-Peru frontier is the most advanced. There, an interesting collaboration is taking place between the local governments of the three countries to implement an integrated social development project, linked to the “Aymaras without Borders” (Aymaras sin Fronteras) network. Its aim is to set up solid foundations for the articulation of a region that transcends state borders, thus reactivating historic, social, and cultural links. The project involves, besides the corresponding sub-state governments, 56 municipalities of the Andean area of the three countries, which share a very similar reality regarding unmet needs and lack of access to basic services. The design of the project includes the possibility of an active participation of the Italian Regions through technical advisory and internships in Italy for operators of the Aymara Area. In the region between Peru and Ecuador, possibilities of exchange with Italian regions have been identified with the objective of strengthening cross-border cooperation around the issue of natural resources management. The final report on the study is being prepared and will be presented in a public meeting to be held in Rome by the end of 2006. This report will also contain proposals for a structured collaboration project between Italian and European sub-state governments and partner organisations in Latin America. The suggested methods include the transfer of best practices of Italian and European Regions in the management of integration processes between territories;

²⁹ | This case study was prepared by Mr. Dario Conato, Coordinator of the Area for Development Projects of CeSPI.

³⁰ | CeSPI is a non-profit, independent think-tank working on the issues of migration, development and international cooperation.

technical assistance in integration processes that articulate “macro-regions”; internships for Latin American operators in Italian and European regions that are active in cross-border and transnational relations; dissemination of information, documents, and experiences through an e-newsletter; technical assistance for the creation of interregional and transnational structures.

The new concept of territorial partnership has emerged in Italy out of all these processes. Indeed, the debate on the diverse motivations linking international relations with Italian decentralised cooperation has brought about the evolution of the classic donor-beneficiary model present in the traditional activity of cooperation for development. Being essentially of the assistance type, the latter has evolved towards the idea of territorial partnership, which envisages the adoption of a participatory profile and the acknowledgement of mutual interests between partners on the policies to be implemented. Partnerships should consist of the search of a common vision on development between the South and the North. Partnerships between territories are based on a reciprocal and co-responsible relationship, widely open to the interdependence between the different spheres of international relations (cultural, social, environmental, economic, and political). This responds to the need of finding a more coherent and complex approach to development issues, where the fight against poverty interlinks with the search for freedom and democracy principles, social inclusion, growth, and economic integration. In a broader sense, said objectives are part of international relations and the foreign policy of countries and territories, be they in the South or in the North.

The concept of territorial partnership, as well as the interaction of other factors (among which we find the characteristics of the territories, the presence of different ty-

pes of lobbies, political leadership, the bureaucratic capacity of local administrations), translates into different models of decentralised cooperation. According to the studies conducted by CeSPI, two types of regional decentralised cooperation models can be defined: the “open model” and the “integrated model” (Stocchiero 2000).

The first model, in which the example of international cooperation by the Region of Lombardy can be included, does not envisage a particularly bonding orientation power for the regional administration, in terms of specific geographic, thematic, or regional interest limits. In this case, the public institution limits itself to carry out a coordination and programming function, providing funds while monitoring the use that other actors make of them. However, it does not administer these funds directly.

On the other hand, in the second model the Region has a relevant orientation power. It can provide an important amount of resources for initiatives of regional interest, and set up the criteria to direct the actions of the territory’s subjects towards geographic and/or thematic priorities, with the aim of promoting the association of several organisations. For example, this is the case of the Regions of Tuscany (oriented mainly to the Mediterranean), Piemonte (mainly directed towards Sahel), Friuli, Venice, Giulia, Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Marche, and Puglia (oriented mainly towards the Balkans and Eastern Europe). In the integrated model the criteria for selecting the projects/actors assume great relevance. In general, there is a marked interest in the creation of a regional cooperation system (Stocchiero, 2000).

It should be noted that the open model is more favourable to Latin American priorities. Mostly, it can be found in the social organisations of the territories influencing the decisions of their local authorities. On the other hand, the political orientation established by the Re-

gions tends to be aimed at the neighbouring countries, because of the above mentioned reasons.

On the other hand, the Italian trend to create regional cooperation systems represents a new way of relating to the Latin American partners (as well as to the partners of other geographic areas). In fact, in the future, Latin American municipalities and local authorities will be involved in a system of relations that can respond to the territorial partnerships offered by the local Italian authorities. Not only will spaces for small cooperation projects be identified, but a broader political dialogue on different issues will open. The aim will be to exchange information, and opportunities for a common development at a social, economic, and cultural level will be taken into account. The potential will be greater, as well as the obstacles in organising and sustaining these systems. Therefore, only the most capable local authorities will achieve establishing more complex partnership relations, while the weakest ones will be able to organise themselves in networks within the framework of multilateral or bilateral cooperation programmes. On the other hand, taking into consideration the strong autonomy of Italian decentralised cooperation and the obstacles that must be overcome in order to reach a common coordination, local authorities with enough resources to sustain small cooperation projects jointly with NGOD will start to appear in the Latin American continent, as was traditional.

11. Conclusions

In the study, some elements that deserve our attention come to light. The analysis of these elements can contribute to a deeper reflection upon the Italian-Latin American relations,

especially on the cooperation action of regional and local Italian administrations in that area.

First of all, while examining the road travelled by Italian decentralised cooperation over the last years, a progressive evolution of this phenomenon in qualitative and quantitative terms can be noted. Indeed, on the one hand decentralised cooperation of local Italian authorities has been spreading out constantly; on the other hand, the local Italian authorities’ span of objectives regarding international relations has widened. Its aims do not relate only to their contribution to projects on the fight against poverty, but rather to more complex motivations that can be redirected to paradiplomacy activities and the internationalisation of their own territory. In many international cooperation initiatives launched by Italian regions, these spheres often appear to be closely connected.

International relations constitute an activity that becomes more and more important for the development of territories –and therefore, of local authorities- with each passing day. Decentralised cooperation, traditionally expressed with simple contributions to solidarity projects, finds itself today more embedded in the “foreign policy” of local authorities. On the one hand, that could turn into a problem on account of the risk of moving away from the aims and resources of decentralised cooperation in relation to the objective of the fight against poverty. However, on the other hand, it can become an opportunity to lend more relevance to the multidimensional aspect of this objective. The latter can be faced in all its complexity within paradiplomacy, economic internationalisation, migratory fluxes, institution building, new welfare policies, and economic development at local and transnational levels. The multidimensional aspect of the international relations of local authorities and of the concept of poverty corresponds to a dimension of multiple actors. The Italian regions and,



increasingly, the provinces and the metropolitan municipalities, are trying to create systems of public and private actors that participate in decentralised cooperation. That also applies not only to NGO, but also to social associations, immigrant organisations, chambers of commerce and development agencies, universities and research centres: systems that give rise to territorial partnerships with the local authorities and the local subjects of the cooperation countries.

The above has a significant meaning for the Latin American municipalities: Italian decentralised cooperation appears less and less to be a specific contribution to initiatives to fight poverty. Instead, it comes as an offer of relations and exchange between territories, between actors, with the aim of local development. Latin American municipalities find in this way an encouragement to articulate systems of subjects to offer their Italian partners. The role of municipalities is then focused on the governance of these systems, in addition to the exchange of institution building to define new policies of local development and the fight against poverty.

In Italy, the development of decentralised cooperation has been executed in an essentially reactive way by the MFA. Initially, the latter just limited itself to react under the stimulus of the actions of local authorities when these launched initiatives at an international level. Later on, the Ministry's role became more active, so much so that now it is trying to articulate bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes (of vital importance are the UNDP human development programmes at a local level). Through these, decentralised cooperation is valued, with particular emphasis on the neighbouring Mediterranean area. However, the problem of the lack of an effective coordination between the central and the local levels in this sector, the multi-level governance, is still present.

Surely, in the analysis conducted, the

weak points of Italian decentralised cooperation also emerge. These are essentially inherent to the lack of relevant financial and human resources in the local authorities, and to the recurring problems of budgetary deficits which increased particularly after the last national financial laws that envisaged budgetary cuts, especially for local institutions.

Moreover, also in this case, the coordination between the actions of the various local authorities in the sector of international cooperation does not suffice. The regions, provinces, and metropolitan municipalities that have articulated decentralised cooperation systems are still few, although this tendency is increasing. The collaboration at horizontal level between the regions, provinces, and municipalities is scarce, thus hindering the creation of an Italian cooperation system. Each local Italian authority is still self-centred and not much prone to define strategic alliances with other local authorities at the same level. In this sense, the experience of the four Italian regions in Brazil is of particular importance, because it points out an important perspective for Italian decentralised cooperation.

The following chart summarises the main challenges for the future of Italian decentralised cooperation.

In relation to the Latin American area in particular, more reflections are needed. Above all, and as underlined on several opportunities, Italian decentralised cooperation is mainly oriented towards the Balkans and the Mediterranean, on account of political reasons: management of the crises and building development paths. Notwithstanding, significant experiences of local Italian authorities can be seen in the area. For example, the participation of Italian municipalities in the URB-AL programme, as well as initiatives that comprise a complex set of spheres. The role that could be played by Latin American communities who emigrate to Italy should

Chart 1 | Main challenges of Italian decentralised cooperation

- *For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs -MFA (in coordination with other central Ministries) to act within a defined and clear political and strategic framework, with geographic and thematic programmes accorded with the decentralised cooperation, especially to Latin America.*
- *To divide the work between networks and local autonomy systems, and improve their coordination and decentralised cooperation service activities, overcoming project fragmentation.*
- *To capitalise and connect local autonomies' participation in the European Commission Programmes with MFA and the policies of regional systems.*
- *To Europeanize decentralised cooperation through joint programmes by local autonomies in different countries, also in support of new South-South programmes.*
- *To harmonise traditional decentralised cooperation with territorial cooperation approaches to new European Commission instruments towards neighbours and countries in pre-adherence to the EU, transferring such approach to the cooperation with "faraway" countries, especially Latin America.*
- *To overcome mistakes from the jumble of objectives that affect decentralised cooperation, especially developing the concept of the multidimensional fight of poverty in its relations with local development economic and social policies, to define coherent strategies to overcome contradictions between competitiveness, social cohesion, security, and environmental sustainability.*
- *To value the contribution from different actors (social, economic, and political) to local development, demanding NGOs to adopt a new role as transnational mobilisers of social and territorial capital.*
- *To open decentralised cooperation to new actors such as immigrants within the framework of partnership implementation between territories.*
- *To strengthen decentralised cooperation financial and human resources.*
- *To improve the quality of territorial partnership through analysis, evaluations, and learning processes.*



also be noted. They are new subjects for relations, and thanks to them Latin American local authorities could open and build new cooperation relations with Italian territories.

However, these experiences are still little valued in a systematic way. In effect, the absence of an ad hoc policy towards Latin America at a central level is noticed. This absence resulted in the lack of support offered to the initiatives launched by local authorities with those countries. Above all, the lack of a systematic process of reflection and capitalisation of the acquired experience by local administration in that geographic area may be noticed. This process would allow for an effective and efficient planning of future actions. This is especially clear in the case of the participation of local Italian authorities in URB-AL: approximately one hundred municipalities, provinces, and regions that have prepared projects, but whose experiences have not been shared and exchanged at national level. These experiences are not valued in the design of an Italian policy of decentralised cooperation in Latin America. Since the beginning, a lack of interaction between the URB-AL community programme and the Italian cooperation policy can be observed. A need that could be addressed using a research-action initiative with the aim of capitalising experiences and best practices, from which lessons can be learned and guidelines given for a more systematic policy.

It is to be expected that in the sphere where Italian foreign policy towards Latin American countries is relaunched, as declared by the current Italian government, the establishment of adequate ruling and financial tools is achieved. These will enable local Italian authorities to programme their own initiatives in the area, counting on a clear frame of reference that allows them to coordinate the different interventions and optimise the impact of the actions.

Annex 1: The financial resources of Italian decentralised cooperation

In Italy there is no data base that allows evaluating the financial commitment of decentralised cooperation. The regions and the local organisations should submit this information to the MFA; however, few do so in a systematic way. Only OICS and CeSPI have tried to gather and analyse this kind of data, placing a special emphasis on the regions. The most recent analysis conducted by CeSPI is presented next.

Assistance allocation of the regions and the autonomous provinces for cooperation for development and emergency relief amount to approximately 18,6 million Euros in 1999/2000. The total endowment—which also includes, in some regions, activities in the health cooperation field—increased gradually until reaching the amount of 36 million Euros in 2003. This means the resources have doubled in just three years.

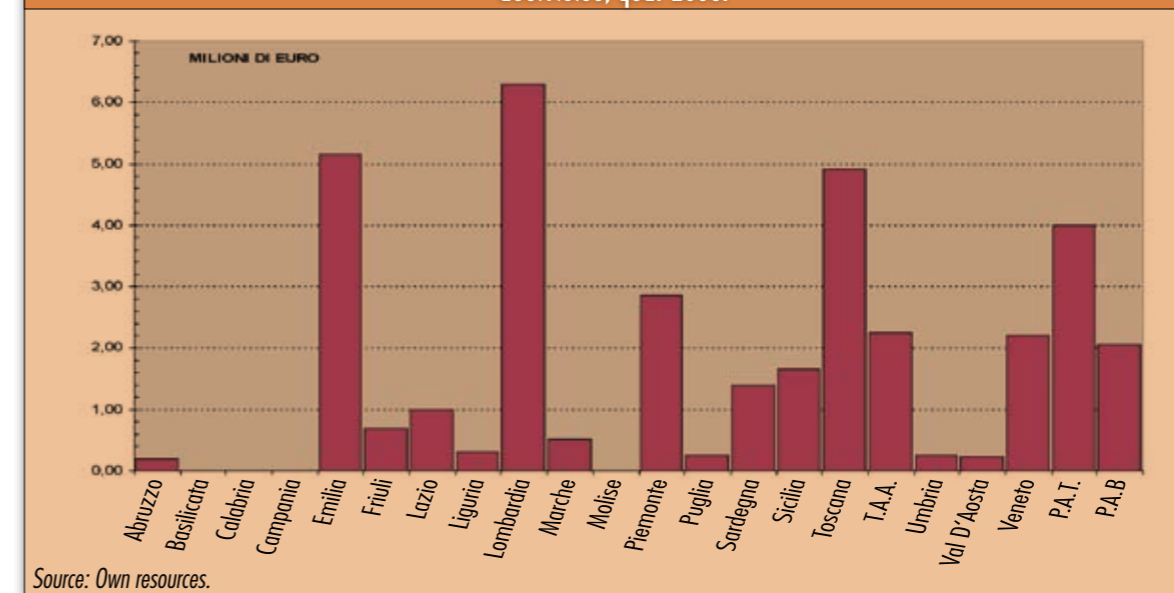
Despite the gradual increase in budgets, it should be noted that in some administrations this growth has kept a significant constant pace. For example, the Region of Lombardy raised its commitment to over six million Euros in 2003. This could be done thanks to the increase of the funds in capital account, which went from 500,000 to two million Euros, and include health cooperation. This assistance was stable in the following years and gradually increased until exceeding nine million Euros in 2005. After an exceptional contribution to the Tsunami emergency relief, the Region of Veneto has exceeded the amount of three million Euros in 2004, and the Regions of Emilia-Romagna and Piemonte, five million Euros each. The Southern Regions, such as Puglia and Sicilia, have increased the allocated funds aimed at the above mentioned objectives. The former went from 225,000 Euros in 2003 to one

million Euros in 2005, while the annual funding provided by the latter reached an average of 1,400,000 Euros in the 2002-2004 period. Finally, after the enactment of the new law, the Autonomous Province of Trento envisages allocating 0,25% of its income, equivalent to ten million Euros. Therefore, the financial commitment of the Regions' decentralised cooperation is growing; added to the resources provided by Provinces and Municipalities, it is estimated that it represents over 10% of the bi-

lateral cooperation of the DGSC/ MFA (which in 2003 was of 500,000 million Euros).

In relation to Latin American countries, it is observed that OICS and the Coordination Unit of MFA Decentralised Cooperation are putting together a database on decentralised cooperation. Through it, it will be possible to identify in a more detailed manner the amount of the resources specifically allocated to cooperation in this area. For the time being, this data base is not available.

Graph 1 | Assistance resources from autonomous regions and provinces for international cooperation activities, year 2003.



Annex 2: Interview with the Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs with Latin America, Mr. Donato Di Santo.

-In your opinion, how should Italian foreign policy be relaunched in Latin America?

Relaunching the Italian-Latin American relations should be carried out

through the promotion of international relations with this area, whether in the bilateral sphere or in the sphere of decentralised cooperation. With regard to strengthening the latter, reactivating the cooperation for development on the part of the central level would also be vital. In this sense, I am in favour of the idea of cooperation as an integral part of a State foreign policy.



- Which were the weak points of Italian foreign policy in the relations with Latin American countries?

Essentially, the lack of political will to identify, in some Latin American regions, a significant point of reference on the international agenda of our country. This standpoint had repercussions also in terms of a predisposition of specific operational tools for this area, which in fact are practically absent nowadays.

- In your opinion, what motives lie behind this omission of attention to these countries?

One of the usually quoted motives to explain this behaviour is the confirmation that, at this particular historic moment, Latin America is not an essential area in matters of world security. In the second place, most Latin American countries have a middle income; therefore, they do not constitute a priority, not even in relation to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. Neither was the importance of the role Italy could have played in the democratic stabilisation process in Latin America understood.

However, I think there is another reason that explains the lack of political will to establish strong links with this area. It is a less orthodox explanation: the political and cultural idleness of the ruling classes. Over the past decades they kept alternating between each other and did not know how to grasp some important aspects of the relations that could have been established with the Latin American countries. Neither the importance of establishing a relation with the Southern Cone countries regarding the votes of the Italians residing abroad has been understood, nor the important role Italy could have played in the democratic

stabilization process in Latin America. For example, I think of the Colombia of Uribe, where our country could play the role of mediator in the national pacification process.

Over the past years, nothing of that was understood: it suffices to remember that during the last legislation the President of the Council did not travel to Latin America, not even once; and this is not just a diplomatic option, but political. Although, to be completely frank, it is only fair to add that in the past, central/left governments did not do much for this area either.

- What should be done now?

We must respond with a strong activism and I think that the government has already given proof of this will to relaunch the foreign policy towards this area with Prodi's opening speech to the Chambers and D'Alema's official declarations.

- In your opinion, is it possible to establish a dialogue between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union in relation to a common policy for the Latin American countries?

Yes indeed. On this point I could mention two initiatives that, as State Under-Secretary, I am carrying out. The first one is aimed at the European institutions, Commission and the Parliament, while the second is specifically aimed at Spain. For some time now, this country has been the only mediator of European policy in Latin America.

In relation to the first initiative, on October 25 and 26 of this year I will travel to Strasbourg and Brussels to speak about reactivating European foreign policy for Latin American countries, so that the Iberian channel would not be the sole negotiator of

European interests. I think that few times has the government of a country, with the exception of Spain, brought forward this issue before the European institutions.

Regarding the second initiative, as Under-Secretary I participated last July in a preparatory Seminar of the Iberian-Latin American Summit to be held in Montevideo in November, and which will address

the issue of migration. For the first time, in addition to Spain, two other European countries will be present: France and Italy. In the July seminar, an Italian-Spanish meeting was scheduled for the next months. It will take place in Madrid or in Rome, and will revolve around the Latin American issue, with the aim of counting on Southern Europe's viewpoint, in addition to Spain's.



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Public decentralised cooperation in Mexico: Now is the time

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The recent transformation of the Mexican political system has led non-central governments (GNCs) to present new dynamics of strategy and organization for decentralisation, democratisation, and global economic integration. As part of this transformation, some Mexican GNCs have sought to extend their interests and expectations in the international arena. In this same way, the shift towards a less centralist state in the management of international relations has led to concrete changes in the legal system and in institutional mechanisms of the federation, state entities, and several municipalities. In these cases, public decentralised cooperation has frequently operated as a vehicle for the internationalisation of GNCs and to maximise the development of certain capacities at a local level. Although this phenomenon is recent in the country, it has been quickly expanding and it proving to be an alternative and complementary approach for European cooperation in Mexico. However, actors in the field of decentralised cooperation are still scarce in relation to the huge potential they offer. This practice is still in the process of consolidation. These are some of the attractions and challenges facing the development of decentralised activities in the country. This paper is an effort to offer a general and balanced account of public decentralised cooperation relations between European and Mexican sub-state territories.

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1. General outlook

This article attempts to offer a general up to date outlook on the current state of affairs in public decentralised cooperation relations between Mexican and European territorial administrations. This specific approach is restricted to cooperation activities carried out between non-central governments (GNCs) or between local and regional territorial authorities.

It can be said that public decentralised cooperation began in Mexico during the sixties, during the Cold War, and specifically based on town-twinning. At the time, relations were mainly active in cross-border relations, migration and trade with the United States, and increasingly with Europe and Latin America. Town-twinning was especially frequent between border municipalities with strong cross-border trade, as well as with American territorial entities with a large Mexican population which frequent served as the destination for the main migration flows.

Even though the broadening and diversification of international links on a sub-state level is recent in Mexico, the speed with which this phenomenon is expanding is incredible. The causes are linked to a series of factors that are connected to processes of democratization, decentralisation, and integration of the global economy of the Mexican society and State in general and particularly, in the case we are interested in, of the state and municipal governments.¹ In political terms, 2006 is a year that is perceived as an especially difficult one for the budding Mexi-

can democracy, following the most hotly contested presidential elections in its history. The country's recent democratisation process was consolidated after 71 years of a one one-party regime,² with the victory of the centre-right National Action Party (PAN, Partido Acción Nacional), in 2000, the first time there was a change of party in the Presidency of the Republic. From then on, although it is a fact that political life has been enriched by the plurality of actors and the new balances of power derived from the presence of multiple political parties, the scenario has become more complicated in many ways. A good example of this is how greater compartmentalization of the powers, particularly between the Executive and the Legislative powers,³ caused the national economic reform, based on the so-called "structural reforms," to be mostly halted by Parliament.

In this sense, the current president elect will have to face Parliament without a majority and with little or no political backing as a result of elections that were strongly contested by the opposition coalition. The clear confrontation between the two current main national political rivals, the PAN and the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD, centre left), make it foreseeable that a great part of the political deployment in these six years will have to take place in the sphere of the federal legislative power and also, to a lesser extent, in local congresses.

In this perspective, the Mexican State decentralisation process was definitely consolidated as from the nineties when the highly contested multi-party elections were held. Influenced by the diversity of parties on the national electoral political map, more fa-

¹ | This refers to the 31 federal states or federative entities that together form the Mexican Federal State.

² | Even though the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) changed its name twice, its grip on the presidential power and almost all the political positions in the states and municipalities began in 1929. Towards 1990, at a municipal level, the PRI governed 70% of the population, while in 2003 it was only 30%.

³ | From the beginning of its mandate, the Federal Executive party did not hold a majority in the Congress of the Union. The difference against the PAN deepened in the 2003 elections.



avourable conditions were conceived for political participation from federal and municipal entities. One could say that as of the last decade, a special revitalization was recorded in Mexican federalism in the light of its prior standstill, when the state governments acted as “transmission belts” between the plans from the centre to their area of competence and that of municipal governments. In fact, according to De Remes (2006), political power in Mexico has dispersed as from the integration of sub-state governments with political parties juxtaposed to central power. The plurality in the composition of state and municipality political powers has become a crucial factor in the reorganization of the democratic government in Mexico.

In this sense, democratization and decentralisation have shifted territorial political powers. This has naturally brought about the weakening of presidentialism and the one-party regime, which has led to a decrease in the federation’s authoritarian participation on the agendas of state and municipal governments. In this sense, both the federative entities and the municipalities have been favoured with the assignment of greater areas of competence and, at the same time, in general a relative increase has been recorded in the federal resources destined to sub-state territorial units. It is evident that, in practice, the exercise of federalism and the effective division of powers have been invigorated since the nineties. However, one cannot lose sight of the fact that public administration institutions at the three levels of government –federal, state, and municipal- have not been capable of delivering continuous and sustainable long term public policies for the benefit of its citizens. In this sense, one must pay attention to the GNCs institutional capacities. These have on many occasions assumed new responsibilities without having the staff, administrative structure, or financial resources to have an acceptable performance. This aspect,

which is seen as a drawback in the design of public decentralised cooperation projects in Mexico, can at the same time be one of the most relevant issues on the cooperation agenda between the European Union and Mexico. There is no doubt that the experience acquired on capacity-building in European regions and municipalities can be of much use to Mexican sub-state governments.

On the other hand, it is necessary to consider the real influence on the phenomenon caused by the shifting of political power due to external factors such as the forces of interdependence and globalization. Especially significant is the role this phenomenon has played in “GNCs” internationalization, the gradual liberalization of world trade, and the integration of regional trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in force since 1994, or the Mexico-European Union Free Trade Agreement in force since the year 2000. In this sense, it is evident that since economic and commercial agreements have been subscribed, cooperation relationships between the sub-state territorial entities of the contracting countries have broadened and deepened. At least, the States of Mexico, Jalisco and Nuevo Leon –as well as the capital cities of Guadalajara and Monterrey- are clear examples of the modification ensued in the perception on capitalizing opportunities at an international level, following trade and investment liberalization. As Schiavon indicates (2004: 118), “many states in the Federation participate increasingly and with more intensity in the international sphere, promoting its products abroad and attracting foreign investment. However, this does not imply participation in the design or execution of the country’s foreign economic policy, which is still centralised in the federal Executive power.”

Likewise, one must acknowledge that notwithstanding the efforts to reach a certain degree of decentralisation –in coherence with

the new democratization and federalist spirit- in general, the country remains very centralized in relation to the standards of more developed countries. This fact may be verified in the scarce fiscal powers sub-state authorities have in relation to the federation. It is estimated that only 5% of the total tax collection is made at state and municipal levels, while the remaining 95% is collected by the federal government. In addition to centralising revenue, tax reform in Mexico is urgent, since the already low revenue resulting from low tax thresholds and high evasion⁴ has hindered the adequate integration of human and physical capital by the governments to improve the population’s quality of life.

Therefore, not only is it necessary to increase and diversify the revenue with the participation of GNCs; but also to improve the efficiency in public expenditure programming and execution at the three government levels. Although decentralisation has meant a larger transfer of resources to states and municipalities, the process has largely been based on the allocation of resources conditioned on the execution of public expenditure rather than on its planning. Because expenditures have already been programmed, sub-state governments’ capacity for response is seriously limited to that which is within its jurisdiction and to specific demands of its citizens, and nothing else. It is evident that this must change in the short term to allow for an authentic redistribution of areas of competence which will allow state and municipal governments to have their own resources

Thus Mexico, notwithstanding its membership in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), plays a dual role in its bilateral relations wi-

thin the international cooperation system. It is at the same time donor and recipient of cooperation. Its role as the beneficiary of international cooperation can be explained on the one hand by the great internal differences between the development levels existing in the regions, and on the other, the disparity between social classes. One must bear in mind that this country plays a key role as donor in Central America where 75% of donations come from Mexican cooperation funds.⁵

2. Legal framework for the international action of states and municipalities

As in other Mexican spheres, the practice of this action is already way ahead of legislation with regards to sub-state government international relations. And this is so even though State and municipal interaction is, as stated before, a recent phenomenon which is still in the process of defining its participation strategies in the international arena.

In principle, in federal systems, federal and state government retain the authority to legislate. The distribution of areas of competence at both government levels is the responsibility of the relevant powers. This allows the distinction between different issues on which each governmental sphere may exclusively act. However, the criterion used to assign different competences is not always clear and conclusive. In the Mexican federal system, the distribution has its starting point in Article 124 of the National Constitution (NC),⁶ which establishes that “the powers not explicitly vested in the federal officers

⁴ | In 2001, an 18.9% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was collected in Mexico –and this figure has not varied significantly- in contrast to an average 36.9% collected by OECD (OECD 2006).

⁵ | Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) - Mexico.

⁶ | The Political Constitution of the United Mexican States may be consulted online at: <http://info4.juridicas.unam.mx/ijure/fed/9/>.



by this Constitution shall be implicitly vested in the states.” This rule of law does not confer powers but rather it becomes a point of reference from which other Supreme Law provisions can confer federal powers and, in the light of the unrestricted or open-ended clause in the Mexican federal system, confer competences to the states.

The execution of foreign policy is monopolized by the national central power, as happens with some variations in all contemporary government systems. In this sense, the NC establishes as a faculty exclusive to the Executive Branch “to direct the nation’s international policy as well as to enter into international treaties that shall be ratified by the Senate. In directing the nation’s international policy, the President shall be guided by principles as follows: the nation’s right to self determination; the non-intrusiveness [...] the international cooperation for development.”⁷ In this way, it may be observed that international cooperation action is contemplated as one of the fundamental elements of national foreign policy, and by legal prescription it is in the hands of the President of the Republic.

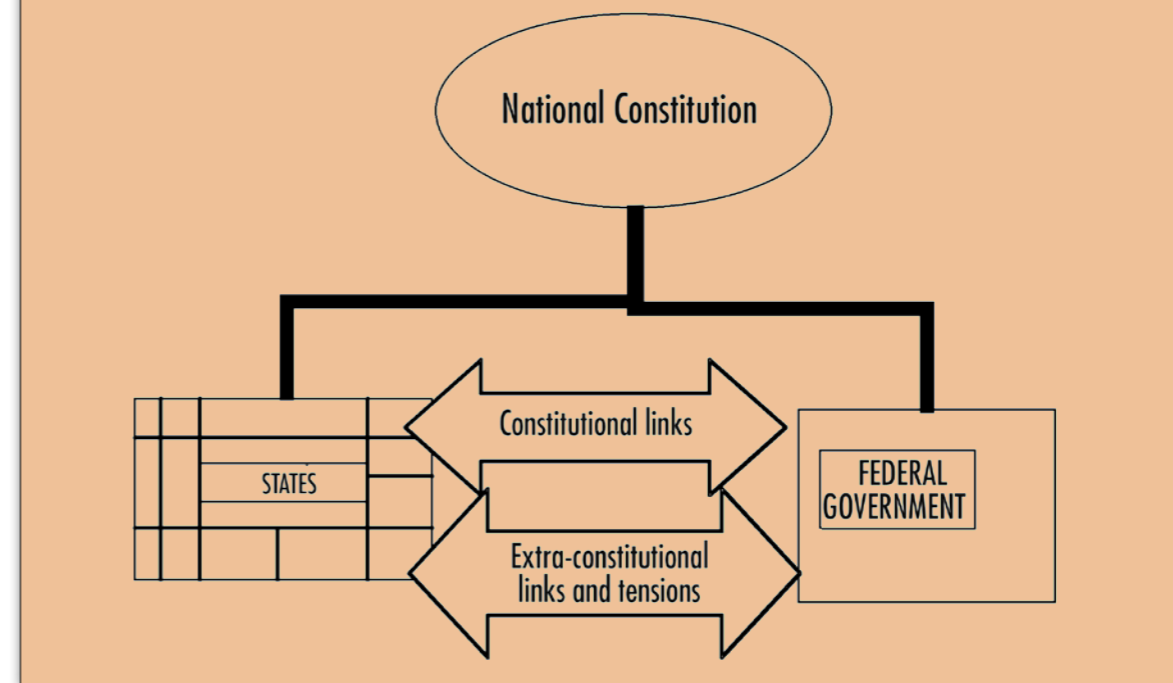
In theory, although the principle of the Senate integration is by territorial representation,⁸ it can be assumed that it is the institutional link foreseen for the projection of international interests by the federative entities and therefore by the municipalities. However, its role in the design and execution of foreign policy is scarce and restricted by the different items of Article 76 of the NC, which gives it the task: “to analyse

the foreign policy directed by the Executive Branch of Federal Government for the information gathered at the annual reports submitted to the Congress by the President of the Republic and the respective Secretary of State; besides, the Senate shall have power to ratify all international treaties and diplomatic conventions signed by the Union’s Executive Power”⁹.

Thus international treaties –among them, bilateral agreements that are frequently the frameworks for actions of international development cooperation - are normally executed and approved by the Federal powers, especially by the Executive power, and ratified by the Senate and, as De la Serna (2004) points out, without taking the states into account, even though the contents cover issues within their competence. Article 133 of the NC requires that once the treaties have been approved by Congress, they shall be ratified by the Federal Executive to become laws of almost the same level as the constitutional precepts. In this case, federal and state judges must ensure they are complied with, even superseding the dispositions of the states themselves on issues within their “exclusive” area of competence. This is one of the main points of tension between the powers granted by the NC to each level of government and their practice. These constitutional and extra-constitutional links and tensions are constant and they are regulated in the first place by the NC, and in the second place, by political praxis. Figure 1 illustrates this aspect.

As regards the treaties, the NC speci-

Figure 1 | Links and tensions between the states and the federal government



fies that federative entities cannot “enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation either with another State or with foreign nations.”¹⁰ However, the undertaking of other types of international actions that are not within the framework of a treaty is not explicitly forbidden. However, another limitation may be observed in the international participation of Mexican GNCs. This corresponds to the prohibition to “borrow money in either a direct or indirect way from any foreign nation, foreign corporations or individuals or to borrow money that has to be paid either in foreign currency or abroad.”¹¹

In fact, apart from the above, the NC has no other disposition prohibiting local and regional authorities to establish international relations, nor is there any constitutional precept explicitly regulating the activities

or fields in which GNCs may participate for the design, planning, and execution of their strategies for territorial development that complement processes of international cooperation actions.

As already pointed out, the Mexican State decentralisation process is incipient and the practice of public decentralised cooperation has found niches which allow its action. The “National Treaty Law” of 1992,¹² broadens the possibility of international participation for sub-state entities –including municipalities- with certain autonomy, within the formal framework of the country’s international relations. This law purports to specifically regulate Article 133 –related to international treaties- and to create the presence of the “inter-institutional agreement” that enables GNCs to execute international

⁷ Article 89, item X. *Artículo 89, fracción X.*
⁸ The Congress of the Union Senate is constituted by 128 legislators. Of these, 64 are elected under the majority principle (two for each state and the Federal District), 32 by the first minority, and the remainder under the proportional representation principle.⁹ *Artículo 76, fracción I.*

⁹ Article 76, item I.

¹⁰ Article 117, item I.

¹¹ Article 117, item VIII.

¹² The complete text of this law may be read in: <http://www.diputados.gob.mx/LeyesBiblio/pdf/216.pdf>.

agreements in the framework within their exclusive areas of governance. Even though not all international action is subordinated to agreements, the enactment of this law is favourable for the exercise of public decentralisation. Attention must especially be given to Article 7 of this Law, which establishes that: “the offices and decentralised organizations of the Federal, State, or Municipal Public Administration must keep the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed of any inter-institutional agreement they expect to execute with other foreign governmental bodies or international organizations. The Secretariat must give its ruling on the suitability of subscribing it and, when applicable, have it filed in the respective Register.”

It should be noted that in Mexico there are inter-institutional agreements, town-twinning for example, that have not been presented, ruled, and recorded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and have materialized notwithstanding. However, it seems recommendable for foreign partners to file their agreements so as to comply with legal provisions in the matter. This would provide the counterpart with legal assurances that the contracting Mexican government has not exceeded its jurisdiction and, thus, the agreement is not outside its political field of competences, which could endanger the success of the intervention.

With the publication of the National Treaty Law, the supremacy of the federation’s Executive power was reaffirmed in the control of foreign relations. However, at the same time the institutional space was opened to formalize actions and relations of the GNCs with other foreign offices and agents. Thus the enactment of this law, which in the specialists’ opinion should be elevated to a constitutional level, signifies the acknowledgement of the transformation in the nature of relations and the interaction of the sub-state government units with fo-

reign countries and the need to offer a more flexible framework –albeit of limited competence- that will allow the GNCs to better face the challenges from abroad, in terms of globalization and interdependence, and domestically, in terms of democracy and decentralisation.

3. Actors and institutional mechanisms

To achieve greater clarity in the analysis, it would seem recommendable to distinguish the institutional actors and mechanisms that interact in public decentralised cooperation in Mexico by action levels: federal, state, and municipal. It is also essential to acknowledge the constitutional and extra-constitutional links between the different government levels.

3.1. Federal level

Evidently, at this level, federal government action is decisive to support or restrict sub-state governments in their public decentralised cooperation relations abroad. As noted in the preceding item, the Mexican legal framework gives priority to the control of links with foreign GNCs over active federalism principles, without this being exceptional.

In this sense, the executive power maintains an institutional mechanism that allows it to offer advice, train, boost, while at the same time controlling, foreign relations, without necessarily interfering with sub-state governments’ international action. This specific mechanism of addressing sub-state territorial authorities’ international linkages is slanted towards two institutional spheres: The Ministry of Governance (SEGOB),¹³ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE).

The SEGOB intervenes in the capa-

city-building of municipalities in the country in different fields, through the National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development (INAFED).¹⁴ This organization holds a certain degree of autonomy,¹⁵ and its commitment is to assist with municipality capacity-building through various activities and products. In its organic structure, the INAFED has an office of international affairs¹⁶, whose function is to promote and guide local government initiatives connected with international cooperation, as well as to keep contact with international levels that will contribute with its objectives to promote federalism and decentralisation.

This institution also has a wealth of publications referred to multiple aspects concerning municipal governments in Mexico. Among them, the International Database on Federalism, Decentralisation, and Local Governments (BII),¹⁷ offers local governments a catalogue of international public decentralised cooperation levels, and agents and of authorized international cooperation instruments with Mexican local governments.

Another INAFED product that may be of use for specialists interested in carrying out public decentralised cooperation actions with Mexican municipalities is the National System of Municipal Information (SNIM).¹⁸ This data base includes an important amount of updated information on the basic indicators of the country’s GNCs.

It must also be noted that even though there is no inter-institutional agreement, the INAFED Office of International Affairs keeps up a coordinated work with the SRE

Sub-directorate of Liaison with Locales Governments (SVGL).¹⁹ This link is aimed at better channelling matters concerning municipalities and their foreign relations.

It could be said that the integration of an office in charge of addressing local governments within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) is evidence of the importance the federal government places on this type of link. At the same time, it shows –endorsed by Article 133 of the NC and the National Treaty Law- the determination of the federation to maintain a high degree of control on local and regional government international actions. The main argument is related to the perception of the federal government of maintaining criteria of coordination, coherence, and complementation in the national foreign policy as a whole, in which the so-called “federative diplomacy” is included²⁰. Among the coordinated tasks fulfilled by these two offices is the technical assistance to local governments for their entry in contact with foreign agents regarding cooperation, advice for the integration of offices for addressing international affairs, legal assistance for the subscribing of inter-institutional agreements with other foreign organizations or entities, among other issues.

More specifically in relation to public decentralised cooperation, the SVGL has under its responsibility the National Town-Twinning Programme (PNCH). It is convenient to underline that part of this programme is oriented towards encouraging town-twinning as an institutional tool in decentralised cooperation that will provide

¹³ The institutional equivalent in various European countries is the Ministry for the Interior.

¹⁴ This institution’s website is: <http://www.inafed.gob.mx/wb2/>

¹⁵ It is the so-called “deconcentrated body” within the Mexican public administration.

¹⁶ The contact is currently: Lic. Ofelia Saavedra, osaavedra@segob.gob.mx or telephone + (55) 5062 2034.

¹⁷ It may be read in: http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/INAFED2006/INAF_Pub_linea

¹⁸ It can be read in: http://www.e-local.gob.mx/wb2/INAFED2006/INAF_Snim

¹⁹ The contact is currently: Lic. Andrés Barba, abarba@sre.gon.mx or Phone + (55) 9159-6086 and 83.

²⁰ This is the term officially used by SRE to refer to the phenomenon.

populations with a formal link to use in their initiatives of international cooperation with other GNCs. The concept of twinning coming from the PNCH reveals the intention of fostering international cooperation relations with town-twinning as the basis and origin of the action that must strengthen and enrich the local development strategy. The PNCH seeks to give local powers information and a standardized mechanism to subscribe inter-institutional agreements that comply with the corresponding regulations. As well as collaborating with the formalization of the agreement, from its establishment in 2005, the programme expects to give advice –in coordination with INAFED– on the installation of Municipal Offices for Foreign Affairs, the creation of committees with citizen participation linked to the project, and the drafting of the regulations that shall govern the agreement.

Thus one can observe that as from the expansion of sub-state government actions abroad, the federal government has institutionally accommodated itself to play an active role in the internationalization process of some of the Mexican sub-state governments. This institutional mechanism coordinates the intervention of the Ministry of Governance (SEGOB) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) in their respective fields of competence. It is possible to affirm that this transformation of the organic structure of the federal government responds to a “monitoring strategy” for the decentralisation process that, contrary to this spirit, seeks to keep complete control of international relations and foreign policy within the federal sphere, in coherence with the constitutional precepts on the matter.

Although its orientation towards the support of public decentralised cooperation is less, the Ministry of Social Development (SEDESOL) is operating the Habitat Programme. This instrument has provided re-

sources that have on some occasions been complemented by the municipalities with contributions from international cooperation, either international organizations, bilateral cooperation organizations or, to a lesser degree, public decentralisation actors and programmes.

3.2. State or intermediate level

In Mexico, compared to the municipalities, the state governments have better possibilities of successfully orchestrating public decentralised cooperation projects with partners from other countries. This is due not only to the greater amount of resources available to them, but also to the great capacity of transformation of their own organic structure. This phenomenon is connected to the fact that all the state governments have six years in office, double of that of the municipalities, which have periods of three years of governance. In addition, in the field of training specialized teams in international affairs and cooperation, it is feasible to establish careers for civil servants that can guarantee continuity from one period of public administration to the next. For now, this process can be considered more tangible in state governments than in municipal ones. Apparently, once the states have formed specialized career teams, this practice could be reproduced the municipalities, but not the other way around.

In a very suggestive research, Schiavon and López Farfán (2005) analysed the participation of the Mexican federative entities in international affairs of different natures. The authors enabled a series of indicators for the quantification of federative entity action in this field, which in general observe the governmental structure, the economic activity, and the demarcation policy. This enables having an idea of the general profile of the activities of the state and its perception of opportunity in

the international sphere and, in this case, within the international cooperation system. One of the fundamental elements for this consideration is the existence of governmental levels specialized in international affairs.

With regard to the availability of institutional links abroad, the study shows that in every Mexican state there is an office, be it an under-secretariat, a directorate, or a coordination office, which has been assigned to address international affairs. These levels normally are part of state secretariats for economic development. However, it is less frequent that, in addition to the above mentioned administrative unit, offices of international affairs are integrated depending directly from the head of the state executive power. In fact, the study indicates that only three, out of 31 states,²¹ have specialized offices that belong to a structural top to bottom logic (see Chart 2 below), which seems very recommendable to achieve greater permeability of issues from the governor’s office –in this case the international issues- towards the remaining offices of lower rank.

It is important to note that not always does the establishment of offices specialised in foreign affairs mean that public decentralised cooperation activities exist. In various cases, whether they are in the rank of action from bottom to top or vice versa, these administrative units are normally executors of the resources obtained from bilateral cooperation within their demarcated territory. In these cases the initiative for cooperation relations does stems form GNCs. Therefore, it can be considered

an extension of national cooperation which must not be confused with public decentralised cooperation.

On the other hand, in the light of the new organization that has appeared as from the decentralisation process and the activation of federalist principles, state governments –and on their part, municipalities- have gathered on the national political scenario through associations. All federative entities, including those with different party affiliations, adhered to the National Conference of Governors (CONAGO), from the start of President Vicente Fox’s tenure. Initially, the fund’s goal was to achieve a more equitable distribution of public resources among the different levels of the government.²² At present, starting with an ambitious agenda, this organization seeks to form a common institutional space in which to establish links between states, thus promoting decentralisation and reinforcing the federalism principles in all forms and levels of government.

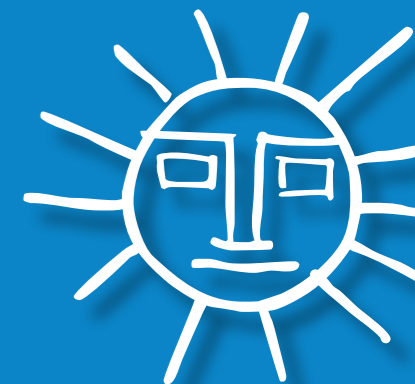
Regarding international cooperation, we may underline that within its internal structure, CONAGO has a committee dedicated to relations between European and Mexican entities,²³ which reveals the Mexican federative entity perception of importance and opportunity around this link. Under this perspective, it is important to note that the Mexico-Spain Regional Meeting took place in the city of Valencia towards the end of 2005, with the attendance of 12 of the 32 Mexican heads of state. As of this event, it was agreed to foster foreign trade and international cooperation,²⁴ based on

²¹ | The cases recorded are Chiapas, Jalisco and Baja California. To these must be added the State of Mexico, which integrated the International Affairs Coordination, complementing the efforts of the administrative units in the Secretariat of Economic Development oriented to the exterior.²² Esta acción impulsó junto con las otras medidas la celebración de la I Convención Nacional Hacendaria, lo que sentó las bases para la instauración de una nueva relación – aún insuficiente – de coordinación fiscal entre las entidades federativas y el poder federal nacional.

²² | This action, together with the other measures, boosted the execution of the I National Treasury Convention, which established the bases for the installation of a new relation –still insufficient- of fiscal coordination between the federative entities and the national federal power.

²³ | The “Mexico-European Union” Committee is coordinated by the government of the State of Jalisco. CONAGO website is: <http://www.conago.org.mx/>

²⁴ | Title Four of the agreement document.



both countries' intermediate levels of government. *gobierno intermedios de ambos países.*

3.3. Municipal level

There are a total of 2,440 municipalities in Mexico, which express the diversity and inequality that characterize this country. We can find municipalities with marginality levels comparable to those of Sub-Saharan Africa,²⁵ which

at the same time there are urban areas with very high degrees of economic and social development and sophistication. Thus institutional mechanisms to address international affairs and foreign cooperation vary considerably in their available resources and motivating factors.

However, there are some common elements that condition the international action of Mexican municipalities. The period of governance at a municipal level generally has a

three-year duration.²⁶ This period is evidently too short to activate international presence and consolidate public decentralised cooperation projects. In addition, the political principle of no re-election is kept in Mexico, which, added to the lack of a municipal employee career, hinders the continuity and sustainability of international cooperation actions. As Moreno (2003) states, the municipal governance period does not allow long-term collaboration agreements. Thus cooperation relations without continuity hinder the sustainability of the interventions.

The tendency to integrate two different prototypical organic forms may be observed among municipal governments that have international affairs offices (See Figure 2). On the one hand, we find those units of the international area that are circumscribed to the structure and subordinated to certain municipal governmental office, normally that of economy. Under this specific disposition, if the municipality wishes to carry out certain international actions, the office in charge must wade through the different administrative levels to gather the areas that take part in the design and execution of the public decentralised cooperation action. This situation slows down the decision-making process and causes the loss of opportunity within the framework of a somewhat short period of office. Town halls that adopt structures such as those described, normally seek to fulfil a certain specific task, such as the promotion of commerce or tourism in their jurisdiction. In those cases, the operational range of the administrative unit is from bottom to top.

Conversely, when the international affairs office organically is dependent on the executive's office, it is possible to maintain a broad vision on the sectors and areas in which

public decentralised cooperation can complement the local initiatives for political, economic, and social development. In addition, the management and the decision-making process are simplified and allow a wider range of action in the field of international cooperation. In this case, the administrative exercise of the municipal office for international affairs goes from top to bottom.

In the light of the Mexican experience, it is recommended that the incursion within the dynamics of international cooperation from the municipalities be accompanied by the integration of a specialized administrative unit. Its own disposition within the town hall's organic structure allows this unit to encourage agreements and initiatives with other municipal areas, and at the same time, to follow up agreed actions and relevant issues promptly and swiftly.

3.3.1. City Council Associations

The associations of municipal governments are another institutional mechanism that can support the exercise of public decentralised cooperation by local governments. There are three national municipality associations in Mexico, which, as Paz Cuevas indicates (2005: 68), "we can see in each one [...] the partisan element as a nodal factor, which in different conjunctures, have submitted the municipal aspirations that give meaning to the associations on their agenda."

The Association of Municipalities of Mexico (AMMAC) is an organization that has been linked to the National Action Party (PAN) from its start. It has a history of supporting the municipal autonomy of the

Figure 2 | International Affairs Office: Ascendent Action Pattern

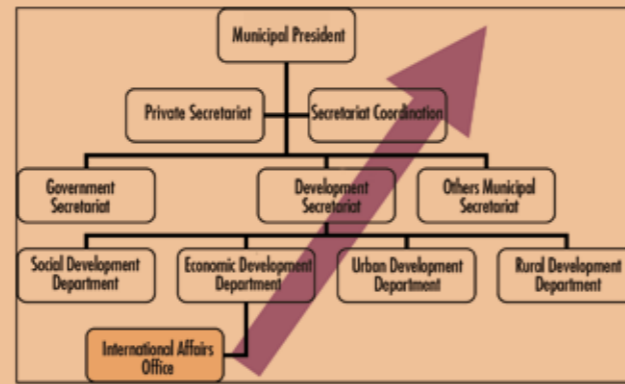
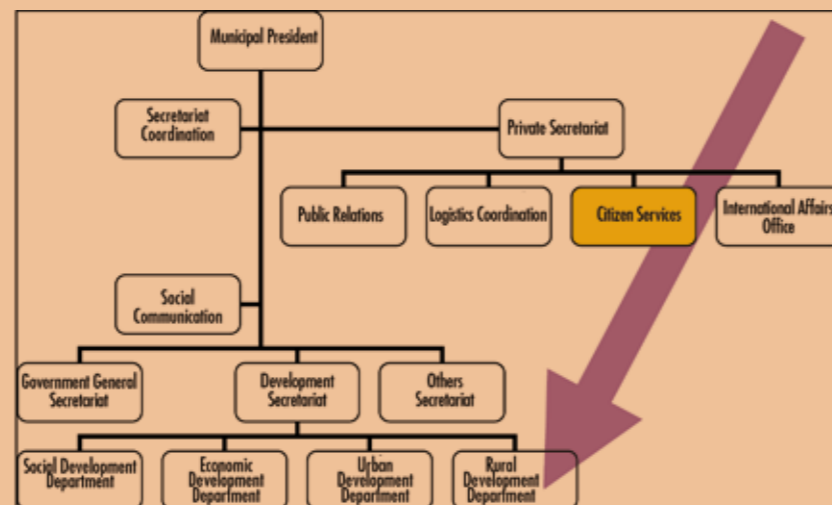


Figure 3 | International Affairs Office — Descendent Action Pattern



Source: Own resources.

²⁵ | As examples of this, we can mention the municipalities of Coicoyán de las Flores with a value of 0,362 on the Human Development Index (HDI) and San Martín Peras (0,393) in the state of Oaxaca and Metlantónoc (0,363) in the state of Guerrero. These values are comparable to the national HDI of Eritrea (0,346), Guinea (0,398) or Ivory Coast (0,422). Source: National Council on Population, <http://www.conapo.gob.mx>

²⁶ | With the exception of the state of Coahuila, where the local Congress extended the municipal mandate to four years.

PAN party while being under the rule of the state and federal government of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). AMMAC has held close links with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation since 1992. This German organization represents a platform for the international manifestation of interests of the political tendency known as Christian Democracy. Later on, at least discursively, this association would start moving away from the party guidelines and appear to transcend all ideological empathy and as AMMAC (2000: 26) itself states, attempt “to regroup so as to put an end to the centralism stated before, and to seek grounds for broader authority.” Of the three national associations, AMMAC maintains the greatest distance from partisan activities, and effectively attempts to integrate municipalities from the different local governing parties into its structure.

Among this organization’s main goals is the strengthening of Mexican municipalities in the intergovernmental dialogue policy, on a regional, national, and international level. As well as the initial postulates relative to the defence of municipal autonomy before other government levels, AMMAC has accounted for an important mobility on an international level. In addition to representing a broader action platform, this has allowed it to diversify its incomes further than the membership dues, in order to support its activities. In addition to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, AMMAC found another international action axis along the same ideological lines of Christian Democracy in what was the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) which, after it merged with the United Towns organisation (UTO) and Metropolis in 2004, gave rise to the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), being the integration of mega-international organisation of local powers. Within the space of the European Union, AMMAC maintains relations with the Spanish Federation of Mu-

nicipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and, as of September 2005, with the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities. Based on the study carried out by the Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Local Authority Associations (FLACMA), it is possible to determine that AMMAC is the most consolidated Mexican municipality association, especially due to its high international mobility, its financial viability, and its increasingly plural political positioning. Among its international activities, its role promoting town-twinning as an instrument to develop the potential of associated municipalities is prominent. In this sense, it is interesting to note that AMMAC’s combativeness on a national level diminished after President Fox assumed office, possibly due to political empathy. However, its international relations have been broadened with other municipality associations, international promunicipality foundations and organizations. According to the same FLACMA study, up to 2005 AMMAC held the membership of 315 municipalities that represent approximately 13% of the total national town halls (2005: 37). However, this numeric relation does not consider the demographic weight and population income in order to identify its members better.

The other two associations are the Association of Local Authorities of Mexico (AALMAC) linked to the Democratic Revolution Party (PRD) and the National Federation of Municipalities of Mexico (FENAMM) linked to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Both organizations have a lower profile than AMMAC regarding their participation in international actions, possibly due to concentrating their interest mainly within national borders. However, AALMAC maintains and promotes among its members some links with European territorialities and associations. Prominent are the close links

with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation of Germany, and its relations with the FEMP and the Mancommunity of Municipalities for the Socioeconomic Development of Huelva, Spain. Until the great world associations were united, AALMAC held a fluid relationship with UTO, probably due to its empathy with social democratic political principles.

On its part, FENAMM is the association that has the largest nominal amount of members (1,716 municipalities) and the representation at a municipal level of almost 50% of the country’s inhabitants.²⁷ Since its foundation in 1997, this organization expected the other two associations –AMMAC and AALMAC– to adhere to its project in one sole national association to care for the interests of the municipalities, regardless of their authorities’ party affiliation. However, partly influenced by the preponderance of the prolonged permanence of the PRI in power, as well as the interest in developing their own political agendas, both associations declined this initiative.

Another effort for integration has been the National Conference of Mexican Municipalities (CONAMM), started in 2001 in the UTO-IULA Unity Congress in Rio de Janeiro. The CONAMM, still without legal capacity, has attempted to promote the unification of the three associations to join the

local powers within one sole national block of municipalities, without success up to now. The fact is that in 2006 Mexico is one of the few countries in the world that does not have a national municipality association, truly representative and without political hues. This is probably one of the main reasons why the international programmes in support of decentralised cooperation have not found local interlocutors in Mexico, apart from isolated actors or the federal government continuing to perform the role of tutor in these processes.

There has been no coordination whatsoever between the three associations on international matters. What is more, the three have at one time or another participated individually in the managing bodies of FLACMA, IULA, UTO and now UCLG, organizations that would do well in promoting a national coordination platform between them before acknowledging them internationally. If the CONAMM were to prosper, it would hold great importance within the national political scenario and unquestionable power on the international stage. At least, that is what has been demonstrated by the up to now successful CONAGO experience regarding federative entities.

Thus we can observe that over the last few years, the organic structures of the Mexi-

Table 1 | Bilateral cooperation, donors by world region

World region	Percentage of the cooperation flow
Europe	31,4
Asia-Pacific	15,8
North America	8,6
Africa and Middle East	0,38
International Organizations	43,9

Source: SRE (Foreign Ministry)

²⁷ | <http://www.urbalvictoria.gob.mx/fenammm.htm>

Table 2 | Cooperation projects by European countries

Country	Number of projects
Germany	41
Italy	25
France	16
Spain	11
European Union	19

Source: SRE (Foreign Ministry)

can State have been modified –although not sufficiently- in response to the new conditions of partisan pluralism and the broadening of democratic channels. Although both processes are incipient, they have definitely influenced the conformation of the institutional mechanisms that give way to the action of public decentralised cooperation in the country.

4. Modalities and quantitative data

In the first place, as a reference parameter, Table 1 will show the distribution of Mexican bilateral cooperation received by region of origin. In this way, it is possible to see how European bilateral cooperation has become the largest and most important in the country. In order to identify the country of origin, Table 2 breaks down European cooperation awarded to Mexico under bilateral cooperation agreements.

In Mexico, obtaining information relative to public decentralised cooperation is quite complicated due to the great quantity of sources one must access to achieve an approximation to the real state of this issue in the country. As indicated by Matul (2006), it requires the direct consultation of the websites of State governments and a considerable portion of municipalities to collect the neces-

sary data. However, the information is usually not very precise, and regularly does not make a distinction between public decentralised cooperation and other types of collaboration agreements. In this sense, the amounts of finance, its source and application are very difficult to track, not only due to the lack of an office assigned to monitor and collect this sort of information, but also due to the variance in criteria used to record it, all which hinder the work even further.

As well as the direct search over the Internet, it would seem convenient to establish personal contact with the responsible people in some of the public institutions that partially gather the information. This is the case of SRE, INAFED and, depending on the matter, those responsible for the information on international activities in state and municipal governments.

Even with the collaborative intention of the staff, many times the lack of experience, training, and frequent absence –or inefficiency- of the specialized administrative area on international affairs will seriously hinder the possibility of obtaining dependable and opportune data for the joint systematization of the phenomenon in the country. In addition, the idea of diminishing the prior administration’s work to highlight their own is a recurring practice, especially when there are party changeovers in the state or municipal power.²⁸

Notwithstanding the difficulties and even though this information is not the product of an exhaustive research, one may consider that it will allow a sound appraisal on the performance of the main methods and tendencies of public decentralised cooperation in Mexico. We shall base the typological classification of the relations between GNCs on the work of Gutiérrez Camps (2006). The researcher first proposes to classify the public decentralised cooperation relations into informal and institutionalized links. Informal relations are relevant and have a

marked influence on the activity performance. However, they are difficult to quantify and due to their very nature, they are subjective elements that offer great complications for their appraisal. On their part, institutionalized links are divided into two categories: bilateral relations, between two territorialities, and pluri-institutional, in networks or projects between more than two public sub-state actors. Among the institutional bilateral relations we can basically identify three categories: town-twinning, bilateral projects and those carried out by associations of federative entities and municipalities. Prominent among the pluri-institutional links are networks and projects in which one or various GNCs participate.

In the case of Mexico, it is necessary to clarify in the first place that the conception of town-twinning in general has evolved from being mostly protocol and good intentions -passive twinning- towards the integration of a common basis on which to plan joint actions for mutual benefit –active twinning-. According to Ballesteros and Luna (2005),²⁹ until May 2005 the SRE had knowledge of 878 projects or already subscribed town-twinning agreements by Mexican territorialities in all the continents. Unfortunately this amount does not distinguish valid agreements from those about to be subscribed, two totally different conditions. However, of the total reported, 23% correspond to Europe, with 202 agreements either signed or about to be signed. Of this amount, there are 76 cases reported with Spanish territorialities, which represent 37.63%; 12.38% with Italy, 9.41% with France; 6.44% with Poland, and 4.95% with Germany.

If we distribute the town-twinning pro-

jects or agreements by federative entity, Jalisco is by far the most dynamic in the country, with 119 town-twinning in the world, which represent 13.56% of the country total. In second place is Nuevo León with 8.2%, the state of Mexico with 7.07%, the City of Mexico with 6.95%, and the state of Veracruz with 5.93%. These five states jointly concentrate over 40% of the country total. The aforementioned authors attribute the motivations that have influenced the states to subscribe these agreements mainly to economic incentives combined with others in 75% of the cases. Other types of incentives considered are: a) historic/cultural 50%; b) social/migratory 50%; and c) strategic/convenience 21.8%. It should be noted that the numbers are distributed in this way because the GNCs can have more than one motivation.

As mentioned before, in the cases of Jalisco, Nuevo León, and the State of Mexico, for example, historic, cultural, social, and migratory factors join. In general the subscription of inert agreements tends to decrease because they offer scarce productivity. In the meantime, the idea that town-twinning is the basis for undertaking other types of initiatives is strengthened. These initiatives are mainly connected with taking advantage of export potential, the interest in capturing productive investment, and the promotion of tourism.

A total of 53 bilateral institutional relations by 30 Mexican municipalities and states with their European counterparts have been recorded.³⁰ This includes municipalities whose bilateral relations are not necessarily based on town-twinning but are preferably defined by their active nature. Coinciding with the

²⁸ The Federal Institute of Access to Public Information (IFAI) was recently created with the intention of guaranteeing the access to public governmental information. It may therefore be foreseen that in the future, the management of governmental information will be more transparent and accessible.

²⁹ At the time of writing this article, H. Ballesteros was Director General of Political Liaison and J.C. Luna, Director of Political Liaison of the SRE

³⁰ Information obtained on the Internet, through telephone contacts with government staff from the states and municipalities, and supplied by the Observatory for Decentralised Cooperation EU-Latin America (OCD).

Table 3 | Volume of public decentralised cooperation by country

Country	Percentage of decentralised cooperation
Spain	54,72
France	26,42
Germany	9,44
<i>Own sources</i>	

SRE information, Jalisco and its capital city Guadalajara concentrate almost 17% of the total activity between them, while the State of Veracruz and Xalapa, its capital city, produced 11.33% of the cases. Nuevo León and its capital city Monterrey, registered 7.6%, the same percentage that is attributed to Mexico City. In the four most representative cases, a dynamic participation is clearly distinguished on the part of the state capitals –and the national one in the case of Mexico City– in the interaction with European territorialities.

In part, this information shows certain centralist tendencies that state capitals take from the national scheme and duplicate in their jurisdictions. However, it is also true that, given the relatively recent implantation of public decentralised cooperation practices in the country, the territorial entities that are usually most receptive to new approaches and development formulas are those municipalities and states with greater economic power and high degrees of human development in relation to the national average. The 30 municipalities detected with decentralised cooperation relations with European Union territorialities cast an average of 0.803 on the Human Development Index (HDI),³¹ a high rank, while the national average is of 0.791,

medium-high rank. Especially outstanding is the fact that sub-state governments with more than two interventions in bilateral-type public decentralised cooperation,³² present an average HDI of 0.84, which is very much higher than the national average and quite a lot more than the other registered territorialities.

Jointly, the three countries included on Table 3 represent 90.58% of the total links recorded between European and Mexican GNCs. There is a strong link with these three countries, especially with Spain, due to historic and cultural reasons as well as the increasing pace of investment of Spanish enterprises in Latin America. In the case of France, since 1998, the French-Mexican Municipal Cooperation Programme coordinated in México by UTO,³³ has increasingly placed more emphasis on French decentralised cooperation by giving advice on how to turn state and municipal employees into professionals, how to run civil servant career courses, how to develop the local economy, and how to coordinate schemes between municipalities (inter-municipality).

On the other hand, there are the pluri-institutional cooperation relations, which are characterized by the joint participation of more than two GNCs or state associations or networks or groups of municipalities. Within this category, it should be noted that network participation is the most well-known in the country. As well as the URB-AL programme of the European Commission, the European and Latin American GNCs interact with other networks on cooperation. There is no information on complementary actions between the EC bilateral cooperation and that of the member states with the URB-AL programme in the country.

³¹ | Source: SNIM.³

³² | They are: the municipality of Guadalajara (six participations); the municipality of Xalapa (five); the Government of Mexico City (four); the state of Jalisco and the municipality of Monterrey (three).³³ Hasta su fusión con IULA, la FMCU mantenía un representante en México.

³³ | UTO had a representative in Mexico until its merger with IULA.

In total there are records of 70 municipalities,³⁴ metropolitan areas, and states that have participated in the programme. In most of the cases the Mexican GNCs only participate as members of one or more thematic networks. In practical terms, this means that they receive periodical information and/or eventually take part in some of the meetings or workshops organized by members. Of these Mexican partners, only 10% benefit from common projects emerging from the network itself. Thus there are only four Mexican governments that were project coordinators, and none that were network coordinators. The main networks in which Mexican and European GNCs co-participate are: Union of Ibero-American Capital Cities (UCCI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), Latin American Centre for Urban Strategic Development (CIDEU) and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI).

Various specialists coincide that Mexico has not utilized the URB-AL programme as much as other Latin American countries such as Brazil or Colombia have. As has already stated, the lack of continuity in municipal public administration hinders local government participation due to the length of the URB-AL programme project cycle. In this way, it would seem relevant to foster the participation of state governments, which have a six-year duration. The search of complementarity of projects financed by the URB-AL Programme with other bilateral cooperation projects, to achieve a better synergy through community cooperation actions in Mexico would also be convenient. For example, the case of the Querétaro municipality is interesting, since even though the local authorities were renewed, it has kept the international affairs unit within its municipal administrative structure and maintained its field of ac-

tion from top to bottom. This municipality maintains a high level of training in its staff, which facilitates its link with the international sphere. This local government's experience in URB-AL is wide, since it has participated on five occasions and coordinated the project of one of them. However, its accumulated experience would seem to lead this GNC to explore ways to complement the actions of the URB-AL Programme with other bilateral projects of European and Mexican public decentralised cooperation.

Notwithstanding the recent strategic positioning of municipalities in this field, more active international relations policies have been generated within state governments, since in general, they concentrate a greater volume of fiscal resources. There are some states that stand out due to their performance in relation to the rest. In the first place, the case of Jalisco stands out, since it generally has a very dynamic international policy, not only in terms of development cooperation, but in other aspects connected to its commercial and industrial capacity and its high rate of migration to the United States. It also maintains a high cultural and education potential that allows it to project its interests and expectations towards the international sphere, an objective that the national centralist scheme has been unable to meet in its foreign policy.

This state thus has a very complete international relations agenda, which covers a wide range of issues. In terms of public decentralised cooperation, Jalisco has two dynamic town-twinning projects with European regions, one with Andalusia, Spain, and the other with Bavaria, Germany. The first stands out for its potential that has not yet completely materialized, and the second has allowed the establishment of relations in the field of productive and commercial investment, as

³⁴ | Source: European Commission Delegation in Mexico and authors' elaboration.



well as the expansion of Jalisco enterprises' exports to Europe and vice versa.³⁵

In addition to coordinating the European Union-Mexico Committee in CONAGO, Jalisco is preparing to organize the next edition of EMEX, an event that plans to join Mexican governors with their Spanish counterparts.

Another very interesting aspect of the Jalisco State government international policy is the start-up of the Municipal Town-Twinning Programme, which attempts to consolidate and diversify the presence of Jalisco in the world, while strengthening the municipal development processes and promoting links between different municipalities and the state government. Regarding public decentralised cooperation, this programme has the virtue of transmitting the state government experience and international contacts to its municipalities. The implementation of this programme would appear to generate propitious conditions in which to extend public decentralised cooperation into other municipalities in addition to the state capital.

On its part, Nuevo León has also attempted to project to the exterior, and although its international relations are more oriented to the United States due to its geographic proximity, it has sought to promote its capital city, Monterrey, as a global city.³⁶ However, the Nuevo León government maintains some links with European regions, and its activity concentrates more on economic promotion issues than on cooperation. The State of Mexico currently represents a similar case, since its international relations have centred on the economic field and the development of its export potential. In this

sense, it has a Programme for International Promotion, which has a broad agenda of international issues, but basically economic ones, among which is international cooperation. In fact, it maintains a cooperation relationship with the region of Bavaria, oriented to the improvement of environmental conditions through the use of clean technology and renewable resources with the strengthening of Mexican enterprises in this field. Up to last summer, the State of Mexico had representation offices in Houston, San Salvador, Paris, and Madrid; however, the policy of austerity imposed by the new administration caused the closing of these offices. According to declarations made to the press by the head of the international area, the reopening of the European representations is not foreseen.³⁷

The case of Chiapas is very special. Great part of its international activism is connected to the projection and fame achieved by the armed movement headed by the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), which showed the world the oppression and misery under which the Chiapas indigenous communities live. Since the insurgence in 1994, Chiapas has continually been the focus of the world's attention, and its visibility cannot be compared to that obtained by any other Mexican region abroad. Having entered the international arena, various channels of support and financing for this entity's development have opened. As noted by López Farfán and Schiavon (2005:24): "over the last few years, the state government has also known how to capitalize on the world fame achieved by Chiapas, resulting in a broad network of relations with diverse international actors."

The Coordination of International Relations (CRI) was created in 2001 in order to manage these state governmental links. This office has quite a complex structure and very effective capacity to respond to and address international issues. However it should be noted that the State of Chiapas only records one public decentralised cooperation relationship with Europe, which is through the participation of the Tapachula Municipality in the URB-AL Programme.

It should also be mentioned that the Government of the State of Chiapas is the beneficiary of one of the most important EU cooperation programmes in Mexico. This is the Project of Social, Integrated, and Sustainable Development (PRODESIS), with a European contribution of 15 million Euros, and programmed within the official bi-lateral cooperation framework for the period 2002-2006.

From this perspective, the CRI has qualified staff with experience in international cooperation. That is, the state government has the necessary basic conditions to diversify its instruments and be a more active stakeholder in international public decentralised cooperation, as well as a possible transmitter of experiences and practices to its municipalities. The potential Chiapas has is high, since the state and its municipalities have experience in local participation and social and solidary economy, which may be attractive to its partners under a platform of reciprocity in learning and interchange.³⁸

Mexico City is another uncommon case. In the nineties, the coordination of international affairs by the Government of Mexico City was surely the most professional in the country. However, as part of the reduction of public expenditure in this area, the office was

radically diminished until it became a sub-directorate with little activity. This measure did not necessarily entail a reduction in the subscribing of inter-institutional agreements with foreign entities on the part of the Mexico City Government and its delegations.³⁹ Instead, these functions were decentralised towards each one of the offices that address their own international matters and are coordinated by the Office of the government head's. However, the information is scattered and there is no continuous follow up on international actions. It must be noted that as the national capital of a centralist country committed to excellence –at least since the end of the nineteenth century- Mexico City has had scarce participation in foreign issues. This condition is mainly the result of not needing to go in the search of opportunities abroad, since as a privileged political centre with intense economic activity, these come alone and only need to be capitalized.

Public decentralised cooperation does not even come near to representing a priority for Mexico City, which in many cases is the beneficiary of programmes and projects that emerge from national bi-lateral cooperation. However, one must acknowledge that it maintains some public decentralised cooperation projects, but its participation is greater through local city and government networks, such as URB-AL, CIDEU, UCLG and UCCI, among others. It is clear that Mexico City's greatest field of experience is rather technical than financial cooperation. Finally, it is important to point out that Mexico City has great potential for the exchange of practices and experiences with its eventual partners regarding governance, urban development, environment, public safety, and transport, among others.

³⁵ | *The state of Jalisco's European Union Centre of Information and Dissemination (CIDUE) is the support for exports to Europe. Its website is: <http://cidue.jalisco.gob.mx/index.html>*

³⁶ | *Monterrey's international projection as a global city may be seen with the 2007 Forum organization (The Universal Forum of Cultures). It should be noted that Monterrey is twinned with the city of Barcelona, seat of the 2004 Forum.*

³⁷ | *El Universal electronic journal, August 17, 2006.*

³⁸ | *To contact CRI: Mr. Roberto Alfonso Morales (head of the International Political Unit), cri_upi@chiapas.gob.mx or Nadia Cabrera, cri_enlaceeuropa@yahoo.com. Phone + (52) 961 6715 866, 67 and 68.*

³⁹ | *This is the name of the 16 demarcations that constitute Mexico City. The delegates are elected by direct popular vote for a three-year period of office.*



As can be seen, bi-lateral institutional relations between European and Mexican territorialities are few, and town-twinning agreements would seem to be a useful instrument with which to increase the activity. City networks –even though there is scarce leadership on the part of Mexican GNCs- represent a more frequent participation exercise, due to which programs such as URB-AL become great stimulants by offering a clear model for participation, with technical advice, monitoring, and measurable goals. These types of relations can promote, together with direct bi-lateral institutional cooperation or through associations, the boom of this phenomenon in Mexico.

5. Tendencies and perspectives

It is foreseeable that the debate which will influence public decentralised cooperation performance in Mexico will focus on important issues such as the federal pact, fiscal powers, or on the need to assign greater areas of competence, not only for their planning but for their execution, to the GNCs. In a political and social context in which progress has been made on these issues, the conditions for carrying out public decentralised cooperation would most surely be more propitious than they are at present. This debate agenda would probably lead to crystallizing the achievements of the NC itself, which could help the regulation of decentralised international cooperation become clearer. As an example, it is known that within the SRE, there are diverging points of view regarding the suitability of penalizing the GNCs that do not comply with the mandate of submitting inter-institutional agreements subscribed with foreign entities to dictum.

However, Mexican sub-state governments offer great potential for broadening

their participation in public decentralised cooperation with European territorialities. Notwithstanding, it is first necessary to advance towards a new scheme for the distribution of public resources among different government levels. This subject greatly surpasses the field of action of public decentralised cooperation and is preferably combined with the establishment of an active federalist model that will allow the GNCs to have greater dynamism and presence in the field of international relations in general.

In this case, the difficulty to obtain information on the matter is a reflection of the dispersion of actions carried out, of the lack of follow up, and of the lack of a standardized model that will allow the taking advantage of public decentralised cooperation as part of a coordinated development strategy by local and state authorities. Similarly, to the extent that beneficiaries themselves take active participation in the development process, joint projects with local or state governments, national and foreign, would have greater possibilities of positively having an impact on and taking root in the corresponding demarcation of social dynamics.

On the other hand, the permanence of the same party in the federal executive power and most state and municipal positions, used to ensure continuity in public policy from one administration to the next. However, the democratization of the Mexican political system has caused parties to alternate at all government levels. The situation during party changeovers invariably leads to the automatic renewal of staff in public administration, and as a result the careers of civil servants are prevented from continuing, which if allowed would ensure that the knowledge and experience they have gained is not lost. There is no doubt that Congress approval of the Federal Public Administration Professional Services Act was a significant step in this direction. However, this disposition does not

Chart 1 | Explanatory record of decentralised cooperation project

Mexican territorial corporation: Queretaro City Council (641 386 inh.)	Foreign territorial corporation: European Union (URB-AL)
Fields of action (where the project has an impact)	City council staff capacity-building in the following areas: international affairs, economic, social, and urban development, city council services, ecology, equality, gender, strengthening of the City Council Planning Institute, and widening the chances of participating in international networks.
Partners:	Latin America: Network 10. Project Coordination: Queretaro City Council (Mexico). City Councils of: Arica (Chile), Guarulhos, Bernardo do Campo (Brazil), Junin, Pergamino (Argentina), San Xavier (Bolivia). Associations: Câmara Ítalo-Brasileira de Comércio e Indústria (Brazil). Europe: City Councils of: Latina, Milano, Padova (Italy) and San Sebastian (Spain). Associations: Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for the International Solidarity (Spain).
Start up date:	September, 2005. The project is scheduled to last 15 months.
Background of the project (association or partnership date, other joint projects, etc.):	In 2004, during the II International Conference of the URB-AL Network 10, with the participation of city council officials: Fighting Urban Poverty, in Sao Paulo, the conclusion was reached to establish basic guidelines to foster more active participation of local authorities in the design of international cooperation projects and to contribute in the fight against poverty. With this starting point, the initiative to develop the project "City council officials training to prepare them to use international cooperation programmes as tools for fighting poverty in their local projects." The project shows the Queretaro City Council's interest to encourage capacity-building of local Public Administration staff, and at the same time to promote participation of other Latin American city councils in the project.
Summary of the project or projects (in case of programs)	The project has as core goal to provide the city councils involved with the necessary tools for designing international cooperation projects as a means to support municipal strategic projects, thus improving citizen's quality of life, especially the people who are most unprotected. With this ruling principle, the project is aimed towards the support of small and medium city councils. Among the products generated within the project framework, it is worth highlighting the diagnosis on poverty conditions, records of international cooperation experiences by the participating localities in fighting poverty, the celebration of a seminar (seat: city of Queretaro), a training workshop (seat: city of Milan) that will be replicated by other city councils within the demarcation of each participant, the preparation and publication of a manual (in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish), and the creation of a web page to inform about project activities and the material especially prepared for these projects and activities.
Global budget of the intervention	€ 336,501.18 total budget.
Financing by partner:	The URB-Latin America programme contributes with approximately 70% (€ 235,147.02) of the total. The rest is contributed by participants.
Remarks:	The Queretaro City Council Unit of International Affairs is in charge of the project and its core goal is to transfer the experience to strategic local entities.
Contacts:	Lic. Daniela Calderón Uribe, Project Coordinator Tel. + (52) 442 238 7700 ext. 6110 e: daniela.calderon@municipiodequeretaro.gob.mx o danicmetz@yahoo.com
Source: Queretaro Municipality Unit of International Affairs.	

Chart 2 | Explanatory record of a decentralised cooperation project

Mexican territorial corporation: State of Mexico (Mexico) (13 096 686 inh.)	Foreign territorial corporation: Free State of Bavaria (Germany)
Fields of action (where the project has an impact)	Solar energy, the environment, professional capacity-building, sustainable development.
Partners: (institutional denomination)	In Mexico: State of Mexico Environmental Secretariat and Secretary of Economic Development, different renewable energy enterprises from the entity and Mexican-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CAMEXA) In Germany: AMBITEC and related enterprises seminar.
Start up date:	October 25, 2000
Background of the project	A Inter-institution Cooperation Agreement was signed between the Government of the State of Mexico and the Free State of Bavaria.
Summary of the project or projects (in case of programmes):	This agreement is mainly aimed at improving the entity environmental condition, through staff capacity-building and application of "clean" technology. To attain this goal, the Bavarian representation in Mexico offers a certain number of scholarships each year to the State of Mexico Environmental Secretariat, for scholars to participate in the AMBITEC seminar together with Mexican enterprises. This seminar focuses on renewable energy. The forum takes place in the city of Munich and Germany provides most of its financing. The event seeks to help participants become familiar with the use of up-to-date technology applied to the environmental sector, establishing contacts with Bavarian related enterprises.
Global budget of the intervention:	Variable.
Financing by partner:	The Bavarian government pays for lodging, food, transport, and translation for individual meetings. Air travel expenses are paid by participants.
Remarks:	It is worth mentioning that the project has continued throughout despite the administrations having changed. The government of the State of Mexico intends to continue to take part in this regional development cooperation agreement since it has proved to be successful.
Contacts:	Mexican-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CAMEXA) Bavarian Representative, Dr. Wilhelm Boucsein, Tel: + (52) 55 1500 5900 Government of the State of Mexico, Foreign Affairs Coordination, Dr. Arnulfo Valdivia (coordinator) and Lic. Claudia Carvajal (liaison), Tel. + (52) 722 1678 318 and 19 or e-mail cg_carbajal@hotmail.com.

Source: Government of the State of Mexico, Foreign Affairs Coordination

Chart 3 | Explanatory record of a decentralised cooperation project

Mexican territorial corporation: Government of the State of Jalisco (population: 6.322.002 inh.)	Foreign territorial corporation: Autonomous Community of Andalusia (Spain)
Fields of action (where the project has an impact)	Economic development, education and culture
Partners: (institutional denomination)	In Mexico: Government of the State of Jalisco, universities and enterprises from several sectors. In Spain: Junta of Andalusia government, Andalusian Agency of Foreign Promotion (EXTENDA) and enterprises from several sectors.
Project start up date (execution):	October 31, 2001
Summary of joint activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a part of this agreement, the Autonomous Community of Andalusia will be guest of honour at the XX International Book Fair (FIL) to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico. A number of activities will be carried out within the FIL framework, in relation to contemporary Andalusian art and culture. A number of meetings between officials from both governments have taken place. José María Rodríguez's, Vice-Counsellor of Culture of the Junta of Andalusia visit to Mexico in 2005 was undoubtedly important. Sergio Moreno Monrovés, Vice-Counselor of Tourism of the Junta of Andalusia visited Mexico in 2005. He was accompanied by the same EXTENDA officials who held meetings with the heads of Tourism and Economic Promotion of the government of the State of Jalisco, to set the bases for the exploration of new niche markets for products and services of both jurisdictions. In this aspect, the Information and Dissemination Center for the European Union (CIDUE) of the government of the State of Jalisco, in collaboration with EXTENDA and other institutions of the Junta of Andalusia, have prepared work agendas within the framework of future reciprocal commercial and entrepreneurial missions. Since 2003, the International University of Andalusia and the Public Education Secretariat of Jalisco, have implemented a cooperation agreement to grant scholarships and foster student exchanges between public universities of Jalisco and the above mentioned university.
Global budget of the intervention:	Variable. The budget is prepared in accordance with projects and expenses included in annual operative plans of both jurisdictions.
Remarks:	An important potential is observed in this connection that, in the future, joint projects of public decentralised cooperation could be carried out.
Contacts:	Elizabeth Chavolla Sánchez Head of Foreign Affairs, Governor's Office, Av. Corona S/N, C.P. 44100, Guadalajara, Jalisco Tel: (33) 36681801, Fax: (33) 36681850 E-mail: echavoll@jalisco.gob.mx

Source: Government of the State of Jalisco; Foreign Affairs Bureau

modify the state and municipal reality, and it will still have to be debated and approved by local congresses in the 31 states and by the Legislative Assembly in Mexico City.

The effort made by some GNCs regarding the application of capacity-building programs for the staff and the implementation of professional civil service is well-known. This is especially the case with states, municipalities, and cities with high levels of income and greater availability of fiscal resources. In this field, the European Commission jointly with Mexican federal, state, and municipal authorities could support a capacity-building program for the staff responsible for international relations –and therefore cooperation– of the interested federative and municipal entities. This could be an important means to consolidate the permanence of specialized staff in spite of changes in the government and eventually of the party in office. It should be noted that, on a municipal level, public decentralised cooperation must transcend its action in the state capitals and seek greater participation and expand its field of action in town halls with lower levels of income and institutional capacities.

It is also necessary to integrate a national department to collect the information on public decentralised cooperation in Mexico and allow action follow up, as well as capitalizing on the experience of other sub-state

public entities on this issue, both European and Mexican. The integration of a committee of this nature should include representatives from the three levels of government. This would allow the coordination of bi-lateral cooperation with decentralised cooperation within a plural forum, thus achieving multiplying and feedback effects in both directions. Likewise, if a peer relation among the representatives were achieved, progress towards a higher degree of social participation would be achieved. This would influence transparency in the management of resources and obtain greater sustainability and subsidiarity in cooperation actions undertaken.

A first step to achieve a permanent public decentralised cooperation agenda could be the organization of a Euro-Mexican dialogue forum between representatives of active and interested sub-state governments on both sides of the Atlantic. This would lead to a permanent space in which to generate an approach and follow up of actions undertaken jointly. The creation of agreements within this framework would ensure continuity in the policies of cooperation that are, by mutual agreement, given priority, and avoid wasting time and effort on isolated actions. Public decentralised cooperation could thus accompany and be accompanied by other actions and policies that complement each other and be coordinated towards objectives of greater impact and durability.

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ACRONYM

AAALMAC	Mexican Association of Local Authorities and Municipalities
ABM	Brazilian Association of Municipalities
ACHM	Chilean Association of Municipalities
ACMB	Brazilian Municipalities Cooperation Agency
ACN	Andean Community of Nations
ACTO	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organisation
ADEL	Local Entities Cooperation Agency (Torino, Italy)
AECI	Spanish International Cooperation Agency
AER	Assembly of European Regions
AFLRA	Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities
AME	Association of Ecuadorian Municipalities
AMMAC	Association of Municipalities of Mexico
ANCI	National Association of Italian Municipalities
AOS	Swiss Worker Aid
APS	Public Assistance for Development
ARRICOD	National Association of Local Governments International Relations and Decentralised Cooperation Authorities and Professional Staff (France)
ATRIDEST	Trifinio Association for Sustainable Development
BIDCE	Educating Cities International Documents Databank
BII	International Bank of Information on Federalism, Decentralisation and Local Governments (Mexico)
CAASD	Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development
CACM	Central American Common Market
CAIS	Central American Integration System
CCAD	Central American Commission on Environment and Development
CCAI	Catalan Centre of International Information and Analysis
CC-SICA	Consultative Council of Central American Integration System
CDPU	URB-AL Programme Documentation Centre
CEBAF	Bi-national Border Service Centre
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CESPI	Centre for International Political Studies
CIDEU	Ibero-American Centre for Urban Strategic Development
CIPCA	Centre for Research and Promotion of Farmers Communities (Peru)
CMC	Common Market Council (MERCOSUR)
CMEAL	Centre for Europe – Latin America Management – NGO based in Biarritz, France)
CN	National Constitution (Mexico)

CODATU	Cooperation for Urban Mobility in the Developing World
CONAGO	National Conference of Governors (Mexico)
CONAMM	National Mexican Municipality Conference
CONFEDELCA	Central American Conference for State Decentralisation and Local Development
COPEI	Federation of Peruvian and Andean Entrepreneurs
CP	Common Projects
CRI	International Relations Centre (Mexico)
CRIS	Sorbonne University International Research Centre (Paris, France)
CRPM	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
CSI	Centre for Social Innovation
DC	Developing Nations
DCC	Development Cooperation Commission
DDCP	Democratic Development and Citizen Participation
DFI	Direct Foreign Investments
DGDC	Directorate – General for Development Cooperation (Italian MAE)
DIE	German Institute for Development Cooperation Policy
E - LA R	Europe – Latin America Relations
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund – Guidance Section
EC	European Commission
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EE	Execution Entities
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
FAL	Forum of Local Authorities for Social Integration
FALP	Forum of the Peripheral Local Authorities
FAM	Argentine Federation of Municipalities
FAMSI	Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity
FAMSI	Andalusia Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity
FELCODE	Local Extremadura Fund for Development Cooperation
FEMICA	Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus
FEMP	Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
FENAM	National Federation of Municipalities of Mexico
FIFG	Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance
FLACMA	Latin American Federation of Cities, Municipalities and Associations
FNP	National Front of Mayors, Brazil
FOCEM	MERCOSUR Structural Convergence and Institutional Strengthening Fund
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas

FUNPADEM	Foundation for Peace and Democracy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMC	Common Market Group
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation Agency
HDI	Human Development Institute
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IAEC	International Association of educating Cities
ICE	Institute of Foreign Trade, Italy
ICLEI	International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILAI	Italian – Latin American Institute
INAFED	National Institute for Federalism and Municipal Development (Mexico)
INTAL	Institute for the Integration of Latin America and the Caribbean
IOPD	Interational Observatory on Participative Democracy
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
IUPN	International Union for the Preservation of Nature
LA	Latin America
LAC	Latin American and the Caribbean
LAFTA	Latin American Free Trade Association
LAIA	Latin American Integration Association
LOPD	Local Observatories on Participative Democracy
MAIZCA	Movement for Action and Exchange with the Central American Region (Spanish NGDO)
MBC	Mesoamerican Biological Corridor
MCDC	Municipal Council for Development Cooperation
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MUSOL	Municipal Professionals for Solidarity and Institutional Strengthening (Spanish NGDO)
NAFTA	North America Free trade Agreement
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODC	Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OELADC	Observatory on Europe Latin America Decentralised Co-operation
OELAR	Observatory on Europe – Latin America Relations
OICS	Inter-Regional Observatory on Development Cooperation for Development (Italy)
OLAGI	Latin American Organisation of Intermediate Governments
ONWARD	Organisation for the Development of Latin America and the Caribbean
OWHC	Organisation of World Heritage Cities

PADEP	AOS Municipal Development Programme
PADEP	GTZ Decentralised Public Management Support and Poverty Reduction Programme
PAN	National Action Party (Mexico)
PNCH	National Twin Towns Programme (Mexico)
PRD	Democratic Revolution Party (Mexico)
PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party (Mexico)
REMI	Specialised Meeting of Municipalities and City Councils (MERCOSUR)
RFCP	Regulatory Framework for Citizen Participation
SDF	No fixed domicile
SEBRAE	Brazilian Micro- and Small-Enterprise Support Service
SEDESOL	Ministry of Social Development (Mexico)
SEGOB	Ministry of Governance (Mexico)
SGT	Work Sub-Group (MERCOSUR)
SNIM	National Municipal Information System (Mexico)
SRE	Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mexico)
TN	Thematic Networks
UCCI	Union of Ibero-American Capitals
UCCLA	Portuguese Language Capitals Union
UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
UIM	Ibero American Union of Municipal Professionals
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP/LHDP	UNDP Local Human Development Programmes
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UPI	Union of Italian Provinces
USA	United States
USAID	United States International Cooperation Agency
USD	United States dollar
UTDEL	Thematic Unit for Local Development
UTO	United Towns organisation (UTO)
WACAP	World Alliance of Cities Against Poverty
WHO	World Health Organisation
ZICOSUR	South America Centre-West Integration Zone
ZIF	Border Integration Zone

