EU RESEARCH ON
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

CHANGING INTERESTS AND IDENTITIES IN EUROPEAN BORDER REGIONS:

EU POLICIES, ETHNIC MINORITIES AND SOCIO-POLITICAL

TRANSFORMATION IN MEMBER STATES AND ACCESSION COUNTRIES

EUROREG

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EU RESEARCH ON
SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Changing interests and identities in European border regions: EU policies, ethnic minorities , socio-political transformation in member states and accession countries

State of the Art

Regions, Minorities and European Policies
An Overview of the State of the Art in Western, Central Eastern and Southeast Europe

Project CIT2-CT-2004-506019
Funded under Priority 7: Citizens and Governance
in a Knowledge-based Society
DG Research

Report issued in
July 2005

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Preface

Within the 6th Community RTD Framework Programme (2002-2006), research in social sciences and humanities is addressed under Priority 7 "Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge based Society". The main objectives of this thematic area are to mobilise research in economic, political, social sciences and humanities in order to develop an understanding of the issues related to the emergence of a knowledge -based society, as well as to address, on the one hand, new forms of relationships between its citizens and on the other between its citizens and institutions.

In order to attain these objectives, researchers were invited to address issues related to the following 7 research areas, grouped into two major themes:

Knowledge based society and social cohesion

1. Improving generation, distribution and use of knowledge
2. Options and choices for the development of a knowledge-based society
3. Variety of paths towards a knowledge society

Citizenship, democracy and new forms of governance

4. Implications of European integration and enlargement
5. New forms of governance
6. Resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace
7. New forms of citizenship and cultural identities

and one additional research area of a horizontal nature:

8. Actions to promote the European Research Area in Social Sciences and Humanities and their contribution to the knowledge based society in Europe.

The implementation of this Priority was undertaken through the launching of calls for proposals in 2003 and 2004 and as a result, 140 projects were selected for funding.

Some of these projects started in 2004 and are now delivering their first results. They are usually presented in the format of a report which reflects the state of the art of the specific topic to be dealt by each individual project.

The present report was prepared in the context of the STREP *"Changing interests and identities in European Border regions: EU policies, ethnic minorities and socio-political transformation in Member states and accession countries - EUROREG"* which was funded by the first call of proposals. It addresses research area 4- The implications of European integration and enlargement for governance and the citizen

I hope this report will make a contribution to further consolidating and structuring the state of the art in this particular field of research.

<div align="right">

T. Lennon
Director

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Regions, Minorities and European Policies

An Overview of the State of the Art in Western, Central Eastern and Southeast Europe

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 An Introduction to the theoretical framework of the EUROREG project

Dia Anagnostou, Anna Triandafyllidou
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The aim of this collective publication is to provide for a first synthesis of the EUROREG theoretical and empirical framework and research questions (Chapter 1) with a critical overview of European policies on regional development and minorities (Chapter 2) and a brief presentation of the selected regions to be studied in the project (Chapters 3-11).

This report is aimed for academics, advanced students and policy users. Our theoretical and empirical discussions in chapters 1 and 2 may be more interesting for scholars and researchers working in the area of European integration, nationalism and minority studies. By contrast, the concise albeit comprehensive presentation and discussion (including a map illustration) of our case studies in the chapters that follow will be mostly useful to policy makers, employees of international organisations and NGOs, politicians as well as activists that would need a brief overview of the situation in different member states and accession countries. Nonetheless, our case study presentation is also useful as a first introduction to the countries/regions in question for scholars and students too. Each case study offers a list of bibliographical references that can be of further guidance for both scholars and policy makers.

This chapter introduces the main theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the EUROREG project which will guide our case study work in the selected countries and regions. We review briefly the relevant literature and outline the main research questions of the project.

EUROREG's focus is on the impact of EU induced regionalisation on minority and majority nationalism. EUROREG is centrally concerned with regions inhabited by large historical minority populations. The term 'historical minority' is used here to distinguish between the minority populations that were part of a national or multinational state since its creation, from the minority groups that are the outcome of international migration flows. EUROREG is interested only in the former type of minorities.

More specifically, EUROREG studies the links between European economic integration and ethnic minority mobilisation. It explores the effects of European integration on territorially concentrated ethnic minorities and their politics, as well as on their relations with national majorities and the state. We have selected nine cases of minority inhabited regions, seven in EU member states: five in 'old' member states (Austria, Greece, Italy, Spain and the UK), two in 2004 member states (Slovakia and Slovenia), and two in accession countries of Central-East and Southeast Europe (CESE) (Bulgaria and Romania).

EUROREG examines how changing opportunities and constraints induced by EU regional economic and human rights policies, alter patterns of local political participation and economic activity of local ethnic minorities and national majorities, their relations with national and ethnic political parties and state administration, as well as minority political and cultural demands vis-à-vis the central state. We will also

examine their influence on how local minorities and majorities view their identification with a national or ethnic community, their rights and obligations as citizens of a state, as well as how they conceptualise 'Europe.'

Our case studies focus on ethnic minorities inhabiting regions near or across border areas in EU member states and accession countries, looking at EU cohesion policy (structural funds and cross border co-operation initiatives), pre-accession programs that include funds to prepare CESE states to implement structural funds and the broader regime of human rights and minority protection, which has developed over the past fifteen years in conjunction with the Council of Europe (CoE).

In the sections that follow we shall outline the general process of nation state building and minority formation in Europe, the politicisation of regional minorities in post war Europe, the role played in this context by EU cohesion policy with particular reference to structural funds and cross border cooperation programmes. We shall furthermore identify ways in which territorial restructuring and the minority question have been intertwined, and probe the changing socio-economic and institutional context in minority inhabited regions, as well as the changing configuration of minority and majority relations and interests (both political and economic). In section 9, we shall further discuss the regional implications of the EU enlargement in Central Eastern and South East European (CESE) countries with special reference to the human rights and minority protection regime, and the preparation of new member states and accession countries for joining the EU. In all these sections we review the relevant bibliography and propose specific research questions on which to focus our case studies in EUROREG.

Last but not least, Section 10 defines a frame of analysing and comparing the (re)configuration of minority-majority interests and identities in subnational regions in the cases under study. It depicts four ideal forms distinguished by their relationship to the central state and the way they view the connection between the cultural, political and territorial unit and variable conceptions of the EU.

1.1   Nation-state building, border regions and minorities in Europe

The rise of modern national states in Europe was a century long historical process that involved the creation of bounded geopolitical, cultural and economic entities out of myriad of fragmented, overlapping and quasi-autonomous territories and communities that comprised the pre-existing feudal and imperial systems. It advanced through two parallel, highly contested and inter-related processes of consolidating an external and clearly demarcated territorial border and simultaneously internally creating an integrated national society. The consolidation of territorial borders advanced through wars and military campaigns and required enhanced capacity on the part of state rulers to extract resources from the populations inhabiting the areas under their command. In the course of it, state formation evolved with the emergence of an administrative apparatus and the concentration of political power in a national centre that tremendously expanded their ability to administer distant territories (Tilly 1975). Such capacity grew in tandem with the expansion of markets and improvements in communications and transport infrastructure (Calhoun 1997: 68). With the consolidation of state borders in the 19th and 20th century, the emerging international system institutionalised mutual recognition of demarcated sovereignty of states and their exclusive jurisdiction over a particular territory.

As state borders became increasingly secure and relatively fixed, national leaders re-oriented and channelled the state's capacity and power internally in the service of creating a unified and homogeneous national society out of dispersed and culturally diverse local communities. Besides political-administrative centralisation, this simultaneously involved processes of economic integration, cultural standardisation and political incorporation. The growth of national economies organised along functionally differentiated lines and the expansion of socio-economic development and transport infrastructure expanded social communication and diffused common cultural norms and a sense of national membership among diverse groups (Deutsch 1966). Cultural and linguistic standardisation was advanced with the construction and expansion of national educational systems (Gellner 1983). The gradual extension of political-civil rights and the broadening of political participation contributed to fostering a common sense of national membership powerfully conjoined to citizenship (Calhoun 1997: 69). Social-economic integration, extension of political rights and cultural homogenisation, however, did not uniformly efface regional-territorial divisions and ethnic-cultural minorities that remained strong, particularly in areas lying across state borders.

In the 20th century, Western European states dealt with ongoing regional protest through attempts to incorporate minorities in systems of representation defined by national political institutions (Urwin and Rokkan 1982). The extension of political rights and the rise of parties with the gradual entry of masses into politics enhanced opportunities for regional minorities and territorial interests to participate in national systems of representation. In the 1920s, these factors contributed to the diffusion and containment of regional autonomy movements and politics (Rokkan and Urwin 1982: 429; Flora 1999: 23). The expansion of democratisation went hand in hand with ongoing standardisation, administrative centralisation and the creation of cross-local organisations and labour markets. Processes of national unification continued to nurture regional-territorial tensions, which, however, remained relatively quiescent through the 1950s in West Europe (Rokkan and Urwin 1982: 429). Throughout this period, national parties penetrated into the various regions and successfully solicited the support of the local population weakening the territorial basis of politics and replacing them with class distinctions (Keating 1998: 43-46).

Drawing upon the work of Stein Rokkan (1970), Albert Hirschman (1970) and Rokkan and Urwin (1982), Bartolini analyses the historical formation of nation-states as a gradual process of incorporation of ever larger sectors of the population through political participation and social citizenship rights in national institutions (Bartolini 1998; 2000). The expansion of democratisation and internal opportunities for political representation (*voice*) with the center's yielding to popular pressure went hand in hand with the consolidation of the state's external boundary and consequently with strong limitations to the possibility to secede (*exit*). Nation building bolstered the state's ability to control its border, less through force and increasingly through the endowing of citizenship rights and the elaboration of a discourse highlighting the 'will of the nation'. This strengthened cultural loyalties towards the centre and provided it with a new account of political legitimacy of the state as the embodiment of the nation (Bartolini 2000: 12-18; Calhoun 1997: 71). In the internal system of political representation and differentiation that emerged, functional interests and individual rights were privileged over the claims of peripheral regions and ethnic-cultural minorities, which withstood assimilation and were regarded as threatening. Governments sought to diffuse or solve conflict with peripheral regions and

minorities by channelling it through the centralised administrative structures and national political parties.

Throughout this tenuous and ongoing juxtaposition between the centrifugal forces of administrative and political power and the centripetal claims of regional minorities, states employed a variety of centralising and federalising accommodation strategies. Combined with variable cultural configurations at the bottom, they produced different territorial structures, degrees of centralisation and centre-periphery relations among states, which are systematically categorised by Rokkan and Urwin in the following way. In the first place, the *unitary state* is characterised by overwhelming and unambiguous dominance of the political and economic centre, from which administrative structures and standardised institutions spawn to extend and diffuse central control over the entire territory. France, Denmark, Italy could be included in this category. Secondly, the *union state* approximates the centralisation and administrative standardisation of the unitary state but diverges from it in tolerating a degree of ethnic-cultural membership and in preserving some degree of pre-existing regional autonomy. Examples of this kind are the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Spain. Thirdly, *mechanical federalism* indicates a model of accommodation comprising diversified territorial structures across the state introduced by the centre, which, however, retains its predominance and control over all other areas, with Germany as an example. Finally, *organic federalism* denotes the voluntary association of several territorial-cultural units into a state entity while they retain their specific institutional structures and Switzerland is the example here.

In Central-East and Southeast Europe (CESE), state unification was specifically shaped by the belated process of nation-state building that spanned over a century of empire dissolution and did not produce secure borders until well in the 20th century. The complex multiethnic mosaic in the Habsburg and Ottoman territories, with language and religious differences irregularly spread and thoroughly intermeshed, made national unification and territorial consolidation particularly antagonistic and bound to remain incomplete. The presence of large and regionally concentrated ethnic minorities in border areas that are often territorially contiguous to an external national homeland continues to this day to bear testimony to this legacy (Brubaker 1996). In the inter-war period, the project of economic modernisation and state centralisation, with which state elites embarked towards unification, came up against ethnic fragmentation, institutionalised through international treaties aiming to protect minority cultures. The resulting tensions and growing revisionist sentiment contributed to the collapse of liberal institutions and the democratisation processes in the region in the inter-war period, which precluded forms of political incorporation of territorial minorities available in Western Europe (Mazower 2000: 109-110). The project of state-led modernisation, nationalisation and political-administrative centralisation did not resume until the 1940s with the advent of communist regimes in CESE.

During the communist period, state socialism in CESE countries consolidated ethnic-national identities and their regional concentration not only in the federal socialist states that explicitly institutionalised such identities, but also in unitary states. States in CESE are home to sizeable ethnic minorities concentrated near or along border regions. While a series of policies unintentionally contributed to strengthening their identities, the Communist regimes politically suppressed both minority and majority nationalist movements and ideologies (Anagnostou 2003). The Communist ideology left little room for the expression of culturally distinct identities, and even less for ethnic mobilisation. In this way, ethnic conflict was prevented and

neutralised. Nonetheless, the post-1989 experience has shown that ethnic and national identities retained part of their strength or appeal. They were relatively easily revived in the 1990s during the process of democratic transition and economic transformation in CESE.

1.2   Regional minority politicisation in post-war Europe

In post-war West Europe, national governments implemented regional economic policies and territorial reforms that set the context for two waves of regional minority politicisation. The first one made its appearance in the 1960s and 1970s. Undertaken with the overriding objective to further national integration, regional policy in the latter period reflected the state's increasing responsibilities in economic management and welfare and targeted through resource transfers and increased investments the peripheral and industrially lagging regions. Conceived as an integral part of national economic management, regional policy was administered in a centralised fashion aiming at enhancing modernisation, efficiency and the performance of the national economy as a whole (Keating 1998: 47-49; Esman 1977: 373). In implementing it, states such as France, the UK and Italy undertook a series of administrative and territorial reforms to improve transport infrastructure, communications, and local provision of services, as well as to redress problems of urbanisation and industrial development (Anderson 1996: 114). In areas where ethnic-cultural distinctions remained significant, regional policies also had an implicit political rationale in providing additional resources as a mechanism for accommodating territorial and potentially disloyal minorities within the prevailing state structures (Urwin 1982: 58).

A growing literature in the late 1970s and 1980s sought to explain the rise of ethnic-regional parties in Scotland, Wales, Brittany and elsewhere, as well as the failure of state modernisation policies to effectively accommodate territorial minorities (Levi and Hechter 1984; Esman 1977; Lijphart 1977). The forms and content of such politicisation varied from case to case depending on electoral arrangements and constitutional structures among other things (Rogers 1990), but on the whole they represented a reaction against what was regarded as excessive state centralisation and intervention in local affairs. An important factor highlighted in this body of literature was the declining appeal of traditional national parties and their weakening as mechanisms of political integration of regional minorities. Significantly influenced and inspired by the rise of social movements in the 1960s and their anti-centralist message (Berger 1977), regional nationalisms of the 1970s raised issues of cultural identity and sought greater autonomy from the central state in determining their distinctive path of economic development (Watson 1990). For most part, scholars entirely left out considerations of the EU factor, exceptions notwithstanding (see Scheinman 1977).

In contrast, the second wave of minority nationalisms in the 1980s and 1990s, in Catalunya, the Basque Country, Scotland and Wales, has been inseparably linked to the processes of EU integration (Lynch 1996; Mitchel and Cavanagh 2001). Studies attribute this wave of politicisation no longer to the centralisation of political and economic power in the hands of the state but instead to its dispersion above and below the latter, induced by European integration. Most importantly, a central factor driving it is the processes of regionalisation, the growing significance of sub-state regions characterising the EU, which gives a fundamentally novel dimension in this most recent wave of minority revival. In the first place, the basic, albeit implicit contract underlying earlier state management policies, under which minority regions would

give loyalty or support to the state in exchange for regional resources, is increasingly undermined in the European context. So is the national state as the exclusive focus of identity and the sole centre to which minorities and regions can direct their claims (Keating 2001b: 22). By expanding political, economic and administrative boundaries from the state to the supranational level, the EU transforms the nature and content of 'new' minority nationalisms. Some scholars argue that the latter shifts away from a concern with ethnic community preservation and state-seeking aspirations, and turns towards civic themes emphasising economic development, territorial self-government and market integration (Keating 2001a).

In this project, drawing upon the insights of the aforementioned studies, we set out to systematically explore the links between EU-induced regionalisation and the changing nature of minority and majority nationalism. We specifically examine how regional resource distribution and territorial and/or institutional changes induced by EU cohesion policy, as well as political opportunities created by the minority protection regime, affect majority-minority relations, ethnic-national politics and identities in the selected regions. In pursuing these research objectives, we also take into account the wider context of European integration and accession to the EU within which each of our case studies is duly contextualised as well as the historical particularities of each case including internal political, economic and symbolic factors that are strongly implicated in the the process of regional development in regions with large historical minority populations.

Cohesion policy has been a major driving force behind the regionalisation of state structures and politics in the EU and more recently in CESE accession states. Comprising structural funds and a variety of cross-border co-operation initiatives and pre-accession programs, it is largely pervaded by functional economic priorities and stresses administrative efficiency, regional competencies and local mobilisation with the goal of enhancing production, development and market competitiveness. In its implementation phase within EU member states, its partnership arrangements adopted after 1988 have been seen as factors promoting a complex reconfiguration of economic, territorial and/or government structures between European, national and subnational levels.

The implementation of pre-accession programmes in the Associate Candidate Countries (ACC) and the partial diversion of cohesion policy in the new EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe is at an embryonic stage, yet, it has set the frame for widespread, ongoing and contested processes of regional reform. Undertaken in the context of pre-accession strategies and in anticipation of structural funds, regional reforms in CESE states seem to follow a markedly distinct trend from earlier practice within the EU, increasingly premised on nationalisation and centralisation of changing regional economic and territorial structures. Nonetheless, they pave the way for ongoing struggle over the drawing of regional units and the creation of subnational structures and competencies, with potentially significant implications for areas inhabited by territorially concentrated ethnic minorities.

Their assertion and politicisation in the 1990s was not only made possible by democratisation and liberalisation, but it has also been encouraged by the emerging European minority protection regime. European human rights norms and minority protection conditions promoted in CESE states by the EU in conjunction with the CoE have encouraged these states to adopt political representation and cultural rights that institutionalise ethnic-national identities (Deets 2002). They have contributed to the adoption of electoral rules and the emergence of institutional arrangements for ethnic-based representation of minorities at the national and subnational levels (Aniol et al

1997). The second part of this project seeks to examine the effects of the European minority protection regime on minority opportunities for political representation at the national, supranational and subnational levels, as well as their implications for regional economic and institutional restructuring in border regions in CESE accession states.

In addressing the abovementioned research questions, we shall seek to cast light to the overall symbolic and political context within which they are embedded. We shall thus place EU policies of regional development and socio-economic cohesion as well as the European human rights regime into their wider context of changing ideas of democracy, values of social and institutional organisation, approaches to the economy (with the emphasis on the liberal functioning of a single European market). We shall pay attention to the influence of European institutions such as the Council of Europe whose powers may be more moral than material but whose work is closely related to parts of the EU legal system.

1.3   Cohesion policy, structural funds and cross-border co-operation in EU member states

Cohesion policy administered by the European Commission was designed as a policy to deal with and reduce the large regional disparities in the EU. Successive waves of enlargement since the 1970s heightened the diversity of member states with regard to levels of development and increased economic and social disparities among regions in the EU (Tsoukalis 1991: 206). Cohesion policy reflected the dominant thinking about integration of the 1970s and 1980s, which was influenced by earlier modernisation theories and premised upon economic development as a means of incorporating peripheral areas and mitigating regional tensions. Through assistance to disadvantaged regions to help them develop economically and converge with the European economy, cohesion policy was also intended to contribute to the stabilisation and political normalisation in the newly democratised states of south Europe. Upholding the post-war model of social democracy, redistribution and regional development, structural policy was intended as a compensation for those regions and populations likely to loose or be placed at a disadvantage in the competitive European common market (Hooghe 1996: 5).

Regional redistribution measures existed in the EU prior to 1970s but it was the first wave of enlargement in 1974 that raised greater concern with regional disparities and made salient a more decisive approach. This was signalled with the creation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975 to add to the pre-existing European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). Relatively small in size, the EC's embryonic regional policy involved the disbursement of funds to member states on the basis of quotas, which were intended to supplement national resources going into regional and infrastructure investments.

In order to deal with the evident reluctance of national authorities to make available their share of resources (principle of additionality), as well as to tackle the special development problems of the Mediterranean, the Commission began to change its approach in the 1980s. With the Iberian enlargement serving as a catalyst, it introduced its new approach with the Integrated Mediterranean Programs (IMPs) in 1985, which targeted the regions of France, Italy and the whole of Greece (Tsoukalis 1991: chapter 8). The shift from the financing of separate individual projects to

medium-term development programs inaugurated with the IMPs signalled a more systematic approach that embedded single projects within more integrated frames of regional development. In this sense, it was a precursor to the major reform of structural policy in 1988.

The formal grounds for the 1988 overhaul of structural policy had been laid by the Single European Act (SEA) that decided to create the internal market. With Title V inserted in the Treaty of Rome, the SEA assigned greater importance to social and economic cohesion (Tsoukalis 1991: 216). Besides the doubling of the size of structural funds, largely a side-payment for the political acceptance of the internal market, the reform adopted five priority Objectives to which the bulk of funds would be channelled. These targeted (Objective 1) the less developed regions where GDP per capita falls below 75% of the EU average, (Objective 2) areas of industrial decline, (Objective 3) the long-term unemployed, (Objective 4) employment among young people, (Objective 5a) adjustment of agricultural structures and (Objective 5b) development of rural areas.

The emphasis was placed on Objective 1-less developed regions that includes the whole of Greece, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Portugal, the greater part of Spain, the *Mezzogiorno* and the overseas departments of France and Corsica, with the intent of improving their capacity in market competition. The amount of structural funds targeting these areas continued to significantly increase throughout the 1990s. The 1988 reform reinforced and extended the integrated approach of the IMPs. Structural funds began to be distributed for projects incorporated in multi-annual Community Support Frameworks (CSFs), that is regional development programs submitted by regional authorities in co-operation with national governments to the Commission.

Structural policy cannot merely be seen as the social counterpart to the European liberal project of economic deregulation and market integration. Its underlying philosophy transcended territorial borders and challenged national socio-political and cultural boundaries. Structural policy sought to address economic development and economic integration into the EC/EU beyond national borders, challenging thus indirectly and to a certain extent unintentionally the loci of national and ethnic antagonisms.

This is exemplified and explicitly captured by a particular kind of regional programs that have a transnational and inter-regional dimension and involve cross-border co-operation (CBC) schemes, which flourish across the EU. Such programs are the focus of the INTERREG Community Initiative established in 1990, which is financed by the ERDF, and other similar programs targeting specific countries like PEACE in Northern Ireland. Designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion, they particularly target remote regions and regions sharing external borders with candidate countries. They place emphasis on fostering co-operation between local minorities and majorities, as well as between national authorities in economic activity and development strategies across state borders. Designating them as responsible for project implementation, these funds promote involvement of local and regional authorities that directly apply to the Commission for these funds (Murphy 1999: 64; Christiansen & Jorgensen 2000). As an idea, cross-border programs originated in the trans-frontier co-operation between local governments across the Franco-German border in the 1950s, instituted with the aim of fostering reconciliation between the two countries by overcoming their wartime national divisions (Anderson 1996: 121).

Although, as we shall se below, INTERREG programmes are rather limited in terms of economic impact, they have gained an important political and symbolic

significance in some cases (albeit not all) despite persistent problems in their implementation related to historical relations and actual disparities between communities at each side of the border.

1.4   Partnership, territorial restructuring, and ethnic minorities

Regional processes induced by EU cohesion policy can be seen to represent a continuation of the historical processes of political-economic integration, which this time is initiated above the state level and targeting entities below it, while reproducing the current functional regime centred on the national state. In contrast to regional policies undertaken by national states in the 1950s and 1960s, however, EU cohesion policy necessitates regional devolution of competencies, the creation of regional units where they do not exist, and improved administrative and planning capacity of substate structures. The most important component of the 1988 reform of cohesion policy was the decision-making and procedural innovations it introduced, which reinforced a series of domestic territorial reforms among the member states that are the policy's beneficiaries. In particular, the 1988 reform enshrined the principle of *partnership*, whereby the planning and implementation of EU-funded regional programs requires close co-operation between subnational, national and European Commission authorities (Hooghe 1996: 2; Marks 1993: 396). The involvement of subnational actors was a departure from the earlier arrangement in which the Commission was exclusively dealing with national authorities. Reflecting an implicit intent to enhance efficiency and promote effective policy implementation, the principle of partnership was also in tune with the principle of subsidiarity and emphasised the involvement of local actors as a precondition for successful economic development and democratic participation (Hooghe 1996: 21).

Requiring the involvement of local authorities together with national governments and the Commission, the partnership arrangements of EU cohesion policy reinforce significant reforms and changes in the territorial structures of member states. The direction and impact of domestic reforms at least partly induced by EU structural policy greatly vary across states. Differences stem from prior experience with regional policy, as well as from the nature of pre-existing territorial structures and power relations between central and local government levels, as a series of case studies have demonstrated (Hooghe 1996; Marks 1996). Belgium had already engaged in extensive territorial devolution of power and Germany had a highly developed system of regional federalisation and arrangements familiar to partnership rules. Despite a strong tradition of regional policy, Britain had retained its unitary structures and centralised practices in dealing with regions and minority nations (Bache et al. 1996). Notwithstanding its strong regional differences and earlier decentralisation attempts to accommodate its historical nations, Spain had little experience with regional policy before its entry in the EU. France had already experimented with some form of partnership, but it otherwise shared with Ireland and Greece a strong unitary tradition and a high degree of administrative centralisation (Hooghe 1996: 13-14).

In states with unitary territorial structures, such as in Greece, Ireland and France, domestic reforms induced by EU structural funds and CBC devolved more competencies to regional structures and enabled local actors to assert their interests vis-à-vis central authorities more openly than before (Hooghe 1996: 13; Thielemann 2000). In some cases, it even promoted a degree of decentralisation and strengthened

subnational government institutions (Ioakimidis 1996; Laffan 1996). In contrast, in states with already strong regionalised structures and competencies, such as Spain, Germany and Belgium, the implementation of EU policies potentially placed regions at a disadvantage in a European political arena where national states continue to be the pre-eminent decision-making actors (Borzel 2001). In regions dominated by historical minority nations, the unsettling of existing territorial structures set anew a struggle between the central and local levels and sparked a new wave of minority politicisation seeking to preserve or extend their autonomy vis-à-vis central states (Morata and Munoz 1996; Laible 2001).

Initially, studies saw in the EU's reformed cohesion policy a political thrust and attributed to it an implicit and substantive aim to transfer political power to regional and subnational government units (Nanetti 1996). Extrapolating from the decision-making and partnership arrangements of cohesion policy, scholars increasingly identified the contours of a system based on multi-level governance. In its vein and in contrast to the historical processes of nation-state building, that involved a progressive concentration of power to a national centre, EU integration was depicted as signalling a perverse process of asymmetrical dispersing of power above and below the national centre (Marks 1993; 1997). It appeared to reconfigure the historical national state as a political organisation with fixed and impermeable territorial boundaries and a unified structure of political power within its territory. The model of multi-level governance has established an analytical frame alternative to the two dominant conceptions of neo-functionalist and intergovernmental models, which challenges the supranational focus of the former and the state-centric view of the latter. It depicts an emerging European polity in which some of the previously centralised functions of the national state have moved up to supranational level and some down to the local-regional level in a highly asymmetrical fashion and without eroding the state.

More recently, scholars have retracted earlier depictions of EU cohesion policy as a force reconfiguring political power relations between central state and subnational levels, as it became increasingly evident that national states retained significant central control over its implementation (Keating 2003a: 21). After all, decentralisation of political power is rarely voluntarily conceded by central states in the absence of local mobilisation to contest and demand it. Nonetheless, in the context of implementing cohesion policy, regional reforms on the whole opened up greater space for and revitalised mobilisation among local and regional actors in several member states even though the effects of cohesion policy implementation on regionalisation are mixed.

Structural policy has far from created a 'Europe of Regions', yet, the regional tier of government is becoming more important and more active in Europe (Anderson 1996: 125). In the past fifteen years, several regions have mobilised in the EU setting up regional offices in Brussels and inter-regional organisations and participating in networks with EU organisations. The strongest and most active regional governments have sought to gain a formal role in the EU and have succeeded in instituting a consultative Committee of the Regions composed of representatives across the EU and a wealth of transnational regional networks (Marks and McAdam 1996).

Leaving aside the debate about its political decentralisation effects, the implementation of cohesion, perhaps more than any other policy, has enabled European institutions to penetrate the politics and societies of member states (Hooghe 1996: 5) in the following way that is of central interest to this project. While exhibiting an increasing tendency for centralised administration of structural funds

and even CBC, cohesion policy continues to place strong emphasis on regional administration, efficiency and programming. It is pervaded by a functional economic logic that highlights the need to mobilise local production capacities for development in order to improve the competitiveness of regional economy in the European market. Such a logic entails policy priorities and norms that potentially contradict traditional regional policies driven by the priority to secure national control over local territory, and potentially reconfigures forms of interest aggregation and articulation historically linked to the national state. In this respect, it potentially undermines political interests based on cross local representation embodied in nation-wide and centralised organisations such as political parties, trade unions and other corporate entities, and potentially paves the way for the rise of regional-economic or ethnic-cultural forms of representation (Marks and McAdam 1996; Bartolini 2000).

1.5 Europeanisation, regional restructuring and minority-majority relations.

Studies on structural funds and CBC have primarily focused on their effects for domestic territorial structures, the resulting changes in the balance of power between central state and the regions, as well as their consequences for opportunities and constraints of minorities inhabiting them (Mitchel and Cavanagh 2001; Laible 2001). Few, however, have paid attention to minority-majority relations within border regions (McCall 1998). While the presence of regional minorities exposes the artificial and incomplete nature of nationalisation within a state, the frequent conflation of a region with a minority nation no less reifies the same national logic it originally sought to challenge. If border regions often lack the national unity professed by central states, they rarely become the citadels of ethnic minority solidarity.

Whether interface or enclave peripheries, minority inhabited and border regions are divided societies. They are spaces of antagonism and conflict between national majorities and ethnic minorities contesting control over local institutions and regional territory. In the course of history, regional and local institutions in border areas have variably been dominated either by national and centrally ruling majorities or by strong regional minorities that acquired extensive degrees of autonomy through successive waves of democratisation. In both cases, the common feature is the attempt to gain national-ethnic control over territory underlined by the aspiration to establish congruence between the cultural community and the political unit, which in Gellner's infamous definition is the epitome of nationalism.

EUROREG examines how the reorganisation of regional resources, administrative structures and subnational institutions around economic development goals, induced by EU cohesion policy, impact upon minority-majority relations not only between central and local levels but primarily *within* border regions. In the first part of the project, we address the following question:

- Does the increased salience that structural funds implementation and CBC assign to regional development, economic competitiveness and administrative efficiency revive majority-minority contestation for asserting exclusive national-ethnic control over local territory, institutions and economic resources? Or conversely does it impute to regional-local mobilisation and subnational government a civic and integrative character that mitigates ethnic-national divisions over territory?

In addressing the aforementioned question, this project employs a research design that focuses on the level of the region. The emphasis on the local context of interaction shaped by changes in sub-national institutions, allows us to focus on actors as much as on structures, and to examine the variety of stances within minorities and majorities, rather than reify them as homogeneous collectivities.

Studies show that even though structural funds and CBC may enhance opportunities for regional interests and politics, the extent to which such opportunities are utilised is largely shaped by the unit-level characteristics of sub-national actors (Smyrl 1997). The constellation of local forces, cultural resources as well as endogenous processes of mobilisation and political interaction are decisive for the reconfiguration of regional, national and ethnic interests and identities.

The first part of EUROREG examines a number of cases of ethnically inhabited and border regions in the EU, which have received structural funds (Objective 1) and INTERREG funds for cross-border co-operation.

EU regional funds affect regions in two direct, as well as indirect ways:

First, structural funds and CBC promote regional policy priorities that may enhance resources and competencies of subnational institutions in economic development. They thus may expand opportunities of local minorities and majorities to mobilise and pursue their interests through them. We will examine how economic development and integration priorities promoted within the frame of EU cohesion policy impact upon regional-subnational authorities and their relations with state administration, as well as on the politics of local-prefecture-regional government. We shall examine how resulting changes in opportunities and constraints of local, regional and national actors, affect patterns of local political participation and economic activity of minorities and majorities, as well as minority political and cultural demands vis-à-vis the central state.

Secondly, structural funds and CBC have an indirect impact on regions. They are part of a wider discourse and set of European policies around the content and meaning of national-ethnic identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, national/European citizenship and 'Europe'. EU regional economic policies are carriers of ideational and imagined constructs of Europe, intertwined with variable and contested ideas of ethnic/national identity, democracy, cultural pluralism, administrative efficiency and economic competitiveness. EUROREG will seek to assess how structural funds and CBC implementation relate to the wider 'Europeanisation' discourse. We will examine how structural funds and CBC implementation on one hand, and the overall discourse on Europe, democracy, diversity, efficiency and citizenship, on the other, influence and/or are reflected in how local minorities and majorities view their identification with a national or ethnic community, their rights and obligations as citizens of a state, as well as how they conceptualise 'Europe.'

For this part of the project pertaining to EU member states, we have selected three cases of regions that receive structural funds as Objective 1 regions: Northern Ireland in the UK, Thrace in Greece, Burgenland in Austria. We have also selected three cases that receive CBC funds: the Italo-Slovene border communities in northeast Italy and northwest Slovenia, and the Spanish Basque country (in relation to the French Basque country).

The region of Thrace in the northeast of Greece is territorially contiguous to Turkey and is inhabited by a small Turkish Muslim minority and a Greek Christian majority. Since 1989, it has received the third largest in size CSF in Greece, which falls under the Objective 1 areas.

In the case of Northern Ireland, we will focus on economic co-operation projects funded by PEACE I and II programs operating since 1995, which seek the involvement of both Catholic and the Protestant communities. The Austrian region of Burgenland is inhabited by a Hungarian minority and has been receiving Objective 1 funds since Austria joined the EU in 1995.

The Basque country in Spain and France have received since 1991, INTERREG I, II and III funds for CBC programmes. The areas around the Italo-Slovene border where the Italian minority of Slovenia and the Slovenian minority of Italy live have participated in the INTERREG II and III programmes. The EU's Phare external assistance programme began operating in Slovenia in 1992, and a cross-border cooperation (CBC) component within it was formalised in 1994, though its interventions took place entirely upon Slovene territory. INTERREG II as regards Italy-Slovenia was finally approved in 1997 while both regions participate in INTERREG III (2000-2006).

1.6   Socioeconomic and institutional change, historical trajectories and culture

Historical processes of nation-state building did not only bequeath distinct territorial and administrative structures among states in Europe but they also bear a strong imprint on the workings and culture of local and regional government particularly in border regions. Seeking to fortify national and state boundaries, traditional state policies towards border regions sought to nationalise culturally diverse groups and/or to accommodate sizeable and territorially based minority nations. Economic development strategies in border and minority regions have been pervaded by the logic of national unification positing the overarching imperative to defend state integrity.

National political parties, nation-wide functional organisations and local state administration have played a central role in perpetuating such a nationalising politics on behalf of the central state in border regions. They have done so through their control over and interference with the workings of subnational self-government institutions and the cultivation of clientelistic relations with the local population. Centralised control of resource distribution and interest representation often privileged the local national majority and/or sought to co-opt the most loyal and moderate segments of an ethnically distinct but often regionally dominant minority in order to accommodate it and neutralise its nationalist tendencies. At the same time, a parallel politics and local structures of ethnic solidarity among minority nations has contested and sought to assert control over local territory and political autonomy vis-à-vis the central state. In sum, the nationalising and centralising functions of regional political economy of border areas produced and sustained strong ethnic and inter-communal divisions at the local level. It has been particularly pronounced in areas bordering a state, which the internal minority considers its "national homeland", such as found in several parts of CESE.

Structural funds implementation and cross-border co-operation place a fundamentally different set of priorities, as well as constraints and opportunities, than those dictated by national integration. The CSFs bound with their priorities and

imperatives the decisions and workings of regional authorities and representatives. CSF objectives place emphasis on enhancing competitiveness of the region's economy in the European common market rather than integrating it better with the needs of the national economy. Imbued with the ideas of new regionalism, they also highlight the mobilisation of local resources and actors, as well as on values of administrative efficiency, economic performance and infrastructure modernisation.

In this changing regional context, subnational institutions can become loci for the growth of 'development coalitions,' comprising local government associations, trade unions, private investors and local representatives-members of regional or prefecture councils. A 'development coalition' as expounded by Keating is a cross-class, place-based, and inter-communal, we may add, alliance of social and political actors of variable composition, dedicated to economic growth in a specific location (Keating 1998: 144). Economic development objectives and the performance criteria defining structural and INTERREG funds may result in a degree of inter-communal co-operation and come in conflict with national unity priorities.

Structural funds implementation and CBC may also encourage the local minority and majority population to reorient its political participation and economic activity centred on national or ethnic community associations, and pursue its interests through regional-local channels of influence. Where pre-existing structures and practices favour it, minorities and majorities can also try to 'exit' the national and mobilise at the European arena, however, *as regions*, that is by utilising regional (rather than national or ethnic-communal) channels of access. Expanded opportunities for the local minority and majority nations to 'voice' their interests through subnational and supranational institutions potentially reinforce a re-orientation of their politics away from supporting ethnic-based and/or nationalist parties and towards supporting more moderate leaders working within regional government structures (McCall 1998).

Whether and the extent to which local minorities and majorities actually mobilise around economic development projects and engage in subnational government and supranational institutions may be constrained by historical, national, political and cultural factors. The view of institutions as decisive factors in shaping political outcomes and behaviour has formed the kernel of the school of new institutionalism that has dominated the study of politics and policy processes in the past few decades (March and Olsen 1989). One strand of this school has offered rational choice accounts that see institutions as arenas shaping political outcomes by providing different sets of opportunities and constraints for actors to pursue their interests, which are taken to be a priori defined and outside the scope of analysis (North et al. 1990). A major challenge to rationalist accounts has come from historical and sociological perspectives that attribute to institutions a more formative role that influences not only the strategies of political actors but also the very goals they pursue (Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Historical perspectives view institutions as path-dependent bearing the imprint of specific historical trajectories, while sociological approaches place emphasis on the cultural frames that influence how individuals conceive of and formulate their interests (Di Maggio and Powell 1991). These approaches focus the analysis on the process of politics and policy-making, on how institutions structure relations of power between contending actors and the overall context of interaction between actors whose conflicting interests may transform in the process.

While historical and sociological approaches to institutions highlight continuity by attributing to their influence an enduring quality, they identify various

sources of change. Broader political and socio-economic restructuring can revive the salience of old institutions, it can infuse them with new ideas and/or produce shifts in the functioning of, as well as the goals pursued by existing institutions. Political actors may adjust their strategies to changes and new actors may come into play setting in motion new kinds of struggles (Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Historical and sociological approaches take institutions both as independent and as dependent variables, both shaping and in turn being shaped by political actors' behaviour, respectively.

In areas near or along state borders, minority-majority interaction and regional economic mobilisation may be constrained by existing administrative-political structures and ethnic/national traditions (including distinct cultural-social norms, linguistic differences and religious beliefs). In ethnically divided regions, minorities have historically established their own structures of economic activity, political organisation and cultural-associational life, which can constrain local actors' choices. Cultural-historical factors and communal solidarity underpinning the latter may actually conflict with forms of regional economic co-operation and institutional participation made imperative by the functional logic of structural fund implementation and CBC.

The cohesion and intensity of ethnic community solidarity varies from case to case. It is most binding when cultural differences are enmeshed with interests, as well as when both are institutionalised through state policies, international treaties or cultural-religious organisations (Cornell 1996). Historical ties and close contacts with an external national homeland can also reinforce such collective cohesion, together with the extent of politicisation characterising an ethnic community. During periods when state nationalising functions and minority marginalisation or repression were strong, such parallel ethnic community structures offered what Bartolini has called 'partial exits' (Bartolini 1998: 14). These were alternative spaces physically within but at the same outside the public sphere of the national state, where minorities could retreat and pursue their economic and political interests. Minority-majority divisions, parallel and comparable in essence to transnational relations across state borders, have imbued local life and politics with profound inter-communal mistrust. In a slightly different context, scholars have identified the latter as a major constrain in building social capital, in encouraging civic participation and in promoting the autonomisation of regional institutions and politics from national structures (Putnam 1993; Paraskevopoulos 1998).

EUROREG's first research question aims at presenting the background to each of our case studies:

    a) Have EU structural funds and cross-border co-operation schemes affected the territorial and administrative structures of states and if yes, how?

    b) Have these same funds and schemes influenced regional economic development strategies of minority-inhabited regions and if yes, how?

The second set of questions that will guide our research is the following: Has the implementation of structural funds and CBC schemes and the related changes in regional competencies and/or subnational institutions affected the patterns of political participation and economic activity of minority and majority actors? And if yes, how?

In particular:

    a) Do they expand minority and majority opportunities and initiatives for political 'voice' and economic participation in regional-subnational and/or

supranational institutions? Or do they eventually nurture the power of central state institutions?

b) Do they promote the formation of inter-ethnic, cross-border and inter-party coalitions and co-operation around regional economic and cross-border development schemes? Or do they reinforce pre-existing patterns of division along ethnic (or other) lines?

c) What is the impact, if any, on relations between locally elected minority and majority representatives on the one hand, and national and ethnic political parties and leaders on the other?

We identify here two competing sets of factors that affect the development of regional patterns of economic development and political participation in minority inhabited regions. On one hand, we hypothesise that SF and CBC implementation mobilise and strengthen regional and generally subnational resources and institutions with a view to fostering the development of the region, transcending traditional ethnic lines of division and promoting integration of minority and majority political and economic activities in regional frames. We also hypothesise that this trend, which potentially leads to the decline of minority and majority support for nationalism and the politics of national unity/ethnic solidarity, is further reinforced by wider discourses on democracy, cultural and ethnic diversity, human rights, non discrimination as well as economic efficiency and competitiveness in a market economy that take place within the wider framework of European integration processes.

On the other hand, we also expect a competing set of factors related to local/national traditions of ethnic/cultural solidarity, traditions, policies and institutions of state nationalism and centralism and also the strength of national and ethnic political parties among local populations to affect minority and majority cooperation in the opposite direction. In other words, we expect that such ethnic/national factors will resist regional integration for development and will promote political and economic patterns of activity along ethnic lines and traditional divisions between majority and minority actors and populations.

In our case studies, we shall look at the varying combinations and strength of these different factors and the ways in which they can explain the differences in the degree to which local minorities-majorities and cross border communities mobilise and seek 'voice' through sub-national, regional or supranational channels and engage in economic activities that promote a common pattern of development or a pattern that favours the interests of one group, at the expense of the other.

1.7   The reconfiguration of political and economic interests

Territorial-regional institutions and representation may not only expand political and economic participation of minorities and majorities, but they may also become a source of institutional learning ensuing in the process of inter-communal association and interaction. Such process can arguably engender mechanisms of political collusion, suspend the traditional majority principle and challenge the unquestionable authority of the national centre and its nationalising activities and priorities (Bartolini 2000: 41-42). Growing interest aggregation around subnational institutions, local mobilisation and inter-communal co-operation around regional development projects,

engendered in the course of structural funds implementation, can initiate a process of learning and re-evaluation through re-negotiation of means and ends. It may promote trust among minorities and majorities in ethnically mixed and border regions and attenuate their historical divisions (Kirchner 1998).

Studies show that in the process of mobilising local actors and regional representatives around development projects, structural funds implementation and cross border activities strengthen their commitment to self-government and regional decentralisation and redefine their interests (Verney and Papageorgiou 1992; Papageorgiou and Verney 1992). As early as 1990, an empirical study on prefecture councils in Greece examining their role in the implementation of the IMPs, identified growing awareness and mobilisation around local problems (Verney and Papageorgiou 1992). The implementation of the IMPs was seriously hampered and undermined by a highly centralised administrative structure and entrenched networks of clientelism flourishing by political parties. Yet, in the course of local mobilisation they engendered, local support for increased decentralisation seemed to grow and the first signs of building a regional image began to emerge in a context where regional-subnational institutions have historically been extremely weak (Verney and Papageorgiou 1992; Papageorgiou and Verney 1992). A few years later, following a major reform that established regional institutions and prefecture self-government, another study found growing political interaction and local support for decentralisation in the Greek region of Thrace, across the two ethnic communities of Christian Greeks and Turkish Muslims minority inhabiting the region (Anagnostou 2001).

Nonetheless, these findings from the case of Greece mainly cannot be mechanically projected to other countries. For this reason, while we take inspiration from these early studies to propose our third set of hypothese, we remain cautious in relation to the complex ways in which experiences of Structural Funds and CBC programme implementation are mediated by the national and regional context of ethnic politics, ideas of democracy and economic efficiency, patterns of ethnic-cultural solidarity and, last but not least, perceptions of Europe and European values.

The third set of questions that will guide EUROREG is:
Does involvement in structural funds implementation and CBC affect the political views and interests of locally elected minority and majority representatives, as well as local party leaders? And if yes, how?

a) What are the views of ethnic minorities and transnational communities about decentralisation, subnational government and EU integration?
b) What do local-regional representatives and leaders of minorities and majorities view as the most effective strategy, as well as the main obstacles in pursuing national and ethnic interests and in preserving cultural identity?
c) What are the levels of minority and majority support for nationalist political parties and associations?
d) Can we identify any convergence of regional minority-majority interests, and/or increasing differentiation of views about the proper means and ends of collective solidarity and political representation *within* each national and ethnic community (i.e. about the proper centre -- regional, national or supranational -- towards which to act)?

1.8 Local participation, national-ethnic identity and emerging concepts of 'Europe'

In the social, political, cultural and historical sciences the predominant approaches conceive of collective identities as constituted by the collective group which individuals belong to and identify with. Accordingly, national identities are analysed as derivatives or prerequisites of nation-state formation and, translated to Europe, a European identity is seen as an attachment to the evolving European transnational governance regime. Within this perspective, in parallel to the opposition between the nation-state and an evolving European super-state, two opposite theoretical approaches define the methodological options for analysing the relationship between national identities and a potentially emerging European identity. The first position, starting from the conceptualisation of the European Community/Union as a transnational layer above the constituting nation-state members, views the emerging 'Europeanness' as an additional layer to the basic national identity (Lepsius 1998). The premise here is that the emerging European identity is secondary or additional and therefore weak as compared to the primary and strong national identity. The opposite position, conceptualising the European Union as a system of governance which absorbs elements of national governance, assumes a trans- or post-national European identity is increasingly replacing the pre-existing national identities (Eder 1998). The opposite premise here is that national identities are progressively declining against a strengthening European identity.

However, these approaches tend to neglect the interaction between nations and the EU and more generally the link between collective identity development and boundary constructions (Triandafyllidou 2001). Each national identity is constructed and continually reconstructed as a collective sentiment, self-awareness, self-definition and boundary setting of a national group, but at the same time in continued interaction with the surrounding national groups in the cultural and geopolitical context of Europe. The post-World War II European integration project has been developing in interaction with the matrix of national groups and web of national identities involved in it and has been influenced by a set of interwoven national and European elements (af Malmborg and Stråth 2001). From this relational perspective, the European element in national identities is not simply an emerging property of or an identification with the formation of transnational European institutions, rather it is constituted in continual interaction between nationally formed European orientations and the developing transnational European framework. In this sense, the image of intertwining of European and national components in collective identities is more appropriate than the alternative models of superimposition or replacement.

From this relational perspective, the reconfiguration of collective identities in their national and European components with the implosion of Soviet communism, the opening and bridging of the East-West divide and the progressing reconnection of the European civilisation is crucial. On the Western European side, the opening of the Eastern European space means a geopolitical as well as a cultural reconfiguration of collective identities and redefinition of boundary constructions as cultural bases of the Eastern enlargement of the European Union. In geopolitical terms, it presents an opportunity to export and enlarge the Western European model of liberal-democratic welfare capitalism and create a military, political and social welfare zone. In cultural terms, a reconstruction of a Western 'mission' towards the East from defensive anti-

communism to a cautious expansion of Western values is under way. This includes the geopolitical relocation and cultural reconstruction of national identities, particularly of those countries at the border of the former East-West divide and now again in-between East and West.

In the past decade, a lively debate has been taking place on whether a common identity is a precondition for greater political integration among the peoples of Europe. On the one hand, scholars argue that political union can only be founded upon a common European identity that can endow legitimacy to EU-induced institutions and decisions. In so far as it is absent, and in light of enduring national allegiances, the latter are hampered by and further reinforce the union's infamous democratic deficit (Grimm 1997; Smith 1997). Others, however, argue that the emergence of a shared social identity, whether it originates from a national or supranational centre, is not premised upon common culture but grows out of a shared experience of political citizenship. It is a product of civic participation in institutions that help forge a common sense of belonging to a broader European demos (Habermas 1997; Weiler 1997). From this perspective, the extension and deepening of EU competencies and institutions at the subnational level as expounded by multi-level governance, arguably contributes to growing citizens' attachment to the European sphere without, necessarily, any corresponding decline of national or regional identity (Marks 1997: 85). From this view, identities are arguably no longer exclusively defined in reference to the nation but exhibit a variety of coexisting attachments to local-regional, ethnic-cultural and supranational communities alongside the national one (Marks 1997; 1999).

The methodological task we are confronted with here is thus to analyse how direct experiences of European integration through involvement in the implementation of SF and CBC programmes, on one hand, and more general discourses on Europe, European values, democracy, equality and cultural diversity contribute to new understandings and configuration of regional ethnic or national identities and notions of citizenship.

- We shall examine how majorities and minorities (among local representatives and party leaders) perceive national-ethnic identity and themselves as citizens in relation to the EU? What constructions and meanings do they attribute to 'Europe': do they view the latter as a guarantee or as a threat to identity and culture?

- We shall examine whether and in what ways, in the process of their involvement in local development projects, minority and majority actors re-negotiate and potentially redefine dominant concepts of citizenship and ethnic-national identity.

- How do minority and majority political parties (and those of transnational communities) view European integration? As posing a threat or providing a guarantee to national-ethnic interests and culture?

1.9 European enlargement: pre-accession funds, human rights and minority protection, and regional economic development

Similarly to the Mediterranean enlargement in the 1970s and 1980s, eastern enlargement in the 1990s has succeeded the democratic transitions in CESE states where EU integration has been seen as a way to assist political and economic development and the consolidation of their nascent institutions. Soon following regime transition, most CESE countries applied for membership in the CoE, while since the mid-1990s, most have signed association agreements with the EU (originally the Europe agreements in 1995 and the Accession Partnerships in 1998). The foundational prerequisite for European integration remains that the country must be a democracy and have a functional and competitive market economy. At the same time, in the process of their enlargement to CESE, European organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the EU have given explicit attention to human rights, and specifically to the cultural and political rights of minorities as defining criteria of democracy. This was largely a response to the crucial and potentially destabilising role ethnic and national divisions played in the dissolution of communist regimes and the multi-ethnic federal states of the Soviet bloc.

The extension of human rights to an explicit provision about the protection of minorities presents a departure from earlier waves of enlargement in the 1970s and 1980s. Human rights were far from absent from the European agenda prior to the 1990s, with all EC states also being members of the CoE, and thus parties to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) that contains a list of basic human rights accorded to individuals. However, prior to the 1990s, the EC did not pay specific attention to or scrutinise the human rights record of candidate or member states neither how they treated their minorities. For example, the Council of Europe's readmission of Greece in 1975 following her transition to democracy, or her admittance to EC membership in 1981, did not pay any attention to how Greece treated her minorities. While respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights had been recognised as fundamental values since the EU's origins, insistence on the protection of minorities is a new condition explicitly highlighted only in the context of enlargement to CESE in the 1990s (De Witte 2001).

The increasing emphasis of European organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) on human rights and minority protection in the 1990s as conditions for membership have established a distinct political context for regional minority-majority relations. Central-East and Southeast Europe (CESE) is home to sizeable and territorially concentrated ethnic minorities inhabiting border, and usually peripheral and undeveloped, regions, a legacy of the multi-ethnic empires that preceded the formation of national states.

The transition from communism and the process of constructing democratic political systems in the region were what Rokkan has called a "critical juncture" during which basic decisions concerning the structures and forms of political representation in CESE were made (Flora 1999: 36). This turning point saw widespread mobilisation of historical minorities asserting their rights to political participation and representation on an ethnic basis. Indigenous minority claims and demands have been implicitly or explicitly defended by European organisations such as the Council of Europe (CoE) seeking to diffuse nationalist tensions and prevent conflicts. Case studies report that European support for human rights has encouraged improved state treatment of minorities in CESE states (Aniol et al. 1997; Pettai 2001:

274), which are required to demonstrate a "credible commitment" to guaranteeing cultural and political rights of ethnic minorities (Pentassuglia 2001: 28).

The EU in conjunction with the CoE has emphasised a variety of methods for protecting minority cultural and political rights in the process of integrating CESE states in the European structures. The CoE Recommendation 1201 of 1993, advocated that regionally concentrated minorities have the right to special status of local autonomy, which had become a point of friction between Hungary and Slovakia (De Witte 2000). Throughout the 1990s, EU economic assistance, co-operation and trade preferences vis-à-vis CESE has regularly been linked, directly or indirectly, to respect for human rights and minorities, with the underlying intent of conflict prevention and conflict management (Pentassuglia 2001).

With the signing of association agreements between the EU and CESE candidate states in 1997-98, the Commission has given considerable attention to minority rights in its assessment and opinions of the latter (Agenda 2000, Volume I). In the Regular Reports on Progress towards Accession, the Commission has devoted sections to issues such as minority language and education, political and social discrimination, etc., in reference to minorities in Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. The EU has even tied its aid through PHARE program to CESE candidate states to the Copenhagen political conditions for respect for human rights and the protection of minorities. Several micro-projects at the local level supported by it include analyses of minority problems and cross-border co-operation in areas where border conflicts had taken place and areas lying along the EU's external border (Pentassuglia 2001).

Nonetheless, the lack of a firm foundation in EU law and concise benchmarks for minority protection (De Witte 2000) means that what constitutes minority and minority rights remains unclear and there are different interpretations of what implementation of promotion and protection of minorities may mean (Tesser 2003).

European support for minority protection contributed in the early stages of the democratic transition to the creation of ethnic parties and their incorporation in national parliaments in countries like Bulgaria, Slovakia, Romania and Poland (for the Bulgarian case, see Anagnostou 2003). Under pressure from domestic minorities and European organisations, the democratising elites and polities of CESE states adopted electoral rules and arrangements that institutionalised ethnic-based representation of minorities in spite of national opposition. The incorporation of ethnic parties in the national representation systems diffused nationalist tensions and it also gave to minorities direct access to the supranational level through their delegates to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). They have regularly used European arenas and drawn leverage from the minority protection regime to redress their grievances and exercise pressure in pursuing their demands domestically. Furthermore and more importantly for the purposes of this project, the presence of minority parties has meant the ethnicisation of local government units and municipalities in regions where a minority is demographically concentrated. Ongoing monitoring of how CESE states treat their minorities provides further incentives for ethnic-based mobilisation and organisation.

For the second part of the project, we have selected four cases of new member states and candidate countries from CESE: the Hungarian minority in southern Slovakia, the Hungarian minority concentrated in the region of Transylvania in Romania and the Turkish minority concentrated in southeast Bulgaria. These countries have been receiving pre-accession funds mainly through PHARE but also

through SAPARD and ISPA programmes. Slovakia is now (2005) also preparing to receive after the 2004-2006 transition period, its first share of structural funds.

All three countries have been through a process of more or less successful decentralisation and regionalisation. This has been partly in relation to the EU's request to create a NUTS2 level of unit that would promote and assist regional development but also and perhaps most importantly as a response to the political transition elites and citizens' request for decentralisation and democratisation within these countries.

Our aim here is to study

a) Whether and how the implementation of pre-accession funds as well as the overall regime and discourse about human rights and minority protection has influenced the structure of political opportunities for minority actors and their involvement in regional/subnational institutions,

b) Whether and how the implementation of pre-accession funds has affected the patterns of economic activity of minority actors

c) What are the demands of ethnic minority parties vis-à-vis the central state regarding decentralisation, cultural rights development strategies and distribution of EU regional aid and do they come in conflict with the position of national parties and governments?

d) What are the local minority and majority conceptions of national-ethnic identity and citizenship and their perceptions of Europe? Have these been influenced by their participation in the implementation of pre-accession funds and by the related changing patterns of economic development in their regions?

e) Can we predict the implications of ethnic-based representation for processes of current and/or pending regional and territorial reforms linked to EU funds and pre-accession conditions.

The transition to a market economy in CESE states, a central precondition for membership in the EU, has led to a massive withdrawal of the central state from regional economic development, with far-reaching effects for economic conditions in the less advantaged regions such as minority inhabited areas. In general, CESE comprises states with a GDP ranging from ¼ to ¾ of the EU average. Since 1997, when the Luxembourg European Council launched the present enlargement process to CESE, the EU has expanded economic aid to candidate states to assist their development and reoriented it towards accession priorities. The main and oldest frame of economic assistance to CESE has been the PHARE program originally created in 1989 to assist Poland and Hungary, which today encompasses the ten candidate countries in the region. PHARE funds are in no way comparable to structural funds, they do not specifically focus on regions as targets, neither are they accompanied by the institutional and organisational arrangements of partnership familiar to structural funds. Since 1997-98, PHARE funds have been re-oriented in the service of accession priorities with the goals of domestic institution building, enhancing administrative competencies and programming capacity and redressing regional economic development problems. In addition, EU regional aid since 2000 has come through two new programs, the Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) and the Instrument for Structural Policies for pre-Accession (ISPA).

In the frame of the accession process to the EU, however, CESE states have undertaken a series of regional reforms largely with the view to enhancing their capacity to implement structural funds once these are diverted to CESE. In contrast to earlier expectations, studies show that regional reforms promoted in CESE states tend to reassert centralisation and the role of national states and to marginalise that of subnational authorities (Hughes et al. 2003; Keating 2003b: 63). Nonetheless, the ongoing and pending nature of regional reforms and the relative fluidity they introduce in existing territorial patterns and central-local relations set the stage for local and minority actors to contest and seek to influence outcomes (Bachtler et al. 2000).

We hypothesise that the reconfiguration of minority and majority interests, as well as contestation over ongoing or pending and EU-induced regional-territorial reforms in anticipation of structural funds, are mediated by the institutionalisation of minority rights in CESE states. More specifically, we hypothesise that ethnic-based political representation of ethnic minorities in CESE, drawing leverage from the European human rights and minority protection regime, is likely to mediate and shape very differently processes of EU-driven regional territorial restructuring, as well as minority-majority relations and politics in CESE.

The second set of questions guiding our research in the three accession countries is:

a) What has been the impact of market restructuring on regional economic conditions of the selected minority inhabited areas, and to what extent have they so far benefited from EU funds?
b) What are the patterns of conflict and co-operation between local minority and majority representatives in subnational government, and the relations of local representatives with ethnic and national parties? Does local government in minority-inhabited regions act as a representative of a national-ethnic group or is it defined by inter-party and inter-ethnic coalitions?
c) How do local government representatives and party leaders in the minority regions under study conceptualise ethnic-national identity and citizenship, and how do they view 'Europe'?

1.10 Regional minorities and ethnic politics in the EU and CESE accession countries: a comparative frame

The juncture of democratisation and the ongoing explicit European emphasis on the protection of political and cultural rights of minorities have established distinct political representation structures and normative-cultural expectations, among regional minorities and majorities in CESE accession countries, in comparison to earlier waves of democratisation cum EU integration. We suggest that the extensive and ongoing institutionalisation of minority rights in CESE paves the way for very different processes of regional institution-building and economic development in accession states than those within the EU, in which claims to ethnic solidarity and national unity are likely to figure prominently. We can depict the (re)configuration of minority-majority interests and identities in subnational regions in four ideal forms distinguished by their relationship to the central state and the way they view the

connection between the cultural, political and territorial unit and variable conceptions of the EU.

The first is the national-state form, in which the national majority politically dominates subnational institutions and its political representation is monopolised by national parties oriented towards the state centre. It may define itself along liberal or socialist lines and advocate centralisation of local government and regional economic development in the service of national unity or rapid economic reform goals of the central state, and views minority mobilisation as an obstacle to these. Majority identification with Europe may be from limited to widespread but in any case it is primarily seen as a source of political and economic modernisation of the national state. Minority and majority interests and politics in the region are predominantly defined by exclusive attachment to ethnic-national community and an underlying conflict for exclusive community control over the institutions and resources of local territory.

Secondly, we can depict a national-civic form, which has the basic characteristics of the first type, but in which we observe some, albeit limited regional co-operation, local alliances and support for decentralisation *across* political parties and *across* the two national-ethnic communities in the context of strong centralisation. Such local alliances are temporary, circumstantial and dependent upon the support and approval of strong state- and national-oriented and ethnic-based parties and associations. Issues of national or ethnic cultural identity are politicised and form the basis around which minorities and majorities advance their political demands.

Thirdly, we can depict a regional-civic form in which there is extensive regional co-operation, support for decentralisation, as well as increasingly institutionalised regional-local alliances *across* political parties and *across* the two national-ethnic communities. Local-subnational government increasingly operates as a representative of the region rather than the ethnic or national community. Minority and majority political-economic dependence on and support for state-centred and national-ethnic parties and associations are declining and minority-majority interests and politics are defined by growing convergence around economic and regional development objectives. There are active cultural and community associations of minorities and majorities, but declining politicisation of cultural identity issues and their re-orientation away and dissociation from the state. Identification with Europe is widespread and the EU is seen as an entity where various cultural identities can flourish but primarily as a source of more efficient government, economic competence and regional competitiveness.

Finally, we have the regional-ethnic form, in which a dominant minority in the region or in areas within it has established or seeks to establish control over local government and economic resources. Local government operates as the representative of the ethnic community rather than the local population. Minority interests and identities may be aligned with a national state centre outside the state in which they live, and/or they may seek regional political autonomy and/or self-determination on the basis of ethnic community solidarity. Its politics is monopolised by ethnic parties and upon strong politicisation of cultural issues and demands for collective minority rights. Minority identification with Europe may be limited or widespread but in any case the EU is seen as an entity that can safeguard political self-determination and cultural preservation of the ethnic community.

In the overall research design and comparative focus of EUROREG, we consider the Objective I set of cases/regions (GR, NI, A), as our control group on which to test our initial set of hypotheses about the ways in which SF and CBC

implementation, the wider discourse on Europe and European values, and national factors and traditions related to minority nationalism affect local patterns of political and economic participation in minority inhabited regions.

The INTERREG set of cases (IT, SLN, BC) provides for further insights on what kind of new opportunity structures and political/symbolic/identity contexts are created in cases where the local 'minority' can reach out across the border to its 'national homeland' (as in the case of Italy and Slovenia) or the local 'minority nation,' as in the case of the BC, can argue further its political and symbolic case through reaching out to its co-national brothers/sisters across the border in France. With all due recognition of the history and complexities of each of these cases, we want to see whether and how CBC funds and the overall European integration/accession process have affected the economic activity, political participation and identity patterns in these regions.

As regards the cases receiving pre-accession funds (SLVK, ROM, BU), we want to test our hypotheses regarding the new member states and their specific economic and institutional structures, their political and economic experiences from Communist times and during the transition period since 1989.

In analysing each of our nine cases we shall seek to establish with which of these four ideal types they conform most. We shall thus compare the variable configurations and effects of (a) type of EU funding received and its implementation process (Objective I, INTERREG, pre-accession funds), (b) historical legacies of state nationalism, ethnic-cultural solidarity, minority majority relations, and (c) an emerging identification with Europe and references to discourses on the values/norms that are (supposedly) distinctively European such as democracy, respect for diversity, non-discrimination, economic efficiency, and a market economy.

In comparing the three subgroups of cases, we hypothesise that regional economic restructuring in the member states (Objective I and INTERREG cases) reinforces a reconfiguration of minority-majority interests and identities that dissociates ethnic-national community from local government institutions (EU cases will tend to fall in the middle categories of national-civic and regional-civic forms). This happens because the impact of factors (a) and (c) is stronger in these cases. Conversely, we hypothesise that ethnic-based political representation in accession states of CESE reinforces divisions between majority and minority over regional territorial reforms and control over local government institutions along national-ethnic lines (CESE cases will tend to fall in the two opposite categories of national-state form and regional-ethnic form) because factor (b) is stronger in these cases.

Moreover, EUROREG will seek to cast light to the following more general research questions with a view to casting more light to the social, political, economic and identity transformations taking place in European regions inhabited by large minority populations and/or stateless nations:

How is the nationality question reconceptualised in the European context? What collective norms are being used in the new regionalist economic modes of action? How is the theme of local cultural identity used in economic terms? What new institutional transformations are taking place locally? And what new forms of cross-frontier cooperation are occurring? Who is involved in such new cooperative patterns and why? What does it mean to be European for self-acclaimed minority representatives? What is the salience of European values (for example with the talk of human rights and regions) in local discourses about the minority community? How is the notion of Europe used in the local minority nationalist and regionalist discourses?

Each case study will seek to address the specific research questions and hypotheses outlined in this chapter as well as to provide expert assessments on the more general questions presented in the paragraph above. The following chapter (chapter 2) of this report offers a more detailed and critical overview of the development and change of European policies towards regions with large minority populations. Chapters 3 to 11 offer historical insights into the case studies as well as a concise analysis of regional development patterns, EU funds received, and patterns of minority majority relation and identification. Each chapter concludes with some remarks on the ways in which the specific case contributes to the EUROREG research design.

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Young, Crawford. *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism*

2 State of the art report reviewing the development and change of European policies towards regions with large minority populations

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2.1 Introduction

This section provides an outline of the development and workings of EU regional policy and of European norms directed at 'minorities'; and reviews the literature that covers in some way or other the link between 'minorities' and European regional development.

In the process, it will make a few clarifications of certain concepts and political assumptions. First of all, with regard to EUROREG's loose usage of the concepts of identity, region and minority/majority, we shall make a preliminary step towards their elucidation in this paper which should necessarily be improved in Euroreg's upcoming meeting in May. To begin with, we understand a 'minority' to be a self-identified group of people who have in common an attachment to a historic language and culture particular to a geographical place but without the benefit of its own state. We will point out later, however, that such a minority may not be a 'minority' in every context.

Secondly, there are no European policies specifically directed at such minorities. The Council of Europe (CofE) and the OSCE are inter-governmental organisations not part of the EU institutional structure, even though they often act in close cooperation with the EU. They have produced numerous charters and treaties, providing a set of norms for the protection of minorities and for decentralisation. The EU has drawn on these to produce its own directives on how minority issues may be dealt with. But these remain deliberately open and have only a limited impact on domestic policies. While there is an overriding European principle, the ways of national states ultimately predominate. The EU only produces more specific statements when it comes to posing the conditions for candidate countries' accession to the EU, where minority rights are mentioned. However, actual implementation of minority protection and representation is again left to the discretion of individual states. All the EU does is provide observations and recommendations via its regular country reports. Finally, these conditions do not form part of the EU *acquis*.

The vehicles for implementation of the EU's regional policy are its Structural and Cohesion funds. These are aimed at redressing regional economic disparities in Europe and promoting social solidarity and cohesion across territorial boundaries. The Structural funds are made up of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Common Agricultural fund (EAGGF, the guidance section only), and the financial support for fishing communities as part of

the common fisheries policy (FIFG).[1] There are also four Community Initiative funds, accounting between them 5.35% of the Structural Funds, during the period 2000-2006. These are Interreg, directed at cross-frontier and inter-regional cooperation;[2] Urban, for the sustainable development of cities and declining urban areas; Leader, for rural development through local initiatives;[3] and Equal, to combat inequalities and discrimination in access to the labour market. The Cohesion fund,[4] meanwhile, finances transport and environment infrastructure in the poorer EU countries. There is also an additional programme specifically conceived to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Known as Peace, it has five areas of action: employment, urban and rural regeneration, cross-border development, social inclusion and industrial development.

With enlargement, the EU launched in 2000 new programmes for incoming states (also part of the Structural and Cohesion Funds):[5] the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) which finances environment and transport projects;[6] and the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD) which concentrates on agricultural development.[7] The already existing Phare programme will continue until 2006 and aims to strengthen the administrative and institutional capacity of the receiving countries, as well as finance investment projects.[8]

While these funds are based on the EU's principles of subsidiarity and decentralisation, they are for the most part managed at the interstate level, where the money goes directly to the regions without national quotas. We will attempt to explain the logistics of this in section two of this paper (to the extent that is possible given the vagueness of official texts as well as of scholarly analyses on the actual practical aspects…). Due to this and to the political and institutional intricacies existing in any national case, it is impossible to find a link between these funds and local minority representatives. There is however an exception with the Community Initiatives. These are managed by local authorities which receive the funds directly from the European Commission via regional bodies. Again, however, the money flows through institutional frames in which local minority representatives seldom have an influential presence. A minority link with concrete EU money is therefore extremely tenuous and should be considered more symbolic than substantial. EUROREG appreciates this and, as a consequence, will explore the more general context. This report then, attempts to explain this context.

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1 These funds will pay out about 213 billion euros or roughly one third of total EU spending, between 2000 and 2006. Beneficiary countries are divided into objective zones. See http://europa.eu.int/pol/reg/print_overview_en.htm for explanation.
2 Interreg II (b), active 1994 and 1999, had a budget of 2,900,000,000 euros. Interreg III, active between 2000 and 2006, had a budget of 4,875,000,000 euros.
3 Leader II (b), in action between 1994 and 1999, had a budget of 1,400,000,000 euros. Leader +, active between 2000 and 2006, had a budget of 2,020,000,000 euros.
4 This has been allocated 18 billion euros for the period 2000-2006.
5 The Structural and Cohesion Funds have set aside 23 billion euros for CEE countries for the period 2000-2006.
6 This has a budget of 7.28 billion euros.
7 This has a budget of 3.64 billion euros.
8 This has a budget of 10.92 billion for the period 2000-2006.

Variations between and even sometimes within EU member states in relation to the treatment of individual minority communities are large, when it comes to their protection and promotion sometimes even within individual states. This variety is reflected in the way in which the different states that have ratified the Council of Europe's *European Charter for regional or minority languages* have chosen to do this. Thus, as the 'Final Report on Support for Minority Languages in Europe'[9] explains, there has been no systematic and exhaustive analysis of policy intervention in favour of regional and minority languages in Europe against the background of a complete account of what member states do. This has also much to do with the fact that different actors are involved in promotional efforts in a wide range of areas (Grin 2002: 34 and 39-40). For this reason too, the literature on policy networks which examines the various dynamics involving the different actors and interest groups (Marks 1993; Peterson 1995; Pollack 1995; Tofarides 2003) does not talk in terms of the mobilisation of minority local actors.

Cohesion policy makes no reference to minorities. It is necessary to understand that the issue of minorities is a delicate one for the EU, as its connotations of nationalism, self-determination and sovereignty pose a potential political challenge to respective individual states (Jackson Preece 1998). While the protection of minorities is viewed as a fundamental part of human rights and democracy, it remains a challenge which most states manage as part of their individual domestic affairs. The EU discourse remains for the most part normative, setting an example with its principles outlined in various treaties and charters. We also need to appreciate that, for the EU, the reference to national minorities and the recognition of group differences and rights sits uncomfortably with its emphasis on procedural essence and individual rights (Deets 2002; Sasse 2004).

It is illustrative of the reluctance of the EU's Commission to get involved more seriously in the protection and promotion of minorities that the only budget devoted specifically to them is in the category of Education, under the heading of protection and promotion of 'regional and minority languages'. The Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, Direction C - Unit 5 Language Policy opened the budget lines for 'lesser used languages' named B3 1006 in 1983, at the behest of the European Parliament but with only 100,000 euros. By 1995, the budget had risen to 4 million euros a year, used to subsidise a wide range of cultural, educational and media projects, as well as to support the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages meant to represent such minorities in Brussels (Grin 2002). Numerous grassroots associations sought access to these funds, applying directly to the DG for Education and Culture. In 1998, however, this budget was ended following a ruling of the Court of Justice that the financial set-up was not properly legally based.[10] This again illustrates the delicate political environment for EU support for regional and minority languages, under which such support could not be made available with an effective and open legal set-up. Since the court ruling, there has been continuous insecurity with respect to the continuation of positive measures for the support of regional and minority languages. In 2001, projects in favour of these languages nonetheless

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9 'Final Report on Support for Minority Languages in Europe', Francois Grin, European Centre for Minority Issues, and Tom Moring, European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (research project leaders), 15/5/2002, European Commission Contract No. 2000 – 1288 / 001 – 001 EDU-MLCEV.
10 A temporary accommodation was made which lasted between 1999 and 2000, in which 2,500,000 euros was made available in a budget line named B3 - 1000.

managed to be included in the one-off EU programme 'European Year of Languages 2001', jointly organised with the Council of Europe, as part of an engagement 'to encourage linguistic diversity', with a budget of 8 million euros.[11]

It is important here to consider that just as regional policies may be seen as having an impact on regions inhabited by minorities, so may any other policies by the EU.[12]

In order to enable management of its regional development funds at the local level, the Commission generally encourages domestic institutional de-centralisation. There has never, however, been any question of imposing a single model of territorial government, and there are different views on the desirability and reinforcement of this intermediate level. The Commission does not plan to reorganise European space, taking regions into partnership to undermine the states. Rather, its interests are functionally-driven by the perceived needs of economic development, and extend into institutional change only as far as is necessary (Keating 2004: chapter 3).

A number of new local and regional institutions have been set up over the years on the initiative of many EU Member and Acceeding States. However, to what extent this has been done in direct relation to EU politics is open to interpretation (Andersen 2001: 3-19). It is difficult to seek what measurable effect EU regional policies may have both on individual European States' territorial and institutional management and on minority mobilisation.

This is why it is more helpful to examine the symbolic negotiations of European politics at the ground level. EUROREG takes account of this. European policies, treaties and charters are an important part of a more general process of Europeanisation which involves a change in mentalities and 'ways of doing things' (Radaelli 2004; Radaelli 2000). The various policies and charters of European institutions introduce the notion of subsidiarity and encourage a respect for minorities. This helps to legitimize minority claims, justifying their cause in line with the European trend (Urwin 1991 and McKay 1996). In this European supranational and normative order, minority actors may find new opportunities for making sense of themselves and possibly for local mobilisation (Keating 2004a; Keating 2003; Keating 2005; Keating 2001).

European integration is a process of changing and renegotiated boundaries. Empirical studies on the relationship between European integration and regions and minorities are few and far between, and remain to this day mostly superficial and incomplete. This is an opportunity to fill a gap that is far overdue. For this, however, and in order to avoid falling into the trap of more insubstantial and inconclusive research, a vigorous theoretical adjustment is recommended. A bottom-up study of changing social, cultural and political interests and identities in European border regions inhabited by minorities requires a consideration for the interpretation and negotiation

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11 See decision No. 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17/7/200 on the European Year of Languages 2001. Official Journal L 232, 14/9/2000, p.1-5. http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/2000/en_300D1934.html

12 See Grin and Moring 2002 for an examination of EU Education and Culture programmes Leonardo, Socrates, Lingua, Information Society, Ariane, Minerva, Raphael, Culture 2000, Media and Kaleidoscope.and how they have been used by and for minorities. Also Bray 1998 and 1998a; Bray and Wynne 1998.

of the idea of Europe and all that it may be understood to involve by minority representatives, how this affects their construction of the minority community.

2.2   Concepts

In line with the approach sketched out in the introduction, we shall attempt in this section to provide a clarification of certain concepts crucial for EUROREG's research.

2.2.1   Region

This term has different meanings in different political and institutional contexts. It has different connections with culture and territory and different political and institutional implications.[13] Keating has listed the different kinds of ways in which regions may exist, functional, cultural, administrative... (Keating 1998). There are also different cultural and political perceptions of the regional territory according to different people. Regions therefore must necessarily be appreciated as open systems whose boundaries, even in the most consolidated ones, may differ for different purposes.

The evolution of the western European state and transnational order (Europeanisation again) has led stateless nation and region builders to construct new systems of action. Now, regions increasingly have to compete with each other for investment, technology and markets within European and global space. Today, areas inhabited by minorities often emerge as sites of such region-building, with their various stakeholders and political elites committed to new regionalist theories about the ability of small units to compete in the European space autonomously (Keating 2004a:8). Thus minorities may gain a substantial degree of functional autonomy within the new regional political and economic world. Interest groups and other civil society actors now adapt to consolidate the territory as a social, economic and political system. Identity and culture, previously seen as an obstacle to modernization, become potential assets in this new regional development paradigm (eg McCrone 2005). For those minority nationalities which do not benefit of any territorial recognition, and are hence weaker, there emerges an incentive to affirm themselves aside already established regions by playing the 'regional territorialization game'.

However, the ability of regional and local units to compete in the European space autonomously is not a universal trend, depending rather on the institutional opportunities in their respective states.[14] There are mechanisms for regions to act in the European high policy-making game in spite of its pervasive intergovernmental nature, but regions must first achieve victory in home constitutional arenas. National minority elites who identify with Europe will attempt to negotiate with their respective states using the concept of Europe. Structural funds do not contribute to this. They tend, on the contrary, to tie regions back into their respective States as they dominate the process.

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13 Amongst others, see Bourdieu 1991, De Frantz, 2004; Schmitt-Egner, 2002.
14 For this reason it may be difficult to apply the territorial solution in central and eastern Europe as recommended by Kymlicka (2001) where the nationalities have undergone a different process of territorial consolidation.

There is also the European Commission's NUTS 'nomenclature of territorial units for statistics' (NUTS). This was created by the European Office for Statistics (Eurostat) in order to create a single and coherent structure of territorial distribution. It has been used in the Community legislation pertaining to the Structural Funds since 1988. The current nomenclature subdivides the fifteen old Member States of the EU into: a small amount of NUTS level 1 territorial units which, relevant to our research, only includes the very large[15] regions of Ireland; NUTS level 2 territorial units which, in our case include the autonomous regions of Spain, French regions, the Italian regions, the Austrian Länder, the regions of Rumania and Bulgaria; and the most numerous NUTS level 3 territorial units, which include the Nomoi in Greece, the French departments, and the Spanish and Italian provinces.

Regions are defined not merely by economics (Ohmae 1995) but also by culture and history, which define their boundaries and shape social relations within them. Regions are also the outcome of political leadership and competition. In some parts of Europe, territory has become a significant political cleavage and regions have emerged as political spaces, sustaining a debate about the common interest and a distinct political agenda (Keating and Hooghe 1995). Regions have also emerged as institutions, an intermediate level of government between states and municipalities, but taking very different forms, from the fully-fledged federalism of Germany and Austria, to the weak, administrative regionalism of Italy and France. This has produced a heterogeneous pattern across Europe, according to whether the various meanings of the region coincide or not, and to the degree of institutionalisation of regional government. In some places, like Scotland or Catalonia, the economic, cultural and political regions (or rather stateless nations) coincide and are endowed with important institutions with legislative and administrative competences. Some of the other Spanish autonomous communities and many of the German Länder have a much weaker sense of political and cultural identity, although still possessing autonomous institutions. French regions were designed to suppress rather than encourage political and cultural identity and, like Italian regions, rarely constitute political spaces or a primary reference point for political debate (Keating and Hooghe 2005). In some of the smaller states there are no elected regional governments and, at best, a system of functionally specific agencies for economic development. In some cases, the most important level for economic, social and political mobilisation is not the region but the city.

As a polity, the region has much in common with the EU itself. It is complex, patchily institutionalised and contested. Arenas and actors vary across policy areas, and policy-making is organised through networks, which may be functionally or territorially based. As in Europe (Hooghe 1999), there is a constant struggle between those who see the region as primarily an economic entity, driven by competitive market considerations locked in a neo-mercantilist competition for economic advantage, and those who favour a stronger social dimension (Keating 1998). As in the European Union, concerns of economic competitiveness have usually trumped questions regarding the region as a basis for social solidarity. In a few regions, strong regional governments are able to impose coherence on the array of local actors and define a common territorial interest. In other regions, development coalitions have emerged to promote a vision of the region's place in European and global markets but

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15 http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/funds/prord/guide/gu111_en.htm.

without an overall social project. Yet other regions are a political no man's land, fought over by rival political and social interests, often with different territorial bases.

2.2.2 Border

Frontiers are classically associated with the notion of the modern nation-state. The frontier is generally regarded as a physical demarcation, defining where the territory of one state ends and that of another begins (Anderson 1996b:1-3). They are, according to political scientist Malcolm Anderson, "the basic political institution: no rule-bound economic, social or political life in advanced societies could be organised without them" (Anderson 1998:4). As a representation of the territorial limits of the state, the frontier has also conventionally been understood as the circumscription of the territory within which the residing population feels identified with the state and shares in a 'national' identity. Geographers have played an important role in opening the way for this appreciation of border areas as locations with a social and political dynamic very different from that of non-frontier zones (Prescott 1987). Their analysis has helped political and social scientists to appreciate the frontier as having a particular role in the formation of a sense of difference between populations on either side of it and in the creation of the 'nation' in line with the state of which either side forms part.

The international border often has a peculiar quality of no-man's land. It is a space that is 'betwixt and between' two distinctly culturally marked territories. The frontier, as a mere transit point, presents itself as, what Augé (1995) has called, a *non-lieu*, a non-place that is not culturally defined (1995:34) but rather a social space of its own (1995:82). Lavie and Swedenburg see in border zones sites of 'creative cultural creolization, places where criss-crossed identities are forged out of the debris of corroded, formerly (would-be) homogenous identities', and where one experiences the 'feeling of being trapped in an impossible in-between' (Lavie 1996:15).

Indeed, a particular characteristic of borders as social spaces is the way in which local populations live with the state frontier as a factor in their daily existence. This has led to the concept of 'border identity' as some kind of unique sense of self found amongst inhabitants of border areas (Wilson 1998).[16] As a space where two or more states meet and end, the border is an area in which the presence of the state in the human landscape is particularly evident. Elements that identify the state, from the language of road signs and advertisements to the style of urban architecture and the uniforms of state officialdom, are visible in abundance until they suddenly cease at the frontier. This makes it starkly evident to the person crossing that he or she is going from one particular space to another. Just as in ritual passages (Van Gennep 1960), this change in context obliges the individual to reflect on his or her position in relation to the changing environment.

In the political sciences, concerned as they are more with the larger political and institutional consequences of frontiers, borders in Europe have traditionally been regarded as mere peripheral zones, assumed to have a 'static' or 'frozen' quality (Anderson 1996). As from the late 1980s, however, the Schengen Agreement of the

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16   See also project consortium on 'Changing Identities, Changing Nations, Changing Stories in European Border Communities' on http://www.borderidentities.com funded by the EU Fifth Framework Programme.

EU brought about a change in the nature and perception of borders. Many border areas have become sites of active economic and cultural interchange (Ricq 1992; Leresche 1995). This has aroused new interest among both state and institutional political theorists and policy makers. With the breakdown of border controls, local institutions and organisations on either side of frontiers have begun forging stronger links of cross-border cooperation. This trend has been particularly encouraged by financial assistance from the EU, in the form of the INTERREG programme specifically geared in the economic development of peripheral regions and border areas (O'Dowd 1996:12-3). This new dynamism of border areas has prompted some theorists to talk of an erosion of the sovereignty of the modern nation-state, from above by the construction of Europe, and from below by the greater self-assertion of localities and other sub-national authorities (Loughlin 1994). As discrete socio-economic areas providing fertile ground for different cultural, economic and political discourses and as potentially new dynamic areas in the wider context of the EU, European borders have lately attracted increasing interest on the part of researchers in the political and economic sciences and legal studies.[17]

Borders are interesting not just as sites permitting the construction and interplay of competing national identities but as contexts in which to explore both the multivocality and the multilocality of place. Place after all, is given meaning by human interpretation. It acquires a multiplicity of meanings through diverse and often competing views of the geographical landscape, which, at the end of the day, is inherently social. While the frontier is and remains a real dividing line in political and social terms, it also has significance in symbolic terms as a boundary relevant to individuals in their construction and expression of personal identity. Crossing the frontier means different things to different people. While some people are very much aware of moving from one context to another, others can remain largely unaware of it. In some cases, this can be a source of frustration for people who regard the frontier as an important line of demarcation. Cohen, for example, comments on how he would wish English people to be more conscious of the fact that they have crossed some kind of boundary and entered another social context when they come from England to Scotland. This remark is illustrative of the different and often competing use of symbols. I add to Cohen's remark that it may not be so much a question of English people being unaware of their crossing the border but rather of actually not wanting to recognise it, as part of their self assertion in what they believe to be their space.

While frontiers and borders define the limits of contiguous societies, boundaries are abstract divisions which appear routinely not just between cultures but between individuals who, despite sharing similar cultural markers, interpret these abstract divisions differently. By looking at how boundaries are transformed by individuals, we can begin to understand the qualitative and diverse nature of collective boundaries. While frontiers are political spaces objectively marking which state the areas on either side belong to, boundaries are subjective referents of the frontiers. As a 'social fact', the frontier is given meaning when a person consciously or unconsciously makes it into a symbolic boundary (Bray 2004; Cohen 1998) in his or her personal symbolic struggle as part of the socio-cultural context.

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17   Examples for the Basque Country: Letamendia et al. (1994); Cambot (1998); Jáuregui et al. (1997).

Anderson (1996), in a review of the changing use of the concepts of frontier, border and boundary in the political sciences, makes a clear distinction between the three. In his definition, the frontier applies not only to the precise demarcation line where two State jurisdictions meet, but to the area around it (1996:8-9). In this way, he understands the frontier as a zone of contact in which neighbouring populations maintain relations of contiguity. The border, by contrast, is taken by Anderson to mean both the demarcation line and the zone around it, marked by the changing presence of the relevant states, while the boundary is used to refer to the actual line of delimitation (1996:8-9).

These definitions stand in stark contrast to those attributed in the sociological and anthropological disciplines. These make a distinction between frontiers and borders as matters of physical political fact and boundaries as matters of consciousness and experience. The term frontier is strictly limited to its geographical and legal applications as a delimitation of state jurisdictions, while border is used to refer to the area on and close to the frontier whose landscape is affected by the presence of man in all its different ways. As for the term 'boundary', it is used as a basis for social differentiation. Contrary to the other terms, which are specific and geographical, a boundary is abstract and symbolic and individually interpretable. Using this concept of boundaries as symbolic manifestations of difference, we can analyse how certain people see and act within a certain reality of space, such as that of the frontier or the border and their social world in general (Bray 2004).

In the social sciences, the study of borders in Europe has only recently attracted the attention of researchers.[18] This can largely be related to the broader debate about globalisation and the demise of the nation-state as the preeminent political structure of modernity. As the realms of society, culture, politics and economics become increasingly boundless and translocal, the analysis of notions of the self in the context of discrete cultural units and neatly identifiable socio-political groupings has been brought into question. Nonetheless, the physical structures of territory and government remain an everyday reality, continuing to influence and assist in people's construction of the self. Borders are key vantage points from which to view the processes of building and redefining the states, nations and transnational networks, which comprise the new Europe.

The work of anthropologists Cole and Wolf (1974) and historian Sahlins (1989) served to underline the importance of borders as instrumental in the construction and expression of identity. In the Italian region of Alto Adige, Cole and Wolf noted how the inhabitants of the two neighbouring villages, one traditionally German-speaking and the other Romance-speaking, had retained their sense of different identity despite being affected by the repeated shifting of the Austrian-Italian frontier during the two World Wars. Long after the political boundaries of the Austrio-Hungarian Empire had disappeared, cultural boundaries continued to divide the two villages in spite of the fact that they are now both situated within the territory of the Italian state. In everyday encounters, Cole and Wolf noted, the inhabitants of the two villages played down their differences. Yet, once in the company of their own cultural group, those of each village were quick to resort to stereotypes to explain the actions of their neighbours.

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18   For a review of border studies in the social sciences see Donnan and Wilson (1994; 1999).

Sahlins, in his study of the construction of state national identity in the Cerdanya, straddling the Franco-Spanish frontier to the East of the Pyrenees, noted how the existence of the frontier served to reinforce the formation of separate French and Spanish identities by providing a boundary across which to view the people on the other side. He observed how the inhabitants used the frontier for their own convenience, sneaking across it in order to avoid conscription and other civic obligations. This shows that the border is not just an imposer of difference, but can be used by the local inhabitants to their own advantage. From this, Sahlins proposed a model of national identity based on instrumental manipulation. When it was in their interest to associate themselves with their cross-border neighbours, local inhabitants asserted their common Cerdans identity. When it was in their interest to deny any involvement with their neighbours, for instance in situations of rivalry or political divisions, or when comparing the lifestyle, economic progress and cultural 'openness' of the contrasting state contexts, they emphasised their state national identity. With this case, Sahlins demonstrated how state national identity develops not only through the nationalisation projects of the state, but also through the interests of the local inhabitants. By incorporating the border into their social psychology over the centuries, they came to see each other as French or Spanish first and Cerdans and Catalan-speaking second; "their national disguises ended up sticking to their skin" (1989:269). From this, Sahlins has suggested a bottom-up approach to the construction of state national identity which remains relevant to analyses of identity in many border areas today.

With the recent transformation of frontiers, particularly in the EU, borders are recognised today as 'meaning-making and meaning-carrying entities, parts of cultural landscapes which often transcend the physical limits of the state and defy the power of state institutions' (Donnan 1994:4). Following this line of thought, recent academic analysis has focused on the 'porosity', 'permeability' and 'ambiguity' of state borders, and on the consequences that these imply for a unified sense of state national identity (E.g. Douglass 1998; Douglass 1999; Donnan 1999; Wilson 1998). By stressing the 'blurred' quality of borders, these anthropological accounts highlight borders as particular contexts in which people of theoretically opposed notions of identity can cohabit in many domains of daily living, thereby making the distinction between state national identities redundant. (Moncusi 1999), for example, in his anthropological research in the Cerdanya, identified a unique kind of 'reciprocal' relationship between the population on either side of the frontier in a symbiotic relationship that led to ambivalent attitudes towards French and Spanish identity (1999:127). In a similar vein, (Leizaola 1999) focused on the phenomenon of dual nationality in the rural Basque border area to demonstrate the 'ambiguity' of French and Spanish national identity for some of its inhabitants and who, with such an ambiguity, claim to feel at home on either side of the frontier.

Common to the accounts of both Moncusí and Leizaola is the idea that when a common ethnic culture straddles a frontier, border inhabitants enjoy a special bond among themselves that over-rides any state boundary. It remains to be pointed out however that this 'sense of community' regardless of the border depends on the other processes of political and cultural boundary-drawing of the people's identity. Some people who, despite meeting the so-called ethnic criteria that make them automatically part of the 'ethnic community', may not identify with various political definitions of what this is. Such differences and disparities – and political tensions thereof – should necessarily be taken into account.

Local support or resistance to various state and supranational initiatives to transform the economic, political and social structures of people's everyday lives are particularly evident in European borderlands. This is because such cultural practices have always been found in border regions (Donnan 2003). The ethnography of everyday life in European border communities is simultaneously the study of the daily life of Europe.

2.2.3 Minority/Majority:

In the introduction, we defined a minority as a self-identified group of people who have in common a historic language and culture particular to a geographical place, but which does not benefit of its own state. The most comprehensive attempt to establish a concise definition of minority that could be widely used both by international practitioners and by students of international relations was made by Special Rapporteur Francesco Capotorti in his *Study of the Rights of Persons belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. Capotorti defined a minority as: 'a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-domination position, whose members – being nationals of the state – possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics different from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language'.[19] This definition leaves it open to the possibility or not of members of the minority to feel and express national will. At this point, the term 'stateless nation', whereby the minority aspires to having its own state; or the term 'minority nation', whereby the minority feels politically out of synch with its co-citizens in state territory in which it is situated, and instead identifies more with its compatriots across the frontier where they benefit of their own state.

However, the complexity of cultural and political identification and affiliation at grassroots level means that it is difficult to talk in simple terms of 'minority' and 'majority' groups. The neat divide is problematic. People form part of minority groups in certain situations, and sometimes also of majority groups in other situations. Such alternating affiliations depend on the emotional, political or instrumental motivations of the individuals (Douglass 1994; Bray 2005).

As a minority group is often represented by a variety of political groupings, there are also majorities and minorities within a minority. One political party for instance may benefit from more electoral support than other parties also claiming to represent the linguistic/cultural minority group. Who considers whom a minority and on what grounds is yet another issue. It is also important to consider for example how minority nationalism also creates its own majority/minority discourse. The political quality therefore of these terms need to be constantly borne in mind in any effectively critical study of changing social, cultural and political interests and identities in European border regions inhabited by minorities as we first defined them.

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19 United Nations, E/CN.4/Sub.2/384 Add. 1, 10.

2.2.4 Europeanisation

European integration can be said to be operationalised via EU policies and funding. But this forms part of a much wider, rich and fluid cultural and political process. This is where it becomes more appropriate to talk of Europeanisation (Borneman 1997; Harmsen 2000). Europeanisation is necessarily an open concept, referring to a process embracing current political, social and economic changes in Europe (Wivel 1998). It involves ideas of democracy, values of social and institutional organisation, liberal approaches to the economy- with the setting up of the single market, free mobility of goods, people and money. As such, it comprises EU policies of regional development and socioeconomic cohesion, European norms of Human Rights and cultural and linguistic diversity. This includes the Council of Europe and the OSCE, whose powers are more moral than material. So Europeanisation means globalisation in the European space, involving a recognition of and hence identification with Europe. The nature of this identification, however, changes according to the national and local context, as Europeanisation has an uneven and inconsistent impact across the continent (Hughes, Sasse and Gordon, 2004; (Donnan 2003). Sasse defines Europeanisation as 'the diffusion of common political rules, norms and practices in Europe' (2004:6), but at its most fundamental, according to Radaelli (2000:3), Europeanisation involves 'ways of doing things' which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated into 'the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies' (idem & Borzel 2002). Radaelli's definition includes both organizations and individuals. Thus it is 'sufficiently broad to cover the major interests of political scientists, such as political structure, public policy, identities and the cognitive dimension of politics' (Radaelli 2000:3).

However, as Keating (2004e) has commented in reference to Radaelli and Featherstone's exploration of the concept of Europeanization (2003), the exhaustive analysis of its multiple meanings literally pulverizes it into further abstraction. Nonetheless, the concept of Europeanization can remain helpful by providing a frame in which to understand current political debates in regions inhabited by minorities. Europeanisation is a shorthand for a set of contextual factors mediated by a variety of circumstances. As such it cannot be operationalised in the conventional way. Rather, it serves as a starting point for looking at individual projects where researchers can observe local dynamics and draw different conclusions as to the process and influences of Europeanisation.

Europeanisation can be broken down into four broad dimensions – cultural, political, economic and normative.

In line with the four broad dimensions, EUROREG's research focus may be broken down into smaller questions:

On the cultural dimension, we may ask: what kind of cultural representations are possible in the European context and how are they emerging? How is the nationality question reconceptualised?

On the economic dimension, we may ask: what collective norms are being used in the new regionalist economic modes of action? How is the theme of local cultural identity and the idea of European funds used in capital terms?

On the political dimension, we may ask: What new institutional transformations are taking place locally? And what new forms of cross-frontier cooperation are occurring (with and without the support of INTERREG funds)? Who does it involve and why?

While there is no prospect of a Europe of the Peoples replacing the Europe of the States, a new form of politics is emerging in which nationalities questions may be managed and normalized.[20] Keating identifies four levels of adaptation inherent to Europeanisation potentially affecting minority movements (2004a & 2004b): a rethinking of sovereignty and a certain de-ethnicization of nationalist movements; a change in the conception of democracy and Human Rights, taking them out of the state framework and into the EU's; a functional transformation and territorial restructuring; a new opportunity structure allowing non-state entities a role in the European polity. Some political representatives of minorities recognise that the various visions of Europe provide to a certain extent space for them in the interstices of the state system (Jauregui 1997) (Keating 2004b; Keating 2004c). The most attractive kind of Europe for regional and minority actors for example is an integrated, decentralised and pluralist one and many majority regional and stateless-national actors have pressed for this. Thus, their pro-Europeanism can serve as a means to legitimize the European project itself by linking it to local mobilization and identity, and vice versa.

On the normative dimension, we may ask: What does it mean to be European for self-acclaimed minority representatives? What is the salience of European values (for example with the talk of human rights and regions) in local discourses about the minority community. How is the notion of Europe used in the local minority nationalist and regionalist discourses.

For each of these different effects, there is a hypothesis of mobilization and territorialisation, but also a counter-hypothesis of other trends taking place.

We suggest defining the unit of analysis as being politicians and members of local associations and NGOs who claim to represent the cultural community in the border area.

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20 The European Constitution makes no mention of minorities or recognises any notion of a Europe of the Peoples. Nonetheless, some minority representatives who have been making a variety of claims to self-determination, historic and present rights and sovereignty and post-sovereignty claims see in the Constitution a possibility of having their aspirations taken into account. To what extent this is possible is debatable. However what is certain is that a new form of constitutional thinking is needed, adapted to a world in which the connection between nation, territory and sovereignty can no longer be taken for granted (Keating 2004a).

Many representatives of minorities continue to be disillusioned and some are considering voting against the Constitution in respective State referendums. At this level, it would be interesting to examine the nature of political interaction between these different representatives and those adhering to the State, as the state seeks to obtain a 'Yes' vote to the Constitution.

2.3 Brief historical overview of European policies and critical assessment

In this section we outline the development of European policies on a) regional development and b) autochtonous cultural and linguistic minority issues. We provide this in the form of a chronological outline to illustrate the evolution of European institutions' perceptions and approaches to the regional and minority issues. Also, in an attempt to go beyond the rhetoric of the various European institutions in their charters, treaties and policy outlines, we will tentatively explore in this section how the ideas and objectives actually work in the involvement of actors at the local level.

2.3.1 European policies on regional development

Regions as important territorial units for effective democratic processes and socioeconomic development become officially acknowledged in the 1950s. The Treaty of Rome signed in 1957, states in its preamble the objective to 'strengthen the unity of their (states') economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing among the various regions and the backwardness of the less-favoured regions'. When the Council of Europe is founded in 1949, a Committee of Regional and Local Authorities is created. In 1958, the European Community launches sector-based funds to begin developing this cohesion between regions – the *ESF* and the *EAGGF*. The Council of Europe begins to promote a European regional planning theory. In resolution 210, it states that 'the harmonious geographical development of such (economic) activities (…) is impossible in the absence of a regional development policy'.[21] In 1970, the Council of Europe's European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) launches its first European conference for Ministers. The concept of regional/spatial planning is explained thus: 'Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy'.[22] 'Regional/spatial planning contributes to a better spatial organisation in Europe and in finding solutions to problems that go beyond the national framework. Its aim is to create feelings of common identity in North-South and East-West relations.'[23] The charter stresses that such planning 'must be based on active civic participation.[24]

The ESF was reformed in 1971 with the aim of extending and strengthening the Fund as an instrument responding to Community rather than purely national objectives, while introducing greater efficiency and flexibility in its management. The new fund which emerged[25] had substantially greater resources, exceeding in the first two years the total budget for the twelve years of the previous fund. The new structure was a compromise between Member States advocating a focus on specific categories of

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21 http://coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/environment/cemat/presentation/defa...
22 Recommendation (84)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter.
23 Op.cit.
24 Op.cit.
25 http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/esf/en/overview/ftnts.htm#n01.

workers and those favouring an emphasis on structural unemployment in the less developed regions. This feature was to re-emerge in the subsequent reviews of the ESF up to the adoption in 1988 of the principles underlying the present-day structure. The system of retroactive funding was replaced by new rules providing for applications to be submitted prior to the beginning of operations. A further innovation was the opening up of ESF aid to the private sector. For the first time, private bodies became eligible for ESF grants to the extent that a public authority guaranteeing the scheme was also contributing.

In 1975 the EU created the *European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)* which aims to redistribute money to the poorest regions. Northern Ireland was specified as one of the absolute priority regions.

In 1980 the Council of Europe produced the *Framework Convention for Cross-Frontier Cooperation for Territorial Collectivities and Authorities*, also known as the *Madrid Convention,* providing basic legal instrument for cross-border partnership. This, however, was only binding for public authorities, and not for civil society. Thus, cross-frontier cooperation remained latent, only existing in official expressions of interest on the part of authorities on either side of frontiers, with little concrete action to back such statements up. Three years later, the Council of Europe adopted the *European Regional and Spatial Planning Charter*.

The 1980s witnessed further regionalisation of different sorts in individual EU member state countries. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was talk of a 'Europe of the Regions', a vaguely specified vision of an EU in which regions would be recognised as a third level of government alongside states and the EU. This, however, was not accompanied by any concrete action on the part of EU member states or EU policy-makers.

The ESF underwent further reforms with an accentuated emphasis on lagging regions. The new decision requires 40% of the budget to be allocated, amongst others, to Greece, Ireland, and Northern Ireland. The ESF acted as a catalyst for new approaches to projects, harnessing and bringing to bear the combined resources of all involved. It encouraged a 'simplification of administration' and 'local solutions to local issues'.[26] The European Commission recognised that local planning and a bottom-up approach would lead to more effective use of the ESF. The single project system was considered to have outlived its usefulness and to be ill-adapted to the enhanced scale of the Funds' operations especially with the enlargement of the Community to twelve Member States. The growth of the subsidiarity idea, later to be enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty, also influenced the move to decentralise the administration of the ESF through the introduction of integrated programming.

A foretaste of what was to come appeared in a Commission report in 1983 which recommended 'the introduction of a Community development and structural adjustment policy in the service of priority activities defined by the Community and implemented by the entire armoury of the Community's Structural Funds and other financial instruments.'[27] The first real examples of such integrated action with the

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26 http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/esf2000/introduction-en.htm.
27 http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/esf/en/overview/ftnts.htm#n01.

involvement of partnerships were the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMP) in 1986 to cushion the Mediterranean regions of France, Italy and Greece against the impact of the enlargement of the Community to Spain and Portugal. These programmes involved assistance for industrial and agricultural conversion by the ERDF and EAGGF, with the essential human resources component provided through the ESF, in a framework of multi-annual programming. Around the same time, other Member States were encouraged to submit Integrated Development Operations constructed on the same lines as the IMPs. Despite the priority offered them in the guidelines for the management of the ESF, however, the response was limited. The Greek government applied for a series of measures, in the social as well as other policy areas to assist the integration of the country into the Community. This led to the adoption of Council Regulation (EEC) 815/84 providing aid, totalling ECU 120 million, over a period of five years (later extended to ten) for the establishment of the essential infrastructure to develop training services qualifying for ESF support and promoting the reform of the psychiatric system. This Regulation, although strictly speaking not part of the Structural Funds' Regulations and Budgets, was managed by the ESF services.

Over the 1980s, the Commission sought to increase its influence over the framing and implementation of the policy, to convert it to a genuine instrument of regional policy, and to ensure that spending is additional to national spending programmes (Keating 2005). From the late 1980s, it also sought to co-opt regional interests as partners in designing and implementing programmes. This produced a three-level contest for control of the policy instrument, among the Commission, Member States and regions themselves.

In 1988, there was a major reform, again guided by both political and policy logics. The political logic was provided by the need to compensate the countries of southern Europe and Ireland for the adoption of the single market programme measures in the period to 1993. The policy logic was the Commission's desire to convert the ERDF and other structural funds into a genuine policy. The funds doubled and the three main ones, the ERDF, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Guidance Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) were brought together (Armstrong 1995).

Community-wide objectives were established and the Commission drew up its own map of eligible areas, using Community-wide criteria. Funds were granted only to projects within approved Community Support Frameworks (CSFs), apart from 9%, which was reserved for Community Initiatives sponsored by the Commission. CSFs were negotiated between the Commission and member states, with the involvement of regions themselves. Additionality was made a general principle, so that spending would be over and above national spending. The whole policy was guided by the notion of subsidiarity, with the greatest possible involvement of regional and local interests and the social partners representing business, labour and voluntary groups. The regulations prescribed an integrated approach to regional development: as this links spatial policy to technology, environmental policy, education, public procurement and competition policy, it was intended to bring regions into contact with a range of EU policies and directorates. The Commission, in line with contemporary thinking on development policy, also sought to move from infrastructure to human capital, productive investment and indigenous development.

This too implies a more active and participative role for regional actors of various sorts.

These changes potentially paved the way for greater regional involvement in policy-making and for stronger direct links between the Commission and regional interests. To a significant extent, this has happened (Hooghe 2001). Yet some of the weakest regions, not equipped with appropriate institutional structures, have struggled to benefit. While the reform may have given regions an entitlement to participate, Bailey and De Propris (2002) argue that some have lacked the capacity to do so effectively. Those states without regional structures have been obliged to create them, or at least a substitute for them, in order to be eligible for funds. This is the case in Greece and Ireland.

There has been a great deal of political mobilisation around the funds. The belief that lots of money can be obtained from the EU partly explains the thriving of regional lobbying and offices in Brussels. Regional actors make contact with Commission officials, and EU thinking on development policy has diffused through the mechanism of partnership.

Yet the effect on territorial relations should not be overstated. The Commission for instance does not have one definition of a region. It bases itself on the NUTS table (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) which consists of three levels, each of which is an aggregation of national administrative units. The Commission's objective following its policy logic is to get programmes going, to spend the funds in the most effective way possible, and to involve whatever partners they believe are appropriate for the task at hand.

National governments have also found their way back into the act and from the high point of 1988 there has been considerable re-nationalisation of the policy field. While the Commission has succeeded in concentrating funds on the neediest regions, it still has to make sure that everyone gets something in order to keep national governments satisfied.

The *European Charter of Local Self Government,* first adopted by the Council of Europe in 1985, entered into force on 1 September 1988, following its ratification by four countries out of 16 to have signed it. Local self-government is defined in article 3 of the charter as: 'the ability of local authorities to regulate and manage, themselves, a substantial share of public affairs in the interests of the local population. This right is exercised by democratically elected councils which may possess executive organs responsible to them.' The Charter is an international judicial undertaking which links the countries which have ratified it, whilst maintaining a degree of flexibility in order to take account of the legislative and administrative systems of each country. It imposes the respect of a minimum number of rights which constitute the first European platform for local self-government (Article 12).

To date, a further 18 signatures have been added and the Charter has been ratified by 30 European countries. It has been used as a major guideline by several countries of Central and Eastern Europe which have been admitted to membership of the Council of Europe in recent years in their constitutions and/or their basic local government legislation. The principle of local self-government is seen as such an essential

component of the Council of Europe's fundamental principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, that signature of the European Charter of Local Self-Government, along with the European Convention on Human Rights, is henceforth a pre-requisite for accession by new Member States.[28] In ratifying the Charter however, States may choose to adopt some parts of it and not others, and make their own interpretations.

Regional issues featured quite prominently in the European debate in the accession countries of central and eastern Europe. In the early years of the process, the impression was given that, to be a modern European country, it was necessary to have regional government on the western model. As there is no western model, but a variety of types (Keating 2002), this was a great simplification, but the idea persisted that regions of a critical 'European' scale are essential for economic competitiveness.

Another widespread belief was that regional government is needed in order to receive and manage Structural Funds (Hughes 2001; Hughes, Sasse and Gordon 2004). There is no written record of the Commission having laid this down, but this impression seems to have been given by Commission officials and consultants, and taken up in domestic debates by those pressing for reform for their own reasons.

The Community Initiative funds were launched in 1990, to last until 1994. For managing Interreg funds, many local institutions use the *European Economic Interest Grouping,* created in 1985 by the European Council in 1989 to provide the necessary legal entity based on Community law to facilitate cross-border cooperation.[29] As Interreg funds are only designed at this stage for frontiers internal to the EU, the European Commission created Phare to support cross-border cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe. A similar arrangement is made for the newly independent states with the Tacis programme.

Clause 203 of the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1993, allows regional ministers to represent Member States in the Council of Ministers. But this is only where domestic law permits, i.e. in Germany, UK, Austria and Belgium.

In the Edinburgh European Council of 1993, the decision was made to allocate one third of the Community budget to the Cohesion policy. Alongside the Structural Funds, the *Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance* (FIFG) is created. For the Structural Fund programming period 1994-1999, the ERDF concentrates assistance on 4 priority objectives corresponding to four kinds of regions. They were:

Objective 1 promoted the development and structural adjustment of regions. In our list of case studies, this includes Northern Ireland, Greece and Austria. Objective 2 focused on converting regions affected by industrial decline. In our list of case studies, this included France, Spain, Italy, Northern Ireland, Greece and Austria. Objective 5b aimed to facilitate the development and structural adjustment of rural areas. Objective 6 was aimed at development and structural adjustment of regions with an extremely low population density. This did not apply to any of our case

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28 http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/charter.html
29 http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l26015.htm

studies. Objectives 3, 4 and 5a covered the whole of the European Community and are not financed by ERDF, but by the other funds of the SFs – ESF, EAGGF and FIFG.

Eligibility for these objectives was defined on the EU's NUTS categorization of regions (see in section of 'Region' of this paper). Objective 1 was defined with reference to NUTS level 2, and Objective 2 areas to NUTS level 3.

Communities Initiatives (Interreg, Leader, Urban and Equal) amounted to 9% of the Structural Funds for the period 1995-1999. Leader was launched again as Leader II. Leader was financed by the EAGGF-Guidance section. Between 1994 and 1999, a sum of 1,081 million euros was used under regional Objectives 1 and 6.

Interreg also continued as Interreg II. Interreg II combined the functions of Interreg I and Regen, which, also launched in 1990 focused on trans-European networks for transport and energy distribution in Objective 1 regions. It had three distinct strands with a total budget of ECU 3,519 million in 1996 prices. 2613 million must go to Objective 1 and 6 regions only. What may interest us in EUROREG in particular is the first strand Interreg II A which focused on cross-border cooperation (Interreg II B is completion of energy networks and Interreg II C is cooperation in regional planning, especially water resources).

Interreg II A benefited of 1800 million ECUs (1994 prices) for Objective 1 and 6 regions. The eligible measures for Interreg II A were: studies related to development plans for treating border areas as an integrated geographical unit; development and support of SMEs through the establishment of cross-border networks; general tourism; local resource supplies; pollution prevention; rural development; cross-border trade networks; communications infrastructure; cooperation in field of education and culture between research centres and universities; cooperation on health; administrative exchanges and overcoming language barriers.[30] In appraising the programmes submitted by the Member States, the Commission 'paid particular attention to the degree of involvement of regional and local authorities'.[31]

The Commission then adopted in 1996 an additional section on spatial planning under Interreg II which includes the promotion of tourism, the development of cooperation networks between medium-sized towns and the use of information and communication technology. The promotion of language learning and regional culture were taken into consideration under this new section (Grin and Moring 2002: 56).

The Committee of the Regions (CofR) was created in 1994 as a second consultative body alongside the Economic and Social Committee, to represent regional and local government bodies at the heart of the EU. Three principles are stated as lying at the heart of the CofR, in their interpretation of the nature of the European Union: subsidiarity, proximity and partnership.[32] Subsidiarity meaning that 'decisions within the EU should be taken at the closest practical level to the citizen. The EU, therefore,

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30 To what extent were initiatives in these areas begun thanks to Interreg? In the Basque Country for example it is clear that such initiatives had already begun thanks to the dynamism of local actors. The Interreg label has only helped to officialise these already existing initiatives.
31 http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/inte2/inte2.htm
32 See http://www.cor.eu.int/en/presentation/Role.htm)

should not take on tasks which are better suited to national, regional or local administrations.' Proximity meaning that 'All levels of government should aim to be 'close to the citizens', in particular by organising their work in a transparent fashion, so people know who is in charge of what and how to make their views heard.' Partnership involves an assumption that 'sound European governance means European, national, regional and local government working together – all four are indispensable and should be involved throughout the decision making process.'

The CofR includes, at the discretion of Member States, regional and local representatives who must have an elective mandate or be directly answerable to an elected assembly. The CofR however remains weak, too heterogeneous, having only a consultative role and lacking in resources. Frustrated, strong regions created their own assembly under the name of Regions with Legislative Powers or Constitutional Regions to gain recognition in the European Constitution. More than anything, this is a discursive space pursued by many regional offices in Brussels which have become an important link in the exchange of ideas and policy initiatives.

The CofE created the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in 1994 to represent local and regional authorities in the CofE. This was then replaced by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRA). The CLRA, which has a largely consultative role, is made up of two chambers, one for local and one for regional authorities. Its main objective is to protect and promote the political, administrative and financial autonomy of local and regional European authorities by encouraging central governments to develop effective local democracy and apply the principle of subsidiarity.

The Peace Programme to promote reconciliation in Northern Ireland is adopted in 1995 by the European Commission as a 'Special Support Programme Community Initiative' to last until 1999.

The CofE produced a draft *European Charter of Regional Self Government* in 1997, stating that 'the guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European Continent stress the territorial dimension of human rights and democracy'.[33] The CofE also stresses that 'the recognition of self-government entails loyalty towards the State to which the regions belong' (Paragraph 8 of the preamble) and that 'the competencies of the regions shall be acknowledged or determined by the constitution' of the relevant state (Article 4, first paragraph). Furthermore, 'conflicts of competencies shall be settled according to the constitutional and statutory principles of each state. Failing a clear solution in the positive law applicable, the principle of subsidiarity shall be taken into consideration in the decision.'

Similarly to the other charters produced by the CofE, the ECRSG does not provide for an institutionalised system of control of its application, beyond a requirement for parties to supply all relevant information concerning legislative or other measures taken for the purpose of complying with the Charter. The need for special supervision machinery, such as exists for certain other European Conventions, was considered, but it was concluded that the existence of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRA) as an official CofE body representing the local and regional

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33 http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Environment/CEMAT/

authorities of all the member states and having direct access to the Committee of Ministers would ensure adequate political control of compliance.

In recent years CLRA has embarked upon a process of periodic review of the state of local autonomy in particular member states, as a means of verifying compliance with the Charter's provisions. It is assisted in this process by a recently constituted association of academic experts, the European Local Government Association for Research (ELGAR, also known as ARCOLE, *Association pour la Recherche sur les Collectivités Locales en Europe*). Moreover, CLRA henceforth uses the Charter on a permanent basis as a template for the consideration of a wide variety of policy and governance issues appearing on its agenda.

In 1997, the Treaty of Amsterdam incorporated all the values set out by the EU in the first Copenhagen criterion (1993) in Article 6 (1), 'liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and rule of law'.[34] That same year, the Phare programme was reoriented to address accession priorities.

In June 1999, during the Berlin European Council, the Structural Funds were again reformed and the operation of the Cohesion Fund adjusted. The aim was to simplify procedures and achieve greater decentralisation and concentration of support measures on most needy regions. This, however, on the whole involved granting more freedom to Member States, rather than the Commission, on the managing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of funding projects.[35] This reform was also part of Agenda 2000 which aims to prepare the EU for further enlargement.

The new regulations relate to the general aims and co-ordination of the four Community Structural Funds (RDF, SF, AGGF and FIFG). A financial package of 195 billion euros, over the period 2000 to 2006, was approved by the European Council and allocated by Member States between the various Funds. In addition, 18 billion euros is allocated to the Cohesion Fund.

For this period 2000-2006, the Structural Funds were reduced to three Objectives.[36] Objective 1, which is the priority Objective, remains unchanged: it continues to cover regions whose development is lagging behind (with a GDP of less than 75% of the Community average) and which are sparsely populated. Coastal areas and fisheries activities located in these regions will not only continue to benefit from FIFG support but will also be able to access the ERDF and the ESF. This covers, in our case, Greece and Ireland. The adaptation of structures in the fishing industry is integrated in this new Objective 1. Northern Ireland is the only region in our case which will receive transitory support. Objective 2 provides support for areas undergoing economic and social conversion, including areas dependent on fishing. For the purposes of our case, this only includes Greece, Italy, Spain and Austria (formerly in the old Objectives 2 and 5b). Objective 3 promotes measures for the development of human resources (education, training and employment). It operates in regions not covered by Objective 1. A transition period is planned for regions formerly covered by Objectives 1, 2 and 5b.

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34 See also Sasse 2004:7; Batt, 2004:1.
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http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/simplification/simpl_en.pdf
36 http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/funds/prord/sf_en.htm

ESF programmes are planned by Member States together with the European Commission and then implemented through a wide range of provider organisations both in the public and the private sectors. These organisations include national, regional and local authorities, educational and training institutions, voluntary organisations and the 'Social Partners', i.e. trade unions and works councils, industry and professional associations, and individual companies.

In 2000, Interreg III was introduced with an extra sector (C) to promote territorial integration between EU and candidate countries. Interreg III C is exclusively financed by ERDF. So are the innovative measures which concentrate on three priorities: improve the quality of assistance under the Objective 1 and 2 programmes; enhance and strengthen public-private partnership; exploit the synergies between regional policy and other Community policies; have exchanges between regions and collective learning by means of the comparison and spread of best practice.[37]

The strategy of innovative measures is determined, in line with the regional partnership principle, by a steering committee. Programme proposals must be submitted to the Commission each year from 2001 to 2005 so that the Commission can select those to be part-financed by the ERDF. The innovative measures have an annual allocation of EUR 400 million, or 0.4 of the ERDF's annual budget. Part-financing of their cost may amount to up to 80%, in Objective 1 regions, and 50%, or even 60% where the Community relevance of the measures justifies it, in Objective 2 regions.

For reasons of consistency, the Commission recommends that bodies responsible for payment and monitoring are the same in the case of both the programmes of innovative measures and the Objective 1 and 2 programmes.[38]

Also in 2000, the third phase of the Leader initiative, as Leader +, was launched, to continue until 2006. Under Leader +, the Community contribution can reach 50 or 75%, depending on the target regions. Higher percentages are given to Objective 1 regions. Leader + also includes a cultural strategy, which operates on four levels: promotion of regional identity, exploitation of cultural heritage, creation of permanent cultural infrastructures and organisation of specific cultural activities.

Urban focuses on the economic and social regeneration of towns and urban areas in difficulty to promote sustainable urban development. Its funding for 2000-2006 will total 700 million euros.

The Equal Community initiative 2000-2006 leads on from two previous human resources initiatives: ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT.[39] It covers all EU Member States. It aims to tackle discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Projects must reflect priorities agreed between Member States and the Commission

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37 http://arguman.tripod.com/region.htm
38 http://arguman.tripod.com/region.htm
39 It has a budget of 2,847 million euros. The ESF is the only Structural Fund to finance this initiative. France benefits of 307 million euros, while Italy 371, Ireland 32, UK 376, Austria 96 and Spain 81.

The second Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland was set up in 2000 to last until 2004. This joint UK/Ireland programme forms part of the Community Support Frameworks of both Northern Ireland and Ireland. The total budget available for funding projects is estimated over 740 million euros, of which the European Structural Funds will provide 531 million euros. Around 80% of the total programme's allocation will go to projects in Northern Ireland and 20% to the Border Region of Ireland; 15% of the overall programme will be attributed to cross-border projects. EU assistance is limited to 75% of the cost of a project.

Also in 2000, the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) and the Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (Sapard) complement the Phare programme.

Around this time too, the Commission clarified that the only formal requirement for the Structural Funds was that accession countries should have a level of administration at the NUTS2 level. It then proceeded to lay down a highly centralized model for the planning and management of Structural Fund programmes. Its motive appears to have been worries about the lack of capacity at the regional level and of clientelism and corruption, together with the need to spend the Structural Fund allocation for the remainder of the programming period 2001-7 in the three years available after accession (Keating 2003). So the Commission pressed for as few sectoral and territorial programmes as possible, a single paying authority, and strong National Development Plans as the basis for the future Structural Fund programmes. A third of the funding was to be given through the Cohesion Fund, which does not have a regional dimension. In a further departure from its own practice, it has insisted that a large part of the funds should go to hard infrastructure rather than the 'soft' development measures, such as human capital and entrepreneurship, now favoured by regional policy in the West. The result has been a de-linking of European policy from the domestic politics of regionalism in the new Member States (Keating 2003).

In early 2004, the European Commission presented proposals for the reform of Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013: 'A new partnership for cohesion: convergence, competitiveness, cooperation'.[40] The idea was to have a 'more integrated regional policy'[41] where procedures would be 'simplified' and concentrated on the most needy regions of the 25 member states. The regional policy budget will be of 336 billion euros, still the equivalent of one third of the total EU budget. 79% will be spent on reducing the gap between poor and richer regions, 17% on increasing the competitiveness of poor regions and creating local jobs, while 4% on cross-cooperation.

The most recent reforms, for the period starting in 2006, were marked by the needs of enlargement, pressures for renationalization, and budget constraints. Enlargement more than doubled the disparities between the 10% most prosperous and the 10 % least prosperous areas, calling for massive transfers if the policy were to operate on the same lines as in the past. The Commission's proposals adopted in 2004 provided for further concentration of funding, decentralization to Member States and a

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40 http://europa.eu.int/pol/reg/print_overview_en.htm.
41 Op.cit.

simplification of policy instruments. At the same time, however, it proposed to increase spending so that cohesion policy would overtake agriculture as the largest item in the budget (Giordano 2004). 78% of the new allocation would go to a 'cohesion' objective, for regions with a gross domestic product less than 75 % of the average, in effect retaining the old Objective One category. 18 % would go to a competitiveness objective and not be restricted as to geographical coverage. The remainder would be for territorial cooperation, meaning cross-border programmes. The Commission would adopt a lighter touch, especially where it is spending a small amount of money, as under the second objective. National frameworks would be negotiated between the Commission and Member States, and national and regional programmes would be worked out within these (European Commission 2004).

The retreat from interventionist regional policy since 1988 reflects general political pressures to contain the role and power of the Commission. It also stems from a concern within the Commission that an active role was too costly in time and resources and ineffective in control; regional funds featured in the mismanagement scandals that erupted in the late 1990s (Hooghe 1998). So, while structural policy has stimulated increased regional activity, this has followed distinctly national lines. Where regional governments have a strong institutional position in the domestic arena, they have become important actors. Where they are weak domestically, states have largely retained their central role concerning links to the Commission and control of regional policy implementation. At one extreme are the Belgian regions, which deal directly with the Commission on the designation of eligible areas, the allocation of the funds, negotiation of the contracts and implementation. The German Länder are also deeply involved, through the mechanisms of co-operative federalism. Individual Länders participate in the design and implementation of CSFs, through the Joint Tasks Framework (Anderson 1996a). At the other extreme are Ireland and Portugal, which lack an elected regional tier of government, as well as Greece, with an elected though extremely weak regional level. At the urging of the Commission, even in those inhospitable settings, local actors have become more involved, though the changes fall well short of undermining the state's gate-keeping role (Reese 1995; Yannopoulos 1995). In France and the UK (outside Scotland and Wales) there has, paradoxically, been some increased centralisation since the 1988 reforms, as the structural funds have become financially significant and politically more salient (Balme 1995; Jones 1995).

Overall, the institutional machinery of partnership, with considerable money, has strengthened aspects of multi-level governance (Ansell 1997; Hooghe 1998). In a 1999 report, the Commission concludes that 'as an institution, the delivery system developed for the structural funds is characterised by multi-level governance, i.e. the Commission, national governments and regional and local authorities are formally autonomous, but there is a high level of shared responsibility at each stage of the decision-making process. The relationship between these is, accordingly, one of partnership and negotiation, rather than being a hierarchical one' (European Commission 1999:143) This challenges state-centric governance in that European institutions set general rules, regions participate in making decisions, and the three parties are in a relationship of mutual dependency rather than hierarchy. But this partnership has never applied evenly across all phases of decision-making. It has traditionally been strongest in the implementation stage of structural programming, but weak in the strategic planning stages. Successive reforms since 1993 have reduced

the interventionist role of the Commission and given more scope to Member States. With the new rules encouraging more partners, greater adjustment to national practices, and greater separation of responsibilities, partnership rules may no longer provide regional authorities an unconditional entitlement to participate in EU decision-making.

With regard to cross-frontier cooperation, the European economic interest grouping (EEIG) was recognised as ill-adapted to organising a structured co-operation of structural fund programmes within the Interreg Initiative during the 2000-20006 programming period. Acknowledging that Member States and regional and local authorities continued to experience important difficulties in carrying out and managing actions of cross-border cooperation within the framework of differing national laws and procedures, the European Commission published in July 2004 the first version of a draft of a future European regulation. The European Commission justified its taking action instead of leaving it to Member States by stating that effective conditions for cross-border co-operation can only be done at the community level. The Commission then took the measure, in accordance with the subsidiarity principle enshrined in article 5 of the treaty. This new regulation aims to enable 'the creation of co-operative groupings in the community territory, invested with legal personality' (ibid: 2) in an effort to 'overcome the obstacles hindering cross-border cooperation'. This instrument is called 'European Groupings of cross-border co-operation' (EGCC). Its objective is defined as being 'to facilitate and promote cross-border co-operation between Member States, as well as regional and local authorities, with the aim of reinforcing economic, social and territorial cohesion.'

At the end of 2004, nine new cross-border and neighbourhood programmes between regions in the ten new Member States, accession countries and third countries were adopted by the European Commission as part of Regional policy. The total available funding for the period 2004-2006 amounts to 260 million euros, the bulk of which will come from Interreg and the rest from financial instruments for accession and third countries (Tacis, Phare and CARDS).[42]

Finally, the Structural Funds, along with the concept of Europe, are an arena for symbolic politics, in which regional and local politicians can claim to have established a link with Brussels, while the EU can claim credit for catering to regions and local action. Thus, both help to bring about a link between Europeanism and regionalist and minority claims. They mutually use each other for legitimising themselves in the public eye.

2.4   Decentralisation in CEE countries

Until 2000, there was still very much ambiguity in the European Commission's Reports about whether regionalisation in CEE countries was being required by the Commission. Instructions in the Accession Reports were vague, though the action reported in the Regular Reports did suggest that some countries had interpreted them (with what explicit advice from Commission officials is unclear) as indeed implying the need for some form of regionalisation. From 1999, the text in the Phare

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42 http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressreleasesaction.do?reference=memo/o5/22&format=html&aged=0...

programme mentions policy implementation more on a decentralised basis, but this refers to the individual or civil society rather than regional levels of government (Keating 2002). This assessment is supported by the fact that it was felt necessary to make explicit in a number of documents in 2000 and 2001, that regionalisation is not required. A term used far more frequently than regionalisation is that of decentralisation. The way this concept is used however is again open to a variety of interpretations in the various Commission reports[43] (Taylor 2002).

Since 2002, the requirement for administrative reform has been clarified, stipulating that accession countries should have defined NUTS2 level regions, as the basis for Objective 1 designation and allocation of funds. This is not, however, a requirement for the setting up of regional government or even decentralised government. Regions in Poland and Hungary are recognised as being NUTS2, while the smaller states are taken to constitute a NUTS2 region on its own. Candidate countries were asked to designate payment and managing authorities, with a preference for central rather than regional bodies (Keating 2002). As a further centralising measure, it was decided that, on accession of the new states, two thirds of their structural funding will come in the form of Cohesion Funds, which are national and not regional in scope.

Thus, while the European Commission presses CEE countries to involve as many social and local partners as possible in programme design and implementation, the main thrust is managerial, its policy stances remaining centralising.

The issue of cross-frontier cooperation in the CEE was first addressed in 1994 under Phare. But here too, cross-frontier cooperation programmes did not always encourage a local approach (Batt 2004). They also tended to be poorly matched to activities on the Western side of the frontier. Evaluation has pointed to a lack of local administrative capacity to receive these funds (Research voor Beleid International 1998; Batt 2002; Sasse 2004; Hughes, Sasse and Gordon 2004). At the same time, other studies confirm that EU support programmes have helped to transform loose and poorly equipped communities into more institutionalised forms of co-operations (Perkman 2003).

2.5   Summary on European regional policy

In general, the literature points to the Member States as the ultimate decision-makers in formulating priorities with the Commission. Regions cannot attract additional money through their own actions except for marginal amounts via the programmes of Community interest. Much of the literature looks at the process of decentralisation and regionalisation as advocated by the various European institutions, but plays down the role of local actors.

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43 Eg- It is different from subsidiarity, referring to co-ordination between levels (Group 3b Governance Report). It is something which happens within states, linked to democratisation and partnership (Second report on ESC). It is linked to the protection of individual freedoms and the NPM model (PAR Report). It refers to the transfer of powers (particularly where the SFs are concerned) from the suprastate to the (national) state level and is linked within the state context to the idea of partnership (DG Regional Policy).

European institutions provide opportunities for non-state actors to intervene, gain recognition, build systems of action and secure protection. On the other hand, the concrete opportunities are limited and rather disparate. Official statements of European institutions emphasize the importance of diversity and the provision of space for non-state actors, but many of the EU institutional and policy initiatives assume a homogeneous sub-State level of authority and identity (Closa 2001). EU rather plays the role of providing the normative frame.

2.5.1   European policies on minority issues

The Council of Europe's *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* and the *European Court of Human Rights* entered into force in 1953. These function with individual national systems of law however (Gilbert 2002). After the Cold War, various charters on minority rights protection are developed under the auspices of the Council of Europe, OSCE and EU which form an interlinked system (Brusis 2003).

The first direct elections to the European Parliament took place in 1979. Some regionally elected minority nationalist parties thus manage to obtain a political voice at the heart of the EU (De Winter 1998; De Winter 2002; Lynch 1996). In 1981, the European Parliament grouping named the European Free Alliance was created, bringing together elected political parties with various minority nationalist or regionalist ambitions. Not all nationalist parties claiming to represent minorities identify with this grouping however; some prefer to take part in other groups such as the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. It would be interesting here to explore what the socio-political consequences of these dynamics in Brussels have for political interaction back home.

In 1982, the European Parliament set up the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, with the financial assistance of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, Direction C - Unit 5 Language Policy and the explicit aim 'to promote and safeguard regional or minority languages and cultures'.

In 1983, the Community action for the 'promotion and safeguard of regional and minority languages and cultures' was launched. Co-financing was in most cases provided for up to 50% of eligible costs, to projects meeting the programme's action lines: development of regional and/or minority language skills, language description and standardisation, economic and social promotion, information and dissemination, etc. This action was renewed yearly with an annual budget until 1998, when it was suspended.

The CSCE/OSCE from 1990 onwards enhanced the normative basis for the EU to build on human rights issues, by making an explicit link between democracy, human rights, conflict-prevention and minority protection (Sasse 2004:2).[44] The *CSCE Peace Charter* of 1990 stipulated that 'peace, justice, stability and democracy, require that

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44 See Chapter 4 of the Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, 5-29 June 1990: http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/hd/cope90e.htm. The tension between advocates of a traditional concept of state sovereignty and those who favoured a reformulation of sovereignty to include an obligation of minority protection first surfaced at the CSCE Copenhagen meeting in 1990.

the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities be protected and conditions for the promotion of that identity be created.'[45] However, the term 'minority' is nowhere defined in OSCE documents. What little discussion did take place on the meaning of minority indicated there was no real agreement on this issue amongst OSCE member states (Jackson Preece, 1998:21). As a result, in the European Council held in Luxembourg in 1991, human rights become an integral part of the EU's formulation of conditionality. The EU then explicitly adopts CSCE norms in the context of the *Badinter Arbitration Committee.*[46] Its emphasis on the rights of 'peoples and minorities' was affirmed by the *EU Foreign Ministers' Declaration on the Guidelines on Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and the Declaration of Yugoslavia,* which made recognition conditional upon, amongst other things, 'guarantees for the rights of ethnic and national groups and minorities in accordance with the commitments subscribed to in the framework of the CSCE'.[47]

The *Maastricht Treaty* (Treaty of European Union) came into force in 1993, with a clause *'in favour of cultural, national and regional diversity'* (Articles F TEU and 128 TEC)[48] and, in article 151, asserted that 'the Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures'.

The *Phare* programme did not mention minorities. The most closely related budget line for assistance in the policy area of minority protection was headed 'civil society and democratization', and accounted only for approx 1% of total Phare funds distributed.

In 1992, the CofE adopted the *European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages* and three years later adopted the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. Matters covered in the Convention included the use of language, education, media, public administration, commercial and road signs, and cross-border contacts. However, the Convention did not recognise minorities as collectivities but rather addresses itself to the rights of individuals who designate themselves as members of these.[49] The Convention was designed to be adopted by signatory states only as they see fit; it did not define minorities, also leaving this to states. Neither the FCPNM nor the *European Convention on Human Rights* (ECHR) contained a definition of the term minority.

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45 The text cited is in the 'Human Dimension' section; see http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/paris90e.htm#anchor-huma-3228.

46 For limits of this human rights conditionality, see B. De Witte and G.N. Toggenburg 2004.

47 In its first opinion, the Badinter Committee advised that the successor states to Yugoslavia must abide by 'the principles and rules of international law, with particular regard for human rights and the rights of peoples and minorities'. For the full text see Pellet 1992.

48 See http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/treaties/en/entoc01.htm.

49 It was expected at the heart of the EU that general processes of 'Europeanisation' would temper the aggressive territoriality of national identities. Also that socio-economic modernisation in the context of EU accession would have an impact on minority issues by deflecting popular energies away from identity politics into more 'rational' channels (Batt, 2004. p.1). For a discussion of the interpretation of minority protection norms in CEE countries see Tesser (2003). For a general history that is sensitive to the issue of minorities in Central and Eastern Europe, see Crampton 1994.

The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed in 1997 but did not include respect for and protection of minorities. Three years later, the *European Charter of Fundamental Rights* was approved at the European Council of Nice in 2000. This was the first express declaration on human rights. Here too, the EU finally expressed its 'respect for linguistic and cultural diversity'.[50] Articles 21 and 22 respectively stated that 'any discrimination based on any ground such as … language … membership of a national minority … shall be prohibited' and 'the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity'.

Thus, as distinct from its connection to rights, linguistic diversity was presented as an asset of the EU. Numerous resolutions passed by the European Parliament,[51] the most recent adopted on 13 December 2001, supported linguistic diversity and call for a more active policy from the Union with respect to regional and minority languages. That same year, it adopted the *Resolution on Regional and Lesser Used Languages.*[52] This supported the reintroduction of financial support for regional and minority languages, the implementation of article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the signature and ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages by the governments of the member states. Several opinions were also adopted by the Committee of the Regions, such as the *Opinion on the promotion of regional and minority languages* of 13 June 2001.[53]

In 2002, the European Council produced a resolution for the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the 'European Year of Languages 2001', in which it was stated that 'all European languages are equal in value and dignity from the cultural point of view and form an integral part of European culture and civilisation'.[54]

An agreement was also made on the conditions for the accession of the ten new Member States. The European Council stipulates that 'membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the respect and protection of minorities'.[55] The *Framework Convention on the Protection of the Rights of National Minorities* and the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* of the Council of Europe served as a benchmark criterion in this field.

The European Convention, launched as a step towards the drawing up of the European Constitution, signed in October 2004, did not have as a priority the national/regional question. It did not seek to provide a new statute for nations and national minorities as their political actors had wished. Rather, debates within the Convention followed more a logic in which authority is divided between European and state-level

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50 Article 22 of the CFREU. See also webpage of European Commission's Directorate on Education: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/lang/languages/langmin/langmin_en.html
51 See p. 29 of the report "Support for minority languages in Europe" commissioned by the Language Policy Unit of the Directorate General for Education and Culture.
52 http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/lif/dat/2000/en_300D1934.html.
53 CdR 86/2001 fin EN/o.
54 Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the promotion of linguistic diversity and language learning in the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the European Year of Languages 2001, Doc. 2002/C 50/01, OJ C 50, 23/2/2002, p.1-2.
55 This was first mentioned in the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council in Copenhagen on 21 and 22 June 1993 (DN: DOC/93/3, 22/06/1993).

institutions (Keating 2004d). The draft Constitution ended up dividing many stateless nationalist movements. The majority in the Convention and in the Committee of the Regions for example refused to make a distinction between federated units and devolved national parliaments on the one hand and municipal government on the other. There was disagreement about whether to officialise a special category of regions with legislative powers, or consider all regions equal. Other ideas, such as dividing a Member State's votes between its regions, creating a chamber of nationalities for stateless nations, providing for internal enlargement in which stateless nations could become full members of the EU, and Lamassoure's proposal for an administrative arrangement between regions, states and the EU, were also rejected.

Minority Rights protection only became a priority on the EU's internal political or legal agenda with the prospect of accession of CEE countries (Biscoe 1999; Sasse 2004). Minority rights protection was then mentioned in setting the criteria for accession to the EU. For writing up these criteria, the EU relied on the principles and processes from the Council of Europe and the OSCE. However, when the Copenhagen criteria were incorporated into the *acquis* of the Union, this clause was strategically left out for all Member States.[56]

EU conditionality has contributed to the salience of minority rights on the political agendas in CEE. A range of factors, such as the size of the minority, its location, resources and degree of political mobilization, the involvement of kin states, the constitutional design of the new regime and its transition path, has interacted with external conditionality and produced varied policy outcomes. But the norms and practices advocated by the Council of Europe and the OSCE in CEE are neither enforceable nor provide a criteria for 'accessionability'. They are open to interpretation and thus have been applied and evaluated variably in the different CEE countries (Kymlicka 2001; Vermeersch 2003). The lack of a firm foundation in EU law and concise benchmarks for minority protection (De Witte 2000) means that what constitutes minority and minority rights remains unclear and there are different interpretations of what implementation of promotion and protection of minorities may mean (Tesser 2003).

The European Commission's reports monitoring the progress in minority protection in the CEE have a formulaic structure broadly following Copenhagen criteria, permitting cross-country comparisons. But as the political Copenhagen criterion was not based on the *acquis*, the Commission rests its monitoring exercise on a set of values and non-EU documents, namely the ECHR (which is now part of the acquis), the major OSCE documents of the early 1990s and the UN declarations. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) was not among the instruments drawn on for inspiration and legitimacy at the beginning of the monitoring process, but over time it became the Commission's primary point of

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56 The Race and Employment Directives of 2000 form part of the acquis. Their transposition into national legislation is covered by the third Copenhagen criterion. For a case-by-case overview of the gradual adoption of anti-discrimination norms and legislation, see European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs Unit D.4, Equality, diversity and enlargement. Report on measures to combat discrimination in acceding and candidate countries, Luxembourg: European Communities, 2003. See also Hughes and Sasse.

reference in the field of minority rights (Sasse, 2004: 8; Hughes and Sasse, 2003; Brusis, 2003; Smith 2003).

The Reports frequently remind the respective governments and parliaments of the candidate states to sign and ratify the FCNM, despite the fact that several EU Member States have not done so (Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg and Netherlands. France has not even signed. In CEE, Latvia has still not ratified.).[57] In contrast, the adoption of the even more controversial European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) is rarely mentioned in the Reports. By March 2004, only Hungary, Slovakia[58] and Slovenia[59] had ratified ECRML, all adding complex declarations providing them with escape clauses.[60]

While most of the ten CEE candidate countries have significant minority populations, only some minority groups are consistently stressed in the European Commission's Regular Reports: the Russophone minority in Estonia and Latvia, and the Roma minorities of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. In the first report on Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia, the Roma are the only minority commented, despite the existence of others.[61]

The European Commission's Reports do not systematically assess the structure and operation of institutional frameworks or policies for dealing with minority groups. Problems in the implementation of minority policy are dealt with in general terms, listing the lack of funding, weak administrative capacity, understaffing and the low levels of public awareness in the candidate countries as the main shortcomings (Taylor, 2002).

Overall, it appears that the main impacts in CEE of the European Commission's Regular Reports have been on legislation, and influencing mentality and public debate in respective countries (Sasse, 2004). Delays in legislation and implementation of the protection of minority groups are attributed to the weak capacity of states to deal with the issues. Such observations however need to be placed in their empirical context so as to evaluate the balance between domestic and external incentives for minority protection. Also however, according to Sasse (2004), it seems that there is often a lack of political will both within the candidate countries and on the part of the EU to go beyond the rhetorical or formal legal and institutional change.

2.6   Summary on minority rights

European institutions regard respect for fundamental rights as a general principle of European law, and recognition of difference is increasingly seen as flowing from

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57 See http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/cadrelistetraites.htm
58 Slovakia, Declaration of 5 September 2001.
59 Slovenia, Declaration of 4 October 2000.
60 Romania, the Czech Republic and Poland have signed, though not yet ratified the ECRML.
61 This 'hierarchy' of minority issues, according to Sasse (2004: 11), reflects the EU's interest in good relations with its most powerful neighbour and energy supplier Russia and its own soft security concerns regarding minorities. A non-territorialized, diverse and marginalised minority like the Roma is also a politically less sensitive group to focus on, compared with the Hungarians in Slovakia and Romania or the Turks in Bulgaria (Guglielmo 2004).

those rights.[62] Yet, legal protection for collective rights of minorities in Europe remains to this day under-developed, as they are still not explicitly mentioned in EU treaties. No European regime recognizes a right to self-determination for minorities and there is always explicit recognition of the integrity of states and their borders. Minority issues remain at the discretion of individual states. EU member-states' policies for their minorities vary widely. While some, such as France and Greece, have reservations about recognising ethnic minorities as a legal category at all, others implement special provisions in education, culture and territorial self-government for specific groups.[63]

2.7   Conclusion

The EU provides a context in which self-identified minority actors may find new opportunities as such. This is done symbolically in the political, economic and cultural context of the EU. The European Commission has never officially committed itself, by way of policy-making, to the implementation of protection measures for cultural and linguistic minorities and stateless nations. Through its engagement with other European organisations such as the Council of Europe, it has only variably given Member and Accession States guidelines on minority rights protection; it has not enforced any kind of obligation and even, in many cases, especially in Accession Countries, turned a blind eye to laxness in following these guidelines. Most claims that the European institutions have assisted minorities rest on different interpretations, rather than on a genuinely comparative examination of the evidence (Keating 2005). More than anything, the European institutions provide norms, on which state politicians and policy-makers can base themselves. Nonetheless, by emphasizing subsidiarity and local self-government, we can appreciate EU regional policies as providing more concrete opportunities for the mobilisation of local actors in regions with large minority populations. But such a notion remains abstract, on the symbolic level (Keating and McGarry, forthcoming).

Any funding aimed at local development is of interest to minorities and is an incentive for them to mobilise to acquire it. Any possibility of acquiring this funding exists only within the institutional structure set up by the respective state. So in order to gain access to these funds, minorities need to gain stakes within the political system of the state, be it at the local, regional or higher state level.

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62 A series of more recent texts in international law explicitly incorporate respect for identity and particular cultures. Convention against discrimination in education, United Nations, 1960, article 5; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, United Nations 1966, article 27; Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE 1990, paragraphs 32, 33,34, 35, 40; European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Council of Europe, 1992; Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Council of Europe, 1995; Decision No. 1934/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17/7/2000 on the European Year of Languages 2001, OJ L 232, 14/9/2000.

63 Most such provisions thus imply recognition that minority rights have a collective dimension, even if the idea of 'collective rights' is not part of official discourse. In practice then, if not always in theory, EU member-states' policies differentially contain 'civic' and 'ethnic' elements.

Developments in minority rights protection and regionalisation have taken place through a general process of Europeanisation, a concept embracing a complex array of political, cultural, social and economic changes taking place in Europe, in which the EU plays an important role.

Theoretically, it would seem that European institutions have the potential to assist minorities in a number of ways. There are three ways in which their influence might positively impact on national minorities- 1. judicially; 2. through the political space afforded to national minorities for increased voice within the institutions of the EU; and 3. via the role of altered norms with respect to sovereignty.

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2.9 Acronyms

EEC – European Economic Community

EU – European Union

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

CEMAT - Council of Europe's European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning

CLRA - Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

CofE – Council of Europe

CofR – Committee of the Regions

CSCE – Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

CSF - Community Support Frameworks

EEAGG – Common Agricultural Fund

EEIG – European economic interest grouping

EGCC - European Groupings of cross-border co-operation

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

ESF – European Social Fund

FIFG – Fisheries Fund

IMP - Integrated Mediterranean Programmes

ISPA - Structural Policies for Pre-Accession

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

NUTS - Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics

SAPARD - Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development

SF – Structural Funds

3 Regions, minorities and European policies: a policy report on Northern Ireland

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Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (the UK) that occupies the north-eastern corner of isle of Ireland, has a disproportionate 'fame' compared to its size – an area of mere 13,756 square kilometres with 1.6 million inhabitants - in today's world. It is first and foremost known for the 'Troubles' – the continuous waves of political violence between two communities, each holding a radically different view of the future of that part of the island. The Troubles, which started in 1969, has claimed more than 3,000 lives, brought misery to many more people. The conflict between the two communities is described more often than not as a religious one – the one between the Protestant majority and the Catholic minority – but some scholars would see it as a conflict between two national communities (the unionist majority with their allegiance with the British state and the nationalist minority wanting a reunification with the rest of Ireland) that has its roots in religious differences.

According to the latest census of 2001, the population of Northern Ireland stands at 1,685,267 which is about 2.9 per cent of the UK population. The gender ratio between male and female is 48.74 to 51.26 which is very similar to the UK figure of 48.61 to 51.39. Ethnically, 99.15 per cent is classified as 'white' with 0.2 per cent being 'mixed', 0.1 per cent 'Irish traveller', 0.09 per cent 'Indian'. This is an interesting aspect in the contemporary UK in which the proportion of non-whites stands at 7.88 per cent of the population, and therefore the question of majority-minority relationship is often manifest as a racial or ethnic issue. In Northern Ireland, however, the problem is mainly observed within the 'white' population, the overwhelming majority of the region, which indicates a danger on the part of observers to look over other forms of conflict.

One characteristic of the Northern Irish situation needs to be highlighted before moving on to the discussion of details: the minority question. The Catholics, many of whom are nationalists, constitute a minority in Northern Ireland or indeed in the all British context, which lies at the heart of their grievances against the current system, while the Protestants, almost all of whom are unionists, although being a majority group in Northern Ireland, constitute a minority (around 25 per cent) of the all Ireland context, the very reason why Northern Ireland were partitioned in the 1921 settlement (Fraser, 2000: 84). Any discussion of the majority-minority relationship in Northern Ireland has to take this dynamic, or rather, fluid, dimension

The most obvious, immediate cause of the 'Troubles', and more broadly the tension between the two communities, lies with the 1921 settlement by which the southern part of the isle of Ireland became independent while six counties in the north (Antrim, Armagh, Derry/Londonderry, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone) remained with the UK, which left the Catholic population in the north as a minority under the control of the Protestant majority. But of course, the Partition did not happen in the vacuum and therefore a short overview of history is necessary.

3.1.1   Map: Northern Ireland – Six counties and major cities*
*Londonderry is also known as Derry

3.2   Seventeenth century: the colonial plantation of Ulster

Because the Protestant reformation did not penetrate Ireland, which was a nominally independent kingdom ruled by the English Crown, it largely remained Catholic. Since Spain was the major enemy of England of the time, Catholic Ireland was a potential threat. One of the ways of containing this perceived threat was *de facto* colonisation of Ireland, spearheaded by the plantation of Ulster. What happened was very similar to what would happen elsewhere in the British Empire to come; the natives were segregated and forced into reservations on the worst land and the best land was offered to Protestant settlers both from England and Scotland. Although the Irish were not completely subjugated in Ireland as a whole, Ulster was turning itself into a different society where the Protestants held power.

The consequences of the so-called English civil war (1642-6; 1648-9) in Ireland are also important in understanding the current tension between the nationalist and unionist communities in Northern Ireland. During the war, the Irish – both natives and old English (descendants of early Catholic English settlers) – sided with the royalists because they were Catholics. When the Protestant/Puritan parliamentary forces won on the mainland, Oliver Cromwell's army turned its attention to Ireland. When the civil war was finally settled by the succession of the English Crown by William the Orange – the Protestant - in 1688, Catholic Ireland remained loyal to Catholic King James II. In Ulster, the Irish Catholic royalists captured most of Ulster, but failed to win the siege of Derry/Londonderry in 1689. This experience has

become the central peace in Ulster Protestant mythology. The slogan 'No surrender!' has its roots in this event. William landed in Ireland in summer of 1690 and defeated James II's army at the River Boyne on 12 July. The Catholic royalists surrendered in 1691, confirming the hegemony of the Protestant Crown over Ireland.

3.3 Eighteenth century: the Protestant ascendancy

During the eighteenth century, the power was in the hands of the Anglo-Irish Protestants, and the phrase 'the Protestant ascendancy' is frequently employed to describe the realities in Ireland of that time. The confidence the Anglo-Irish Protestant establishment had developed led to an increasing demand for more autonomy from the Crown. This tendency was boosted by the American and French revolutions, and in 1791 an organisation called the 'United Irishmen', comprised of both Presbyterians and Catholics, was set up to achieve real independence for Ireland. The United Irishmen staged a rebellion in 1798, and although it was quashed quickly it showed the revolutionary tendency that could overcome the communal differences had taken root in Ireland. In response, Ireland was formally incorporated into the Union of Great Britain in 1801.

3.4 Nineteenth century: industrialisation and the Union

The nineteenth century was not only marked by the Union but also industrialisation. As it was the case elsewhere, industrialisation made its impact felt across the Island of Ireland but in a varying degree. Ulster, the North Eastern corner of the island, was rapidly incorporated in the industrial structure that had already developed in England and Scotland. Belfast became the centre of ship-building as well as textiles. However, in the rest of Ireland, the effect of industrialisation was not visible. Most of the Southern part remained essentially agrarian, preparing the ground for the discontent that was to be released in the next century.

The Union was intended to make Ireland 'British' but it did not work. Probably the Great Famine (1846-51) embodied the failure of the Union. The British government response to the rising trend of separatism in Ireland was home rule, that is, a form of devolution by which Ireland would be given a parliament and power to deal with Irish issues. Although it was first proposed as a way of dealing with Irish discontent with the Union, the idea soon became 'home rule all round' by which some degree of devolution were to be introduced to many parts of the UK. The Home Rule Bill, however, was not welcomed by the unionists in Ireland. Although Catholic/Irish majority of Ireland welcomed it as a way of escaping the colonial situation, the unionists feared becoming a minority in a devolved government and they opposed the idea. The Home Rule Bill, when it was passed in 1914, had a clause excluding all of Ulster due to the pressure from the unionists. Further negotiations on the status of Ulster were supposed to take place following the passage of the law, but due to the outbreak of the Great War, they were postponed, leaving nationalists expecting an all-Ireland unity and unionists determined not to let home rule work.

3.5 Twentieth century: the Partition and the 'Troubles'

The saga of home rule in the end led to the Easter Rising of 1916 in which Protestant and Catholic paramilitaries clashed with the future of Ireland at stake. It was quickly and bloodily quashed, and the British government resumed the negotiation with both sides as to how to implement home rule as a way out. In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act, the government's fourth attempt at home rule, was drafted. The 1920 Act proposed to create two self-rule parliaments in Ireland; one in Belfast as the capital of six counties, and the other in Dublin as the capital of a twenty-six county Southern Ireland. The Irish would be self-governing, and each parliament was free to achieve Irish unity if both sides agree. The unionists accepted the proposal seeing advantages in the Belfast parliament. The Irish/nationalists were not content and fought the war of independence (1919-21) against the Crown forces. In 1921, twenty-six counties gained independence as the Irish Free State with dominion status under the Crown. Based on the 1921 settlement the Northern Ireland parliament voted itself out of Dublin jurisdiction and therefore the partition was formalised.

In Northern Ireland, unionist/Protestant dominance over nationalist/Catholic was firmly entrenched in every section of life. Introduction of the first-past-the-post system, instead of proportional representation as it was originally advocated, to the Northern Ireland parliament elections ensured that unionist parties' monopoly of government. World War II also contributed greatly to the formalisation of partition as well as the inequality in Northern Ireland.

The drive to build a world-class welfare state by the post-war Labour government, perhaps, unwittingly acted as a catalyst for the explosion of tensions between the unionist and nationalist communities in Northern Ireland. After the war there were series of reforms introduced by the Northern Irish government: the introduction of welfare provisions, reconstruction of the financial relationship between Belfast and London; the Education Act of 1947 which allowed disadvantaged Catholic children to proceed to universities through grammar schools and so on. In the meantime, Northern Irish industry was declining rapidly which resulted in the highest unemployment rate in the UK. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) started its sporadic campaigns in the 1950s in the face of a unionist-dominated Northern Irish government. A sense of alienation from the Protestant establishment held by the nationalist/Catholic community deepened because of discrimination against Catholics in jobs and housing. In order to address these issues, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was formed in 1966 and a march to demand to end the discriminatory practices was staged in Londonderry/Derry in 1968 in which the police intervened. This is widely seen as the start of the 'Troubles'. Police brutality towards peaceful marchers was broadcast across the world, and riots and counter-riots followed. In August 1969, British troops were deployed to calm the situation in Bogside marking a new phase in the history of Northern Ireland. In response to the deteriorating situation, the British government issued the Downing Street Declaration promising equality of treatment and freedom from discrimination for everyone in Northern Ireland. The British government was no longer a bystander but an active participant in the Northern Irish question, and although at the beginning it described itself as neutral, soon it became to be seen as the 'enemy' of the nationalists and thus further complicated the problem.

The central government's active intervention did not calm the tension in Northern Ireland. In August 1971, internment was introduced as a means of tackling paramilitary activities and the level of violence surged as a response. On 30 January

1972, what is now known as 'Bloody Sunday' happened in Londonderry/Derry in which the British troops opened fire to the unarmed civil rights marchers, leaving 14 dead. The Northern Ireland parliament, unable to control the outbreak of violence following the event, was suspended on 24 March 1972, and the direct rule by the British government through the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Northern Irish Office began. There was an attempt to restore devolution in 1973, but power-sharing failed due to the general strike called by the Ulster Workers' Council. Direct rule was resumed with the Northern Ireland Act of 1974.

The turning point to the deadlock came in the form of the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 in which the right of the Irish government to be consulted on the Northern Ireland issue was enshrined. In 1990, the then Northern Irish Secretary Peter Booke stated that Britain had 'no selfish or strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland', which was also seen as a signal of the British government's willingness to negotiate the future of Northern Ireland. In December 1993, the Joint Declaration on Northern Ireland was issued by the British and Irish governments confirming that the British government had no selfish or strategic interest in Northern Ireland and assuring that the principle of self-determination would be respected as long as it is expressed through peaceful means, hinting that the British government would not prevent an eventual Irish unity if it were to come through constitutional means.

This marked the beginning of the peace process which led to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 which led to the establishment of the Northern Irish Assembly. The agreement was put to two referenda in May, one in Northern Ireland and the other in the Republic of Ireland. In Northern Ireland, with a turn-out of 80.98 per cent, 71.12 per cent of the votes cast were for 'YES', 28.88 per cent against. In the Republic, the proposed amendment to the constitution to remove the territorial claim over Northern Ireland was endorsed by 99.4 per cent. Following the endorsement of the Agreement, the first election for the Northern Ireland Assembly was held on 25 June, and the Assembly met for the first time on 1 July 1998. The Northern Ireland Executive, a devolved government, was set up in 1999. However, the issue of IRA decommissioning (disarming) has hindered the functioning of the Assembly as well as the executive. The devolved assembly has been suspended for four times; for a few months in 2000 for the first time, and a couple of times for technical reasons in 2001 and the last suspension which came into effect on 14 October 2004 has not yet been called off. In fact, the second election to the assembly took place on 26 November 2003 with the Assembly still suspended. Devolution is clearly in trouble in Northern Ireland. On the other hand, since the Good Friday Agreement, the level of paramilitary violence has been lowered, but the Independent Monitoring Commission, the 'ceasefire watchdog', has recently published its third report on the state of various paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland and has stated that paramilitary violence remains at 'a disturbingly high level'.

3.6   Socio-economic conditions

3.6.1   Religion

The majority-minority conflict in Northern Ireland is widely seen as a religious one – between the Protestant majority and Catholic minority. While Protestants' dominance in Northern Ireland is clear both in their numbers and power, the religious element is

going through a change. The following table traces the changing balance between the Protestant and Catholic populations in Northern Ireland.

Table 3.1 Religion in Northern Ireland (%)

Census	Roman Catholics	Non-Catholic Christians	Not stated/no religion
1861	40.9	59.0*	0.1
1901	34.8	65.1*	0.1
1926	33.5	66.3*	0.2
1937	33.5	66.3*	0.2
1951	34.4	65.2*	0.4
1961	34.9	63.2*	1.9
1971	31.4	59.2*	9.4
1981	28.0	53.3*	18.5
1991	38.4	50.6*	11.00
2001	40.26	45.57	13.88

(adopted from CAIN (2004))

* These figures include a small number of adherents of non-Christian religions.

3.6.2   Economy

Northern Ireland was one of the few parts of the isle of Ireland to achieve considerable industrialisation and its traditional industry includes ship building and textiles (linen). Like many other parts of the UK, the industrial structure of Northern Ireland did not adjust well to the post-WWII situation, and its economy has lagged behind of the rest of the UK. Northern Ireland has long been the poorest part of the United Kingdom. For that reason, Northern Ireland was given Objective 1 status at the 1988 assessment, and it kept the status until 1999.

Northern Irish economy improved during the 1990s and as a result it has 'lost' its Objective 1 status at the latest assessment for the EU Structural Funds. Its GDP grew nominally by 53.3 per cent from 1990 compared to UK growth of 46.6 per cent. In real terms, Northern Ireland's growth is put at 26 per cent and the UK average at 18 per cent (European Commission, 2002). GDP per head in Northern Ireland, however, remains below the UK average.   As of October 2004, the unemployment rate in Northern Ireland was 4.7 per cent, exactly the same as the UK average. This is a remarkable change compared to 16.8 per cent in 1986 and 8.2 per cent in 1997.

The industrial structure has become service sector-centred, as with the rest of the UK, with 79 per cent of employment created by it. Manufacturing accounts for 13 per cent and construction 5 per cent of employment (Invest Northern Ireland, 2004a). In terms of Gross Value Added, the service sector accounts for 68 per cent, followed by manufacturing (20.5 per cent), construction (7 per cent), agriculture (2 per cent). 72 per cent of its manufacturing output is exported including to the rest of the UK (Invest Northern Ireland, 2004b).

A recent report suggests that the employment profile of Catholics in Northern Ireland has substantially improved over the last decade, though there are still areas where they are underrepresented such as security. Despite the overall fall of the unemployment rate in Northern Ireland, Catholics are still more likely to be unemployed than Protestants. Segregation in public housing is still widespread but the number of people working in integrated workplaces is increasing.

3.6.3   EU funding

Between 1989 and 1999, Northern Ireland had Objective 1 status and received a total of just over £1.7 billion in EU Structural Funding (European Commission in Northern Ireland, 2004 a).

1989-1993 period

Northern Ireland was the only region to be given Objective 1 status in the UK and allocated some £750 million from the EU structural funds. One example of projects supported by the Structural Funds was the Cross Harbour Rail Link, Belfast. Opened in 1994, and supported 75 per cent by EU Structural Funds, it was the final link in the creation of a fully integrated Northern Ireland rail network. The whole project, which included a maintenance depot, Yorkgate Station, and the Rail Link, cost £30.5m.

1994-1999 period

Northern Ireland was one of three regions in the UK to have Objective 1 status and allocated £981 million from the Structural Funds. Additionally, a number of specially focused initiatives were applied to Northern Ireland. A further £175 million was allocated through up to 13 initiatives, including £124 million under INTERREG II. One example of the INTERREG II funded projects was the Cross-Border Childcare Project which involved six communities from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland: Beleek in County Fermanagh, Colgher and Donemana in Country Tyrone from Northern Ireland, and Newtowncunningham in County Donegal, Mohill in County Leitrim and North East Monaghan. The range of services developed and provided in this project includes a mobile playbus and the establishment of a centre to deliver childcare services on a session basis to children of different ages. The project cost £625,885, of which £469,414 was met by Northern Ireland/Ireland INTERREG II Programme.
          Moreover, in response to the peace process, the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland (PEACE) was agreed upon at the Essen European Council of October 1994, and it was implemented in July 1995 with a budget of 500 million euros, of which Northern Ireland received 400 million euros. The rest was allocated to the border counties of Ireland. PEACE I supported over 13,000 projects in Northern Ireland during the 1995-1999 period.

2000-2006 period

With the average GDP per head in Northern Ireland catching up with the EU average (now above 80 per cent of the EU average), Northern Ireland no longer qualifies for Objective 1 status. However, the European Commission has agreed to award a transitional Objective 1 status to Northern Ireland for the 2000-2006 period and some 890 million euros are allocated under 'Northern Ireland Transitional Objective 1 Programme – Building Sustainable Prosperity' and a total of 890.5 million euros is allocated for the programme (European Commission, 2004a).   In addition, recognising the success of PEACE I, the European Council in March 1999 decided to extend the programme for a further five years, from 2000 to 2004. The total EU funding for PEACE II is 531 million euros, of which around 80 per cent (about 425

million euros) is allocated for Northern Ireland. PEACE II is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), a body set up in December 1999 by the UK and Irish governments. Northern Ireland also shares an INTERREG III A funding of 134 million euros from the EU with Ireland (European Commission, 2004b) and receives 10.623 million euros through the URBAN II programme.

3.6.4 *Structural Funds in perspective*

Partly because of the now ceased practice of non-additionality, and partly because of the very nature of the Structural Funds, their impact on the Northern Ireland economy is very difficult, if not impossible, to measure. It is estimated that most of the 1980s and 1990s period, Structural Funding was a 'significant but small' addition to the Northern Ireland economy. During the most of 1980s and 1990s, the average expenditure of the Structural Funds in Northern Ireland was around £150 million (1996 prices), which amounted to £100 - £170 per capita per annum. The expenditure rose to £250 million in 1996 due to the start of PEACE I, but it still accounted for 1.7 per cent of GDP only. In relation to public expenditure, the contribution from the Structural Funds was around 2 per cent for most of 1980s and 1990s, and it rose to around 3 per cent towards the end of the 1990s.

3.7 Political settings

The Good Friday Agreement of 1998 laid out the plan of a devolved parliament (Northern Ireland Assembly) and government in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Executive); an Assembly of 108 seats to be elected by single transferable vote using proportional representation; finance, personnel, agriculture, education, health, social services, economic development and environment are devolved to the Assembly and Executive. Unlike the Scottish Parliament, the Assembly does not have a tax-varying power. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland retains responsibilities for Northern Irish Office for the areas that are not devolved to the Assembly such as security, policing, tax, and pension.

The members of the Executive are not to be appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as happened in the 1972-3 power-sharing period, but are to be selected through a cross-community voting mechanism. This is a mechanism designed to ensure a cross-community agreement on important issues. All the members of the Assembly need to register their orientation (nationalist, unionist, or other). In deciding on important issues, instead of majority voting, cross-community consensus will be required. This is worked out following a rather complicated formula:

> Parallel consent, i.e. a majority of those members present and voting, including a majority of the unionists and nationalists present and voting; or, alternatively, a weighted majority of 60 per cent members present and voting, including at least 40 per cent of unionists present and voting and 40 per cent of nationalists present and voting.' (Bogdanor, 1999: 106).

The First Minister and Deputy First Minister are to be elected by the Assembly by parallel consent, not to be appointed by the British government. Because of the use of parallel consent, each party is encouraged to put forward a candidate who is more

likely to be accepted by other parties, therefore eliminating the possibility of electing Gerry Adams, for instance, as First Minister. The cross-community element is new in the UK setting, but Bogdanor points out that there is a similar provision in the Belgian constitution of 1994 in which for certain key issues, the elected members of the parliament will be divided into French-speaking and Flemish speaking groups (Bogdanor, 1999: 107).

The plan laid out in the Good Friday Agreement places devolution to Northern Ireland in the wider Anglo-Irish context. It requires north-south co-operation within Ireland, and in order to full fill this obligation, the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) was established on 2 December 1999. This is a forum to bring Ministers from the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Irish Government together to foster cross-border co-operation. It covers 12 areas, of which six have North/South Bodies – water, food safety, trade and business development, special EU programmes, language, fisheries – and remaining six – transport, agriculture, education, health, environment and tourism – are identified as 'Areas of co-operation'.

The third strand of the Good Friday Agreement deals with the relationship between Britain and Ireland. To pursue this objective, the British-Irish Council was set up in order to bring about co-operation in areas of mutual interest, including the Misuse of Drugs, Environment, the Knowledge Economy, Social Inclusion, Telemedicine, Tourism, Transport and Minority and Lesser-Used Languages. To date the Council has met five times at summit level, in London in December 1999, in Dublin in November 2001, in Jersey in June 2002, in Scotland in November 2002 and in Wales in November 2003. The Council is scheduled to meet for the sixth time at summit level in Guernsey in 2004. Summit meetings will normally take place twice a year, with participating Administrations represented by the head(s) of that Administration or a substitute.

The Northern Ireland Assembly has now been suspended for more than two years, and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has assumed responsibilities of Northern Ireland departments instead of the Northern Ireland Executive.   The operation of the NSMC has also been affected by the suspension. Following the introduction of suspension, the British and Irish Governments, by an exchange of notes on 19 November 2002, agreed that, 'Decisions of the North/South Ministerial Council on policies and actions relation to the Implementation Bodies, Tourism Ireland or their respective functions shall be taken by our two Governments. No new functions shall be conferred on the Implementation Bodies'. These arrangements were designed to ensure that the Bodies would continue to fulfil their important public functions on a 'care and maintenance' basis, pending the restoration of devolved government to Northern Ireland.

3.8   Impact of EU structural funds: A brief overview

Compared to the amount of literature on the 'Troubles' *per se*, literature on the relationship between 'Europe' (the EU, the Council of Europe, etc.) and the problem of Northern Ireland is scarce. This is probably because the 'Troubles' preceded the UK's accession to the EU, because the successive UK governments often took the view that the Northern Irish problem was the UK's internal matter, not be meddled by external actors, and because the dominant analytical framework has viewed the issue as a consequences of British colonialism. However, as seen in the recent peace process, the UK government no longer insists that the 'Troubles' is a purely internal

matter and acknowledges the international dimensions especially vis-à-vis the Republic of Ireland. Given these developments, a number of scholars mainly from International Relations have begun to work on the external/international aspects of the Northern Irish problems and the literature produced by those scholars constitutes the first group that this section reviews. While these works mainly focus on formal or conventional politics, scholars in the field of regional policy have started to assess the impact of various EU funding on the community relations (the relationship between the unionist and nationalist communities) as well as on the Northern Irish economy as a whole, in a context that is closer to everyday life in Northern Ireland,. There are also some scholars who focus on the perceptions and attitudes of the people of Northern Ireland.

EU and the Council of Europe as a formal facilitator

Some academic literature suggests that the EU and Council of Europe have contributed to internationalise the Northern Irish problem and thus to facilitate a new solution – the current peace process. The main points are:

- Membership of the EU has brought about a reformulation of the concept of sovereignty, and it is now possible for the member states to embrace the idea of 'pooling sovereignty' whose influence is evident in the Good Friday Agreement;
- The EU has provided extra venues for politicians and civil servants of the British and Irish governments to meet and talk informally, thus facilitating dialogue between the two parties;
- The EU has provided a role model for peaceful cooperation, a manifestation of which is programmes such as INTERREG;
- Globalisation has also contributed to the 'Europeanisation' and internationalisation of the Northern Ireland problem. In this context, the European Court of Human Rights has played an important role in initiating the current peace process;

The EU funding and community relations

Other academics have studied how the EU Structural Funds have been implemented and what effect they have had on community relations. The main observations are:

- Although not EU funded, 'Making Belfast Work (MBW) Initiative' was much influenced by the way the EU dealt with the development issue, especially by introducing the 'partnership' principle in the implementation stage;
- A study on the URBAN programme in Derry/Londonderry suggests that although its impact on the economy is limited, it has had some effects on the improvement of the relationship between the two communities;
- A study on the PEACE participants have found that the participants think that rebuilding their own community on a single-identity basis with economic aid from the EU is the necessary step towards the improvement of cross-community ties.

Popular attitudes towards devolution

Based on the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey results from 1989, 1996 and 1999, it has been observed that while the Catholic/nationalist community seems to be gaining confidence about their position and future in Northern Ireland, the Protestant/unionist community appears to feel increasingly marginalised in devolved Northern Ireland.

Other insights

A comprehensive study on the impact of the UK's membership of the EU on Northern Ireland (Dennis Kennedy (ed.) (2000) *Living with the European Union: The Northern Ireland Experience*) concludes that being a part of a member state of the EU has made little difference to Northern Ireland, especially in terms of economy. However, it is also reported that the participants in the voluntary sector highly appreciates the new opportunities provided by the EU.

3.9   Conclusion

It has been suggested that the EU may have made a difference to the conflict in Northern Ireland, mainly at the level of formal, conventional politics. The EU funds are, however, not regarded as having a significant impact on the relationship between the two major communities though it has been suggested that they may be contributing to the realignment of identity structures in Northern Ireland. The link between the EU funds and the changes in local governance is weak since devolution in Northern Ireland has taken place as a means of containing conflict and in a top-down manner. Although the devolution plan was endorsed by the referendum, it did not materialise in response to the local demand as in the case of Scotland. However, now that devolution has taken place (albeit suspended since 2002), it seems the voters' expectations are in line with those in other devolved areas in that they want the Northern Ireland Assembly to concentrate on day-to-day issues. This seems to suggest that although the major change – the establishment of Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive – was a kind of imposition, people in Northern Ireland have perhaps wanted to bring the government closer to their locality just as anywhere else. With survey data suggesting that two major communities in Northern Ireland appear to be growing apart, this may mean that there will be different demands emerging from the voters in respect to local governance.

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4 Regions, minorities and European policies: A policy report on the Turkish Muslims of Western Thrace in Greece

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4.1 The Muslims in Western Thrace: general overview of the case

The border region of Western Thrace in the northeast part of Greece is home to a small but politically significant population of about 120,000 Muslims, inhabiting the region together with a Greek Christian majority. With its strategic location between three states and two continents, the Muslim community of Western Thrace marks a particular kind of geographical and cultural-historical boundary between East and West. In Europe's southernmost corner, the region of Thrace borders with Turkey to the east and Bulgaria to the north. Across the northern border, Bulgaria's south and southeast regions are also home to large and territorially concentrated Turkish communities, portions of the country's sizeable Turkish minority. Thrace is part of the administrative region of East Macedonia and Thrace (*Perifereia Anatolikis Makedonias & Thrakis*), and consists of three prefectures, Ksanthi, Rhodope and Evros. Being a lagging region within the sluggish Greek economy, it is a case of a 'double periphery' that ranks at the low end of the EU scale in terms of per capita income and overall development (Ioannides and Petrakos 2000: 32).

A relic of the country's Ottoman past, Thrace's Muslim community was exempt correspondingly with the Greeks of Istanbul, from the mandatory population exchange between Greece and Turkey agreed with the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). Signed in the aftermath of Greece's military debacle in Anatolia, the international Treaty of Lausanne includes a section on the 'Protection of Minorities', a bilateral agreement between Greece and Turkey containing a series of provisions to guarantee the rights of the exempted minority populations. The Lausanne Treaty specified an explicit condition of bilateral reciprocity (*amiveotita*) according to which the two states assumed a mutual obligation to institute the requisite measures to safeguard minority rights (Ladas 1932).

Comprising individuals of Turkish origin, Gypsies (Roma), and Slav-speaking Pomaks, the Muslims of Thrace prior to World War II coexisted largely as a religious community characteristic of the Ottoman millet system, without joint bonds of political solidarity. Since the 1950s, however, they have transformed into a minority with ethnic consciousness, and in the past twenty years they have mobilized to claim a common Turkish identity. The latter has caused a major and ongoing rift with Greek authorities who officially recognize a 'Muslim minority' in reference to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923 that has defined the status of the latter through the present. Acknowledging the resonance of ethnic Turkish identification within the community, but also its internal cultural diversity, in this report, we use both terms interchangeably.

Despite Greece's transition to democracy in 1974, state relations with the minority in Thrace deteriorated due to the deepening crisis with Turkey, as well as to a series of restrictive measures against Muslims adopted by the Greek governments.

The tensions that erupted between Muslims and Christians in the region in early 1990 marked a nadir but also a turning point set in by the restoration of minority rights and marked by an overall and progressive improvement in relations with the state that continues until the present (Yagcioglu 2004: chapters 12 and 13). This turning point in the early 1990s coincided with the intensification of Greece's process of EU integration stimulated by poor economic performance and the adoption of stabilization measures under EU supervision. At the same time, concern with the fact that the gap between the Greek and the EC economy was growing instead of narrowing led the to transfer increasing amounts of structural funds to Greece. For the second Community Support Framework (CSF) covering the 1994-99 period these amounted to 3.7% of the country's GDP (Ioannides and Petrakos 2000: 51).

In the frame of the CSF, increased resources from structural funds have been allocated to Thrace as a border region of strategic importance in the post-Cold War Balkans making possible intensified development efforts and infrastructure investments (*Stratigiko Schedio Anaptiksis Makedonias & Thrakis* 1994: 98-100). Of the 13 regional development programmes under the Community Support Frameworks for 1989-93, 1994-9, and 2000-2006, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace received the third largest fund in Greece (after the two major urban areas of Athens/Attiki and Thessaloniki in Central Macedonia) (Chlepas 1999: 164; Getimis and Economou 1996: 131). Out of the nearly 1 billion euro of total public expenditure for the RDP of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace for 2000-2006, only 25% of it came from national funds, while 75% came from the EU structural funds. The significance of the CSF for Greece and for Thrace, both in size but also political importance, has been fundamental; it is questionable whether in the absence of the CSF, regional development policy would have been viable at all in the 1990s (Andrikopoulou and Kafkalas 2004: 42).

Linked to growing dependence on structural funds were a series of reforms of subnational institutions undertaken by Greek governments from the second half of the 1980s onwards. Even though the extent and nature of EU influence in this regard is a matter of controversy in Greek studies as will be discussed later in this report, there is little doubt that the country's regional and local government structures in the early 1990s were thoroughly unsuitable to implementing structural funds (Marks 1997: 163). Considered among the most centralized in Europe, Greece's territorial and administrative structures are divided into fifty two prefectures, the origins of which coincide with those of the modern Greek state in the 19th century, as well as into thirteen administrative regions established for the first time in 1988. Creating viable and active sub-national structures capable of exercising power had never been a widespread public demand and was largely perceived as a threat to the country's territorial integrity (Verney 1994: 167; Ioakimidis 1996: 343). Since the late 1980s, however, a series of reforms have taken place in this direction, which have unsurprisingly been strongly contested in the ethnically mixed region of Thrace.

4.2   Regional (under)development

The administrative region of East Macedonia and Thrace, where Thrace belongs, is predominantly agricultural with 40% of the active labour force in 1997 (this percentage is possibly higher if one looks at Thrace proper) employed in agriculture (when the average for Greece as a whole is 19.9%; see Ioannides and Petrakos 2000: 36). The agricultural character of the region is unevenly spread between the two

prefectures predominantly inhabited by the minority. The prefecture of Ksanthi, primarily populated by Pomaks, has a significant industrial and manufacturing sector with development and infrastructure indicators around the national average, while the predominantly ethnic Turkish and agricultural prefecture of Rhodope ranks near the bottom of national scale (*Dierevnisi Kritirion Technikis Ypodomis* 1987). Besides, its less developed and agricultural character, Thrace has an overall low level of education with a high percentage of its inhabitants having only primary level education (73% in 1991; see *I Anaptixi tis Thrakis* 1995: 15), which is possibly even higher among the minority.

4.2.1   Map: The region of Western Thrace in Northern Greece

Muslims live in segregated settlements in the region's towns and villages (Dragonas 2004: 3), and they are also concentrated in the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas within Thrace. The two prefectures under study are characterized by glaring disparities between a minority-inhabited mountainous and undeveloped zone in the north, and a southern predominantly Christian zone, which is fertile and more prosperous, between which is an intermediate belt with mixed population. In systematically denying to them basic rights such as acquisition of property or expansion of economic activity, state policy in Thrace put an absolute blockade to the

development of Muslim-inhabited areas. It sustained the region's dependence on agriculture and distorted its economy as a whole, rendering it underdeveloped. The land Muslims own is predominantly in the northeast zones of the region, which are mountainous and arid. The majority of Muslims work in agriculture and have a long tradition in the growing of labour-intensive eastern varieties of tobacco, until recently making up over 90 per cent of the region's tobacco producers (*I Anaptiksi tis Anatolikis Makedonias kai Thrakis*, p.238).

It becomes obvious from the above that Muslims live in conditions of greater geographical, social and economic isolation in Thrace, which prior to the 1990s stimulated emigration for economic purposes to Turkey but also Germany, as well as internally to the urban centres of Athens and Thessaloniki. In Thrace, Muslims are active in "their own" segregated section of the local market occupied by minority suppliers (tradesmen, producers, etc.) and customers, and largely operating within the confines of the ethnic community (*I Anaptixi tis Thrakis* 1995: 18; 49). Reinforcing their socioeconomic segregation along ethnic lines has also been the fact that they have tended to export most of their savings abroad (especially to Turkey), as until the early 1990s restrictive measures prevented them from investing them in the region. This, however, appears to have been changing since then, with the abolition of those measures in 1991 (50).

The past two decades have seen the large-scale entry of minority women in the region's labour market, primarily as workers in the region's textiles and tobacco processing factories. In general, women's entry in Thrace's labour market accounts for the increase in the size of the economically active population despite the overall demographic decline the region's has witnessed over the past twenty years (*I Anaptixi tis Thrakis* 1995: 16). It is possible that in the case of the minority, women's undertaking of paid employment has been one way for families to deal with reduced income from agriculture, to which Muslims extensively depend, as levels of agricultural subsidies provided by the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have been declining.

Thrace underdevelopment as a whole and the significant intra-regional disparities between Christians and Muslims, have been a consequence of Greek regional policy in the post-World War II period that in this case became specifically jaundiced due to the presence of the minority. Prior to the 1990s, resource transfer and distribution in Thrace took place in a top-down manner with explicit foreign policy considerations related to the presence of the Muslim population. Lacking explicit development priorities, regional policy was for the most part based on arbitrary government decisions, permeated by party interests that distributed rights and benefits through clientelistic networks to those deemed politically loyal (Verney & Papageorgiou 1992: 111). An overarching ideological imperative of national unity pervaded and served to justify the reproduction of highly centralized state structures and distribution of resources. In Thrace, depriving Muslims of rights and resources and exclusively privileging Christians were deemed imperative in order to defend the region and country against the Turkish "threat."

On the whole, Thrace became a target of generous subsidies granted in the name of national and security interests, yet levels of public investment and central transfers to the region fluctuated in response to political party interests, as well as Greek-Turkish relations. In the 1980s, when EC structural funds promoted some redistribution and regional disparities relatively declined in comparison to the 1970s, Thrace was not affected. Policies and decisions vis-a-vis the region materialized through alliances between the central government, economic interests and political

constituencies in Thrace linked to the local and prefecture administration and backed by nationalist organizations. Local Christians and investors with political leverage received the bulk of resources and state grants on the basis of their nationalist credentials and morale (*ethnikofrones*) and with little, if any, consideration of or correspondence to development needs and criteria.

Generous subsidies attracted investments in industry and manufacturing, which, however, tended to concentrate around the central towns of Ksanthi and Komotini and in the southern Christian-populated zones as opposed to the rural Muslim-populated areas to the north that stagnated. A study of the Commercial Bank of Greece in the mid-1980s on Thrace acknowledged that "constraints of a strategic character have had inhibiting effects on the region's development with restrictions on infrastructure improvements, as well as controls on the creation of industrial units and the development of 'restricted zones'' (*I Anaptiksi tis Anatolikis Makedonias & Thrakis* 1986: 21). These zones encompassed the northern mountainous areas of the prefectures of Ksanthi and Rhodope entirely populated by the minority. Until their abolition in 1996, they were designated as 'restricted zones', where travel by outsiders required special clearance and a permit from the police.

Over time, regional economic policies combined with nationalist government policies that erected discriminatory barriers nurtured sharp inter-communal divisions between Christians and Muslims that erupted in violence in January 1990. Even though these had been put in place in the name of combating the "Turkish threat" in Thrace, they paradoxically became instrumental in nurturing it. They turned the original Greek assumption of the minority as a "foreign body" into a self-fulfilling prophecy, and brought into being a sharply divided local society suffused with suspicion and insecurity about the ethnic 'other.' On the one side, a locally entrenched class of entrepreneurs, officials and others monopolized Greek state resources and power in the region by perpetually invoking the "Turkish threat" (Georgiadis 1993). On the other side, a parallel structure of clientelistic relations and interests also developed among the minority, through which political and other favours were distributed by the Turkish state to those loyal to the 'motherland'. The two seemingly sharply opposite poles of Greek and Turkish nationalism in Thrace paradoxically reached an accommodation with one another, based on an implicit mutual consent to maintain the isolation of the minority as a "state within a state" (*kratos en kratei*).

Given the conditions of socioeconomic exclusion prevailing among Muslims, it is not accidental that the Greek government in 1991 decided to tackle the minority issue and the crisis in inter-communal relations by calling for a new development strategy for the region. Having cross-party consensus, this new approach was introduced with the *Findings of the Inter-party Committee for Border Regions* submitted to the Greek Parliament in 1992. In marked departure from the militaristic language frequently employed in the case of Thrace, the *Findings* called for regional development as 'armour' for defence against the threat of secessionism, through upgrading the region's economy, reducing inequalities between Christians and Muslims and promoting social and economic integration of the minority. It must be noted here that the EU structural funds, the size of which had greatly increased after 1989-90, did not motivate or in any way led the government to adopt this new approach. However, their influx made it possible to put to practice a comprehensive policy of regional development as defined by the Regional Operational Program (ROP) of the CSF I for Thrace, and to firmly anchor the minority issue within it.

4.3   Regional administrative reforms

Greek nationalism in Thrace and its entrenchment in clientelistic relations cultivated by political parties, which so thoroughly skewed the region's economy and development, were made possible by, and in turn reinforced, the centralized administrative and territorial structures of the modern Greek state. Historical reasons related to the slow process of unification of different areas and a sense of national insecurity, led to and found expression in the formation of a highly centralized state. After the Greek transition to democracy in 1974 and particularly following the advent to power of the socialist government of PASOK in 1981, growing demands for, and professed commitment to decentralization met resistance from entrenched party and national interests. Regional development was for the first time in the 1980s directly linked to the issue of redistribution of administrative power (Lavdas 1999: 226), yet attempted reforms failed to redress the imbalance between local level and the centre (Ioakimidis 1996).

By the mid-1990s however, a combination of domestic and European factors led to a wave of reform characterized as groundbreaking, which enhanced sub-national structures and crystallized the territorial organization of the Greek state (Lavdas 1999: 230). The reforms of the 1990s introduced two major changes. The first one was the transformation of the prefecture from an arm of the central administration into an institution of local government with a directly elected prefect and Prefecture Council, defining its goal as "the economic, social and cultural development of the region". Local governments and prefectures became recipients of increased funding under the CSF, which in 1991-5 more than tripled in Rhodope and Ksanthi. For the first time, the minority was depicted as a resource rather than a threat or burden, and its integration as a precondition for the region's development (*I Anaptiksi tis Thrakis – Prokliseis kai Prooptikes* 1994).

Secondly, Law 2218/1994 also upgraded and expanded the role of the 13 administrative regions (*dioikitikes perifereies*), each of which was to establish its own Regional Development Fund and to participate as partners in formulating regional policy and administering national and European projects and funds. The ensuing conflicts over the redistribution of functions between different levels of government led to the adoption of a "corrective" law (L. 2240/1994) that undercut the large array of powers originally envisioned for prefecture self-government. Nonetheless, the strengthening of regions further continued with Law 2503/1997 that established the centrally-appointed Regional Director and upgraded the role of the 13 regions, with their personnel no longer subordinate to central ministries (Chlepas 1999: 170-1). According to an authoritative scholar of Greek local government, the reforms of the 1990s paved the way for the transformation of the 13 regions into decentralised and cohesive units of administration and governance, despite their non-elected character, and expanded their capacity for coordinated action in development planning and fiscal management (Chlepas 1999: 186).

Regional administrations and councils draft the Regional Operational Programs (ROPs) before giving it for approval to the central administration, they play an important role in managing and supervising structural funds implementation, and are responsible for the highest possible absorption of funds. In drafting and planning the ROPs, regional authorities accept or reject applications for individual projects submitted by local government or private bodies. Day to day implementation of the individual projects included in the ROPs, however, rests with the prefectures, as well as with local government at the level of communes and municipalities (Getimis and

Economou 1996: 135). The latest wave of territorial reform in 1999, the "Kapodistrias Plan" initiated a massive reconstitution, merging fragmented local governments units into larger entities of administration and local government in order to enhance their capacity of assuming greater responsibilities and a more active role in development (Chlepas 1999: 399).

The decentralizing potential of the reforms of the 1990s triggered powerful reactions among segments of the opposition, as well as broader local and nationalist constituencies across political parties, which declared prefecture-level local government 'superficial and nationally perilous'. Pointing to the case of Thrace, they alarmingly warned that it would 'fragment the state' and strengthen Turkish nationalism, which could gain political control in Ksanthi and Rhodope where a Muslim prefect could be elected (Kontos and Pavlou 1994; Marinos 1994). To pre-empt this possibility and the consolidation of a Muslim-governed area, the law on prefecture local government was modified in the case of Ksanthi and Rhodope, which were placed in a special category of so-called "enlarged prefectures" (*dievrimenes nomarchies*) (Law 2218/94, Article 40). Essentially a form of gerrymandering targeting the minority, in effect, it incorporated the largely Muslim prefectures of Ksanthi and Rhodope to the Christian-populated prefectures of Kavala and Evros respectively, thereby consolidating two predominantly Christian areas and pre-empting the election of a Muslim prefect.

4.4   The EU, regional change and minority politics

A series of studies have inquired into the influence of the EU, particularly through structural funds, in the reform of regional policy and sub-national structures in Greece over the past fifteen years, as these are reflected in the creation of prefecture councils and 13 administrative regions in the 1980s, as well as the prefecture self-government in the 1990s. Authors, largely specialists on Greece, advance diverging arguments on the following questions: a) has the EU cohesion policy been an instrumental factor in promoting regional reform in Greece, and b) have the regional administrative and institutional reforms reinforced a restructuring of the centralized territorial structures of Greece in the direction of decentralization?

Furthermore, a number of studies have explored local- and regional-level changes in the patterns of involvement and perceptions of local actors, taking place within the frame and in the course of implementing structural funds. Reflecting a more bottom-up approach, this latter set of studies is more directly relevant to the EUROREG project, and helps us formulate a number of research propositions that are put forth in the last section of this report.

Some scholars attribute to the EU structural policy a catalytic role in regional change even as they concede that through the mid-1990s at least, reforms brought limited, if any, transformation of the highly centralized Greek regional administrative and territorial structures. The experience with implementing the IMPs in the second half of the 1980s pointed to the endemic weaknesses and unsuitability of the country's centralized structures to plan and coordinate integrated development projects (Papageorgiou and Verney 1992). Being premised on partnership and subsidiarity, structural funds arguably made it imperative to create new regional institutions (administrative regions) and to modernize existing subnational structures as to render them capable of engaging in regional planning and qualify for finance under the CSF (Verney 1994; Featherstone and Yannopoulos 1996). The doubling of structural funds

in 1988-89 and the establishment of the principles of subsidiarity and partnership between European, national and sub-national actors, as essential for programming and implementing of regional policy, signalled the emergence of a full-fledged EU structural policy.

In light of Greece's inclusion under objective one areas, the need for regional administrative reform could no longer be safely or entirely shunned. While the EU did not dictate reforms towards decentralization, the institutional-procedural requirements of its structural policy emphasizing planning and subsidiarity, made imperative the creation of subnational structures competent to implement and coordinate the Regional Development Programmes (RDP) of the CSF (Christofilopoulou 1997: 52). Albeit established only in paper, the 13 regions were intended to be the structures cardinally responsible for the implementation of the Community Support Frameworks (CSF). By the first half of the 1990s, as the first CSF was well under way, it was clear that the partnership arrangements of the EU structural policy would in practice be impaired without the strengthening of regional structures, while the comeback of the Socialist PASOK to power with a fresh mandate in 1993 presented an opportune moment to bypass opposition against reforms.

On the other hand, while acknowledging the European factor and the difficulties of implementing the IMPs in supplying a stimulus for reform, Ioakimidis argues that the regional institutional reforms of the 1980s were a product of domestic party-policy commitments rather than influences emanating from the EU (Ioakimidis 1996: 348). Similarly, Greek scholars of local government explain the reforms at the prefecture in the 1980s and 1990s (creation of prefecture councils and prefecture self-government, respectively) as government responses to strong endogenous demands. Prefecture self-government was arguably, largely a victory of middle-level party cadres of PASOK and their strong independent assertion vis-à-vis the central government and party leadership in the 1990s (Chlepas 1999: 343; Christofilopoulou 1997: 56). Such an assertion was not merely an instance of personal-political ambition but also symptomatic of a new generation of political cadre who came of age in Greece's post-1974 democratic system with a mature and growing consciousness around local problems.

Some scholars dispute the role of the EU structural policy in regional reform in Greece, and challenge views about an incipient or ongoing decentralization process. They attribute the 1980s shift away from top-down regional policy characterized by centralization to one emphasizing local initiatives and endogenous potential not to structural funds, but instead to a broader process of deregulation and reduction of central state controls, related to the common market and the EC 'paradigm' (Andrikopoulou and Kafkalas 2004: 40). In fact, the declining trend of the Public Investment Budget (including those for regions) in the second half of the 1980s, in comparison to its upward trend in the first half of the decade, was a result of the EC-induced stabilization program to reduce public deficits (Plaskovitis 1994: 119).

Andrikopoulou and Kafkalas argue that the emphasis on decentralization and local development that accompanied the regional reforms from the 1980s onwards was more rhetorical than actual, underneath driven but the need to reduce state spending, and in practice implying that local authorities and regions are left to survive on and compete for their own resources (40). Part and parcel of the Community 'paradigm' of deregulation intended to compensate for the difficulties faced by the less developed regions, structural funds actually supply such resources, without, however, promoting regionalization and decentralization. If anything, in the second

and the third CSF (1994-99 and 2000-06), the national component in terms of size of resources has significantly grown to the detriment of the regional component, partly related to the fact that the European Commission has shifted responsibility for structural funds to national governments (Andrikopoulou and Kafkalas 2004: 43).

Regardless of how they view the role of the EU structural policy in regional reform in Greece or its effects in reinforcing decentralization or conversely strengthening centralization, all studies reviewed here agree on one point where the core research interests of the EUROREG project lie. They all suggest that within the frame of implementing the EU structural funds, important if not fundamental shifts occur at the regional and local levels. These pertain to local actors involvement in subnational institutions and development projects, to their perceptions of the EU, and to their relations with political parties, in sum, to the nature of local and regional politics, with far-reaching implications for minority-inhabited and ethnically-mixed regions.

Regardless of whether EU structural policy is driven by economic deregulation defining the common market or by a premise of enhancing local democracy, a central characteristic of it embedded in the logic of its design and implementation is the mobilization of local actors' initiative. Ioannides and Petrakos succinctly capture the latter stating that structural funds implementation in Greece has amply demonstrated the need for enhancing local government capabilities, promoting civic organizations, improving efficiency and human resources (2000: 55). Despite ongoing problems with the centralized administrative structure, Ioannides and Petrakos argue that progressively there has been a widening of participation of local actors in regional policy within the CSFs, as well as mobilization of and initiative among local actors around development goals in certain areas and regions in the 1990s to a much greater extent than before (46).

The subnational reforms since the 1980s arguably had a cumulative effect in stimulating a process of local and regional awareness change, in which the implementation of the IMPs and subsequently of structural funds played a catalytic role. Despite their incompleteness and limitations, the creation of prefecture councils in the mid-1980s raised local awareness about power relations vis-à-vis the centre, as it was succeeded by the launching of the EU Integrated Mediterranean Projects (IMPs), a precursor to the EU structural policy (Verney and Papageorgiou 1992: 126). The same study on the nascent at the time prefecture councils found that while they lacked autonomy their status remained firmly defined by clientilistic relations with political parties. More importantly, they were instrumental in mounting regional support for further decentralization, as well as for the EU to acquire greater responsibilities in the development of disadvantaged areas (Verney and Papageorgiou 1992: 126-8).

A parallel study focusing on the IMPs in the 1980s found that even though control of latter had remained firmly with the centre, their implementation had diffused socializing effects as the obstacles to local authorities and interest group participation caused them considerable discontent. In this way, they proved to be a significant learning experience as they heightened their awareness about greater decentralization and local mobilization in sub-national structures and in the design and planning of regional policy (Papageorgiou and Verney 1992). Even though he attributes to the EU structural funds a limited, if not marginal role, in promoting regional reform in Greece, let alone in bringing about decentralization, Ioakimidis argues that the process of their implementation established systematic contacts of local authorities with the EU and brought the latter much closer to local society

making it less remote. While the widened participation of subnational actors and social partners in the 2nd and 3rd CSF was mainly symbolic and formalistic rather than substantive, nonetheless the role and functions of regional administration and local government began to transform in response to the pressures and opportunities generated by the implementation of regional development projects (Ioakimidis 1996: 351).

Paraskevopoulos' study addresses the question whether the implementation of the EU structural funds encourages the creation of public-private networks (between subnational authorities and private interest groups, civil society or community organizations) in the regions (Paraskevopoulos 1998). He argues that weak civil society and entrenched clientilistic networks in Greece tend to undermine and constrain such a change. At the same time, Paraskevopoulos argues that some regions in Greece have been more successful in involving civil society, local communities and/or private investors in regional developing programs, and suggests the existence of social capital as a way to explain such a difference. As a concept paradigmatically employed by Robert Putnam (1992) in the study of Italian local-regional government, social capital denotes a pre-existing tradition of civic engagement characterizing some local communities and is centrally premised upon relations of interpersonal trust. Defined by a strong sense of public responsibility and local autonomy, social capital as a feature of horizontally-shaped citizens-government relations has been seen to be diametrically opposed to traditional party clientilism that is of a vertical nature creating hierarchical dependencies between society and the state. Paraskevopoulos' study suggests viewing social capital not necessarily as a pre-existing socio-cultural condition, but also as an outcome that can be formed in the context of implementing EU regional development programs (1998: 173).

In the case of Thrace, it can be argued that a local-regional politics and mobilization, being shaped by strong divisions along ethnic lines and diffused suspicion between the two communities, constrain the formation of social capital (in the sense of public-private synergies and cross-community mobilization on the basis of development goals). In her study of self-government prefecture in the region in the mid-1990s, Anagnostou, however, identified signs of an emerging, even if limited, sense of trust fostered in the course of cooperation between Christian and Muslim members of the prefecture council over the distribution and implementation of structural funds (Anagnostou 2001).

4.5   Overall assessment

Notwithstanding their limitations, the regional and prefecture local government reforms of the 1990s within the frame of the EU structural policy were only the beginning of a manifold and longer-term contestation about which level(s) of administration and government will manage to become dominant as a locus of power. Undoubtedly, its consequences have been and will be fundamental, even if still undetermined, potentially with far-reaching consequences for minority-majority relations in Thrace. Whether continued implementation of structural funds will promote the centrality of Greek regions as subnational institutions, or whether it will reinforce the decentralisation or centralisation of their functions and powers, remains an ongoing process.

The reconfiguration of Greek administrative and subnational structures within the frame of EU structural policy is not merely about formal decentralisation or

centralisation, but about a more qualitative transformation in the nature of subnational institutions and politics. Whether it will be centred at the prefecture or at the region depends on contestation between the different levels and which institution manages to become the locus for the growth of a new regional awareness and identity. Whether it will draw its basis of legitimacy and support from electoral accountability or from efficient economic and development performance, a new level of subnational government is emerging.

Regardless of the extent to which the regions and prefectures become more attuned to central imperatives or conversely transform into decentralised and/or locally elected structures, their autonomous competencies have been greatly enhanced. They draw their legitimacy from their performance in implementing and promoting regional economic development within the frame of the CSF of the EU structural policy, and arguably open space for the representation and participation of the minority in decisions about resource distribution and regional development. Whether by being accountable to a local electorate, or responsible for effective implementation of the CSF Regional Development Programmes, prefecture self-government, the regional council and the Regional Secretary potentially challenge the nationalist priorities that in the previous decades defined state-local and minority-majority relations in Thrace.

The relevant literature outlined above, suggests that regional change is closely linked to the EU structural policy and possibly to the broader process of deregulation of regional economies. With regard to the main research interests of the EUROREG project, the implementation of structural funds in Greece is premised on and has inserted pressures for enhanced local mobilization, patterns of political participation and regional alliances driven by the logic of development. Does this occur in practice or do these continue to be predominantly shaped by the logic of nationalist opposition? Furthermore, what are the perceptions of local minority and majority actors about each other, about the central state, their nation, and about 'Europe'?
In order to empirically assess these questions, we plan to examine the extent of involvement and mobilisation of local government bodies, community organizations and private bodies in project implementation in Ksanthi and Rhodope prefecture: does such mobilization take place across ethnic lines or not?

The allocation of funds and projects in different areas and municipalities within the region (in the two prefectures under study): what kind of differences and conflicts arise and do these run along ethnic lines, political party lines, or other? Is there cooperation or division along ethnic community lines?

What are the views and perceptions of local government officials, members of the regional and prefecture council (from minority and majority): are these characterized by trust or suspicion of each other and the state?

And last but not least, what are the perceptions of Muslim and Christian leaders about the EU and 'Europe'? Do they see it as a means of a) protection of ethnic and cultural identity, c) modernization and economic development, d) a force of assimilation?

4.6   References

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5   Regions, Minorities and European Policies: A Policy Report on the Austrian region of Burgenland

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5.1   The Case Study

While Austrian minority politics tend to focus on the conflict between Slovene minority and the German majority in the region of Carinthia, there are six acknowledged minority groups living in Austria, most of whom concentrating in the East. Apart from the multi-cultural capital Vienna, the Eastern-most region of Burgenland is characterized by the highest diversity of territorially dispersed minority cultures. The Burgenland Croats are Austria's largest minority estimated between 30.000 and 40.000 people, the Hungarian about 25.000, and the Roma 10.000 to 40.000 in 1991. Since, an increasing number of people belonging to either of the three minorities traditionally settled in Burgenland have moved to urban centers outside the region, particularly Vienna. Recent immigration waves from the respective kin states have brought a cultural revival to the shrinking autochtonous communities in and outside Burgenland. Since the 1980s, the so far 'silent minority' of the Burgenland Croats as well as the Hungarians, and the Roma have achieved legal improvements, making Burgenland one of the most minority-friendly regions in Austria.
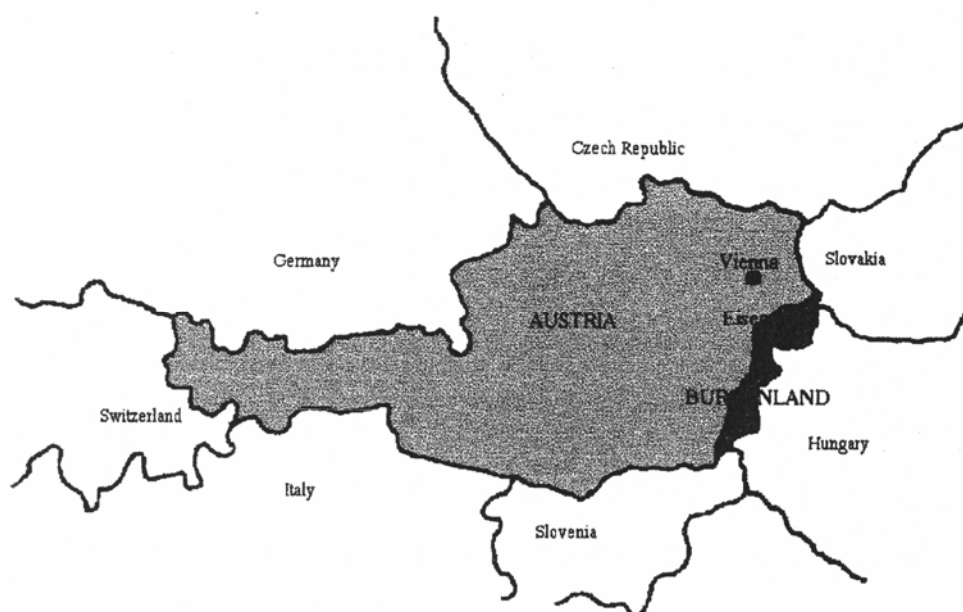
5.1.1   Illustration: Location of Burgenland in Austria and neighboring states.
Source: Gmeiner 1999

Burgenland is the youngest Austrian region with a long history of changing national belongings and the country's longest state border. Its history and geographic position along the border has made it Austria's most socio-economically disadvantaged region. Therefore, Burgenland has been acknowledged EU objective 1 status as well as large Interreg programmes, turning it into Austria's largest receiver of EU regional funds.

Its history, multicultural character, border situation, socio-economic disadvantages, and EU funding status propose Burgenland as a case for studying changing interests and identities in the European periphery. The opening of the Iron Curtain in 1989, Austria's EU accession in 1995, and EU enlargement in 2004 have shifted the region from the Western European periphery into the center of the EU. To turn this geopolitical change into an economic opportunity is the political objective of the regional government, yet with so far unknown outcome. Burgenland's multi-national Central European heritage, its established market economy and federal democratic institutions provide specific structural preconditions for regional development in the context of European integration. Moreover, EU funding for economic and infrastructural improvements, including development of cultural capital, combined with the government's political support for reform offer additional incentives. Researching minority politics in the region of Burgenland therefore presents a case study of the cultural aspects of institutional transition under optimum structural conditions for the development of a peripheral region in the context of European integration.

5.2   Brief literature review

Austria's EU accession in 1995 affected Burgenland's regional institutions through intergovernmental changes in Austrian federalism, the creation of new administrative bodies in the region, and a diverse range of regional cross-border cooperation projects, facilitated but not necessarily initiated by EU structural policy. Apart from general problems of EU regional policy and cross-border cooperation regarding management efficiency and democratic accountability, Burgenland has used the opportunities offered by European integration comparatively well. The institutional adjustments concern mainly technocratic procedures of subsidizing for economic and labour market development, focusing on project implementation efficiency. The decision-making on EU programming and regional participation in national EU policies is situated mainly within the executive branch of the regional government and therefore not transparent to the public. The influence of the EU structural funds can be summarized as an additional economization of regional policy, a shift in policymaking to the regional executive, and from parliamentary democracy to implementation efficiency. For the regional government and for private actors such as minority organizations this means a reorientation toward more informal governance arrangements diversification of strategic partners and resources. However, due to the complex EU programming procedures, this increase of strategic choices, implies even more federal coordination rather than an exit from the national system. In the literature on Burgenland's regional EU policy, ethnic groups, or even the traditionally powerful social partners, are not attributed a relevant role.

The strong assimilation tendencies characterizing minority-majority relations in Austria and particularly in Burgenland find reflection in the statistics on language use as well as in linguistic studies. The historic processes constructing the specific harmonious ethnic situation in the multi-cultural region confront different views about recent modernization effects.

nur DEUTSCH (insges.):   84.9%
auch KROATISCH (insges.):   9.0%
auch UNGARISCH (insges.):   6.1%
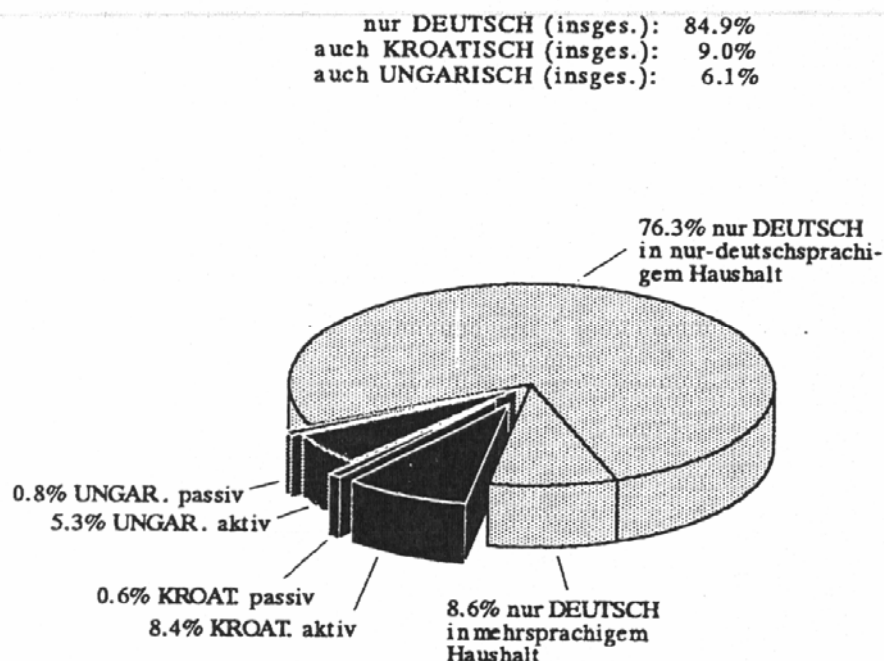
Illustration 2: Language knowledge in Burgenland 1990-1991.
Source: Holzer & Münz 1993

The decade-long assimilation tendencies affecting the traditional communities in the rural periphery have been complemented recently by new trends toward functional bilinguality, on the one hand, and a cultural awakening of minority associations, on the other hand. In addition to strong local identifications among the older minority members, this new multi-cultural consciousness characterizes Burgenland as a region. Modernization of the region therefore might find expression in socio-economic and political integration on one side and in the pluralization of cultural identities and their free strategic choice on the other. It is associated with European integration, meaning generally the opening of the Austro-Hungarian border. But the persisting marginalized situation of the Burgenland Roma moderates the harmonious multicultural image toward one of a rigid ethnic hierarchy.

When Burgenland became part of Austria in 1921, the schooling question polarized the Croatian minority between the Social-Democratic camp aiming at socio-economic integration into the Austrian market and the Christian-Democratic one promoting the conservation of Croat culture. During the Second Republic, this ideological polarization into two socio-political camps continued under the leadership of the conservative and VP-close Croatian Cultural Association (founded in 1921) and the progressive and SP-close 'Burgenländische Bürgermeisterkonferenz'

(founded in 1978). Also the Hungarian minority suffered, despite the foundation of the Cultural Association of Burgenland Hungarians in 1968, from inner divisions. Due to different historic reasons, the lacking minority identity and assimilation turned Burgenland's ethnicities into Austria's 'silent minorities'. However, from the 1970s and increasingly from the end 1980s, a revival of organizational life has attracted the academic attention to the generation conflicts within the minority groups, the role of the church, and external inputs from immigration, kin-states and European integration. These modernization processes have provoked reform processes of the organizational landscape, resulting in the pluralization of minority associations outside the established political institutions of the state and the region. The emancipation of the educated and urbanized young elites from the traditional political leaders expressed itself mostly in socio-cultural activities, often limited to the local level. While it is assumed that external factors associated with European integration provide an additional input for minority activism, little recent empirical research has been realized regarding the question about the political implications for the region.

While Burgenland shows certain regional specifities of minority participation, it is embedded in Austria's national minority regime, driven also by political and legal issues partly beyond the regional realm. In Burgenland specifically, minority members are fully politically integrated into the regional and local government institutions and political parties so that minorities have no separate political representation and therefore have rarely provoked political controversy. Since 1976, and increasingly since the 1990s, major improvements of minority rights have led to a diversification of minority politics in Austria and particularly in Burgenland. An increasing number of minority groups, including the Hungarians and the Roma in addition to the Croats in Burgenland, have received official acknowledgement based on divers legal status. Therefore, different political interests motivate their participation in the collective political consultation mechanisms to the national government. Moreover, improvements of regional legislation in the area of schooling, kindergarden, topography, and official language have given Burgenland's minorities a slightly privileged status in the Austrian context. Most of the improvements at the national and regional level have happened under the pressure of external interest constellations. The literature mentions the role of Yugoslavia in the peace negotiations following WWII, the South Tyrol question, the Waldheim debate, the political transition in kinstates, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, and the EU sanctions, but fails to provide any detailed empirical evidence. Most recently the idea of the 'Europe of the Regions' provides a new context for the formerly peripheral region emerged from decades-long ignorance of the ethnic question to a self-conscious regional policy driven by a government that sees its multicultural heritage and multilingual culture as a political and economic resource.

While there is little literature on the economic activities of minority members or the engagement of minority organizations in regional development, a lot has been written on the economy of the region and the relevance of the border for everyday life. However, it should be taken into account that cross-border cooperation might, but not necessarily does favour people knowing minority languages. The history of cross-border exchange, the present success and spatial dynamics of economic integration, and the changing meanings of the border attributed by the population since the opening in the end 1980s show a more differentiated people of European integration on the ground. In sum, the border for the time being more divides than connects, at least in so far as the immediate border regions are concerned. The most successful implementation of EU structural reform programmes can only partly

balance economic integration effects which deepen existing development gaps between Burgenland's North and South to the advantage of national centers outside the region. While the agglomeration Vienna is expected to gain economic centrality beyond the national borders, small border communities rarely engage in cross-border activities. Burgenland's development might be based more on the geographic situation of the Northern part between Vienna and Bratislava than on socio-cultural cohesion and cross-border integration in the periphery. The development efforts of regional elites promoting bilinguality and mobilizing a post-national idea of a 'Europe of the Regions' finds little reflection in the economic realities and socio-cultural boundaries persistently dividing the border communities. Thus, socio-economic differentials and the cultural prejudices associated with them historically remain stronger than the recent political mobilization of preexisting social and cultural commonalities. Far from a cultural, political, or economic revival of the border periphery, EU enlargement results in little more than in a spatial reorientation of Burgenland's South from one center to another one across the border.

There is no specific literature and also no reference to any empirical evidence on the involvement of the EU or other European organizations in minority activism and no mention either of any links of the minority organizations with any supranational bodies. The EU funds are dedicated mostly to economic priorities and cultural programmes are subordinated to this objective, some EU funded projects, particularly the Interreg projects in the border regions, might concern ethnic or language issues in more or less indirect ways. Possible examples include the Symposium Mogersdorf, the KUGA, the project 'school on screen' by the Arge Volksgruppen Burgenland, and some of the projects implemented in the framework of Euregio Western Pannonia. Yet, EU funding provides more an additional resource than the initial motive for a possible politicization of minorities and majority interests in regional development. While the EU might also play an important symbolic role in all this, the literature pays more attention here to the 'Europe of the Regions'. Although European integration tends to be associated with an economization, a very diverse external context interacts with social modernization and endogenous cultural responses in the region, the political developments of the national minority regime, and the strategies of other ethnic groups.

5.3   Concluding remarks

The historic-political, socio-economic, and legal-institutional context of minority politics and regional development in Burgenland reveals a complex array of relationships between cultural identifications and territorial functions, whereby their link with European institutions is far from clear. The historic-political structures of minority politics show major improvements of minority rights for the Burgenland Croats combined with an extention to a more plural spectrum of minority groups rights including all minority groups in Burgenland. The socio-economic structures of this peripheral border region undergo rapid modernization tendencies including economic restructurings, social urbanization and cultural assimilation tendencies affecting bilingual areas as well as the whole region. The territorial institutions exemplified through sub-national cooperation within and across neighboring borders with the kinstates show reterritorialization processes at multiple functional levels. These political, socio-economic, and territorial pluralization tendencies are embedded in a broader external context characterized by multiple institutional transformations

in Europe, particularly its changing border regimes. But a direct impact of EU policies in the region can be stated only for the economic realm, and most EU funded projects are administered by technocratic development agencies, thus promising little ground for broad politicization. Yet, European integration, in a more general sense, provides an often repeated keyword mobilized in political and academic contexts in association with regionalism or ethnic identifications, or – if associated with the idea of 'Europe of the Regions' - with both.

These institutional transformations define the context of an opportunity structure for political efforts by subnational actors to establish cooperation between different social groups, e.g. minority organizations, regional government, supranational organizations such as the EU, as well as the central state. Interpreting European integration as an institutional, social, political, and economic project of modernization, collective action in the region might not necessarily be initiated by only one actor such as the EU. Possibly the idea of a 'Europe of the Regions' might serve as a common mobilization frame motivating collective action to overcome the disadvantaged status of the national periphery. On the other side the strategies associated with modernization could also be too diverse, based on different historic experiences, socio-economic interests and cultural interpretations. For, the structural incentives of EU policies are too technocratic to motivate social or political mobilization, but they might serve as a resource facilitating the realization of diverse political projects referring to Europe or European integration as a more general symbolic frame. The question emerges therefore how diverse social, cultural, political, and economic interests at different spatial levels interact in the region of Burgenland; and whether these political processes result in conflict or cooperation, or in a shift of political interactions to the emerging centers, thus leaving the periphery untouched. As the regional government considers cultural heritage an important political mobilization source, a decisive role in the regional development effort will come to the minority organizations as representatives and mediators of these top-down and bottom-up cultural forces.

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6 Regions, Minorities and European Policies: A Policy Report on the Italo-Slovene border

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6.1 The Italo-Slovene borderland: an introduction

The Italo-Slovene frontier—which, from its origin at the two nations' mutual border with Austria, describes what many have deemed the meeting-point of Europe's three great, historic civilisations and ethno-linguistic groups, the Romance, the Germanic, and the Slavonic—has also been one of European history's most violently fraught, famously so in the 20th century. Yet, the degeneration of that frontier at the end of the Second World War into a genocide area was not due to the region's historic and enduring multicultural composition, but rather the impossibility of dividing it along ethnic lines (Gross 1978). Competing, 'self-completing' nationalist projects in Italy and the emergent Yugoslavia had incited both to fight against the Habsburgs for the liberation of their ethnic brethren in the frontier in World War One, and thus to lay simultaneous claim thereafter to a frontier which had been and multilingual and multicultural since the 6th century AD. The addition of an ideological struggle for this frontier—which had been incorporated into Italy after the First World War—fought largely along nationalist lines served to exacerbate the enduring conflict over which nation the frontier 'belonged to' as the Second World War ended. It is the memory of Italian fascism's brutal oppression of the region's Slovenes and Croats, and the 'retribution' for it which came in the deportation, execution, and exodus of the bulk of the Istrian Italophone population, which continues to fuel contemporary skepticism of the 'other' community between the majority Italophone and minority Slovenophone populations on the Italian side of the border.

While the minorities' relative protections within Italy and the former Yugoslavia were finally, legally described in the 1975 Osimo Treaty (which also fixed the border between the two states), in practice, the legal protection of the estimated 80-100,000 Slovenophones in Italy continues to evolve to this day. Rights to Slovene-language education, public address, and toponomastic signage varies amongst the three provinces in which the Slovenophones live—Udine (*Videm* in Slovene), Gorizia (*Gorica*), and Trieste (*Trst*), with the latter two, post-war provinces providing the greatest *de jure* (if not *de facto*) protection due to their being subject to the post-WWII Peace Treaty. Though the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia has been officially autonomous since 1967 due to its multicultural nature, much of the interpretation and implementation of the various minority protections has been left to the discretion of the municipal level; indeed, the Italian parliament only formally recognised the Slovenophones as a 'national' minority in 2001. The non-implementation of the Peace Treaty's full range of minority protections on the Italian side was largely due to pressure from the Triestine and Gorizian right wing, as well as the political ability to dismiss the Slovenophones as a Communist 'threat' in the Cold War era. In comparison, the roughly 3,000 Italophones of the Slovene littoral—who

live within four officially bilingual municipalities, Portorož-Portorose, Piran-Pirano, Izola-Isola, and Koper-Capodistria—are constitutionally guaranteed full protection and permanent representation as an autochthonous minority.
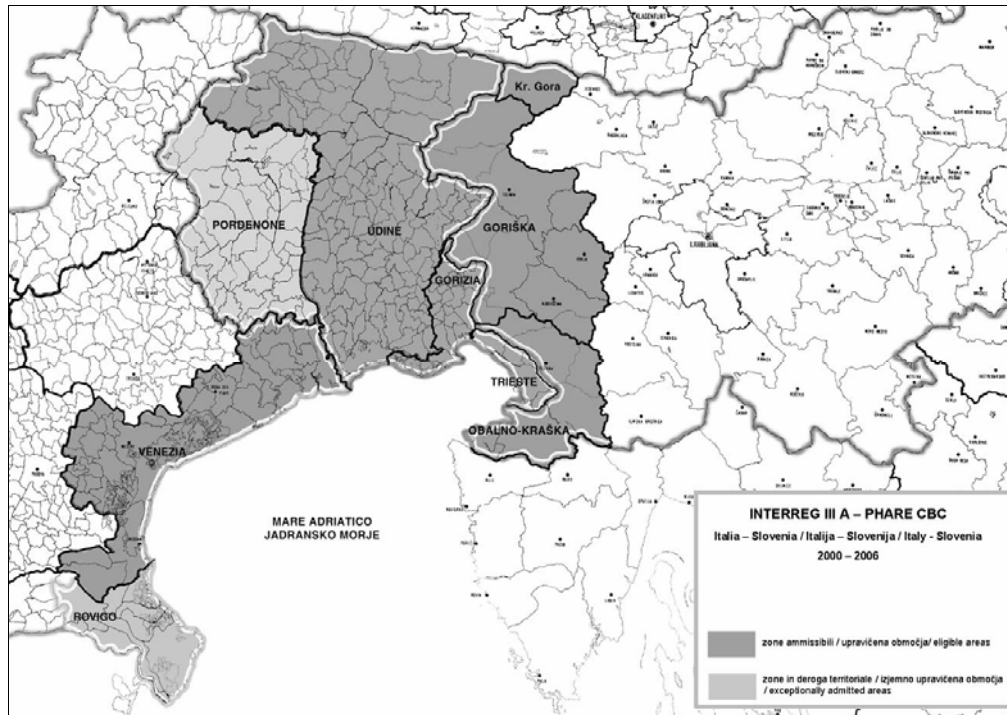
6.1.1   INTERREG IIIA Italy/Slovenia Programming Region

The evolving nature of the border—and the politico-economic identity it helped frame as southernmost portion of the 'fault-line' between the post-war capitalist and communist worlds—continues to impact upon the populations it circumscribes and divides, most dramatically so in the latter half of the 20th century. With the accession of Slovenia to the European Union in May 2004, many observers believe that the rift between the communities will finally be healed. Nevertheless, the persistence of historical memory among segments of the population—and those they elect to represent them—threatens to continue as a barrier to socio-economic integration, as well as to the ability of the Triestine economy to resuscitate after a half-century of stagnation.

The EU, meanwhile, has made a substantial investment in cross-border cooperation as a means of enhancing socio-economic integration across its internal and external borders since the early 1990s. This has occurred primarily through the Interreg/Phare CBC programmes financed through the Structural Funds. Along the EU's internal borders, such investment has been made due to recognition that frontiers between the member-states should function as the Union's connective tissue rather than remain developmental gaps. Along the external borders, investment in cross-border integration processes have provided a further means of adapting and bringing what are now the new member states closer to the EU. At the same time,

cross-border regional policy has been seen as a means of building networks—economic, cultural, infrastructural, interpersonal—among ethno-linguistically heterogeneous borderland populations who remain skeptical of one another due to the legacy of fascism and the Second World War. This report examines the impact of programmatic EU-led financial intervention upon the Slovenophone minority in Italy through looking at the potentially mobilizing effects of the regional economic initiatives it supports, the infrastructural linkages it creates, the incentives it provides for bilateral and inter-ethno-linguistic community action and cooperation, and the person-to-person networks it aims to foster among and across the frontier's communities.

6.2   An overview of Italo-Slovene borderland and minority relations, 1918-2004

In 1918, at the conclusion of the First World War and upon the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Duchy of Görz, most of the province of Carniola, and the entirety of the Karstic littoral, including Trieste, were awarded to the Kingdom of Italy. Italy's entrance into the war on the side of the Triple Entente had been predicated upon this territorial redistribution, as secretly agreed in the 1915 Treaty of London. Italy's claims, however, had been economically and strategically defensive, in addition to nationalist, ones, insofar as the Austro-Hungarian territory it requested aimed to ensure Italian politico-economic hegemony over the entirety of the Upper Adriatic. Locally, the move sought to consolidate power among the urban, coastal Italian population, which had previously been one among several, regional minorities within Austria-Hungary. This consolidation of politico-economic and territorial power was to be to the great disadvantage of the region's substantial, but primarily rural-agricultural in nature, Slovene and Croatian populations.

At the 1919 Peace Conference both the Italians and the then-Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes presented their respective claims to the Julian March. In 1920, the Treaty of Rapallo confirmed roughly the eastern third of present-day Slovenia as part of Italy, bringing 300,000 Slovenes into the kingdom—a quarter of the total Slovene population in Europe at the time (Pirjevec and Kacin Wohinz 1988:30). The 'relocation' of such a substantial portion of the small nation's population to a larger state still contributes to Slovenia's sense of cultural peril in relation to its larger neighbours (Manzin 1997:xiii). The fact that the Rapallo Treaty required Yugoslavia to protect its Italophone minority, but neglected to require the Italian Kingdom to undertake the same towards its Slavic populations—insofar as it was then considered 'insulting' to make such a requirement of a victorious Great Power—only contributed to Slovenia's sense of powerlessness to protect the cultural development of its ethnic brethren newly abroad (Sluga 2001:42).

With the onset of the Fascist era in the early 1920s, the Slovenophone community in Italy was (along with the Istrian Croatophones and Tyrolean Germanophones) subjected to a concerted, and often brutal, Italianisation campaign, which increased in its intensity throughout the 1930s. The visual and rhetorical erasure of extant, alternative cultural histories in the 'new' territories sought to consolidate further Italy's geopolitical control over the territory. Indeed, the region's seamless, functional commercial Italophonia until the rise of 19th-century nationalism and irredentism was a reality which Italian fascism rendered permanently politicized through its efforts to enforce what came naturally in the marketplace, school, church,

119

and home, and furthermore only served to further Slovene and Croatian national consciousness in the wider region (Novak 1970).

Fascist Italy invaded Yugoslavia in 1941 with the intention of seizing the Dalmatian coast; by 1942, it had seized and incorporated most of Dalmatia into Italy, and also occupied Slovenia as far east as Ljubljana. Primorskan Slovenes—as well as anti-fascist Italians—joined the partisans in increasing numbers. Italy's capitulation suddenly called its pre- and intra-war territorial gains into question, ennobling the partisan forces fighting under Tito to make plans to claim Trieste and Istria. The Nazis prepared for the worst and seized the Julian March and Istria; these were transformed into the Reich province of *Adriatisches Küstenland,* and were thus isolated from Italian national life for the remainder of the war. During the final course of the war, the towns and valleys of the Julian March changed hands several times, seeing bitter partisan warfare, largely coordinated by the Communist Slovene-Italian Liberation Front, against the Fascist and, later, Nazi occupiers. Indeed, the utter volatility of the area, and the success of the partisan attacks against the Nazi occupying forces led the latter to create the only extermination camp on Italian soil in Trieste, where an estimated 3,000-5,000 persons lost their lives, the majority of whom were Slavic antifascists (Ballinger 2003; Sluga 1996; Fölkel 1979; Bon Gherardi 1972).

On 1 May 1945, Trieste was liberated from Nazi control by Yugoslav forces led by Tito, and the diplomatic struggle for the annexation of the 'Free Territory of Trieste' began. While residual contemporary mistrust of the Italians among some Slovenophone factions relates primarily to the Fascist Italianisation campaign, contemporary Italian extremism toward the Slovenes relates to the consolidation of Yugoslav communist-partisan power in Istria and the harsh, 42-day Yugoslav occupation of Trieste, during which an unknown number of Italians in Trieste and Istria were thrown to their deaths in the Karst *foibe*. The exodus of the majority of the Italophone population of the Slovene littoral and Istria (estimated at between 200,000 and 350,000 people) during and after the war ultimately resulted in a magnificent change in the region's ethno-cultural composition, as well as a massive and difficult population shift toward refugee camps in Trieste and Gorizia, resettlement elsewhere in Italy, and migration abroad.

Land in the primarily Slovenophone Triestine upland was expropriated to provide temporary shelter for the 'exiles,' which further contributed to local ethnic hostility. Meanwhile, the Istrians who left, as well as those who remained in what was to become communist Yugoslavia, were, regardless of their relative innocence or guilt, collectively stained with the 'excesses' of fascism, and as such they were destined to pay for fascism's crimes; the Italian Communist Party's labeling of the exiles as such led to their lending their electoral support to the revanchist and 'post-fascist' *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI), who were to dominate the Triestine and Gorizian political scene for decades in the guise of the exiles' protector (Ballinger 2003:202).

The obsessive remembering of the tragedy of the *foibe* by the Triestine right-wing—which, combined with their revanchist territorial aspirations, ultimately resulted in the city being politically marginalized as the international political environment attempted to reconstruct itself in the post-war era—was, in essence, a response by the periphery to a conscious 'forgetting' which took place at the nation's centre (Favretto 2003; Valdevit 1999). Indeed, the silence regarding the *foibe* was intricately tied to the nation's collective lapse of memory regarding the Fascist era and its aftermath. Italy's refusal to accept responsibility for fascism's crimes in the

former Yugoslavia link to its national embarrassment that its war-time occupation had been a resolute failure, to its insistence that it had behaved nobly in contrast to the Germans and the Croats, and more broadly to its national conviction that it had been opposed to fascism and thus firmly aligned with the partisan and Allied struggle against it at the end of the war—with the direct conclusion that it should not be subject to war-crimes tribunals and excessive reparations (cf. Rodogno 2003; Rodogno 2004; Petrusewicz 2004; Pavone 2004). The debates regarding suffering and loss in this period are thus almost by nature mutually exclusionary ones demarcating opposite identities, histories, and memories for the region's population (cf. Ballinger 2004; Ballinger 2003; Sluga 2001; Sluga 1996). Such relentless rhetorical exclusion of the mutual culpability has, in turn, produced its own political implications; for some Italian factions in Trieste, 'the historical 'crime' of the *foibe* deprives contemporary Slovenes of any basis for demanding that Italy honor its international treaty agreements concerning minority protection,' (Ballinger 2004:149; cf. Spanò 1995).

The Allies assumed control of Trieste on 12 June 1945. The Triestine hinterland, the Slovene littoral, and northwestern Istria came under Yugoslav administration at the same time. Several attempts were made by the delegations of Yugoslavia and Italy with the other Great Powers to divide the region along ethnic lines, despite the fact that no 'ideal' line existed. Outside of the so-defined 'Free Territory of Trieste,' the 1947 Peace Treaty between the Allied Powers and Italy eventually employed the French delegation's cartographic proposal to assign the Resia, Canal, and Natisone valleys, as well as the urban Gorizia and Monfalcone, to Italy; the remainder of the territory of the former province of Venezia Giulia was assigned to Yugoslavia. In addition to isolating Trieste geographically from both Italy and Slovenia (then within Yugoslavia), the post-war demarcation of the border also isolated it commercially. Slovenia, meanwhile, would remain without an Adriatic port until the enlargement of Koper-Capodistria beginning in 1957.

Ultimately confirmed in its territorial claims (and this time cowed by its wartime *volte-face*), Italy eventually agreed to be signatory to minority protection agreements with both Yugoslavia and Austria. While these provisions were largely ones which had already been informally agreed to after World War I, Italy now understood in signing them the precedent they would set in protecting its own minorities remaining in territories now 'abroad' (Alcock 1970:143). Nevertheless, a variety of reasons stood behind Italy's non-implementation of the full-extent of its protection commitments to its Slovenophone minority: its 'victor' status and 'moral' capital versus communist Yugoslavia (and the Slovenophones in Italy by association) during the Cold War; its lack of acceptance of its (mutual) culpability for the 'loss' of the historic Italophone communities in the Slovene littoral and Istria (which coincided with its pressure for protection toward the Italophones who remained; its relative, practical lack of experience with the legal and institutional development of regional autonomy and minority protection; its fears of secessionist movements in the autonomous regions; lack of mobilization on the part of the Slovenophone minority; Yugoslavia's lack of initiative in internationalizing the minority issue (as Austria did with South Tyrol), likely due to reluctance to jeopardize preferential foreign aid and trade agreements; and, the local power of the Triestine right-wing to block implementation of minority-protection measures on the 'understood' basis of Italy's failures to deliver on its promises to its Istrian refugees. One further obstacle for harmonizing minority protection in Friuli-Venezia Giulia was the historic absence of protection for the Slovenophone communities of 'Venetian Slovenia'; an inability to

agree upon the terms and geographical extent of minority protection in the province of Udine stalled discussion of further developments in the neighbouring provinces and toward a 'global' norm (Bratina 1997:129, 139).

The zonal demarcation of Trieste became the *de facto* international boundary following the 1954 London Memorandum. Considerations of the formation of a multi-ethnic free state centred upon Trieste had been quickly overshadowed by the politico-economic polarisation of Europe and Allied fear of a potentially Communist Italy. While the emerging Cold War thus ensured that Trieste returned to Italy, the looming split between Belgrade and Moscow (in large part due to the Yugoslavia's continued claim to Trieste) rapidly altered the relationship between the West and Yugoslavia. Beginning in the latter half of the 1950s, political relations between Italy and Yugoslavia began to normalize, leading to the beginnings of regional and borderland economic re-integration. Citizens of both nations began to cross the local border to visit relatives and on errands with increasing frequency following the signing of bilateral agreements on the movement of borderland residents in 1955. The divide between the Allies' original geo-political strategy behind the borderland demarcation and the daily socio-economic reality of the Italo-Yugoslav borderland widened throughout the 1960s and 1970s. At the same time, relations between the Slovenophone minority in Italy with Slovenia (within Yugoslavia) also began to normalize, and, in some ways, 'institutionalise,' through economic and cultural support mechanisms (Bratina 1997:130). Meanwhile, due to its ethno-linguistic composition and the frontier-related political *problématique* it faced, Friuli-Venezia Giulia was granted its own regional parliament and autonomous status within the Italian republic in 1964. By the mid-1960s, 'greater and more equitable Slovene participation in civic life stabilized, even if the effects were limited and transitory, and one can say that this fact, together with the institution of the [autonomous] region, signaled the definitive exit of [majority] Triestine political life from the period of post-fascism,' (Apih 1988:189).

De jure sovereignty over the existing border, sanctioned by the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, was finally formalised in the subsequent 1975 Treaty of Osimo. Negotiation over the Osimo Accords involved substantial discussion of cross-border, economic-integration-related measures throughout the borderland region. The extensive economic cooperation foreseen in the accords was by and large never pursued, however, due to what is widely perceived to be lack of interest among local political and economic actors. The minority-protection provisions of the Osimo Treaty concerned the right to Slovene-language education and press, to Slovenophone political, cultural, and recreational organizations, and a commitment to the community's overall equitable socio-economic development. Furthermore, the educational provisions were limited to the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia, and critically, did not include a reciprocal provision mandating courses in Slovene language and culture in Italian schools, in direct contrast to the Slovene littoral. As a result, local knowledge of the Slovenophone community and its history in Friuli-Venezia Giulia has generally remained isolated within the community.

Attempts by the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in 1970 to introduce Slovenophone minority-protection legislation into the Italian Senate for the first time were ultimately unsuccessful. Academic and (some) civic public attention in borderland region in the 1970s, meanwhile, turned the threat of assimilation, noting that the stability of the Slovenophone minority was potentially endangered by the increasing rate on inter-cultural marriages, the continuing 'expropriation' of territory in Slovenophone municipalities for industrial purposes as well as by Italophone re-

settlement within them, sub-average higher-educational enrollment and qualifications within the community, minimal average capital accumulation in local financial institutions, the continuing perspective of their culture being a 'subaltern' one (Apih 1988:195; cf. Provincia di Trieste 1981). Furthermore, cultural development was obstructed by the absence of cohabitation, the lack of educational administrative autonomy, and the continuing, seemingly endless legal debate over a 'global protection' statute for the region—which would, in particular, 'officialise' public use of the Slovene language (Apih 1988:196). Indeed, a 'Catch-22' presented itself, in which the extent of Slovene-language protection needed to be determined (in the province of Udine in particular), but wherein the 'ethnic' census required for doing so was refused for differing reasons on both sides of the debate, i.e., for fear of increasing/decreasing the estimated number of Slovenes in Italy (Apih 1988:196). These factors ultimately threatened the wider development of a distinctly Slovene middle class in the region (Sapelli 1988:259-260).

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw fundamental change in the Italian political environment, with the end of the Grand (anti-Communist) Coalition between the Christian Democrats (DC) and the Socialists (PSI). Meanwhile, despite the Osimo Treaty, the Italo-Slovene border once again became a 'contestable' upon Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia in 1991, which 'allowed' several formally settled issues to resurface: beyond the central issue of Slovenia's succession in treaties concluded between Italy and Yugoslavia, political actors in Italy specifically raised the issues of compensation for/recuperation of property abandoned by Italians in the Slovene littoral, as well as the protection afforded the Italophone minority in Slovenia and in relationship to its counterpart in Croatia in the context of the two countries independence.

During the first Berlusconi administration, 'Slovene' issues appeared at the level of Italian foreign policy, most directly in Italy's insistence upon Slovenia's harmonisation of property rights prior to signing its EU Association Agreement, alongside intermittent threats to veto its accession if it did not comply. Italy's actions—on behalf of the Triestine right wing—were 'a challenge to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy' as well as the EU's enlargement policy regarding a prime candidate (Gow and Carmichael 2000:206). Robust support for continued Italian intransigence toward Slovenia among factions in Trieste and elsewhere continued to sour local inter-ethnic relations generally on the eve of a potential rapprochement between the borderland minority communities and 'their' nations. Italo-Slovene bilateral relations thus frequently set the tone for local minority-majority relations in the early 1990s. Slovenia, in response, formally raised the question of the level of protection afforded the Slovenophone minority across the border.

While a majority within the Italian Parliament passed a resolution in October 1991 demanding recognition of Slovenia, this was not acted upon by the Italian state in an individual capacity. The extreme right continued to argue for a revision of the Osimo Treaty prior to Slovenia's recognition (Sema 1994). Italy only recognized Slovenia in conjunction with the EU's other member-states on 16 January 1992. Following the Berlusconi government's collapse in 1994, the Spanish EU Presidency was able to broker a compromise to the property-claims issue in December 1995—and thus to find a path toward the ratification of Slovenia's Association Agreement. The Prodi administration, which came into power in May 1996, finally signed Slovenia's Association Agreement the following month. In amending its constitution in 1996 in order to allow property to be purchased by non-resident non-citizens from

1 July 2003, Slovenia's desire to conclude its Europe Agreement carried the day (Šabič 2002:115). Slovenia was finally duly and formally admitted as a member-state of the EU on 1 May 2004.

6.3 Current issues in minority protection and patterns of civic participation

According to the Italian Ministry of the Interior, in 1994 there were an estimated 80,000 Slovenophones resident in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (Ministero dell'Interno:1994). Though its approach varies widely across its territory, Italy has occasionally proven itself capable of enlightened minority protection policies; its treatment of its Germanophone population in South Tyrol is on par with Slovenia's treatment of its Italophone and Ugrophone minorities, who are, by most accounts, the best-protected small ethno-linguistic minorities in Europe. Roughly 2.5 million people in Italy, or 4.5% of the population, belong to one of 14 officially acknowledged minority groups, making Italy home to more minorities than any other EU country in absolute size. The variance in the level of protection afforded derives from the fact that affirmative minority rights are primarily connected to territory in Italy, rather than the inhabitants themselves (and similar to the connection of the autochthonous minorities to their municipalities in Slovenia).

Nevertheless, in the absence of a general law on minority protection, the officially recognised minorities enjoy differing statuses. Though they are present within 36 communities in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the Slovenophones of the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia have been the longest and best protected due to the fact that they, unlike the province of Udine, had been subject to the post-war negotiations over the Free Territory of Trieste, and are presently provided with education in the Slovene language at the nursery, primary and lower- and upper-secondary levels, the right to address the local and provincial public administration in Slovene, bilingual identity cards, and bilingual toponomastic signage in their communities (though the latter is not fully implemented).

Italian Law 38 of 2001 officially recognised the Slovenophone community in 32 communities in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and among them in several municipalities in the province of Udine, thus in principle making the latter equal in terms of rights with those resident of the provinces of Gorizia and Trieste for the first time. Law 38 will, however only apply in those municipalities of the province which specifically request it. As such, state funds destined for its fulfilment remain at present unassigned and/or unavailable to the province's municipalities; in large part, the present blockage in applying the law overall is due to political resistance within the local government in Trieste, which does not want the law applied to all six of the province's municipalities. As it had presumably been preoccupied with its own entrance into the European Union, the government of Slovenia had not confronted Rome on the law's application as of May 2004.

6.4 Economic activity and EU regional policy in the Italo-Slovene borderland

The EU, meanwhile, has programmatically sought to enhance cross-border development within and at the edges of the Union since 1991 both in order to increase the transactional efficiency of the internal market and as part of its commitment to balanced territorial development. The Italo-Slovene border was one of the first targets

of the Interreg cross-border cooperation programme due to Friuli-Venezia Giulia's own regional-developmental needs, the extant groundwork for cross-border institutional cooperation in the region due to the Alpe Adria regional-cooperation initiative begun in the 1970s, the priority given by the EU to politico-economic stabilisation alongside the former Yugoslavia as it began its wars of succession and to post-communist Central and Eastern Europe generally, as well as the tragic history of this particular frontier and the desire to facilitate better relations across it.

The first Interreg programming period, which ended in 1995, was an experimental 'familiarisation' exercise for this new Community Initiative financed through the Structural Funds, and as such, the initial programming period saw little, actual cross-border impact or participation from the Slovenian side of the borderland. The EU's Phare external assistance programme began operating in Slovenia in 1992, and a cross-border cooperation (CBC) component within it was formalised in 1994, though its interventions also took place entirely upon Slovene territory. The second phase of EU-led borderland integration, Interreg II Italy-Slovenia was finally approved in 1997. From the outset, the Interreg II programme was committed to enhancing the cross-borderness of its interventions beyond the (very limited) achievements of the earlier Interreg programme; its interventions were divided into three 'axes': upgrading the region, local resources and environmental protection; improvements in institutional cooperation and communication; and, entrepreneurial cooperation (Ambrosi 2001). The specific objective of the loosely coordinated Phare CBC (cross-border cooperation) Slovenia-Italy programme was stated simply as to assist 'Phare areas bordering the EU to overcome their developmental problems' whilst promoting cross-border co-operation 'according to the Interreg programme principles,' (JPD:243-244). Interreg II and Phare CBC began in different years, and that lag had a significant impact upon programming, institutional cooperation, local-partnership development, and project implementation generally, as well as the overall programme's ability to achieve its aims. Meanwhile, the legal and administrative discrepancies between Interreg and Phare had vast implications for level of cross-borderness in its interventions.

For the purposes of the present Interreg IIIA Italy-Slovenia programme, the Italo-Slovene border is once again defined as both a land and maritime one; it includes on the Italian side the provinces of Udine, Gorizia, and Trieste (region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia), as well as the province of Venice (region of the Veneto), and on the Slovenian side the statistical regions of Obalno-kraška and Goriška as well as the municipality of Kranjska Gora. The 232 km-long land border connects 24 Italian municipalities with 13 Slovenian ones. The programming area covers an area of 11,400km^2 and a population of 1.9m (as of 1998; JPD:12). Financing was initially set at €93m for Interreg IIIA (43% of from the European Regional Development Fund, the remainder from national and regional sources), and €5m annually for the Phare CBC component. Following enlargement, the programme budget was reset at €56m, with Slovenia's Interreg receipts as a member-state for the 2004-2006 period remaining under discussion.

The Interreg IIIA Italy-Slovenia programme is the first to have a truly joint programming document as well as joint steering committee from the outset. Given the perceived institutional 'learning-by-doing' achieved by both the Commission and the Italian and Slovene actors in the last programming period, as well as the capacity to achieve greater cross-borderness via the person-to-person intervention supported by Phare's Small Projects Fund, officials on both sides were optimistic about the potentiality for Interreg IIIA to achieve greater results at its outset. Nevertheless,

several factors still compromised seamless cooperation in the institutional environment: the cross-border partnership 'continuing' into this programming period initially involved new actors in Friuli-Venezia Giulia (though, following Riccardo Illy's election to the regional presidency, yet another regional development shake-up brought the earlier programme administration back in to lead the programme), the Slovenian regionalisation debate remained (and remains) unresolved, and the political environment in Trieste still encompassed several nationalist factions (though this issue has, to some extent, recently been mitigated somewhat by Illy's presence at the region's helm).

Though the Interreg programme does not specifically target the borderland minority communities within its development priorities, specific objectives within the programme have an implicit minority 'focus' (e.g., those geared toward cross-border cultural and vocational cooperation, or toward economic development at the border itself between similar linguistic communities), and minority organisations are among the many eligible to apply with projects for funding. Furthermore, minority representatives are invited to some committee meetings as experts in project elaboration or preliminary evaluation. Given the perceived institutional 'learning-by-doing' achieved by both the Commission and Italian and Slovene actors in the earlier programming periods, the creation of a Joint Technical Secretariat in Trieste to oversee Interreg IIIA, and the procedural and legal harmonization which will come in the wake regarding the financial instruments involved with Slovenia's eligibility for Interreg funding itself from May 2001, officials on both sides and in Brussels have been optimistic about the potentiality for Interreg to achieve greater cross-border impact than it has in the past.

6.5   Conclusion

Despite a repeatedly tragic history of intercultural and political relations between the two 'kin' states, and in particular regarding Italy's past treatment of the Slavonophones resident within its territory, and current lack of truly 'positive discrimination' regarding its Slovenophone population, the EU-negotiated settlement of the property-restitution issue, recent developments in the political environment in Friuli-Venezia Giulia which have moved the administration further outside of the decades-old, obstructionist right-wing deadlock, the recent accession of Slovenia to the EU, the formal (if still in areas stalled) protection of the global Slovenophone population within Italian national legislation after a delay of half a century, and the continuing profound economic lure of Trieste for the Slovene littoral economy, all provide indication that socio-economic relations in the Italo-Slovene frontier should improve in the course of the coming decade. Examination of the experience of Interreg, and its contribution toward facilitating intra-ethnic and cross-border linkages between the frontier's communities will be undertaken in the sections to follow. While past evaluations of the Interreg programme have been lukewarm about its achieving cross-borderness in intervention, the seamlessness provided by Slovenia's participation in Interreg from 2004 should remedy many of the earlier obstacles to EU-led cooperation.

In the 1990s, the state of Slovene-minority participation in politico-economic affairs in Italy was in great flux, as questions that had been silenced on both sides of the post-war scenario have been reopened, and as the Slovene nation—both within and without its borders—has begun to raise its voice within a reuniting Europe.

Though recent political developments in the Italian frontier have been largely positive and well-received ones, the long-term nature of the instruments and processes of European borderland integration mean that a decade of less cordial relations form the background of this case study and still continue to influence opinion and developmental direction within some sections of the borderland population and economy. As such, though Interreg has been one driver of borderland minority mobilisation, it is critical to note the impact of Slovenia's accession to the EU as a separate but coordinate factor in this arena. For this reason, bilateral relations between Italy and Slovenia, within the context of Slovenia's accession negotiations, have been introduced above and will be considered, where relevant, throughout.

It must also be noted that the lack of application of the free movement of persons principle, and the continuing presence of the Schengen frontier at the Italian border, following Slovenia's accession to the EU will have a dramatic impact upon transfrontier relations and commerce, insofar as levels of contact will not be seen to substantially increase. Though the process of accession has substantially harmonised the differences in the legal framework supporting cooperation and exchange between Italy and Slovenia, systemic discrepancies still exist, and thus must be recognised as a further factor limiting inter-ethnic and bilateral politico-economic engagement. Further, differences in the minority-rights regimes between the two states have differed for the past decade, and, as such, levels of minority representation on both sides of the border vary significantly. A fully transfrontier view is essential here, insofar as developments on the Italian side of the border must necessarily be understood alongside to the deeply evolved and ingrained protections extant on the Slovene side.

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7   Regions, Minorities, and European Policies: A Policy Report on the Italian Minority in Slovenia

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7.1   Presentation of the specific case

The relationship between the Italian and Slovene nations has a long history. Long before Slovenia became independent, the two nations lived side by side, not as two separated cultures, but partially in a mixed cultural environment. Nowadays ethnic minorities can be found on both sides of the border: the Slovene minority in Italy and Italian minority in Slovenia. In Slovenia, the borderland in the south stretches from the Karst region, the lime stone region of Slovenia, to the north where the borders of Italy and Slovenia join Austria's, to the basin of the Alps.

The Italian minority is concentrated in the southern part of this area in the municipalities of Piran - Pirano, Izola – Isola and Koper – Capodistria. The population of Italians in Slovenia is relatively small, in comparison to Slovenes on the Italian side of the border. Residents total 2,258; 0.11% of the total population of Slovenia. In the period 1961 to 1991, the number of Italians in Slovenia changed little. At the beginning of the 1990s elderly people made up a large proportion of the Italian population as the youth generation increased slowly. There was renewed growth afterwards because a part of the Italian ethnic group was statistically hidden in other categories, at the same time parts of other ethnic and regional populations declared Italian affiliation.

Before World War II the region where the Italian minority lives today was a part of Italy, as determined by the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920. During the era of fascism the Slovene population was repressed in many ways. They were not allowed to use their own language, not even in their own homes. While Italians were treated very well, the Slovenes were the subject of, sometimes even brutal, Italianisation. Such treatment spurred much resistance from the Slovene population. During World War II, when Slovenia was occupied by Germany, Hungary and Italy, the situation was even worse. After the Allies defeated Italy and Germany, Tito's partisans took advantage and liberated the whole territory, including Trieste, even risking war with the Allies. Later on they had to withdraw, and under the patronage of the Allies two zones were established, Zone A and Zone B, with the intention of dividing two nations. The division seemed 'too' factitious, and in addition Italy and Yugoslavia claimed both territories for themselves. In 1947, the decision was made that Zone A would belong to Italy, while Zone B would belong to Yugoslavia. The border between Italy and Yugoslavia was recognised as an international boundary with the London Memorandum in 1954. The outcome has resulted in the existence of two minorities, one on either side of the border.

Italians who represented the local majority in the towns and rural settlements of the Istrian part of Slovenia before World War II (in the greater part of the hinterland of Slovenian Istria there was practically none) moved away, which contributed largely to the present ethnically mixed structure of the population. The

situation changed significantly. The Italian population became a minority in the cities as well, representing less than 5% of the total population. The proportion of Italians in the post-war period continuously declined, particularly because of steady immigration.

The relationship between Italy and Yugoslavia over the Slovene minority in Italy and Italian minority in Slovenia cooled with the Treaty of Osimo in 1975. The treaty presupposed extensive cross boarder economic and cultural co-operation of Italian and Slovenian minorities with their central societies. But unfortunately the resolutions of the Treaty of Osimo were never fully carried out, due to lack of political will of both parties. After Slovenia's separation from Yugoslavia in 1991, the border issue with Italy was reopened again. A few right-wing Italian politicians demanded compensation for the property of Italians who emigrated or were driven away after the Second World War by the Yugoslav communist regime. Italy ratified Osimo in 2001, but even now the Slovene minority has less linguistic and thus cultural rights than Slovenia offers to the Italian minority in Slovenia.

Problems in Slovenia's relations with Italy became particularly tense in the early 1990s concerning the area that straddled the border between the two countries along with property issues that had arisen as a result of World War II. The cross-border area is ethnically mixed on both sides and was the subject of dispute at the end of the war. It became particularly sensitive in the 1990s because of the acts of forcible expulsion, migration and expropriation of property that occurred in the 1940s. The Italian government raised the property issue as an association agreement during negotiations between the EU and Slovenia. However, there was the ever-present issue of minorities on either side of the border, but for Slovenes more troubling was the resurgence of Italian irredentism toward areas of the former Yugoslavia that had been a part of Italy between the world wars.

Slovenia is divided into 193 municipalities (občine), but Slovenes more commonly relate to eight historical and geographic regions (Upper Carniola (Gorenjska), Lower Carniola (Dolenjska), Styria (Štajerska), the Littoral (Primorska), Inner Carniola (Notranjska), White Carniola (Bela krajina), Carinthia (Koroška), the eastern region of Slovenia along the Hungarian border (Prekmurje)), the boundaries of which are somewhat fluid. These historical regions do not entirely coincide with Slovenia's statistical regions: Pomurska, Podravska, Koroška, Savinjska, Zasavska, Spodnjeposavska, Jugovzhodna Slovenija, Osrednjeslovenska, Gorenjska, Notranjskokraška, Goriška and Obalno-kraška.

Slovene Istria, where the Italian minority in Slovenia is populated, is part of the Littoral-karstic (Obalno-kraška) statistical region and part of the Primorska historical and geographical region. Ethnically mixed areas within the three municipalities include Koper, Izola and Piran. Within the structure of the ethnically mixed areas as defined above, the proportion of Italians in the total number of inhabitants is somewhat more pronounced only in Strunjan/Strugnano (approx. 20%), while elsewhere it rarely exceeds 10%, with the total percentage being under 5%. Most Italians – some 75% - live in urban centres where they represent only a small portion of the population.

The system of special minority rights did not come into existence only after the independence of Slovenia. Elements of minority protection could be found soon after World War II, and the whole system was more or less in place by the mid-1980s. With the creation of the new state, ethnic community protection had only to be "adapted" into the newly pluralistic political system. A starting point for the protection of ethnic communities in Slovenia is provided by the concepts of ethnically

mixed territory and the system of collective rights which the state grants irrespective of numerical strength or proportion of members of ethnic minorities on the ethnically mixed territory (i.e. the absence of a numerical clause). Representatives of both ethnic communities actively participate in the process of building legal norms that apply to the various aspects of the development of ethnic communities. In this process they have the status of subject, the destiny of which may not be decided upon without the explicit consent of legitimate representatives of ethnic communities. Representatives of the ethnic communities have the right to veto all decisions of the legislator (from the state to the local level) in matters that relate to the special rights of the ethnic communities. This being the highest guarantee against possible attempts by representatives, of the majority nation, to force upon the ethnic communities, directions of development rejected by these communities.

The system of special rights of minorities can be divided into:

- The system of basic special rights: the right to exist, the right to be recognised, the right to group adherence and the right to special protection. The Italian (and Hungarian) ethnic communities in Slovenia all have these special rights assured in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia and other abovementioned documents.

- The system of so-called "compensation" rights (the right to special protection): use of minority languages (bilingual signs, use of minority languages in state administration, bilingual documents, bilingual operation in the judiciary, bilingual transactions in municipal administration, the use of ethnic community languages in the church), the right to education, the right to information, the right to own cultural development, the right to free contacts, the right to economic development, the right to the use of national symbols (flag, anthem).

- The system of rights arising from participation in decision-making of members of ethnic minorities: deputies of the ethnic communities in the National Assembly, ethnic community representatives in municipal councils, self-governing ethnic communities.

7.2   Overview of the possible impact of EU structural funds on the region

The territory, in which the independent state of Slovenia was created, in the early 1990s, was never ethnically homogenous. The number of ethnic minorities, their size and their real economic and political power has historically changed in accordance with changing political boundaries. The most recent change of state borders has left Slovenia a numerous collection of members of non-Slovene ethnic groups. These can be classified into two groups: the "historical" minorities and the newly formed ethnic communities (comprising mostly of members of nations of the former Yugoslavia), which emerged as a result of contemporary processes of economic immigration.

The number of 'historical' ethnic minority members (Hungarian and Italian) is 8,501 (0.43%) persons (or 11,747 (0.6%) persons, if taking into account the number of members of the Romany community according to 2002 census). The state assigns the status of "ethnic community" to this category of citizens and guarantees full legal protection to their collective and individual rights. A group of 272,338 persons (13.85% of Slovenia's population) composed of members of different nationalities is added to these, to make up the total of the non-Slovene population of the Republic of Slovenia as established by the 2002 census. To this second group the

constitution (Article 61) also guarantees expression of their ethnic affiliation. The covenant to protect both "historical" ethnic communities, as well as members of other nations living in Slovenia, may be found in the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, in all documents, which deal with the attainment of Slovene independence, in all basic documents at the universal (in the United Nations) and regional level (in the Council of Europe) which deal with issues of human rights and freedoms, and by bilateral agreements with Italy and Hungary.

The constitution is designed in the spirit of positive relations with the ethnic communities. In it the greatest attention is paid to the Italian and Hungarian ethnic communities, a special interest is expressed also towards the Romany community and towards members of nations and nationalities from the former common state, however, most of them had to become citizens of the Republic of Slovenia first. In contrast with the constitution of 1974 (from the former Yugoslavia), the constitution of 1991 introduces an important conceptual novelty. From the traditional ethnic communities (Italian and Hungarian) it removes their status of constitutive ethnic elements (as provided in the constitution of 1974) and grants them the status of "historical" ethnic minorities. It is possible to claim that the State of Slovenia well respects its minority's legislation.

However, the development and / or transformation of sub national / regional institutions is a never-ending story in Slovene politics. Soon after 1991, when Slovenia gained its political and economic independence from Yugoslavia, a debate started regarding the number of regions Slovenia should have. Even up to now there has not been any useful decisions made on that particular issue, although every politician knows that time, slowly but inevitably, is running out. Slovenia should be divided into, at least, two or three regions, unless there will be no structural funds available for their future development. The Italian minority cannot expect it will have its own region, but it will remain a part of a larger (Littoral-Karstic) region. Whether there will be any special treatment for the Italian minority in terms of its own institutions in future regional development, is difficult to tell. All in all, the Ministry of Regional Development and Structural Instruments certainly by designation of a pre-existing NARD satellite office in Štanjel, which main role is cross border co-operation between Slovenia and Italy, made the first step towards regional co-operation.

As the constitutional protection of the Italian minority is strong, the minority / majority relationship can be depicted as one of the finest ethnical relationships not only in Slovenia, but in Europe as well. Only rarely is there any clamor raised by the Italian minority against violations of their rights. The Italian minority has its own representative in the Slovene parliament, Robert Botteri, who, during the last electoral campaign, made some complaints over the execution of rights of the Italian minority, but his endeavour was understood, not only among the population of the majority, but among the Italian population too, as more or less political propaganda. Another aspect is that the Italian minority does not live separate from the rest of the Slovene population in, culturally speaking, a ghetto. The area is in fact ethnically mixed, which as a consequence brings higher integration of both ethnical sides into each other's culture (intermarriages etc.). Another characteristic that is very interesting for understanding cross border co-operation between Slovenia and Italy are blood relations, which have helped establish cross border co-operation. Which brings us to another aspect of the Italian minority in Slovenia, its ethnic / national identity.

The Italian population is given, as a constitutional right, full linguistic parity. In the regions populated with Italians there are two official languages: Italian and Slovene. But although Italians may speak in Italian, they are in a way, but not literally, forced to speak Slovene as well. This is possible since the Italian minority is so interwoven into the Slovene majority. All the residents, no matter what their nationality may be, of the municipalities where the Italian minority lives, are educated bilingually with primary and secondary levels of education.

Since 1955 a special agreement between Italy and Yugoslavia has allowed Slovenes living in the municipalities near the border, to cross the border as daily economic migrants without the need of a special work permit. Some five to seven thousand Slovenes cross the Italian – Slovene border in order to work in Italy and earn higher wages. Many of these economic migrants are members of the Italian minority.

On the basis of everything that was said until now, we can expect that the main benefit from the European Regional Development Policy for the Italian minority would be economic, as well as social and cultural. Since the Italian minority in Slovenia is well integrated in Slovenia's majority population, it can be expected that the benefits should go to the rest of Slovene society as well. This is particularly the reason why Slovenia has to be deeply interested in EU structural funds.

Slovenia is a member state of the Alps-Adriatic Organization, also called the Alps-Adriatic Working Community, an association of provinces, regions, and republics of the Eastern Alps region of Europe. The state of Slovenia is also part of the Central European Initiative, which aim is to improve relations and address common regional matters. A particular concern is the issue of minorities in the region.

Slovenia co-operates with Austria and Italy in the Phare Cross-Border Programme. The Phare Programme started covering the Slovene-Italian border in 1994 and in 1995 was expanded to cover the Austrian and Hungarian borders. During this period more than 180 projects were approved at a total cost of 3.7 million euros. Also the Trilateral Co-operation Programme, involving Slovenia, Austria and Italy, had been implemented. Phare CBC Programme intends to foster economic development (establishing information centres, business and technology parks, setting up databases to aid sustainable farming or a network of tourist trails), infrastructure and transport (motorway construction, signposting, (re)construction of border crossings, communal and communications facilities), human resources and cultural co-operation (seminars, courses, workshops, cultural exchanges, revitalisation of cultural monuments), environment protection (research construction of waste water treatment, plants conservation of protected areas), technical assistance (CBC programme management, assistance in the project circle, increasing awareness and networking), small projects fund (cultural, social and economic activities (exhibitions, fairs, presentations, sporting events), development of NGOs, research projects, encouragement of direct contacts ('people to people' exchanges), particularly in the fields of business, sports, culture and social activities in different border areas). Guidelines for the establishment of a Small Projects Fund (transparency and decentralisation) were prepared by the European Commission. Slovenia is at the forefront of countries implementing small-scale projects under the decentralised system.

It seems that regarding the issue of the Italian minority in Slovenia, the latter can be best integrated in the sector of the Small Projects Fund with its "people to people" exchanges and cultural, social and economic activities. These programmes on cross-border co-operation are closely connected with the INTERREG II Programme

initiatives, which operate across the external and internal border regions in the European Union. In charge of the Phare CBC Programme in Slovenia is the National Agency for Regional Development, which functions within the framework of the Ministry of the Economy.

The Phare CBC Programme between Slovenia and Italy (the Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto regions) was initiated in 1994. In 1995, a Phare Regional Office was set up in Štanjel and has undoubtedly strengthened the co-operation between the two border regions in Slovenia and Italy, as evidenced by numerous meetings organised at the level of the border municipalities and the number of project proposals with a 'real' cross-border impact (such as the establishment of the International Karst park).

Despite different procedures and areas of interest, implementation of the projects of the Phare CBC and INTERREG programmes, greater emphasis has been laid on joint planning of the Phare CBC / INTERREG III programmes in the period 2000-2006. The Interreg III A programme is organised in four different sectors plus the Small Projects Fund: sustainable development of cross-border regions, economic co-operation, human resources, co-operation and systems harmonisation, and support to co-operation. However, among the initial priorities for Slovenia there is no particular item for the Italian minority living in Slovenia and its cross-border co-operation with the central state or other activities. This, of course, does not inevitably mean that co-operation of representatives of the Italian minority, living in Slovenia, in EU cross-border and regional integrative processes are automatically excluded.

7.3   Conclusion

According to recent events in the Republic of Italy (the proclamation and celebration of Memorial Day, release of the controversial and extremely propagandistic film "Srce v breznu" (about the post-war executions by Tito's army, constant attacks on the Slovene minority in Trieste, etc.) there is the ever-present issue of minorities on either side of the border. However, for Slovenes, more troubling is the resurgence of Italian irredentism toward areas of the former Yugoslavia that had been a part of Italy between the world wars (property rights, the status of Slovene collection of works of art, taken from autochthonous Slovene places at the beginning of World War II by Italy, etc.).

In my opinion, the political atmosphere in the Italian-Slovene relationship is far tenser, as it was supposed to be before Slovenia became a full member state of the European Union. The broader political situation undoubtedly also affects people's everyday habits and attitudes.

EU cross-border cooperation initiatives and programmes contribute to economic, social, and cultural development of particular regions, nevertheless it is hard to say that they can be sufficient measures to overcome historical divisions and discrepancy between two different symbolical geographies, existing on the most eastern Italian and most western Slovene borders.

Therefore, EU projects should be more oriented towards quests for reciprocal cohabitation in a more comprehensive sense: critical discussions on historical disputes between the two nations, exposing different ethnic/national/regional traditions with immediate and explicit emphasis on divergent, often conflicting interrelationships between the Italian and Slovene populations.

NATIONALLY MIXED AREA IN THE COMMUNES OF IZOLA, KOPER AND PIRAN AFTER THE YEAR 1991

Vsebina / Research: dr. MIRAN KOMAC
Karta / Design and production: Z. DROLE
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ITALIJA
ITALY

HRVAŠKA / CROATIA

Legenda / Key:

DRŽAVNA MEJA
INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY

OBČINSKE MEJE
COMMUNAL BOUNDARY

MEJA OBČINE KOPER PRED LETOM 1995
BOUNDARY OF THE COMMUNE OF KOPER BEFORE THE YEAR 1995

MEDNARODNI CESTNI MEJNI PREHOD
INTERNATIONAL ROAD BORDER CROSSING

OBMEJNI CESTNI PREHOD
LOCAL ROAD BORDER CROSSING

ŽELEZNIŠKI MEJNI PREHOD
RAILWAY BORDER CROSSING

POMORSKI MEJNI PREHOD
MARITIME BORDER CROSSING

NARODNOSTNO MEŠANO OBMOČJE
NATIONALLY MIXED AREA

Merilo / Scale:

0 1 2 3 4 5   10km
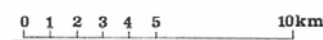
Viri / Sources :

ZAKON O LOKALNI SAMOUPRAVI. URADNI LIST REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE, ŠT. 72/93 IN ŠT. 57/94.

ZAKON O USTANOVITVI OBČIN IN DOLOČITVI NJIHOVIH OBMOČIJ. URADNI LIST REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE, ŠT. 60/94 IN 69/94.

STATUT OBČINE IZOLA (STATUTO DEL COMUNE DI ISOLA).

STATUT OBČINE KOPER (STATUTO DEL COMUNE DI CAPODISTRIA).

STATUT OBČINE PIRAN (STATUTO DEL COMUNE DI PIRANO).

POPIS PREBIVALSTVA 1991: PREBIVALSTVO PO NARODNOSTNI PRIPADNOSTI. LJUBLJANA, 1992.

ŠTEVILO PREBIVALCEV V NASELJIH NA NARODNOSTNO MEŠANEM OBMOČJU LETA 1991
NUMBER OF INHABITANTS IN THE SETTLEMENTS IN THE NATIONALLY MIXED AREA IN THE YEAR 1991

24.704 (Koper/Capodistria)
10.284 (Izola / Isola)
5.000
2.500
1.000
100 250 500

DELEŽ ITALIJANOV
PERCENTAGE OF ITALIANS

DELEŽ OSTALEGA PREBIVALSTVA
PERCENTAGE OF OTHER POPULAION

(13) ŠTEVILO ITALIJANOV V NASELJIH IZVEN NARODNOSTNO MEŠANEGA OBMOČJA
NUMBER OF ITALIANS IN THE SETTLEMENTS OUTSIDE OF THE NATIONALLY MIXED AREA
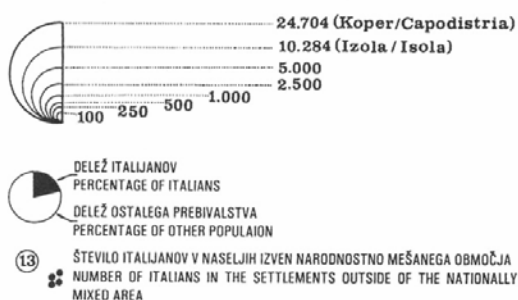
7.3.1   Map: Nationally mixed areas in the Comunes of Izola, Koper and Piran, in Slovenia, after year 1991

Source: Miran Komac (1999): Protection of ethnic communities in the Republic of Slovenia: vademecum. Ljubljana: Institute for Ethnic Studies.

136

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8   Regions, Minorities and European Policies: A Policy Report on the Basque Nation in the Spanish State

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8.1   Presentation of the Basque case

The Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (ACBC) is the selected region, although to correctly understand some central aspects of the relations between the Basque national minority and the Spanish State the analysis must be extended to include data concerning the neighbouring *Foral* Community of Navarre (FCN). Similarly, above all when referring to the funds of the European programs for cross-border cooperation, certain data concerning the Basque Country situated in the Acquitaine Region of the French State must be considered.

Regarding this need to complete the information with data from other administrative and political entities (Navarre and the French Basque Country), this is due to the fact that the language of the European Union groups together, under the same terms of region and regionalism, two social phenomena that, although they are at times superimposed, respond to different dynamics. On the one hand, there are the regions, with all their wealth of variety and economic, administrative and political situations, and on the other, the stateless nations, which in their turn have very different degrees of recognition and political capacity.

Source: http://goeurope.about.com/cs/basque/l/bl_basque_map.htm

8.1.1   Map: Basque regions in Spain and France

It is also necessary to have in mind some historical keys to obtaining a better analysis of the present situation: in the first place, the way in which a centralist act put an end to the old laws of Basque self-government, and the fear that persists in broad Basque sectors of the power of the centre to unilaterally define the relations of the Basque nation and the State; in the second place, the idea of an agreement between equals that for centuries marked the relations between the Basque nation and the rest of the State; and, in the third place, the importance of the political horizon of integration in the European Community for the stabilisation of Spanish democracy.

Within the history of the difficult relations between the Spanish nation - predominant within the State - and the Basque nation, it is necessary to draw special attention to a fact that has held continued importance over time. This was the unilateral abolition of the *Fueros*, the Basques' own laws, by the central political power in the 1841-1876 period. We should not let the distance in time conceal the immense symbolism that this centralist act was to hold for the Basque Country. When it occurred, this aggression – which is how it was perceived at the time by Basque society – meant a change in the nature of the historical, legal and political link that united the Basque territories to the Spanish ensemble. The agreement that had been the foundation of union for several centuries was altered in a unilateral way by a conjunctural majority, without any consultation of those affected. This provoked an angry social and political response that transcended the ideologies and rivalries of the period, a response described by historians as "*foral* unanimity" [*unanimidad fuerista*].

8.2   Political approach

But what is relevant is the way in which these events came to form part of the Basque political imaginary, preserved down to the present by the different factions of Basque nationalism. Many Basques drew the lesson that it was necessary to find a formula of political conciliation, making peaceful co-existence possible on the basis of recognition by the centre of Basque political reality; but, even more important, the new political agreement should be safeguarded against conjunctural majorities that might hold power in Madrid.

It is easy to understand this fear when one observes that both the Basque and Catalan nations are minorities unable to form a majority that could govern in the Spanish parliament. Their character as structural minorities also explains the symbolic importance of another political fact: the decisive support by nationalist parties (above all the Catalans of *Convergencia I Unió* and, since the elections of March 14th 2004, of *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*; as well as the Basque Nationalist Party on other occasions) for Spanish minority governments, which has become a subtle, informal device for consolidating the balance amongst the different nations of the State.

This spirit motivated the evolving political process of the State of the Autonomous Communities. In response to the nationalist demands, an attempt was made to find points of conciliation for national diversity, but, on the imperative of the central government, without this threatening the control of the centre in the final instance, or territorial unity. It was into this climate of relatively controlled tension that the second government of the Popular Party irrupted, which, thanks to its absolute majority in the Spanish parliament, redirected State policy towards a greater centralism and a growing Spanish nationalism that sorely offended the peripheral

nationalisms. What is most relevant for the case at hand is that these stateless nations could observe how a conjunctural majority in the centre was once again able to unilaterally reinterpret a delicate political balance whose achievement had been costly. Eight years in office in the centre enabled the governing party to gain control of many of the strategic positions in the State, including a majority in the Constitutional Court, the highest guarantor in the disputes between the centre and the autonomous communities over the sharing out of power, etc.

A phenomenon of such complexity obviously cannot be reduced to a single factor, but the perception by Basque nationalism that the relationship of the Basque nation with the State was once again at the mercy of the centre, is an important factor in explaining the latest political proposal by the Basque government. This political document, entitled "Proposal of a Political Statute of the Community of *Euskadi* [the Basque Country]", proposes a new framework of relations between the Basque nation and the Spanish State, emphasising the idea of an agreement between equals and free association with the State, developing the notion of autonomy beyond the form envisaged by the initial model of autonomy that is currently in force.

While this is the form in which the majority of nationalists currently view the problem of the political relations with the State, one must not forget the nationalist faction that has historically opted for demanding secession and the construction of a Basque state. What is interesting is that even the partisans of this solution (which has historically oscillated between 17 and 21% of the population, depending on the survey and the timing of the question) want their new State to form part of the European Union.

In the second place, another historical fact that is of importance because of its present-day consequences is the agreement between the Basque territories and the State centre. Holding an historical continuity that is almost unprecedented, the insertion of these territories within the Spanish State was inspired by the medieval idea of an agreement with the crown, with a renewal of this pact on the ascension of each new king, who had to swear to respect the *Fueros* in Basque territory before being accepted as sovereign. This phenomenon, which was relatively normal some centuries ago, was increasingly viewed as an historical oddity, but persisted due to its proven capacity to satisfy the parties involved. It was a political and juridical solution that made it possible to build a broader political space, the Spanish State, on the basis of numerous autonomous political entities (excepting, of course, those that had been incorporated though force of arms, such as the Kingdom of Navarre in 1512, etc.). That experience is reminiscent of today's attempt to build a European political space on the basis of respect for the States of the continent.

Finally, we must not overlook the importance held by the horizon of integration in the European Community during the Spanish transition to democracy and, once inside, the political stability that membership of the Community has meant for Spain (Anderson 1999; 286).

8.3   Socio-economic conditions

Following Catalonia, the Basque region was one of the driving forces of industrialisation in the Spanish State. Hence, Spanish modernisation did not radiate from the centre to the periphery, as in other countries, but instead two powerful peripheries (Barcelona and Bilbao) were constantly opposed to the dictates of a backward State centre (Madrid), which was seen as an obstacle to their development.

This historical tradition of endogenous development is an important factor for understanding the evolution of the Basque region. In the Basque Country there was an economic dynamic that linked capital obtained from industry with the regional territory, with profits thus reinvested in the area, creating an important network of private banks and semi-public savings banks that favoured industrial investment and supported the development of a flourishing co-operate movement.

A key period was the decade of the 1980s, when a large part of Basque industry (shipyards, steel works) had to undergo a harsh reconversion process, which resulted in massive redundancies and raised unemployment to amongst the highest levels in the European Community. Thus a region which because of its level of income had no access to European funds (objective 1), was able to request the aid of objective 2 (unemployment, areas of industrial decline, and some of the poorest rural areas).

On the other hand, in spite of the reform of the structural funds in 1989, the Spanish central government systematically refused to accept participation by the regions in Community affairs. Thus, during the 1989-1993 period, this reform barely affected the relations between the centre and the regions; nonetheless, pressure from the regional and local powers, together with the weakness of the central government that had a parliamentary minority, resulted in an agreement in 1994 to share the management of the money from the European Union.

8.4   Political-administrative institutions and territorial structures

The seven Basque territories are grouped in three different political entities. An element that is common to the three political systems is that they are organised along a double axis of tension (cleavage): the traditional one of class (left-right), to which is added another, which is superimposed and is concerned with national distinction (French-Basque, Spanish-Basque).

Source: http://www.geocities.com/Athens/9479/basque.html

8.4.1   Map: Geopolitical map of Basque regions in Spain and France.

In coherence with the political history of the Basque territories, the three that form the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country (Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa) have a confederal organisation. In its turn, this community is inserted in a quasi-federal autonomous system (not a federal one - as sometimes appears to be the case in comparative studies - both because this is not formalised and because of the existence of important political and juridical elements of correction that favour control by the centre over the autonomous communities).

Besides, to complete this picture of complexity, the State itself is inserted within another quasi-federal structure: the European Union.

The principal instrument of Basque self-government is the Autonomy Statute, completing some dispositions of the 1978 Constitution itself on the Basque "historical rights" and envisaging an eventual political regrouping with Navarre. One should note the calculated ambiguity of some constitutional and statutory principles, favouring a more or less stable resolution of the relationship of the Basque minority with the Spanish majority. This opinion has been held by some eminent constitutionalists who call for a constructive interpretation of the existing texts in order to advance towards a feasible solution (what authors like Herrero de Miñón, one of the "fathers" of the Constitution, have called "useful constitutionalism"; *Vid*. Herrero de Miñón 1991, 1998; Herrero de Miñón and Lluch 2001).

8.5   Position of the Basque Government facing European integration

In line with its traditional position and with the thesis of the European Commission put forward in the White Book of Governance, the Basque Government understands that the regional ambit is well suited for proximity between governors and governed; it is more efficient for the design and management of a large part of public policies. It understands, besides, that those regions that have their own parliaments and exclusive powers should have direct access to Community decision-making and forums in order not to harm internal political balances. In particular, in the words of the Director for European Affairs of the Basque Government, the Basque Country holds as a priority demand the capacity to defend its complete self-government in fiscal and tributary affairs in the Ecofin of Brussels.

In short, what the Basque Government expects from the process of European integration is not access to structural funds, since, as we have seen above, the wealth of the country is approximately situated on the European average, but instead a political context in which its claims for self-government are better received, and which makes it possible to symbolically visualise the national territory, in spite of its variable juridical-political statuses. With respect to the first factor, the most politically conscious stateless nations - amongst which the Basque Country must undoubtedly be numbered - are pursuing the fulfilment of their political and cultural aspirations within the new Europe inaugurated with the Maastricht Treaty, a Europe perceived as an emergent political institution that they wish to voluntarily enter into.

With respect to the second factor – the utilisation of institutional mechanisms and the management of the structural funds of the European Union within the symbolic dimension –, it must be analysed within the context of a more general practices of foreign action by sub-national entities (para-diplomacy) are a fully consolidated fact of current international life, constituting a global phenomenon, and it can also be seen that the principal resistance from the States to acceptance of such

action is not due to its juridical scope or material ambition, but to its symbolic relevance.

This general tendency is also valid for the Spanish Autonomous Communities which, in spite of constitutional limitations and the frontal opposition of the central governments, have been creating a dense network of international relationships. Specifically, in 1994 the Basque Government obtained recognition by the Constitutional Tribunal that international relations, constitutionally monopolised by the central government, could not be understood in the same way within the territory of the European Union, where the Autonomous Communities could carry out a series of activities essential to the efficient functioning of their powers.

Amongst the possibilities opened up by European integration for participation by the regions, without going into the question of a direct presence at ministerial meetings, etc., a decisive aspect is the participation of the regions in the design of State plans that manage the expenditure of the structural funds. Thus, although the Community envisages the presentation of specific plans for the regions included in objectives 1, 2 and 5b, the Spanish government opted for the presentation of global plans – in spite of pressure from the Commission and resistance from the Autonomous Communities – with the aim of assuring itself a greater discretionary role in the assignment of European funds. It is evident that this opposition by the centre to the involvement of the regions in the decision-making processes runs counter to the new governmental tendency marked by the "method of open coordination" – approved by the European Council in Lisbon in 2000. The regions also perceive that within the European political framework itself, in which their partners from other States are actively participating, their role is restricted to requesting funds from the Madrid government, which graciously does or doesn't concede them according to its own criterion.

8.6   The symbolic visibility of the Basque nation: cross-border cooperation

All the actors that design projects of cross-border cooperation consider that collaboration in joint plans of economic development makes it possible to obtain better results. Similarly, all the actors that have formed the so-called Euro-regions believe that they are helping to erode the barriers caused by the State frontiers (Yoder 2003:91, 100).

Recently, the President of the Basque Government, Juan José Ibarretxe, together with the President of the Acquitaine Region of France, declared himself in favour of these two regions forming the heart of a Euro-region. Developing this idea, he underlined the advantages of strengthening cross-border cooperation between the Basque Country and Acquitaine. On the one hand, because there are powerful economic incentives for increasing cooperation in projects such as the universities, technology, tourism and aeronautics. On the other hand, because this cooperation could heal the scars of history that have made it historically impossible to work in common, and thus to really strengthen relationships "between *Iparralde* and *Hegoalde* (literally the "northern part" and the "southern part" in the Basque language) given that "neither France nor Spain have been able to split up the Basque group" by means of their frontier (Deia, November 5th 2004).

8.7 Conclusions

1) Historical character of the problem

European integration has conditioned the evolution of relations between the small Basque nation and the Spanish State, but the problem has not arisen because of the political opportunity structure created by the process of integration.

During the years of the transition, the European Community did indeed serve to establish democracy. In fact, the firm desire of the main Spanish parties to enter the European Community as soon as possible was favourably viewed by the Basque nationalist parties. The latter considered the horizon of integration to be an important element for guaranteeing the existence of a suitable context in which they could raise political demands that could not be discussed during the transition from the Francoist dictatorship to democracy.

2) Role of the structural funds

Due to the process of industrial reconversion faced in the 1980s, which increased unemployment to levels that were a record within the European Community, the Basque Country has regularly received Community funds. However, the quantities have never been very high, which is why they have never had a great impact on the regional economy, nor have they significantly affected the political process of the region, nor its relations with the centre.

More relevant than the quantity of funds received or its capacity to give impulse to the Basque economy, European integration has brought a new context within which concepts such as co-sovereignty or foreign action by non-State entities are considered normal, as well as a series of instruments that give visibility to the Basque nation on the symbolic and political plane.

This holds for both the Basque Country and Catalonia. Besides, both Autonomous Communities understand that the question of Community funding belongs to the past, given that with the widening towards the Centre and East of Europe this money will be destined to correcting the imbalances of those countries.

3) New political scenario

At present, a new political scenario is taking shape in the Spanish State, one that is more open and different from that which characterised the final stage of the government of the Popular Party, presided by Mr. Aznar.

On the one hand, the Basque Nationalist Party, which is the majority party in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, has made a strategic turn in recent years, centring its discourse on the need for the State to explicitly recognise the existence of the Basque nation as a political subject that must democratically decide its political status and its relationship with the Spanish State.

This turn has been accompanied in Catalonia by the massive support of the Catalan citizens for a left-wing and openly pro-independence, nationalist political party (*Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya*).

Both movements – the Basque and the Catalan – have managed to place on the Spanish political agenda a debate on the redefinition of the relationship of these nations with the State. On the one hand, the new government of the Socialist Party has made some political gestures from the centre favourable to promoting the other

official languages, besides Spanish, in the ambit of the European Community. An example of this was the recent official presentation of the Constitutional Treaty Project in *Euskera* (the Basque language). This is in contrast to the systematic aggressions that this language had received during President Aznar's final term in office; such aggressions continue in Navarre, however, where the regionalist governing party, allied to the Popular Party, continues trying to eliminate any juridical protection of this language and to restrict its teaching and public use (this has been denounced in the report the European Observatory of Minority Languages).

In short, following the electoral victory of the Socialist Party we find ourselves immersed in a process of debate over the autonomous model, its problems and possible solutions. Amongst these problems, one of the most important is how to fit national diversity into the Constitutional framework. Both in the Basque Country and in Catalonia we find at the centre of the political agenda the need for explicit recognition that several nations coexist within the State and that the Constitutional text must place such affairs beyond the reach of conservative or Spanish nationalist majorities that might unilaterally alter the framework of relations amongst the different nations that form the State.

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9 Regions, minorities and European policies: A policy report on Muslim Minorities (Turks and Muslim Bulgarians) in the South Central Planning Region (Bulgaria)

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9.1 Presentation of the Specific Case

The research will study the Muslim minority groups – Turks and Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims or Muslim Bulgarians) – in three districts of the South-Central region of Bulgaria, located along the borders with Greece and Turkey – Smolian district (SD), Kardzhali district (KD) and Haskovo district (HD).

The territories and the populations, which are in the focus of this research project, became a part of the Bulgarian state in several stages after the liberation of the country from the Ottoman rule. A part of them was initially included within the borders of the autonomous region Eastern Rumelia, which in 1885 united with the Principality of Bulgaria. The southernmost regions were annexed as a result of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913). In general, after the restoration of the Bulgarian state, relations between the majority (Christian Bulgarians) and the minorities (Muslim Bulgarians and Turks) were based on two models. The nationalistic model strongly influenced the state policies, as nationalism became a fundament of the international law in the 19th century. The traditional model of coexistence of various ethnic and religious groups, which developed in the Balkans in the course of the centuries, opposed the nationalistic model, but the range and mechanism of its activities were limited.

The situation of Muslim population of the Bulgarian part of the Rhodope Mountain was further complicated by the proximity of the border. The border disrupted the traditional economic links with the lowlands along the Aegean coast and separated relatives from neighboring villages. After the World War II, this border became a part of the "iron curtain" and the communist regime tried to reinforce control over the region by attempting to erase or weaken religious and ethnic differences.

Integration of Bulgaria into the European Union – the union which tries to look at cultural, ethnic and religious diversities not as a problem, but as a treasure –, and the removal of barriers for interaction and exchange between residents of border regions, gave an opportunity for rebuilding relations between communities and individuals on new grounds. This is a way to overcome the mistrust and the desire to dominate the "others," which are both the heritage of the past.

Note: The South Central Planning Region includes the following districts: Pazardzhik. Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Smolian, Kardzhali and Haskovo. The border districts Smolyan, Kardzhali and Haskovo are the subject of the current research.

The Bulgarian state policies towards minorities were defined immediately after the restoration of the Bulgarian state after the Russian–Turkish war of 1877–1878. The Tarnovo Constitution (1879) took into consideration the demands put forward by the Berlin Treaty (1878) – the first international document regulating the rights of the minority groups –, and envisaged freedom of religion and wide cultural autonomy. Muslims were guaranteed the right to their places of worship, schools, newspapers and journals. Administratively, they were divided into districts, headed by *muftis*, and including both Turks and Pomaks. In Turkish schools, which were financially supported by the state, the language of instruction was Turkish. Since the formation of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Turks had their political representatives in the parliament, but without forming a political party on ethnic grounds. Yet, the rights of the Muslim population were often not respected, despite the fact that they were guaranteed by the principal law of the state.

After the unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria, a large Muslim population "appeared" within the borders of the new state. The periodic tensions between Bulgaria and Turkey had a negative influence on the popular attitudes towards minorities. After the proclamation of independence of the Kingdom of Bulgaria in 1908, the rights of Turks in the country were regulated anew by the Constantinople Treaty of 1909. The Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 resulted in the change of political borders and led to mass migrations. At that time, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, supported by the state, undertook the first forced mass attempt to Christianize Pomaks (Georgiev, Trifonov: 1995). After the Second Balkan War, the Turkish-Bulgarian treaty from 1913 declared that respect of religious freedom would be guaranteed and the Neuilly Treaty of 1919 confirmed these guarantees.

After the coup in Bulgaria in 1923, the state limited the autonomy of Turkish schools. Following the proclamation of Ataturk's Turkish Republic, the two states signed a treaty of friendship in 1925, which again reaffirmed the minority rights, but Turkey lost its role of the champion of the Turkish minority. In 1926, Bulgaria and Turkey agreed to nationalize the property of those who emigrated during the Balkan Wars. Between the World Wars I and II, Bulgaria strove to respect the minority rights as part of its policy of peacefully revising some of the negative consequences the Neuilly Treaty had for the country. After the coup in 1934, all political organizations in the country, including those of the Bulgarian Turks, were outlawed.

The state became more active regarding Pomaks. In 1937, society "Rodina" (Homeland) was formed, with the goal of integrating the Pomak community into the Bulgarian nation. The declared voluntary character of the process soon turned into a forced changing of the names of Pomaks in the Rhodopes with Bulgarian names. The most active phase of this policy occurred during the World War II (1942–1944). Also during this period, almost all of the newspapers in Turkish language were shut down.

In September 1944, the anti-fascist coalition, dominated by the communists, took power in Bulgaria. For a short period, this led to a positive change in policies towards the ethno-religious minorities. Turks received a wide cultural autonomy. Old names of Muslim Bulgarians were restored and restrictions on wearing of traditional clothes were lifted. Private Turkish schools were legalized. This autonomy was seen as a step towards integrating Turks into a transnational communist society, based on the Soviet model (Stoianov 1998: 118–119).

The tolerant policy towards ethnic and religious minorities, applied until 1948, was gradually replaced by harsher measures, especially after the April plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1956), when the state policy towards minorities again turned towards assimilation. The new concept was "integration of minorities into a monolithic socialist nation." Even before that, in 1953, a campaign against religious holidays started. Religious education was replaced by the secular one – the private schools were closed down and replaced by state schools for Turkish, Jewish and Armenian communities.

The state continued its policy of "solving" the minority issue through emigration. This policy, however, was different for different groups. State supported emigration of Turks to Turkey, but tried to prevent the emigration of Muslim Bulgarians. The next large emigration wave of Turkish population occurred between 1949 and 1951, when over 150,000 Turks left Bulgaria. This wave was to a large extent a reaction to the collectivization of the land. In 1948, after the conclusion of the Paris Conference, the authorities began the resettlement of Bulgarian Muslim population from border regions to the interior of the country.

In the beginning of 1960s, a new mechanism for dealing with minorities was employed – changing of the names, which were seen as a mark of "foreign" ethnic and religious affiliation. In 1964 an unsuccessful attempt to change the names of Pomaks in the western Rhodopes (border areas of the Blagoevgrad district) was carried out. These measures encountered a persistent resistance of the population – in several villages outright rebellions occured. However, this policy did not include Turks. In 1968, Bulgaria and Turkey reached an agreement on reunification of divided families, which allowed numerous Turks to leave the country. Bulgarian state took further steps to eliminate external identification marks of Muslim Bulgarians and from 1970 to 1972, and is some regions until 1974, their names were substituted with Bulgarian ones, whether the name holders agreed with the change or not.

In mid 1980s, for the first time such measures were initiated also against Turks. They were declared to be the descendants of Bulgarians, who were forced to adopt the Turkish identity, and that is why the process of changing of their names with Bulgarian ones was named "revival process." In the space of few weeks in 1984–1985 the Bulgarian government forced nearly one million Turks – more than a tenth of Bulgaria's population – to change their names. Use of Turkish language and traditional clothes were outlawed, and Turkish graveyards were demolished. This campaign, incomparably larger that any other undertaken before, was met by a wave of demonstrations in the spring of 1989. The government of Todor Zhivkov decided to open the border, hoping that the activists of the Turkish resistance movement would leave the country. During this forced emigration, which became known as "the great trip," more than 360,000 Turks left the country. Turkey's decision to close its border in August 1989 left thousands of people in no man's land, having sold their possessions and yet being deprived of the possibility to emigrate. Soviet efforts to resolve the crisis through the shuttle diplomacy of their ambassador to Ankara failed to achieve any results. In the fall of 1989, Moscow openly supported the internal opposition within the Communist Party – some of the Party leaders opposed the assimilation policy of Zhivkov, accusing him that he once more pushed the country into international isolation. The dissident groups, then in the process of formation, used the debacle to openly criticize the government, and established links with imprisoned Turkish intellectuals (Asenov, 1996: 121; Dimitrov 2000: 16–18).

Political changes in Bulgaria in the end of 1989 and the subsequent democratization made it possible to fully restore the rights of ethnic and religious communities. Fifteen years later we can state that today the legal mechanisms and the political will to guarantee and respect the human and minority rights of the compact Muslim population (Turkish and Bulgarian) exist in the country.

Bulgaria has signed and ratified all international conventions on human rights protection: the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1997, ratified in 1999); the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. All these documents became a part of the state's legislation. In December 2002, the National Assembly adopted the new Law on Religions, which declared the interference of the state in the internal organization of the religious communities inadmissible. In its Annual Reports (from 1998 to 2004) on the progress of Bulgaria in regard with its EU accession, the European Commission has regularly marked that Bulgaria respected human rights and freedoms, and that it fulfilled the political criteria for membership, set by the European Council in Copenhagen in 1993.

The socio-economic situation in the South Central region is characterized, on the one hand, by the presence of favorable conditions for economic growth (natural

resources, qualified and experienced work-force), and on the other, by serious problems with the employment possibilities, development of private business, infrastructure and protection of natural environment. Some of the problems were inherited from the socialist period (mainly regarding the infrastructure and protection of natural environment). The others were a result of slow and painful transition to market economy, sluggish and non-effective privatization, closure of enterprises without taking social measures for providing alternative employment to laid-off workers, low purchasing prices of agricultural products (including of the tobacco), dumping import of agricultural products from the neighboring countries (Greece, Turkey and Macedonia), low consumption power of the population, and of underdeveloped regional markets.

Recently, successful negotiations of Bulgaria for EU membership brought more optimism into the prospects for the future. The purposeful efforts of the last two governments and of the local authorities to revive the economic life in the region through the appropriate investment policy – in which pre-accession EU funds play a significant role, – are beginning to have an effect. Funds are sought for stimulating the employers to hire the unemployed and for optimization of training courses and programs for qualification and re-qualification, including the introduction of alternative systems for vocational training and for qualifications on municipal and regional level.

Of the three pre-accession programs, financed by the EU (PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD), the most important for the development of the South Central Region (SCR) was the PHARE program and especially the National PHARE Program, and the programs for Trans-Border Cooperation (PHARE–TBC). In 2000, when the financial memorandum on the PHARE–NP program "Economic and Social Alignment" (ESA) was signed, SCR was one of the priority regions. Projects in the following areas were financed: 1) Human resources development; 2) Development of the manufacturing sector; 3) Development of tourism.

The PHARE-TBC program was launched in Bulgaria in 1994. The sub-program PHARE–TBC Bulgaria–Greece, which was being implemented along the whole length of the natural border between the two counties – the Rhodope Mountain, was exceptionally important for the SCR. Priorities for the region according to this program are: transport, environment, communications, economic development, social development and agriculture. Some of the most important projects, which were financed on the territory of the SCR were: "Road II–86 Construction of an Access Road to Cross-border Checkpoint Rudozem"; "Regional Monitoring Network for Radio-Ecological Monitoring of Southern Bulgaria"; "Program for Elimination of Uranium Mine Impact in Southern Bulgaria"; "Construction of Three Urban Wastewater Treatment Facilities along the Arda River Basin: at Madan, Rudozem and Zlatograd".

In April 2004, three additional financial memoranda within the PHARE program were signed and two of them fall under the TBC initiative for 2003 (between Bulgaria and Greece for 20 million Euros). The third memorandum is the first Bulgaria signed under the initiative of the program PHARE–"External Borders 2003" in respect to the future external borders of EU (between Bulgaria and Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia).

The impact of the other two programs from which Bulgaria is receiving funds – SAPARD and ISPA – has been until now difficult to assess. Projects from the ISPA program, which, albeit only partially, are realized on the territory of the SCR, are dealing with transport infrastructure ("Reconstruction and Electrification of the

Railway Line Plovdiv–Svilengrad–Greek/Turkish Border") and with environment (directed mainly towards investments in management of waste waters, canalization systems and water supply, waste management in cities and air pollution:"Collection and Treatment of City Waste Waters and Water Supply in the City of Smolian"; „Construction of the Regional Center for Waste Management–Kardzhali"). In contrast to the financing through ISPA, which is realized on the government level, assistance through SAPARD is intended for individual agricultural proprietors, farmers and municipalities. There have been many serious difficulties with the ISPA projects and they were largely discussed not only among politicians and scholars, but also on public level.

9.2 Minority–majority relations, minority identities, socio-economic situation and regional development in the scholarly literature

Since the start of the democratic reforms in 1989, Bulgaria accepted the international standards of human rights and minority protection, which had developed over the past fifteen years in conjunction with the requirements of the Council of Europe. In the past, the Bulgarian scholarly literature on the Muslims minorities imposed the views of the national majority on the history and identity of Muslim Bulgarians and Turks. After 1989, new areas of research appeared. The following three are the most important: 1) the peaceful co-existence and/or possible disagreements and conflicts between the Bulgarian majority and Muslim minorities; 2) the issue of identities – practically never discussed before because of the predominating theory of the "unified Bulgarian nation"; and 3) the problems of the transition from state regulated economy to market economy and prospects and difficulties in the implementation of EU pre-accession funds. The new areas of research required new approaches with the ambition to realistically present the situation. For this reason, the priority was given to top-bottom approach and field work research, conducted simultaneously by experts from various fields (historians, ethnologists, sociologists, political scientists and economists). The results of these efforts led to the following conclusions:

1) The analyses of the empirical data about the **minority–majority relations** in the country made it possible to outline a specific model of coexistence in the contact zones between Bulgarians, Pomaks and Turks. In the course of the centuries, several patterns of communication between individuals and communities were set up. These patterns represent mechanisms for prevention of conflicts on the local level, and sometimes they even manage to neutralize the policies and decision, made on the central level and which are potentially dangerous for the peace and coexistence.

At the same time the deep-rooted opinions and stereotypes about those belonging to a different ethnicity continue to be strengthened by the old and new myths and they should not be overlooked. The complex system of co-existence, however, is traditionally established mainly in everyday contacts and on personal and local level. The negative stereotypes acquire the form of ethnic/religious intolerance and fear of historical counter-reaction, which explains the negative attitude of the majority to the religious, cultural and particularly the political rights of the minorities. And yet, in the past fifteen years the situation has changed for better, at least because of the fact that the problems are generally discussed jointly and in political terms. The majority is getting used to the loss of their privileged political status and to the top-bottom measures for human rights protection, seeing them pragmatically, as a legal

guarantee not only for the interests of the minorities, but for their own interests as well.

2) The research work on the issue of **identities of Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks** led to the conclusion that in both cases there were concrete historical and political lines, which defined and stimulated/impeded the display of their identities. The processes of differentiation and self-identification of these communities occured in conditions of systematic pressure from central and local authorities. The fact that the state policy was different towards Turks and towards Pomaks played an important role. As a result their identities have gone through changes, which gradually distanced them from the original model of identification according to the confessional belonging. At the end of the 20th century the empirical surveys registered two separate cases: a) **Turkish** minority with clearly displayed ethnic identity and hierarchical consciousness of belonging to a group whose levels (Sunni–Kizilbash/Bektash; "Bulgarian" Turk – "Turkish" Turk) come into effect in correspondence with the specific situation, with the ethnic mark dominating the other ones; and b) **Pomaks** generally prefer to self-identify along religious lines as "Muslims" while in relation to their ethnicity they are dubious and display "multiple context-sensitive identities" (Brunnbauer 1999: 36–39), or apply the strategy of "situational switching" (Karagiannis 1999). Most of the experts agree that at the present moment the Pomak community is not united with regard to its identity, which is fluid and in a process of formation, and yet they expect the group to self-identify along positive ethnic lines. After 1989 most Bulgarian researchers have agreed with the theory that the majority of the group perceive themselves as "Muslim Bulgarians," and that there is a constant tendency of combining the Bulgarian ethnic identity with the Muslim religious identity, which is expressed in fostering and demonstrating a local traditional culture (Georgieva 1998). Yet, albeit the term "Muslim Bulgarian" seems quite acceptable to Pomaks, they evidently do not understand it in ethnic terms – the opposition "us–them" is prevailing in relation to the majority. They determine their culture as "Islamic," and still share historical memories and estimations of historical facts which are quite opposite to the historical myths of the majority. Recently, the idea of creating a new (regional supra-national and European) identity has been discussed as means to overcome the contradictions between problematic local (religious, ethnic, etc.) identities – and such is evidently the case with the Pomak community on both sides of the Bulgarian–Greek border – and the "imagined" national identification.

3) Recent scholarly research and press publications on **economic development and future prospects** of the three districts (Haskovo, Smolian and Kardzhali) and their participation in the implementation of pre-accession funds, outlined a set of specific problems and tried to propose adequate solutions for improving the present situation. They could be summarized in three points:

a) **Assessment of Problems/Favorable conditions.** The economic crisis is sharper in the highland border regions with mixed population. The social-economic situation there is characterized by economic stagnation, high level of unemployment, mono-culture type of agriculture on small plots, underdeveloped infrastructure and pauperization of the larger part of the population. The result is social isolation and limited access to education, culture, politics and other spheres of public life. Despite the high level of emigration for economic reasons and the tendency among the young people to permanently settle abroad, the emigration is mostly viewed as temporary work abroad.

b) **Weak points in local/regional/central policies**. From the early 1990s the high level of centralization (institutional, economic and financial) has been assessed

as the main obstacle for the development of local/regional economic policies. All the important reforms and the construction of new institutions were conducted on national level for a long time and rarely took the regional aspect into consideration. As a result regional and local authorities were not engaged and were limited by the lack of resources and skills. In the economic development the priority was the national growth over the decrease in the regional and district differences. Recently the problem has also been the lack of coordination between various ministries, which execute and coordinate the implementation of the pre-accession funds. However, the weak points of central policy had often been explained by the fact that some requirements of the EU regarding the regional policy were contradictory in concrete stipulations, not clear enough and changing due to the development of the policy of social-economic rapprochement. The slow rate of implementation of pre-accession funds on local level is due to red-tape and the mediation of formal institutions like the Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. This circumstance is further aggravated by the stipulation that the state should co-finance each project. The complicated rules and procedures of the European Commission, which have to be strictly followed, while the Bulgarian local and regional administration is still learning how to manage projects, also seems to be a serious problem. Low interest to pre-accession programmes (especially SAPARD) among local contractors also have reasonable explanation: the program subsidizes only a half of the investment, and the agricultural proprietors have to take bank loans at their own risk. That is why they can afford only small-scale projects. Often there is a lack of initiative, information and clear strategy for development of private business.

   c) Solution of the Problems/Expert Recommendations. The decentralization of the management of pre-accession instruments of the EU seems to be the most adequate solution, yet the experts warn that the decentralization could endanger the macroeconomic stability in the country. Another important recommendation is to increase investments in regional infrastructure and accelerate the construction of the necessary border check-points. Yet those measures alone will by no means help to overcome the historically inherited economic and ethno-cultural marginalization of the region. The necessity for establishing qualified administrative units for the realization of the EU programs should also not be neglected.

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10 Regions, minorities and European policies: A policy report on Hungarians from Transylvania

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10.1 Presentation of the specific case

10.1.1 Description of socio-economic conditions in the region under study

This case study focuses on the minorities from the Central development region (DR 7)[64] of Romania. The surface of this region is 34,099.4 square km or 14.3% of the territory of the country and its total population number is 2,523,021. Its location is between Transylvanian Alps, Eastern Carpathians and the Apuseni Mountains. The region covers the main part of the historical Transylvania and comprises 6 counties with different ethnic composition (Harghita, Covasna, Brasov, Sibiu, Alba and Mures). The minorities represent 35% of the whole population in the region. However Hungarians represent the majority in Harghita and Covasna counties (85% respectively 74%).

Table 1. The distribution of ethnic groups at regional and county levels

Ethnic group	Central Region %	Alba %	Brasov %	Covasna %	Harghita %	Mures %	Sibiu %
Romanians	65,37	90,41	87,29	23,28	14,06	53,26	90,6
Hungarians	29,94	5,4	8,65	73,8	84,62	39,3	3,64
Roma	3,96	3,74	3,11	2,69	1,18	6,96	4,06
Saxons	0,58	0,34	0,75	0,09	0,04	0,35	1,55
Other minorities	0,14	0,10	0,20	0,15	0,10	0,13	0,15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: National Institute of Statistics. National Census (2000)

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64 The development regions were set on basis of the Law 151/1998 and correspond to the European NUTS II level. They represent the framework for implementing regional development policy.

10.1.2 Map: Romania and its Regions

Note: The Central Development Region, which is in the focus this case study, is labelled "7" on this map.

Central Development Region has the largest urban population (60.5% compared with the national average of 55%). With regard to the labour force, in 2002 the active population counted 1,010,177 inhabitants, while the unemployment rate was around 13,6%. (NIS, 2002) The strongest impact of unemployment can be found in the mono-industrial mining settlements, as well as in metal processing areas.

Inside the region there are great social economical disparities. Whether some areas are in a development process other areas face more problems. Especially in the isolated mountain regions, the health care is underdeveloped and the access to education is reduced. Since 1998, an important role in the social and economic development of the region was played by the Agency of Regional Development – Centre. Based on both internal and external funding, this agency has co-ordinated programs in various fields: the development of small and medium size enterprises, human resources development, infrastructure and social services. Beside, it provided a credit line for agricultural sector. Between 2000 and 2004 the programs developed by the Agency of Regional Development – Centre amounted Euro 66,090,477. The EU pre-accession contribution represented 49% of these regional development funds, the public contribution was of 25%, and the rest of 26% comprised the contribution of private organisations. Particularly, the agency is responsible for the implementing of the Social Economic Cohesion PHARE Program. The regional and county distribution of these EU funds is presented bellow:

Table 2. Pre-accession funds channelled in the selected region through PHARE Economic and Social Cohesion Program.

Contracting Year	Received funds (euro)						
	Central Region	Alba	Brasov	Covasna	Harghita	Mures	Sibiu
2000	2,297,457	551,711	387,731	331,717	293,871	320,644	411,783
2002	3,201,253	478,664	1,027,128	455,341	390,319	336,925	512,876
2003	20,343,852	4,058,594	4,101,464	1,568,579	1,883,700	6,978,741	1,752,774
2004	6,665,968*						
Total	32,508,530	5,088,969	5,516,323	2,355,637	2,567,890	7,636,310	2,677,433

*This fund was contracted in a joint project developed on the territory of 3 counties form the Central Development Region (Brasov, Covasna and Harghita)

Source: Agency for Regional Development – Centre

10.1.3 *Brief presentation of the central and local political-administrative institutions and territorial structures.*

At present, the political-administrative structure of Romania consists of central institutions (Council of Ministers, ministries, national authorities, agencies, directions and offices) and two tiers of elected local governments (county councils at the intermediary level; and local councils and mayors at the local level proper). The national government appoints a prefect as its representative at the county level.

Hungarian minority has been properly represented in the elected local authorities at both levels. As a result of the elections that took place in 2004, the Hungarian party obtained 2485 seats, namely 411 seats in 77 municipality and town councils, respectively 2074 seats in 369 communal councils. The alliance obtained the majority in Covasna and Harghita counties However, in Romania the political power continues to be centralised. Although Hungarians are well represented in local elected authorities, the central institutions or the government representatives in territory, the prefect can sometimes restrict their local autonomy.

10.1.4 *Historical excursus on the relationship between minorities with the state and national majority*

Disputed in the modern times between Hungary and Romania, Transylvania survived all through the 20th Century as an ethnic mix ethnic groups (Romanian, Hungarians, Szekelys, Germans, Gypsies, Jews) and religious communities (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Greek Catholic or Uniate, Christian Orthodox), united somehow superficially under the same political leadership but preserving each a sort of autonomy.

Transsylvania became part of Hungary in 1868 when process of Magyarization of the principality begun. The recognition of Hungarian as the official language and the founding of a Hungarian university at Kolozsvar in 1872 were part of the process. The region was incorporated into Romania by the Trianon Treaty of 1920, then northern Transylvania was granted again to Hungary by the Axis Powers in 1940, to return again to Romania at the end of the war.

The communist regime, but mostly the blind modernisation imposed by it, radically affected the ethnic composition of Transylvania. Ceausescu's industrialisation of the seventies led to subsequent arrival of Romanians from the old Kingdom of Romania (Moldavia and Wallachia) to urban Transylvanian areas and to large numbers of Transylvanian peasants, regardless of their ethnic origins, who also settled in urban areas. Moreover, during communism the minorities rights, in general, and the rights of Hungarians in particular, were heavily reduced: the number of Hungarian classes in schools decreased, the ideological censorship applied to their publications increased and the rural settlements of Hungarians started to be demolished. Romanian officials were also named in regions inhabited by a Hungarian majority for assuring state control.

The falling of the communist regime led to a notable improvement in the legislative framework for the protection of national minorities that was stimulated by the requirements of European Union pre-accession process. In the case of Hungarian minority there are opportunities, although some times limited, to study in Hungarian language; the Hungarian language can be used – at least in principle – in local public administration; several Hungarian cultural institution exists; there are newspapers and other publications in Hungarian; and there are no restrictions on the participation of Hungarians to both central and local political life. However, conflicting views remain on a series of ethno-political issues as the territorial autonomy for the compact Hungarian communities from Transylvania, the re-establishment of the Hungarian language state-university, the amending the first article of the constitution which defines Romania as a nation-state, and providing quasi-official status to the Hungarian language in certain institutions of the state. Because of these tensions, the generous legislation and policies adopted at top level are frequently inefficient, being resisted at local level by those in charge to implement them.

10.2 Overview of the Impact of EU

10.2.1 The Regional Development Policy in Romania

In Romania, the regional policy was designed exclusively in order to meet the financial support offered by European Union and the entire regional development process was put into practice with European assistance. The three pre-accession instruments that support Romania in the European integration process are PHARE, SAPARD and ISPA.

PHARE is currently the most important program and support the consolidation of the state institutions, the participation to Community programs, the regional and social development, the industrial restructuring and the SME development. In 2003 the PHARE support was of 276.5 million Euro.

SAPARD aims to support the participation of Romania to the Common Agricultural Policy applied in the European Union. The program's budget is 150 million Euro/year between 2000 and 2006.

ISPA started in 2000 and finances infrastructure projects in the fields of transport and environment. It aims to extend and link up the national transport systems with the Trans-European transport networks and to familiarise applicants with policies and procedures of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. Romania receives a support of 240 million Euro/year, roughly equally divided between transport and environment projects.

The building and implementation of a regional development policy in Romania started in 1996, at the same time as the PHARE program, by outlining several "development regions". In 1997, a joint PHARE-Government team developed the "Green Paper for Regional Development". The classification of the 42 counties on basis of sectorial and global indicators resulted in identifying the current 8 development regions, including the Central Development Region which is in the focus of this project.

The Law no. 151/15th July 1998 on regional development was the first fundamental law of Romanian policy in this field. Supplemented by GD no. 268/2000, the act established the framework of this policy, as well as the institutional setting needed. According to this law, a Regional Development Council (RDC) as well as a Regional Development Agency (RDA) were formed at the level of each development region. Each Regional Development Agency functions according to an organisational status approved by RDC. Among their main attributions, the Regional Development agencies:

-   elaborate and propose to RDC the regional development strategy, regional development programs and funds management plans;
-   implement the regional development programs and funds management plans in accordance with the decisions of the RDC;
-   act as Implementing Authorities for PHARE programs – Economic and Social Cohesion component.

At national level, the National Council for Regional Development (NRCD) is set by the mentioned law. NRCD is formed by the presidents and vice-presidents of RDC and representatives of the Government designated by Government Decision "at parity with the latter's number". NRCD approves the national strategy for regional development and the National Programme for Regional Development as well as the criteria, priorities and allocation rata of the financial assistance. All the national structures dealing with regional development are currently included in the Ministry of European Integration.

The Law 315/2004 keeps the structures and attributions stipulated in the former regional development law but introduces important changes as the decentralization of Regional Development Agencies and the mandatory establishment of an internal audit. The national legal framework in this field is expected to be finalized till the end of 2005.

In spite of the legislative improvements, the international and national monitoring institutions criticised the institutional shortcomings of the Romanian regional development institutions. The following main problems were identified:

- the reduced fiscal autonomy and decentralisation at Regional Development Agency (RDA) level;
- the involvement of political actors in the distribution of the European funds;
- the deficit in both human (few, untrained, and unmotivated public officials, insufficient logistics), and material (lack of funds for co-financing development projects) resources;
- the problems of communication between regional institutions and the absence of real partnerships.

All these problems, as well as the absence of a common cultural identity at regional level, led to the poor efficiency of regional development institutions. These institutions were not able yet to reduce the development discrepancies that exist inside the regions.

10.2.2 Academic and Political Debates on the Regional Autonomy of Transylvania and Szeklerland Regions

Regionalism was originally strong in Romania, a country formed by gradual unification of Romanian speaking territories with different state traditions. It was nowhere as strong as in Transylvania, the province which united last, was the most populous, and won its unification after long emancipation battles with Hungary, then part of the Dual Monarchy. Transylvanian leaders had started their political careers in the Budapest parliament and they continued it in the Romanian Parliament after 1918, but the core of their creed was similar. They wanted the Transylvanian specificity acknowledged in some special administrative status. Romanian political elites, liberals and conservatives, both, were in favour of a unitary state on the French model. Eventually Transylvanians lost, and a strongly centralized unitary state was created. The interwar times were plagued by Hungarian irredentism, which led in the end by the Hitler-Mussolini Vienna arbitrage. Half of Transylvania was granted to Hungary. At the end of Second World War, the Soviets had to arbitrate this border dispute, and they solved it by returning to Romanian most of the territory, but imposing territorial autonomy for Szeklerland, the region where the Hungarian population was densely concentrated. The region has lasted through Romanian Stalinist years, but Ceausescu put an end to it after his arrival to power in 1964, claiming Hungarian nationalism within party ranks, a claim particularly credible in the aftermath of the Hungarian 1856 Revolution.

The debate was reopened soon after the 1989 Revolution. Among the claims of the Hungarian rallies in Tg. Mures, which turned bloody eventually after clashes with Romanians, a main one was the restoration of a special status region. The Szeklers had been divided among three counties by the, Harghita, Covasna, and Mures, on traditional dividion lines, as the medieval name of the land was 'Three Chairs'. In 1995 a first document laying out specificities was produced, a Romanian version of the Ferenc Glatz policy paper on territorial and extraterritorial autonomy for East European minorities. The model of Professor Glatz, then President of the Hungarian academy, advocates on one side that territorial autonomy should be granted wherever possible, but for circumventing situations where minorities do not have a local majority, it is also advocating the creation of administrative bodies for the whole minority group. Accordingly, the Romanian Hungarian alliance developed an 'internal parliament' where all elected office holders meet, and a number of other

self-government bodies. The problem is complicated as less than half the Hungarians in Romania lives in that area, and what would be the practical meaning of autonomy for the rest was not clear. Romanians view with considerable reluctance this creation of self/governing bodies and they argue that as long as Hungarian have 7% of Parliament seats, and proportional shares in county and local government there is no need for any other administrative innovation.

The Hungarians themselves are divided, or claim to be, in a more radical wing and a more moderate one. The moderates have strict control of the party, and they have been associated to the government of both left and right since 1996. Despite gaining various cultural and language rights, they were not granted by either of their allies the territorial autonomy or special status they sought.

Their appeal to Europe and the European authorities to promote their cause has been constant and professional. Starting with Council of Europe, Romania's Hungarian politicians worked their way up to each and every European body, writing several memos where the Romanian government was barely able to compile one. Since the signing of the bilateral treaty between Romania and Hungary in 1996, grassroots nationalism decreased. It became increasingly difficult for Hungarians to convince Europeans they are persecuted, when they were associated to government and enjoyed positions as ministers. Radical Hungarians actually denounced moderates and accused them of having been co-opted by Romanian politicians. In February 2005, radicals proposed their own draft law on the regional autonomy of Szeklerland to the Parliament. In the April 2005 resolution approving Romania's accession treaty, the European Parliament, pushed by right wing representatives from Hungary, included a catch phrase saying that despite the situation of the Hungarian minority being very good, some of their aspirations to subsidiarity are not yet satisfied. The passage became the flag Hungarians raised when promoting a minority law in May 2005, basically patterned after the first autonomy manifesto they produced ten years ago. It starts by claiming that the Hungarian group, alongside the Romanian one, is a constituent of the state (so the state is made of national groups, not individuals, and just these two, not the others), and goes on by elaborating self government structures which apply only to the Hungarian minority, the rest being too small to have any regional claims. Also, when they switched allegiance from postcommunists to anticommunists in December 2004 after postcommunists lost elections they asked that the NUTS regions should be redesigned so that a central region should have Hungarian majority. This is actually included in the program of the current government, although EC made clear NUTS regions cannot be touched in the foreseeable future. Strange enough, Hungarians claim and have always claimed that EU itself is asking for the kind of regionalisation they seek. A group of Hungarian intellectuals, together with a few Romanian Transylvanians, produced a manifesto in 2001 claiming no less than Romania should immediately regionalize to be in line with the European Constitution, which specifically requires regions and mesogovernment. Beyond such blunders, in Transylvania and Banat, both rich regions, there are widespread sensitivities over the issue, and many people feel they would develop more if Bucharest would not take a share of their income. The presence of a strong regional identity is not supported by survey data. Just 11% of the citizens assumed a regional identity (CURS, 2001). Second, the level of trust and solidarity between the elite and the ordinary people is not strong enough to support a regional autonomy project. Also, the redistribution system is much more complicated than the simple regional transfer from North - West towards the South - East, and rather takes place according to local needs, no matter their geographical positioning (EWR, 2002).

The debate on regionalism in Romania is impossible to separate from he national aspirations of Romanian Hungarians and their drive towards self government. The Germans, historically the other great minority, now seriously reduced numerically due to emigration to Germany, have always cared to distance themselves from the Hungarian regionalisation policy. The government elected end 2004 is truly liberal, so they included many Hungarian inspired proposals in their government program. However, many of them will not go into practice, the one concerning regions actually due to obstacles put by the acquis and the accession treaty, which seal the current administrative division until 2014.

10.2.3 *Minority Rights and Patterns of Political Participation*

Since the falling of the communist regime, in 1989, minorities' rights have come to be increasingly enforced. Romania has ratified several international conventions of relevance for the protection of the national minorities such as the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,* the *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* and the *Social Charter*. Romania has also committed itself to the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* and to the *Universal Declaration of the Human Rights.* At national level, the legislation is generally consistent with these international conventions and fulfils the minimum requirements. The National Constitution guarantees the equality of citizens and non-discrimination on the basis of nationality, and stipulates the right to representation in the Parliament for minorities failing to obtain the necessary votes to reach the established threshold.

Beside the mentioned general legislative measures, several other normative acts where issued in order to protect the minority rights. For instance, the Ordinance 137/2000 regarding the *Prevention and Punishment of All Forms of Discrimination* constraints both physical and legal persons to respect the principle of non-discrimination in fields like employment, education, and access to public services. The 1995 *Law on Education,* grants the right to education in the mother tongue at all levels. The 2001 *Law on Public Administration* allows the use of minority languages in communications with public authorities if the percent of the local minority is bigger than 20 per cent. The Law on the Status of the Policeman (2002) states a similar regulation, although this law still lack a clear procedure of implementation. The *Law no. 10/2001 on the Restitution of Nationalised Immovable Properties* (including confiscated church property and other property formerly held by minority organisations) is another legislative achievement for the protection of minorities.

With regard to the political participation of minorities, there can be identified elements of political representation in the legislative bodies, measures of positive discrimination for small minorities, and elements of power sharing. The best case in this respect is that of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), the Hungarian ethnic party. Since the first elections in 1990, DAHR has been present in the Parliament and participated in Government in several electoral cycles. The presence of DAHR at the top of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities led to the revision of the Statute of the Council for Minorities, the creation of regional offices of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities, the modifications of laws on education, the modification of the state budget law in order

to legalise financial support for minority organisations. At present, the main political priorities of DAHR include the efforts to join European Union, the administrative financial decentralisation, the protection of human rights and the property restitution.

10.3 Conclusion

In the Romanian case, the pre-accession process to the European Union has already proved to have an important impact on the relation between the Hungarian minority and the Romanian majority. While during communism the strong assimilation policy heavily restricted the access of the ethnic Hungarians to the public sphere, a notable improvement in the legislative framework for the protection of the national minorities took place in post-socialist Romania stimulated by the requirements to join the Union. The national minority protection legislation is consistent with international conventions and guarantees the use of minority languages in local administration, police and justice, the access to education in the mother tongue, the development of independent media and cultural organizations, and the participation to both central and local political life. Elements of power sharing, measures of positive discrimination for small minorities as well as elements of political participation of minorities in the legislative bodies are part of the current political life. The political participation and influence of the Hungarian party, both at central and local level, are significant for the national democratization process. However, the political power is still too centralized and the decisions of the minority representatives at regional and local level can be easily obstructed by the county representatives of the central government.

In contrast with the achievements in the field of minority rights and political participation, the efficiency of the European induced regionalization process and its effects upon the interethnic relations are more debatable. In Romania, the regional development policy was not the result of the national political will but appeared exclusively to meet the institutional requirements for the provision of the EU pre-accession and structural funding programs. Although the national legislative framework for regional development was recently improved, serious problems still affect the functioning of the regional development institutions. These problems are the reduced level of fiscal autonomy and decentralization, the illegitimate involvement of the political actors in the distribution of the European funds, the insufficient human and logistic resources and the lack of local and regional partnerships.

The issues of decentralization and regional autonomy, in the context of the European integration process, generate strong debates between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority both at central and local levels. The Hungarian party contests the current division of the country in regional development regions and proposes the creation of an ethnic based region to include the territories with a compact Hungarian population. This project is constantly rejected by many representatives of the national Romanian majority who consider it as an attempt to create a new level of elected regional government and as a first step toward federalisation.

Whether the commitment of the entire political class to European integration is a positive element, research should be done on the changing interests and strategies of the different political actors and ethnic groups who support this joint effort at central and regional level. While the aim of both Romanians and Hungarians to have access to the financial and institutional resources brought by the accession to the

European Union is a legitimate one, the attempts to legitimate projects of regional autonomy in this context remain a sensitive issue.

It seems clear that the research findings of this project will respond to a series of social and political uncertainties that both Romanians and Hungarians face in the process of accession to European Union. However, the academic or policy studies that explicitly address the impact of regionalisation and EU funds implementation on the relation between the Romanian majority and the Hungarian minority are missing. The next stage of field research will require a thorough approach that should explore the changing contexts at the different levels (European, national, regional and local) and should take into account the local differences and the various perspectives of the different ethnic groups and stakeholders involved. Not only the changing institutional framework but also the regional historical and cultural heritage will play an influential role for the outcomes of the European integration process.

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11 Regions, minorities and European policies: A policy report on ethnic Hungarians in Košice region (Slovakia)

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This study examines governmental policies towards Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the process of regionalization and to illustrate the role European Union has played in development of both processes.

11.1 Presentation of the specific case

For the purposes of this report I will focus on the Košice region for two reasons. The first is that it is a border region, neighbouring Hungary and Ukraine, a factor that has influenced the composition of its population which is characterized by high proportion of ethnic Hungarians reaching up 11 per cent of inhabitants. The second reason is because the region's low socio-economic development. It is a problematic region with the highest unemployment rate in Slovakia (25, 2%). The unemployment especially affects the minority population which predominantly inhabits the rural areas. This region offers an opportunity to examine EUROREG assumptions to see if, and in what ways, the EU pre-accession funds and structural funds have influenced the majority-minority relations and overall status of ethnic minorities. I will focus on the most significant (most numerous and prominent) minority – ethnic Hungarians.

The self-governing region of Košice spreads over more than six thousands square kilometers, covering 13.8% of the total territory of the Slovak Republic. It consists of 439 self-governing communities (*obec*), of which 17 have a status of a town. The city of Košice enjoys the dominant position in the settlement structure of Košice region. It is situated on the intersection of an east-west development axis (the Ukraine, Košice, and western Slovakia) and a south-north axis (Hungary, Košice, Prešov, and Poland). The regional settlement structure is unbalanced. On one hand it is dispersed, on the other hand there are some big industrial centers as a consequence of Stalinist type of industrialization.

Ethnic Hungarians are the most numerous minority within the region (11.15 per cent of inhabitants) followed by the Roma minority (3.89 per cent), Czech minority (0.65), Ukrainian (0.27), Ruthenian (0.26), and ethnic Germans (0.20).

11.2 Socio-economic development

Košice region faces several structural problems including the high rate of unemployment, unbalanced structure of industry in particular, the predominance of heavy industry sectors, the disproportionate localization of factories, the high proportion of Roma population, and the general lack of job opportunities in rural areas. Within the Košice region there are three districts–the Košice district, Gelnica, and Sobrance–which are among the five least developed areas in Slovakia. The post-communist economic and social transformation has worsened existing regional

disparities. The government after the collapse of Communism paid more attention to the center than to regions. It seems that the growing disparities did not prompt an acceleration of efficient regional policy formulation; rather, it was the effort to join the EU and gain access to EU pre-accession funds (Buček 2002).

11.2.1 Map: Territorial structure of the Slovak Republic

Legend:
Bratislavský kraj – Bratislava region
Trnavský kraj – Trnava region
Nitriansky kraj – Nitra region
Trenčiansky kraj – Trenčín region
Banskobystrický kraj – Banská Bystrica region
Žilinský kraj – Žilina region
Prešovský kraj – Prešov region
Košický kraj – Košice region

The regional GDP per capita does reach half of the EU average, a factor that makes the region eligible for EU structural funds under the Goal One of the EU cohesion policy. The location of the region along the eastern and southern borders of Slovakia also allows the area's participation in the cross-border initiatives of the EC.

The Košice region used the smallest proportion of the pre-accession EU funds. Up until 2002, not one infrastructure project (ISPA) was realized in the Košice region. The PHARE projects that specifically targeted the Košice region did not exist prior to 2000. The financial report of the Ministry of Finance on allocation of PHARE support in 2000 stated that only 2% of the financial sources allocated to the program that year went to Košice region. Since 2001 when the cross-border cooperation (CBC) program has been launch in Slovakia, the situation changed. In contrast with previous very low proportion of pre-accession funds' resources allocated in Košice region, the amount of PHARE financial support for the Košice region increased to 39% of all PHARE financial sources spent in Slovakia in year 2001. Thanks to the initiative of local actors in Hungary who took advantage of CBC and approached Slovak organizations in the Košice region, the CBC program was very successful in the region.

The 2004 indicators on the use of the financial support provided by PHARE gives us evidence of the increasing absorbing capacity of the region. Most grants

supporting regional and local development went to Košice region (22% of all grants). The region also gained 8 grants (out of 103 under the scheme) for the support of tourism and 9 (out of 119) from the industrial development.

The Košice region and its structural problems are among the priorities identified by the Slovak Republic in its regional development policy after it became a member of the Union. The region is eligible for objective 1 funding as well as for the EC initiatives. Beyond that, some projects financed by the Cohesion Fund are also carried out in the Košice region.

11.3 Minority – majority relations

Regarding the majority-minority relations, the status of Hungarian minority was the most serious minority problem in the first years of the independent Slovak Republic. The EU criticism of Slovakia[65] had focused around three broad political issues: respect for the rights of the parliamentary opposition, protection of minority rights, and stability of institutions. The deficiencies in the Slovak government's policy towards ethnic minorities were among the reasons given by the EU for not including Slovakia among the first group of countries invited to begin accession negotiations (so called Luxemburg group) in December 1997.

The EU, individual member states, neighbouring Hungary, the United States, and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities all repeatedly expressed concern over the political and ethnic tensions in Slovakia. Opposition parties and elements of civic society (supported by the international community) united as they feared the international isolation of Slovakia; these groups made an enormous effort to mobilize support for the political change.

The most important turning point in the approach of the Slovak Republic towards its minorities was the parliamentary elections of 1998. A new ruling coalition built from SDK (Slovak Democratic Coalition), SDĽ (Slovak Democratic Left), SMK (Hungarian Coalition Party) and SOP (Party of Civic Understanding) united eleven right-wing and left-wing parties. It is important to note that the most significant political party of the Hungarian minority, the SMK, was included. Rybář and Malová (2003) identified the EU criticism as the single most important factor which influenced the inclusiveness of the 1998 government towards the SMK. In its program manifesto, the new government enunciated a more friendly and accommodating approach to minorities' demands. Even if the decision-making of such large coalition and advocacy of minorities' demands was not always easy, the government managed to widen the institutional framework for solving the problems of minorities and corrected a number of deficiencies in the state's minority policy.

Among the coalition partners, the most negative attitudes towards the claims of the SMK in the field of minority policy and regional policy were shared by the SDĽ and SOP. Both parties refused the governmental proposal to create 16 regional self-governments (*župa*) and to abolish the state's regional administrative offices. They joined the opposition in the strict rejection of SMK's proposal to create the so-called *Komárno župa*[66]. There appeared also problems in the sphere of education

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65 The European Commission expressed its criticism in the annual evaluating reports on progress of candidate states while European Parliament sent some demarches and resolutions. The dissatisfaction with the development of Slovakia was also openly expressed by a number of European politicians.

66 The SMK formulated a strict and hardly negotiable demand for the creation of a new region, the so-called *Komárno župa* in an area populated mostly by the Hungarian minority. The opponents of this

which have belonged together with culture among one of the most sensitive policy areas for minorities. In August 2002, shortly before the parliamentary elections, the Minister of Education (SDĽ) reduced the Minority Education Section of his ministry to the status of a mere department.

On the eve of 2002 parliamentary elections, problems remained relating to the training of teachers for the minority school system. Slovakia also missed a law on the status of ethnic minorities. The government also rejects some other SMK requests regarding the status of Hungarians living in Slovakia.

The elections 2002 presented another important change. The SDĽ and SOP, the parties in the old governing coalition which had most often refused the SMK's proposals, did not make it into the new parliament. The SMK became second largest party in a government coalition that consisted of the SDKÚ (SDKÚ – Slovak Democratic and Christian Union), SMK, KDH (Christian Democratic Party), and ANO (Alliance of New Citizens). The most urgent need – the call for establishing the Hungarian university – was answered by founding the University of János Selye.

Since 1990's, Slovak - ethnic Hungarian relations has tremendously improved.

11.4 Overview of the impact of EU

Slovak scholarship on decentralization and devolution of power has mainly argued that the process of decentralization and devolution was a primary stage in the implementation of European regional policy and that because of its four years delay in preparation for the EU membership, Slovakia is still slightly falling behind. Even if the prospect of membership of the European Union was not the only incentive behind regionalization, it contributed significantly, by providing an external political stimulus, to reaching a final political agreement on the form of decentralization. The current form of regionalization mirrors the historical ethnic divide (in terms of Slovak-Hungarian relations). More recent literature on regional policy focuses on criticism of Slovak regional policy as being dependent exclusively on EU funds and thus lacking any autonomous, endogenous sources of development.

Authors writing about minority-majority relationships in Slovakia tend to point on historical development of the Slovak Republic as a necessary background for understanding the tensions between Slovaks and Hungarian minority as well as on regular misused of historical roots of the conflict in the Slovak politics. They emphasis the role the EU has played in the development of minority policy in the Slovak Republic during the 1990's only on rare occasions.

11.5 Territorial and political decentralization

The communist state was centralized therefore immediately after the collapse of Communism a very influential group of environmentalists, architects and urbanists came up with a model of decentralization of the country. The first plans for changes in territorial structure appeared as soon early as 1990 and were related to the post-socialist transformation and state-building process (Tvrdoň 2004, Krivý et al. 1996,

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request argued that ethnicity seemed to be the only criteria for the creation of such region, in contradiction with the other principles of the public administration reform.

Malíková 1996, Gajdoš 1993). In the case of Slovakia, the process of decentralization cannot be explained exclusively by the integration ambitions of the country.

The reform of the public administration has been one of the most discussed political issues in the history of the post-communist Slovakia. Most attention has been paid to the „patterns of the central – local relations' "(Malíková 1996: 21). As Malíková goes on to argue, the involvement of various political and interest groups in the preparation of the different alternatives for reform supports the claim that this was a highly attractive issue during the transformation process. Together with the timing of the political requests and attempts at decentralization it also supports the thesis that the territorial restructuring of Slovakia was aroused by domestic not international factors.

On the other hand, Buček (2002) clearly names the ambition of the Slovak Republic to join the EU as the most important factor that led to substantial progress in regionalization. He divides the regionalization of Slovakia into two main processes: public administration reform and regional policy reform and he concludes that without the integration context there would have been only a minimal shift towards regionalization and the establishment of regional levels of government.

Different opinions on the scope of decentralization, limited public funds, and contradictory opinions on administrative division of the country could be seen as the main hurdles in the regionalization of the Slovak Republic. The almost total absence of political regionalization at the beginning of 1990s ended later with the introduction of administrative regions in 1996. The reform of 1996 was, however, strongly criticized for having subordinated the strong role of the state administration to the political interests of governing parties, and for an inappropriate territorial division (Buček 2002, Nižňanský et al. 1999, Kusá 1999, Malíková 1996). New territorial administrative organization changed the ratio of the Hungarian minority in the districts with significant proportion of Hungarians (over 20%). The percentage of such districts dropped in 1996 from 26,3% to 16,5%. The gerrymandering that accompanied the 1996 reform is criticized also by Krivý (1997). He highlighted the worsening of the position of the Hungarian minority as a consequence of establishing inappropriately large districts in ethnically mixed regions of Slovakia.

Even if the 1996 reform was strongly criticized by the opposition, once they themselves came to power in 1998 they started with the political regionalization and administrative districts have retained the same borders as in 1996. As a consequence of the new reforms the regional governments were institutionalized from 2002 followed by substantial progress in building an institutional and legal framework for regional development policy. As Buček (2002) warns, the regionalization of Slovakia remains far from complete and cannot be considered the best solution. However, the established regions can play an important role in strengthening regional democracy, building civil society and mobilizing forces in favour of regional development. He illustrates these assumptions on an already existing formation of bottom-up regionalization activities by local government associations and non-governmental organizations.

11.6 The EU funds

The experiences with the pre-accession funds are not well charted yet. The literature dealing with the EU funds is mostly in the form of governmental information booklets or official reports. One instance of focusing on the funds as the political tool for

supporting privileged regions in Slovakia has been the analysis made by non-governmental organization Ľudia a voda [People and Water] in 2004. They demonstrated that 75 out of 94 grants (total of 3,4 mil. Euros) allocated through the 2004 PHARE grant scheme for supporting regional and local development, went to the southern regions of Slovakia, while only 21 projects (total of 1,1 mil. Euros) were approved for the regions in the northern part of the country. The authors wanted to make the point that ministries responsible for structural policy (Ministry of Construction and Regional Development – PHARE, ERDF, Cohesion fund; Ministry of Agriculture – SAPARD, EAGGF; Ministry of Environment – ISPA, Cohesion fund) are under the leadership of politicians from the Hungarian Coalition Party who used the financial support from the pre-accession funds to support their own constituencies. However, this analysis lacked a solid methodology – it used the terms southern and northern part of Slovakia without specifying which regions are the southern ones and which are not. The official administrative or political division of the country does not recognize the terms Southern Slovakia or Northern Slovakia.

Other authors mention the pre-accession funds only marginally. According to Kling (2004) there are two main features coming up from the last experiences with the implementation of the funds. First, the calls for submitting projects induced enormous activity in terms of preparing the projects at the regional level. Such experience is however, both positive and negative. It is positive because the high number of submitted projects shows the regions are ready for projects. The negative side of the experience is that from almost 2000 projects only 300 were accepted, thus the quantity goes at expense of quality. The second common feature of all grant schemes is the postponement of the evaluation of the projects on the side of relevant administrative bodies. Despite the financial flow that has been coming from the PHARE program to strengthen the capability of the administration to handle the implementation of EU funds, the deficiencies are still serious.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences evaluated the impact of the SAPARD program in Slovakia. According to promulgated partial outcomes, the beneficiaries have learnt how to program, implement and monitor the financial support coming from the funds. However, most SAPARD money went to economically developed regions. Thus, the support for less developed regions like southern parts of Košice or Banská Bystrica region was minimal. The main objective of the EU regional policy, that of achieving the social and economic cohesion of the EU regions, has not been taken into consideration.

11.7 Hungarian minority in Slovakia

The territories and the population, which are in the focus of this study, became a part of the Slovak state with the most unstable borders after the termination of the Austrian – Hungarian Empire. After the First World War a new state – Czechoslovakia – was established at the territory of previous Austrian – Hungarian Empire. The Trianon Treaty has confirmed the borders of the new state which were artificially demarcated. The southern border of the Slovak territory still presents a source of tensions between the Slovak and Hungarian nationalistic politicians. In general, after the establishment of the Czechoslovakia (and subsequently Slovakia), relations between the majority (Slovaks) and the minority (ethnic Hungarians) were based on antagonistic interests – (nationalistic) state centrism versus (minority) territorial autonomy.

Czechoslovakia of the interwar period created the legislative and institutional conditions for the development of a collective ethnic identity. Continuity was interrupted after the Second World War when ethnic Hungarians and Germans were deprived of their rights. Later on, the socialist government gave civic rights to both minorities. The regime used strictly the terms "inhabitants or citizens of Hungarian nationality" denying the community status of Hungarian minority (Kiss, 2004: 69). Kiss focuses his studies (1998, 2002, 2004) on the fight of ethnic Hungarians for ethnic autonomy. He considers the question of collective rights for ethnic Hungarians to be   key issue in minority – majority relations in Slovakia. As he points out historical and territorial aspects of Hungarian minority make evident that half million ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia are not merely a sum of individuals speaking the same language. Ethnic Hungarians form a "minority unit with its own internal structure" (Kiss 2004, 1998). The reform process in the sixties had paved the way for Hungarian minority communist functionaries to formulate ethnic requests. The CSEMADOK adopted a position in which it formulated the requests for clarification and incorporation of the ethnic minorities' position into the Constitution. From this standpoint, representatives of the Hungarian minority have clearly declared its requests for collective rights (right to independent self-governance) justified by its status of community. Similar claims emerged on local and regional level. They asked for representation of ethnic Hungarians in representative organs from the point of ethnic minority status. Such claims and also requirements for homogenization of the Southern Slovakia districts had created anti-Hungarian attitudes among Slovaks. The Hungarian minority's demands met with a lack of understanding from the greater part of the Slovak public. Kiss names then effort by political elites to silence[67] any movements concerning the needs of minorities as the significant determinant that influenced public opinion. At the end of reform process, the issue of ethnic minorities' status suffered from emerging concern about the federalization of Czechoslovakia. The position adopted towards minorities in 1968 was a legal basis for minority policy for the rest of period.

Treatment of ethnic Hungarians by Mečiar's government presented one of the major obstacles to the integration ambitions of the Slovak Republic, most of the studies from the 1990s have touched upon this phenomenon.

The relations between Slovak government and Hungarian minority represented by Hungarian political parties had been problematical since the victory of nationalistic parties in the 1992 general elections. The newly formed government lead by Mečiar perceived the Hungarians demands for the protection of Hungarian identity as a sign of the group's disloyalty to the young Slovak state (Bakker 1998). Most of the literature named the Mečiar government and its minority policy as the single factor causing political isolation of the country (Bakker 1998, Kusý 1999, Dostál 2000, Gajdoš, Konečný 2003). The EU, individual member states, the OSCE and the United States expressed their concerns over the political and ethnic tensions in Slovakia. Restrictive minority policies increased hostile relationship between the government and the minorities and even if there were no indications of ethnically based violence the tensions could not be denied. As early as November 1994 the European Commission released its first *démarche,* and many *communiqués*, *aide-memoires*, diplomatic notes and official statements would follow. Slovakia was not included in

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67 This effort was caused by a fear from increasing nationalistic moods on the both sides of society – Slovak side as well as Hungarian one.

the first wave of NATO enlargement and in the group of the associated countries with which EU started the negotiations in 1997.

Pressure from the international community in addition to the fear of international isolation expressed by the political opposition mobilized political change in the elections' of 1998. Rybář and Malová (2003) affirm that the application of the EU political conditions played a major role in turning the country' s regime back on the way to consolidated democracy after the 1998 elections. In their study, they deal with European political conditionality (including references to minority protection) and its role in the political development of Slovakia. Authors point out that political conditionality of the Union, however, does not work formally by establishing legal framework; it also requires a corresponding set of political actors who can comply with democratic rules and procedures. The case of Mečiar's Slovakia clearly supports this claim. As authors state, the EU political criteria even played a role of guidance for the political development which came after 1998. Inclusion of the Party of Hungarian Coalition, was according to these authors, partly motivated by the need to incorporate Slovakia's largest ethnic minority into the decision-making process, in contrast to the often criticized minority policy of the previous government.

Ethnic autonomy represents another aspect of the majority-minority relations in the Slovak Republic and has been broadly analyzed in the literature. Kusý (1998) advocates ethnic autonomy for Hungarians, arguing that because the Slovak Republic is a state established on an ethnic principle in accordance with a non-discriminatory tradition, the Hungarian minority should be treated similarly. The application of the ethnic principle to the Hungarian minority would entail their autonomy. Despite incorporating the opportunity to establish territorial autonomy into the Slovak Constitution and many other international documents, the call for Hungarian autonomy is a sensitive political issue in Slovakia. The autonomy should be placed in the controversial border region that has been repeatedly annexed by Hungary during the course of history. Surveys show that people worry about the fact that such autonomy would lead towards detach of this area from the Slovak republic. Not even coalition partners of the Hungarian party identify themselves with the idea of autonomy for Hungarians in the fields of culture and education. In the case of Slovakia, Kusá (1999) indicates the ethnic issues as means of political struggle. She concludes that "ethnic card" has been often been used purposely by politicians. When the ethnic issues do not serve their political aims they turn their backs on minorities. However mutual mistrust is shared by both ethnic groups – 66% of Slovaks are convinced about the threat of hungarisation in Southern parts of Slovakia while 41% of the Hungarian minority has concerns about slovakisation. Examining Slovak-Hungarian relations, authors also depict the overall attitudes of both ethnic groups towards each other. Bačová (1996) observe that all surveys done after 1989 show less positive assessment of Slovak-Hungarian relations from the side of Slovaks who do not coexist with Hungarian minority (Bakker 1998).

In Slovakia, collective identity of minorities was examined by social psychologists, sociologists, ethnologists and historians. Research projects focus on study of national, political and social identity. However, up till now the regional identity was studied only indirectly as "a link to the place".

Most of the studies presented in this review were conducted in the 1993-8 period which was rather politically controversial for the Slovak Republic because of minority problems. Since 1998, the interest of social scientists in national and ethnic identities has declined. However, with the growing debate about European identity, it is possible to anticipate the revival of interest in identity study.

Jószef Liszka (2003) gives a detail ethnographic description of the ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia. *Ethnography of Hungarian Minority in Slovakia* offers an interesting picture of the daily life of Southern Slovakia inhabitants. As he pointed out there was a lack of ethnographers who would be interested in the Hungarian minority during the interwar period and the Second World War. "The first decade after the Second World War was actually a period of searching the way, period of discovering own identity for ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia" (Liszka, 2003:108). An important role in the re-introduction of the traditional culture was played by CSEMADOK. As he concludes, the popular culture of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia is miscellaneous. The territory inhabited by Hungarians is possible to divide into larger or smaller cultural units but the units differ from each other to such a degree that they have often more in common with the neighbouring Slovak cultural region than with each other (372).

Hardly any study has aspired to put the question of ethnic identity into a geographical framework. From this perspective the work of Kusá (1999) is unique. She examines the role of state in influencing the identity of the ethnic groups. She identifies geography and statistics as powerful tools which a state government can use to affect the minorities. Official statistics, mainly in form of population census, is often a crucial prerequisite for official recognition of minority existence and also for financial support from the state. In the case of Slovakia, population census also plays a significant role because of the use of Hungarian language in the areas where the total Hungarian population reaches 20%. Authorization to use one's mother tongue in official relations is very sensitive in Slovakia. As Plichtová (1991) examined, the majority of Hungarians in Slovakia consider education in their mother tongue as the most important aspect of their ethnic identity (also Zeľová 1992, Kusá 1999, Bibó 1996). The same conclusion is made by Bordás (1995), who identified the mother tongue as being the only differential tool between the majority and minority in Southern Slovakia. Thus, Kusá (1999) focused on interpretation and reinterpretation of such statistics for political reasons and its impact on minority-majority relations.

Kusá is touching the territorial aspect of ethnic identity from the perspective according to which compact minority-inhabited territory is more likely to be self-governed by the minority and thus is has an impact on self-perception of the members of the minority group. She also looks more closely on the relationship of the different ethnic groups to their historical territory. That is because the borders of the state and the "fair" principle of their demarcation present a focus of long-term disputes among ethnic groups in Slovakia. She pointed out the fact that Hungarian politicians and historians tend to call the demarcation of state borders between Slovakia and Hungary unfair (Bibó 1996, also Deák 2001) and she considers that to be the starting point of ethnic tensions between the two nations. Hungary never gives up the idea of a Greater Hungary and Slovak politicians still perceive the call for any kind of Hungarian minority autonomy as a first step towards secession. She illustrates that claim on historical development of the territorial organization of contemporary Slovakia from the end of the First World War until 1996 reform.

Kusá concludes that political elites who governed the territory of nowadays Slovakia widely used the statistics and changes in territorial organization to burden the situation of minorities. That means the oppression from the side of government without regard to the nationality which represented the majority (Hungarian oppression of Slovaks before the 1st world war and Slovak oppression of Hungarians later on). The modern Slovak Republic was built as a national state. She assumes that changing political culture from a nationalistic one to a civic one might release the

tensions between majority and minority and provide better conditions for development of ethnic identity.

An extensive work in the field of studying ethnic identity was done by Bačová (1996, 1997, 1998, 1999a, 1999b). Ethnic identity usually refers to marginally ethnic groups while national identity is used in reference to the majority in the Slovak Republic (Bačová 1997, Kusá 1999). Thus, national identity is widely perceived in an ethnic sense instead of understanding it as a civic loyalty towards the state. In her studies she focused on patterns in which the identity is created. While primordial perspective regards ethnic or national identity as given by birth and connected with the culture, territory, language and history, a civic (instrumental) perspective considers national identity as a matter of personal decision. "Primordialists" tend to highlight a need for national solidarity and cohesion, but from the nationalistic rather than civic perspective of solidarity. They are also characterized by negative attitudes towards the (specifically) Hungarian minority (1998, 1999b). Thus, the primordialistic perspective of national identity is more common for the majority (Slovaks) while members of minorities share more often the instrumental viewpoint on their national identity construction.

The other aspect of the social identity, the sense of belonging to some macro social formation was examined by Výrost, Bačová (1996). The results show that the generation above 50 years old shares more intensive sense of affiliation to the region or state than younger generations. On the contrary, younger generations are more likely to attach themselves to the formations such as, for example, the European Union (Frankovský, Bolfíková, 1996). Homišinová (1999) adds the ethnic dimension to the above mentioned research and she concentrates more on affiliation towards region/state/Europe along the ethnic lines. The results present the Hungarian minority as having a stronger affiliation towards categories as Central Europe and Europe than the Slovak majority.

Both frames of reference, identity construction and belonging to the social formations are relevant to the EUROREG project because in its second phase we will also examine how Europe is perceived by the members of minority and majority. According to academic findings, because of more flexible attitudes towards identity formation and better affiliation of the Hungarian minority to larger entities (as for example Europe), its view of European Union should be more positive as Slovak one. However, up till now no empirical research focusing on European identity was conducted (Lášticová, Bianchi 2003: 406).

The available research results are limited in their explanatory capability because they simply state the mentioned differences but they lack a deeper causal analysis of the factors which determine such differences. Forthcoming research must require more intensive examination of all discourses – political, media and laic.

11.8 Conclusion

The close examination of Slovak case suggests that EU has had impact on majority-minority relations in Slovakia. On the national level, political conditionality of the EU caused the incorporation of the ethnic Hungarian political parties into the government. Even if the EU funds are not regarded as having a significant impact on the relationship between the Slovaks and ethnic Hungarians, they may paint a different picture at the regional level. I assume that increasing economic potential will support

intraregional cooperation and may help to decrease ethnic tensions. However, this needs more study.

The link between EU funds and the process of regionalization seems to be relatively strong. In Slovakia, the politicians often termed the process of devolution of powers as a necessary step for launching the EU cohesion policy. However, in the case of Slovakia, the process of decentralization cannot be explained exclusively by the integration ambitions of the country. Unlike in the other member states in which regionalization occurred as a consequence of the implementation of EU cohesion policy, the case of Slovakia illustrates an effort to introduce restructuring of a country's territorial administration prior to EU membership. Since the 1990's there have been domestic political demands for the territorial and even political reorganization of the Slovak Republic. What was missing was the political will to launch such reforms and this created room for the EU to exert influence. The Union accelerated the process of regionalization.

11.9   References

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