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THE ‘DIPLOMACY OF THE REGIONS’

THE REGIONS AS TOOLS FOR EXERCISING SOFT POWER POLITICS
IN THE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARENA.

THE GREEK REGIONS AS ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present paper focuses on the role of the European regions as actors for the exercise of soft power in a new governance model in the EU, contributing to European integration and to the exercise of its foreign policy. The levels of intervention that are analysed in the present paper refer to the following:

- 1) European regions as levers and powerful poles for the exercise of soft power in the framework of a new model of Multi-layered, Multi-participatory and Multi-polar Governance in the EU, contributing dynamically to European integration, but also to the exercise of an effective EU foreign policy.
- 2) Greek regions must acquire a new, powerful identity and a monitoring function, with the aim to become the connecting and developmental link between the central state (which must be smaller and with an even more strategic overseeing function) and the local authorities and communities, providing a new regional dimension in all the aspects of the socio-economic and developmental perspective on a micro- and macro- regional level. Their monitoring authority will empower their role towards this direction, so that they become a tool for the exercise of soft power.

II.CHAPTER: THE ROLE OF THE REGIONS IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION & IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOREIGN POLICYOF THE EU

➤ FOREIGN POLICY OF THE EU – EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY

The common foreign and security policy of the EU (CFSP) was instituted in 1993 with the aim to preserve peace, reinforce international security, promote international cooperation and develop and establish democracy, the rule of law and respect to human rights and fundamental liberties, and has since been supplemented in later Treaties. With the Treaty of Lisbon, the Union acquired a legal entity and an

institutional foundation for its foreign policy, creating a series of new actors within the CFSP, including the High Representative of the Union on Issues of Foreign and Security Policy (also exercising the duties of the Deputy President of the Commission), and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), i.e. its diplomatic service.

While the Union should have been empowered by the Treaty of Lisbon in assuming a leading role in areas of intervention in the international diplomatic arena and in Defense, within the framework of exercising foreign policy, in practice it has been seen essentially to coordinate the national objectives of its member states in these areas. Under this viewpoint, the EEAS is not an Intergovernmental instrument, but a coordinator of 28 national diplomacies on an international level. It is indicative that, a short while ago, France and Germany co-signed a paper with the title: “A powerful Europe in a world of uncertainty”¹, in which they suggest common European policies for security and immigration and the strengthening of economic convergence.

With a decision of the European Council in June 2015, the High Representative Federica Mogherini took up the creation of a Global Strategy of the EU in matters of foreign affairs and security policy. The Strategy aimed at forging a wide strategic framework, within which the EU could measure and deal with the daily international challenges in an effective and cohesive way, utilizing a gamut of tools and mechanisms. This Global Strategy on foreign policy, presented to the Council on 28 June 2016, marks an important shift in the thinking behind the European Strategy on Security of 2003, and defines five priorities for the EU foreign policy: Security of the Union / Resilience of the states and communities beyond our east and south borders / Integrated approach to conflicts / Regional structures of cooperation / Global Governance for the 21st century.

In the text presented by the High Representative Mrs. F. Mogherini in June 2016 titled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: a Stronger Europe’², the common values,

¹ A strong Europe in a world of uncertainties by Jean-Marc Ayrault and Frank- Walter Steinmeier, <http://statewatch.org/news/2016/jul/de-fr-strong-europe-eu-security-compact.pdf>

² The EU Global Strategy, Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy/ Vice President of the Commission, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

principles, priorities and interests of the member states of the Union were featured, in order to inspire member states in seeking unity on a common cause. The paper also stressed that the EU, as a global power, should focus on building peace and resilience of states and communities, both within and without Europe, as it stands for soft power politics and should continue to do that very thing because it does it best.

An innovative element of the EU Strategy on foreign affairs and security policy is the creation of new players and new tools in wielding this power. It is worth noting Mrs. F. Mogherini's statement at the Committee of the Regions (October 2015): *'You are players in our foreign policy. Global challenges call for global alliances, but also for local responses. We need to think to new architectures, where all levels— the international, the regional, the national, the local have a place and play their part. An architecture harmonising the macro and the micro. Think big, act local. This is a goal we can only achieve together.'*³

Establishing the EU on an international level as a key player in economic, financial, environmental, commercial, immigration and other horizontal challenges, such as climate change, fighting poverty, asymmetric threats, etc., reinforces the necessity for activating new players in this new Architecture in the area of foreign affairs, opening the path for exercising soft power policies from regional entities, in the framework of *'Diplomacy of the Regions'*.

III. CHAPTER: DIPLOMACY OF THE REGIONS – THE REGIONS AS IMPORTANT ACTORS IN EXERCISING SOFT POWER POLICY

It is more and more evident that foreign policy is not the exclusive prerogative - or even burden - of the state. According to Robert Cooper, a British diplomat: 'The most important change (in history) in foreign policy was the discovery of peace as a political goal.'⁴ The submission of the enemy through bombardment is something totally different to the skill of convincing others to follow you.

³ Speech 'Regional and local authorities and the EU's external action', Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice (CoR Plenary, 13 October 2015), <http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Documents/mogherini-speech.pdf>

⁴ Robert Cooper, "The Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century", Atlantic Books, 2003

Diplomacy is the most important weapon in exercising foreign policy. Many suggest that the roots of Diplomacy can be traced in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648), where the groundwork was set for the principle of sovereignty and the creation of strong states in Europe. However, if we look back in history, we will see that diplomacy existed before the Westphalian system, as in ancient Greece the formation of alliances was included in the role that ambassadors⁵ had as intermediaries between states.

➤ THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The proposal for developing a Diplomacy of the Regions as a tool for exercising soft power policies, is based on **the theory of soft – clever power**, expanded by the American professor, politician and writer Joseph Nye, and also on **the theoretical background of Governance**, in the framework of a global Multi-polar system, where changes that have been made on a local, national, regional and international level allow us to talk about new forms of Governance, such as a) the Multi-participatory Governance, with the involvement of non-governmental actors (NGOs, scientific communities, private sector, international organisations etc.), b) the Multi-polar Governance and c) the Multi-level Governance⁶. According to Czempliel, the new challenges faced by the different actors in the process of governance could be seen in the international system, regional/national/supranational. In this transformation of governance, Rosenau has developed the notions of **Glocalisation** (from globalization and localization) and **Fragmegration** (from fragmentation and integration)⁷.

The term ‘Governance’ is not new, but it became more popular in the last two decades of the 20th c. and appears in 1989 in a study made by the World Bank on the management of the aid to Third Countries (Africa), where it was defined as the exercising of political power for the management of the affairs of a nation⁸.

⁵ Plato, *Laws*, transl. V. Moskovis, 1988, Athens: Legal Library.

⁶ Pierre Vercauteren, For an Ending of Government: The Representation of the Multiple, Editor’s note, *Studia UBB.EUROPAEA*, LXI 1, 2016, 5-10, pg 5

⁷ As per 3

⁸ The World Bank, *Sub-Saharan Africa – From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, 1989, σελ. 60.

It is a fact that there is no commonly accepted definition, as there have been many different approaches to the subject, depending on the viewpoint, i.e. if it refers to the field of administration, or the methodology for decision-making, or its field of application. According to Rhodes⁹, the term ‘Governance’ includes the coordination between public and private sector and is a prerequisite to the conviction that derives from a network and not through the direct control from a hierarchy. Governance does not suggest just the process of multilateral decision-making, where states do not have a primary or an exclusive role, but refers also to a field for influencing power between: a) states and supranational organisations of a global governance scale (i.e. World Bank, IMF), b) between states and non-governmental actors and c) between states.¹⁰ The added value of the notion of Governance in theory sets an organisational framework for perceiving the changes in the process of ‘governing’.

Governance can be especially applied in international politics, as there is no dominant supranational entity to control the competition between states in increasing their power, so that we could have a balance in this unprincipled and competitive environment. This is why there is a growing number of intergovernmental organisations for dealing with global issues that cannot be solved by states alone and need multiple actors and multiple levels of cooperation and decision-making, showcasing the notion of Multi-level Governance.

Since 2001 and the relevant White Paper of the European Commission, the issue of Governance has now become imperative for the EU. The expression ‘European Governance’ describes the body of rules, processes and practices that refer to the way of exercising powers in the EU. The aim is to reinforce democracy in an international level and to bring citizens closer to European institutions, as one of the fundamental values is the participation of the ‘base’ in the creation and implementation of EU policies.¹¹

⁹ Rhodes, R. (1995), “The Institutional Approach”, at D. March and G. Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), pp 42-57

¹⁰ As per 6, p. 57

¹¹ Report of the European Commission on European Governance (2003), http://ec.europa.eu/governance/docs/comm_rapport_el.pdf

In this new framework of Governance, regional and local authorities, in their proximity to citizens, can play a role on the international scene, complementing classic diplomacy, where circumstances allow. This role is being strengthened today, mainly in countries with federal governments, where regional and local authorities have a larger degree of autonomy and power and can develop international cooperations.

The theoretician of soft-clever power, Joseph Nye, in one of his first studies, focused his attention on the complicated reality of the international system and the dynamic developed by new actors as factors for configuring international developments.¹² He views the foreign policy of a country as a multi-layered and multi-faceted process and believes that an appropriate mix of levers of influence, such as military power, financial resources and social status, can maximise the benefits for every state, whether it is a super-power like the USA, or a country of medium power such as France or Canada, or a smaller country, like Belgium, Austria and Greece. It is characteristic to note Nye's own reference to Greece's potential to exercise soft power politics, because it possesses a major advantage in comparison to its neighbours in terms of soft power.¹³ According to Nye, soft power is based on attraction and lies in the ability to formulate others' preferences. It is based on three main sources: culture, political values and foreign policy.¹⁴ The importance and use of 'soft power' for attaining foreign policy objectives are undoubtable, especially in countries that share borders with troubled regions. The game of foreign policy and protecting national interests is now played not only across borders, but often across formal diplomatic channels and tools and through informal communication channels.

However, the main bearers of these policies are state entities within the framework of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and public diplomacy. The involvement of regional and local entities on 'Diplomatic' activities is, up to now, relatively limited. Scientifically, the 'Diplomatic' activities of local government appear with various

¹²Theodoros Kouloumpis, Introduction, 'Soft Power: the Means to Success in Global Politics', by Joseph Nye, trnsI Errikos Bartzinopoulos, Papazisi publishing, Athens, 2005

¹³See J. Nye, «Greece and the Balkans: A moment of opportunity», in the volume of by Graham Allison and Kalypso Nikolaidis (editors) *The Greek Paradox: Promise v performance*, MIT Press, 1997, chapter. 13, p. 145-151

¹⁴Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in Global Politics* Papazisi publishing, Athens, 2005

terms in bibliography, with the most prevalent one the new-fangled term ‘para-diplomacy’, which appeared at the beginning of the ’80s in the area of comparative political analysis of federal states (Canada, USA, Belgium), mostly in north-American bibliography, in order to promote the international role of the American States. As a term, it refers to entities that have a regional identity (with a stated and powerful cultural personality) and seek, through this, a legitimisation and a recognition from international institutional partners. It is utilised mostly by regional governments that seek, through it, their legitimisation as valid interlocutors to foreign entities on an international level.¹⁵

In recent years and on the European level mostly, the term ‘**Diplomacy of the Cities**’ has taken the fore, a notion that refers to regions and cities (Municipalities) which, either in cooperation with each other or with international bodies, organisations and citizens, take up actions in the sphere of foreign affairs.

Rogier van Der Pluijm (2007)¹⁶ defines the term ‘Diplomacy of the Cities’ (DoC) as a form of decentralization for international relations. It is undoubtable that through DoCone cannot stop conflict, or impose a ceasefire in a war zone, or apply sanctions, however, values may be shared, such as peace, security, the rule of law established through international treaties, which are valid to them as political instruments. This term is no new phenomenon, as it is rooted in history following WWII, when cities started to develop integration policies and were active in the sphere of economy, tourism, cultural exchanges, cooperation between chambers of commerce, on a micro-level of diplomacy, where cities gradually started to become involved in international cooperation by increasing contacts with cities of other countries, either individually or

¹⁵Panayiotis G. Grigoriou, The Europe and region in international relations – a challenge for the Greek region in the ‘post-Kallikratis’ era, p. 269, in the collective work titled “A-I.D. METAXAS Design of the Opus – Introductory Texts, Political Science: Interdisciplinary and concurrent research of political action” published by “I. SIDERIS”

¹⁶Rogier van der Pluijm, Jan Melissen, City Diplomacy: The Expanding Role of Cities in International Politics, papers No. 10, April 2007 NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, CLINGENDAEL, https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/20070400_cdsp_paper_pluijm.pdf

through their networks, such as United Cities and Local Governments, Council of European Municipalities and Regions, etc.

International challenges, international politics and classic diplomacy need a new framework of cooperation and corporate relations, with the involvement of all the levels of governance, promoting the importance of the regional and local entities in the participatory decision-making process towards a new Model of Multi-level and Multi-participatory Governance.

It is of scientific importance to understand the degree of participation that regional entities have in exercising the foreign policy Union, although, until today, it is greatly limited to the European level, through the EU institutions, like the Committee of the Regions (CoR), the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CRPM), through inter-regional partnerships within the framework of various geographic cooperation programmes (MED, Interreg, etc.), through the European Neighborhood Policy, the institution of twinnings, through initiatives such as the Macro regional Strategies (e.g. Ionian-Adriatic, etc.), through the European Groups of Territorial Cooperation and others. If we take into account all the European tools that regions have at their disposal, including financial tools, it will be made clear that they can operate constructively and definitely more actively in exercising international relations even beyond the European family, and through cooperative schemas (e.g. Macro-regional Strategy, European Groups of Territorial Cooperation, etc.); however, the absence of a clear legal and institutional framework, defining jurisdictions of the regions, especially in non-federal countries, diminishes their more active participation in the international political arena.

This paper aims at promoting regional and local authorities as key players in the EU foreign policy, and by extension, in that of the member-states. It is high time to highlight the '*Diplomacy of the Regions*', as they are the most powerful bulwarks and the main exponents of European unification. The process of political union requires allies with a powerful status on a national, regional and international level, whereas member-states entrench themselves behind historical egotisms and a refusal to lose part of their authority. However, the regions, which express local societies and communities, can, through an institutional empowerment, become the cornerstone of

the unification process on the one hand, and the main representative of European diplomacy in exercising EU foreign policy on the other.

More specifically, at this period in time when we witness the ‘institutionalisation’ of a Europe of multiple speeds through a European text, the Declaration of Rome on 25/03/2017¹⁷, an admission that does not ad here to the values and principles of the EU, not to mention the Union’s Cohesion Policy which aims at mitigating inter-regional differences not only on a national but on a European level, now is therefore the time for regions to acquire a stronger voice and a more powerful role in the decision-making process on a national and European level, so as to support the European unification process.

In this instance, what is important is the increase of diplomatic power of the European regions, which operate in the framework of recentralized or federal governments, and also their contribution to the development of international relations, especially those that are related to regional integration. This, of course, presupposes the ability of a state to diversify its diplomatic activity and end the sole management of foreign policy by the central state government¹⁸. Towards this direction, regional and local authorities need to develop the appropriate tools through their comparative advantages and to demand clearly their institutional empowerment by acquiring specific jurisdiction in order to play an active role in the development of diplomatic relations with third countries and not limit their role within the EU.

IV. CHAPTER: EUROPEAN REGIONAL POLICY: A MODEL OF MULTI-LAYERED AND MULTI-PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

The Single European Act had stipulated the objective of the economic and social cohesion, which became a reality in 1988, with the ratification of the first regulation that established the cohesion policy. The Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice Treaties re-confirmed the importance of this policy and the draft treaty of Lisbon expanded its area of application with a new territorial dimension. The European Council of 1988, 1992, 1999 and 2005 also confirmed the importance of the cohesion policy, providing it with increased budgetary allowances.

¹⁷ Declaration of Rome, 25 March 2017, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25-rome-declaration/>

¹⁸ As per 3

With the Treaty for the European Union and the revised Treaty for the European Communities (TEC), which were signed in Maastricht on February 7, 1992, cohesion and regional policies acquire a new institution, the Committee of the Regions (CoR), a new means, the Cohesion fund and introduced the principle of subsidiarity, with EU member states revising their current strategies and receding from traditional roles as sole providers of services, passing those onto a central structure and allowing for the involvement of the regions in this new operational reality. The transformation of the state is a necessary process for an effective survival within the demands of the European integration in the post-Maastricht era – and ultimately those of globalisation. It also serves in materialising another EU objective, in bringing down national borders in the interior of the Union, which may be seen as a first step towards its federalisation¹⁹.

The added value of the cohesion policy surpasses investments in the fields of development and job creation. Through its unique model of Multi-layered Governance, it implicates local and regional institutions in planning and implementing policies, offering a higher degree of effectiveness and local knowledge. It goes without saying that the achievements of the Cohesion Policy have become evident in third countries, where the Commission has signed MoUs on cooperation in matters of regional policy with China, Russia and Brazil; countries which face increased regional inequalities and major challenges in better governance, relying more on information flows running from the bottom upwards in politics and in decision making. Many other countries and organisations (South Africa, Ukraine, MERCOSUR, West-African Economic and Monetary Union) have expressed a strong interest for the cohesion policy model of the EU, exactly because it is considered a successful mechanism. Through this international cooperation, Cohesion Policy promotes the European values beyond the Regions of EU – MS ²⁰.

It is important to mention some typical examples that highlight:

¹⁹As per 11, p. 269

²⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panorama/pdf/mag26/mag26_el.pdf

a) **the cooperation between the EU regions in the framework of a bilateral agreement**, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the South Aegean Region and the Regional Government of Valencia²¹, on the relocation and integration of at least 1000 refugees from the Aegean islands into the local community of Valencia, which is an important initiative of the two Regions¹. This act is not just important because, in its essence, is about the management of the refugee problem in Europe, but also because it marks a strong symbolism with the development of bilateral relations at an international cooperation level between two European regions, and

b) **the cooperation or action in third countries within a specific institutional framework, such as the EU-ACP Partnership Agreement or the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA)**,²² where non-governmental actors (art. 4) are explicitly recognized in the EU-ACP partnership. In our case, the Regions, as development actors, are supposed to be informed and involved in consultations, to be provided with capacity building support, with financial resources to support local development processes and to be involved in implementing projects and programmes. The agreement additionally recognizes the need for the capacity building of local governments, as well as the importance of decentralization process in order to foster local economic development, reduce inequalities within a country and increase the participation of the population in the development process.

It is worth studying further the approach of managing international relations by **reversing the Principle of Subsidiarity**²³. More specifically, while the traditional subsidiarity model in the EU dictates that the course of action begins from the constituent parts (member states) and if they are not successful then the EU institutions are activated, in the suggested pattern, the course of action would begin from the central state government and if that is not successful, then the sub-state entities are activated (regional, local authorities).

²¹ <http://www.pnai.gov.gr/Arthro.aspx?a=6980>

²² The EU-ACP Partnership Agreement was adopted in 2000, the EU-ACP Partnership Agreement (or Cotonou Partnership Agreement- CPA) and is the institutional and operational framework for cooperation between the European Union and 79 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. It is one of the most extensive agreements, addressing development, economic and trade and political cooperation. It is also one of the few EU development agreements that includes local and regional governments (LRGs) among the key stakeholders for its implementation. In particular, since the revision of 2010, it recognises their “complementary role and potential for contribution”.

²³ Dimitrios Skiadas, Institutions and Policies for the Protection of the Fiscal Interests of the European Union, Administrative Law Review, issue 4, 2007, p. 546

V. CHAPTER: THE GREEK REGIONS AS MAIN ACTORS IN A MULTI-LAYERED GOVERNANCE

➤ GREEK FOREIGN POLICY

It has been specifically proven that, in Greece, Diplomacy has been the main lever for the protection and promotion of its national interests. However, where classic diplomacy is solely utilized, it is necessary to have a commensurate adaptation of the structures for exercising national diplomacy. Taking advantage of new forms of diplomacy and new players in exercising foreign policy in a country such as Greece, where strategic choices in foreign affairs lead to the preservation of peace and the strengthening of relations with other peoples, is considered necessary.

Greek foreign policy moves along three levels: the first has to do with her relations with the EU, the second with the regional sub-system of SE Europe and the third with the wider international globalized system. In order to manage the challenges of an unstable and fluid environment in terms of security, it is crucial to use all available tools of soft power (expat Greeks – including academics and executives in international organisations, cultural diplomacy, financial diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy – in the European Parliament as well, religious diplomacy, etc.) under the coordination of the MFA, as well as looking for ways to institutionally forge cooperation between regions and local authorities, the academic community and other entities in planning and wielding politics, all in the framework of soft power.

How much do the ‘Kallikratis’ regions, an innovative institution for Greek matters, represent powerful regions within a Europe of the Regions?

➤ ELECTED REGIONS: A NEW BEGINNING HAS BEEN MADE, BUT IS IT ENOUGH;

The law 3852/2010 establishing a new architecture for local and regional government (up to 2nd degree) and decentralized administration (the so called ‘Kallikratis

Programme')²⁴ created new terms and conditions for the exercising of a decentralized administration. This concerns a modern way to exercise politics with clear developmental and project-based characteristics. This new role, dynamic, focused and democratically sanctioned, can become the foundation for an equitable regional development. This is about real development, structured, planned and implemented by elected officials, built upon principles such as proximity to the citizen, transparency and democratic legitimisation of decision making.

Through this new model, the lawmaker promotes the ideal of a Greek administration with a truly functional role with an institutional, administrative, financial, and especially social dimension. This powerful and effective administration that the lawmaker has envisaged, refers to a limited, but monitoring presence of the state, which in its turn makes a strategic decision for the strengthening of democracy and of the participatory institutions. It is a system that functions in tandem with the principles and the philosophy of European governance, that is direct and has an enhanced role in the decision making process, as, from now on, some of the state powers are wielded by the regional authority.

However, the theoretical framework for the function of regional government in our country is a far cry from its implementation in practice, as, after 6.5 years in operation, the problems and weaknesses are visible through the daily administration, but also reported by competent institutions, such as the CoR. In the present paper, our interest will focus directly on whether the Greek regions have the capacity to exercise foreign policy of soft power.

The answer is evident at the articles within the 'Kallikratis Law' (L 3852/2010) that refer to exercising international cooperation between regions, art. 202 par. 1 (on networking Greek regions aiming at their competitive participation in European programmes) and art.203 (on international cooperations of the Greek regions). We realise that there is no further showcasing of the role of the regions in this field, which is limited to participation in European programmes and a very broadly depicted role in international synergies. The lawmaker has not taken into account the dynamic and

²⁴ L 3852/2010, 'on the new architecture for the administration and decentralized government (Kallikratis Programme), Government Gazette, Issue A, Sheet number 87/7/6/2010

potential of European regions in these fields and clearly did risk passing on any further powers from the central state and its main representative, which is the MFA.

➤ **CHALLENGES IN THE ‘POST-KALLIKRATIS’ ERA:**

- **A New Model of Regional Government:**

Our first requisite is to develop a new model of **Regional Governance**, with a new administration and management philosophy, a new codification of the relations between central state, local government and citizen, stating simply and clearly the regulatory framework of all these varied and complex administrative activities and operations. It is required to have a Stated Establishment of Regional Governance in the Constitution (art. 102), so as to delineate its autonomy and its new role in the supra-local level.

- **What does powerful and effective Regional Governance mean?**

Regional Government is not a tool of a central state, with a mission to merely implement central policies. It produces its own policy. And, more importantly, it can and should adjust central policies to the needs of local societies. This is why it has to have a regulatory autonomy in the field of its responsibilities and the state superintendence should not hinder its free will and activity. There is a need for power for regions with scope and resources, derived from a fiscal reform that will give regions a wider financial responsibility, free from bureaucratic obstacles and able to establish simple economic systems, based on revenue that will enable them to face satisfactorily operational needs and issues.

It is required to improve the institutional capability of regional and local authorities by reinforcing participatory procedures on a local and regional level, so as to improve decision making and implementing processes. The decentralisation of the state and the organisation of local government ad two parallel processes that to evolve harmoniously, so as to have the most functional and satisfactory response to the above two fundamental questions. Therefore the decentralisation of the state should not

impinge on the operation of the region to the extent that it renders it inadequate, while the reorganization of the local administration should not operate as a mechanism, essentially, to amass functions and decision making procedures that affect local societies.

- **The ability of the Regions to exercise policies of soft power** is the second requisite, in order to face regional challenges and problems that affect wider geographical areas.

Local and regional societies have comparative advantages and developmental perspectives that should be exploited in the framework of wider Interregional and Inter-border cooperations, i.e. tourism, culture etc., but also receptors of threats and pressures, such as the immigration problem and the environmental consequences from the uncontrollable use of natural resources; local societies themselves will have to play a dominant role in providing solutions for these problems. Local societies are being called upon to avoid the limitation of their operational activity to delineated geographical symmetric patterns. On the contrary, they have to adapt to the real possibility of their members to participate in the decision making processes that affect them (EvangelosVenizelos,2006)²⁵

As the state has the overall responsibility for planning Greek foreign policy through its main instrument the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) it can, in the framework of a strategic action plan, involve the regional and local authorities in the process of implementing soft power actions that are institutionally established, for a more systematic and effective process. Today, the absence of a clear framework in the field of international cooperations for regional and local authorities practically creates problems and bears risks. Foreign policy, a crucial and fragile sector as it concerns national issues and the security of the country, must surely be one of the main responsibilities of the state, but the involvement of other actors (regions, in our case) must not be deemed in a negative, obsessively aphoristic manner. On the contrary, their participation and cooperation are necessary in the framework of a Road Map with rules, institutional armouring and accountability.

²⁵EvangelosVenizelos (2006), Response to Challenges, www.evenizelosdialogues.gr/

VII. CONCLUSION

‘Act Global, speak local’: The vision for the creation of ‘powerful local governments’ should be realized through the empowerment of the European regions in the European and international arena. The EU must institutionally strengthen the role of the regions and reinforce their role in the new architecture of its foreign policy, underpinning the European Regional Policy and its diffusion to third countries as well through soft power policies, promoting European values and fostering dialogue and the cooperation between local communities.

An institutional strengthening of the EU regions is needed as well as recognition of their role in the context of EU foreign policy, since the reference in the Lisbon Treaty has been proved not enough. This paper proposes the reversal of the Principle of Subsidiarity, in which case the course of action is initiated by the central state authority and in case the desired goal is not reached, then the sub-national entities (regional, local authorities) are to be activated.

In particular, in "Post-Kallikratis" era in Greece, there should be explicit enshrining of Regional Governance in the Constitution (article 102) in order to define its autonomy and its new role at the supra-local level.

The ‘Diplomacy of the Regions’ should be an important part of the foreign policy of the EU and of member states. In the framework of a Multi-layered, Multi-participatory and Multipolar Governance in the EU, European regions have to find their role and identity within the European governing system.

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