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Veneto in the European Union: the Project of a new
Euroregion in the Upper-Adriatic area

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To my parents

To Sara

Ad augusta per angusta

(G. Verdi, *Ernani*)

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Introduction

In the last decades it has been possible to observe a renaissance of the regions in Europe; a phenomenon that have had causes and consequences not only in the economical field, but in the political and social too. The two main aspects that have contributed to the rise of regions' importance have been on one side the loss of power at the national level and on the other side a greater attention to the regional needs and demands from the institutions of the European Union. In an era in which the limits of the states are under the eyes of everyone, the regions have started not only to play a bigger role in the national area, but have increased their links with the upper level too. Today the regions (every region) act in a context that is closer to the European one, not only for the effects of the European laws and decisions over the regional legislation, but above all for the necessity to find the basic funds for their development, which can not be ensured by the national states; their role as active partners of the European Institutions is today a reality insomuch as we can speak of a second level of political actors after the states. In fact the European regions represent the perfect administrative level because are quite small to be near at the citizens' needs and to substitute the states in giving the basis services of everyday life; but these are at the same time quite big to act to an upper level, whether national or international it is. In a closer relationship with the European Union, the regions can move around and come through the limits of the nation states which clamp down their progress, while the supranational actor has the chance to build a Community closer to the citizens. Today the regional actors play a very important role also in taking advantage and in containing the negative effects of globalization, which is at the same time responsible to a lot of changes in the economical as well in the social and political field; the decision-makers of the present age are putting through a series of challenges without start or end, challenges that don't stop themselves at the borders. An example can be the environmental problems such as the climate change or the sea and earth pollution; it is clear that it is possible to find a solution only through an action involving a lot of actors or different organizations like as political and decision levels. And using the words of the Assembly of the European Regions "in order to maximise their potential to address these challenges, the regions need to both modernise and internationalise their services, systems and

their ways of working”¹: the best manner to “internationalise their ways of working” is in the opinion of the European Community the transfrontier or transregional cooperation, which permits to coordinate the efforts of different regional players and to reach common goals or the solution of common problems. The European Union has helped during the last decades the rise of a transfrontier culture with a lot of dedicated programmes; the main idea was that the best results can be obtained only through a tight cooperation, trespassing the national borders. From the current situation, my work investigates not only the present conditions, but also the future developments of a particular area, which is the Upper-Adriatic. Within it, I will focus my attention in particular to the region of Veneto: in fact in my opinion Veneto represents one of the best example of the uneasy life of regions, which find themselves closed between the limits of the nation state and the future chances at the European level. Even if it is one of the richest and advanced region not only in Italy, but also in Europe, its lack of influence and delegates in the main political centres turns this into an insufficient financial cover and capital investment in the country’s critical infrastructures; this political deficit brings with it a lot of consequences in the economical field too. In fact Veneto, as part of the national economic system of Italy, pays for the common strategies and guidelines taken in the central government institutions, contributing to set again negative trends already presented at the national level. Just to mention an example, Italy is one of the members of the European Union, investing less in the research and development field and reflecting also in the lower levels. In a survey² made by the central bank of Italy in 2004 the Veneto was inserted in a cluster, which included 35 regions located in four different countries (25 in Germany, 4 in Italy, 3 in France and Spain). This area, characterized in comparison with the other grouping, by an higher per capita GDP, an higher attendance of industrial businesses and high-technology firms, has increased of 2,04% in the period between 1995 and 2001 the overall innovation expenditure in relation to the GDP, while in Veneto this ratio hasn’t been affected by any variation. The result was not only a downgrading of the region’s position in the

¹ *Assembly of European Regions, Strategic Plan 2007-2012 (Strengthening the Family of European Regions)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage www.a-e-r.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Commissions/RegionalPolicies/PoliticalPriorities/GB-StrategicPlan2.doc on the 25th April 2008, p.8.

² Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento Strategico Regionale – Programmazione dei fondi strutturali 2007-2013*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.consiglio.regione.veneto.it/commissioni/commissionerapcom/allegati/Veneto_DSRP.pdf on the 25th April 2008, pp.21-22.

referential cluster, but above all a loss of competitiveness in the European and international market, with clear economic disadvantages. And reading the Report on the Social Change 2008 leads up to the same conclusions, that we can summarize with the words of a *Corriere del Veneto* reporter: “the Veneto Region does good, but in a country that is doing bad: as consequence also this Region is doing bad”³; in the same article the author underlines not only the decadence of Italy, but also its moving away from the most advanced European society. Given the limits of the nation state, the future of Veneto will be played on the field of the European Union, in accordance with its border regions, through that transfrontier cooperation that is one of the first order of business of the Community; in fact, this would allow to Veneto to act in an area (the Upper-Adriatic), which has not only common historical and social roots, but also a big economic potentiality. Moreover it represents a strategic region in the development of the European Community, mainly for its strength linkages with the Balkans and the Centre East Europe⁴.

Here I try to outline which is the best way to reach not only an economical, but above all a political and social cohesion in the area and if the creation of an Euroregion could represent the perfect institutionalization of a project, involving five regions (Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Italy, Carinthia in Austria, the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar in Croatia) and a central state (the Republic of Slovenia). But the main actor of my research remains the region of Veneto and in this work I will underline, which could be its role not only in the considered area but above all in a future Euroregion, pointing out the possible benefits like as disadvantages of such operation. It is just for this, that the three main questions, which I’m going to try to answer are:

- Why is important, if not necessary, the creation of an Euroregion in the Upper Adriatic area?
- Why is fundamental for the future of Veneto its participation to the Euroregion?
- Which role will play the Veneto in the future Euroregion?

The work is divided in six chapters, of which the first two represent the theoretical part, while the last but two put their focus in the more concrete aspects of the project; the third chapter, with its both theoretical and practical approach to the

³ Cfr. Filippi, Vittorio (15 marzo 2008). *Il Veneto va. Ma l'Italia?*, in: *Corriere del Veneto*.

⁴ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento Strategico Regionale – Programmazione dei fondi strutturali 2007-2013*, p.199.

institution of Euroregions, represents the point of connection between the two parts, while the last one contains the conclusions. Into details, I start with the explanation of the main concepts like as “Region”, “Regionalism” and “Europe of Regions”, while in the second part of the first chapter the analysis will comprehend the new theories like the “Multi-Level-Governance” or approaches in the field of regionalism like as the “Transregionalism” and the “Transfrontier cooperation”. With the second chapter I try to outline the main developments in the history of regionalism at the European level, from the creation of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) to the last Regulations and projects of the European Union; it will be deepened the most important documents and papers, underlining not only the main developments of European regionalism but above all its influence in the modern Western world. As noted above, the focus of the third part is on the institution of Euroregions: it comprehends an attempt of definition, their historical generation, their implementation and possible deficits, but also a consideration about their place in the European Union of today. With the fourth chapter begins the analysis of the project of an Upper-Adriatic Euroregion: in the first part I outline the main phases of cooperation in the considered area, while in the second one the focus shifts on the involved actors and concludes itself with a personal evaluation of the main problems and possible solutions about its creation. The fifth chapter represents the continuation and the conclusion of that analysis started in the previous one: the objective is trying to better define the proposal for the creation of a new institutional actor called “Euradria”. This project has been developed by Alberto Gasparini in his work “*Regione Euro Adria come integrazione di Macro-Euroregione, Euroregione delle reti funzionali, Euroregione transfrontaliera*”⁵, which I have here reported and modified in some parts. In the last chapter I have summarized the conclusions of my work, answering to the research questions and submitting new questions for future studies.

In conclusion, I will spend some words on the sources that I have used for this paper. As is possible to see in the literature at the end of this work, I have utilised a lot of Italian and German sources, limiting the English literature to those papers originally written in Slovenian or Croatian and, clearly, to the European Union’s

⁵ Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria come integrazione di Macro-Euroregione, Euroregione delle reti funzionali, Euroregione transfrontaliera*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia.

original documents. A wide variety of sources can help us to analyse the same problem, or in this case project, under different points of view, finding new solutions as well as new aspects, which could have been not fully considered before. Moreover I have tried to use the most recent sources to draw up the different parts of this work, because they permit not only to understand better the last events but above all to predict the most probable future developments.

1. Theoretical Approach to the “Europe of Regions”

In this first chapter I try to explain and to give a definition of the basic concepts in the field of regionalism, starting with its theoretical core, e.g. the “Region”, and continuing with the different definitions of regionalism (“New Regionalism” and “Regionalism as top-down or bottom-up process”). The first part ends with a brief *excursus* about the idea of a “Europe of Regions”; on the contrary, in the second part the most recent theories (“Multi-Level-Governance”) and approaches like as the “Trans-regionalism” and the “Transfrontier cooperation” are analysed. This chapter acquires a particular importance for two main reasons: first, it allows us to understand the idea, from which Europe has been originated, i.e. an agglomerate of regions; second, it allows us to compare those theoretical bases with the reality of today.

1.1. Explanation of the fundamental concepts

1.1.1. The “Region”

The “Region” is certainly one of the most difficult subject to discuss and this just for the reason that does not exist an unique definition; a first taxonomy could be elaborated starting from the territorial dimension: in fact, if we run through the literature’s descriptions, it could be described as “territorially based subsystems of the international system”⁶ or “a intermediate territorial level between the state and the locality”⁷. The German expert Schmitt-Egner has defined it as “a spatial unity of middle largeness and intermediate character, of which material substratum establishes the territory”⁸; but these characterizations are certainly not sufficient to analyse the complexity of the subject region, because they don’t represent a coherent standard criterion. In fact, in the real world exist a lot of “territorially based

⁶ Hettne, Björn/Inotai, Andras/Sunkel, Osvaldo, in: Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*” als Gegenstand der Politikwissenschaft, in: Bellers, Jürgen/ Rosenthal, Claudius (Hsg.). *Die gesellschaftliche Basis von Außenpolitik. Internationale Wirtschaft, Umwelt, Ideologien, Regional- und Entwicklungspolitik, internationaler Klientelismus*, Münster, p. 389.

⁷ Keating, Michael (1998). *The New Regionalism in Western Europe. Territorial Restructuring and Political Change*, Cheltenham/Northampton, p.9.

⁸ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*” als Gegenstand der Politikwissenschaft, in: Bellers, Jürgen/ Rosenthal, Claudius (Hsg.). *Die gesellschaftliche Basis von Außenpolitik. Internationale Wirtschaft, Umwelt, Ideologien, Regional- und Entwicklungspolitik, internationaler Klientelismus*, Münster, p.396.

subsystems”, which have different levels of independence and autonomy; with regard to the “intermediate territorial level” there are several administration degrees in the modern states, like the counties, covering the acting field of the regions even if they aren’t. The territorial element is certainly one of the most important aspect to define a region, but it can not be the only one; in fact, a regional subsystem could be classified in accordance with different points of view, which could modify its degree of importance or its role. As points out another author,

“[...] more positively regions can be recognized according to geographical criteria, as physical spaces. These are either homogeneous regions defined by topography, climate or other fixed characteristics; or nodal regions, defined by a common central point. An economic definition of a region would focus on common production patterns, interdependencies and market linkages, and labour markets. Regions can be defined by cultural criteria, according to language, dialect or patterns of social communication, or delineated according to the sense of identity felt by citizens and political actors”⁹.

The difficulty to provide a unique definition as well as a unique classification is given just by the multiplicity of roles and functions, assumed by the regions; but it is this multiplicity that can help us to go over the *impasse*. In fact, if it is not possible to find a common description, can be tried instead a multi-approach categorization, taking these several elements in consideration. Ursula Bauer in her work “*Europa der Regionen-Zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*” just proposes a classification of regions, which includes not only the territorial aspect, but also the cultural, ethnical and economical ones:

- The analytical delimitation of region (*Die analytische Regionsabgrenzung*): it could be of two types, a homogeneous and a functional category. The first one is the result of one or more characteristics, like a homogeneous population, economy or culture. The second one, called also “functional or nodal region” (*Nodalregion*), is characterized by a territorial heterogeneity, in which the different elements become complementary.
- The “living space” concept (*Das Lebensraumkonzept*): the regions are considered as territories, representing political and geographical unities, of which territorial, cultural, ethnical and economical roots are older than the today’s nation states.

⁹ Keating, Michael (1998). *The New Regionalism in Western Europe*, p.9.

- The planning region or the administrative region (*Die Planungsregion*): these regions are created above all for functional aims. In fact, they are the intervention objects of the nation states and are in close relationship with their regional and territorial administration policies¹⁰.

It is clear that this categorization represents only one of the possible solutions to limit and define this field of study, but it is very important, because it introduces more than one level of classification. But what is missing in the above description are the actors, like people, groups or institutions, that live and act in it and are the main responsible to the reproduction of the regional level. These transform the element “region” in what Schmitt-Egner calls “acting unit” (*Handlungseinheit*), representing it both inwards and outwards. Inwards, their main role is setting up of the formal and system conditions, which allow the reproduction of the regional vital “acting space” (*Handlungsraum*); outwards, they cooperate or act with other “acting units” to reach common aims or interests. This interaction creates a double level of participation, both horizontally and vertically; it is just this last perspective, which contributes to make it a more complex actor, giving birth to three new types of region. The first one is the “Subnational region” (*Subnationale Region*), characterized from being the sub-national part of a nation state’s space. The second one is the “Transnational region” (*Transnationale Region*), which acts as *Handlungseinheit*, but in a crossborder space; the last one is the “International region” (*Internationale Region*), which is an acting unit playing in an international acting space, constituted by neighbouring states through multilateral agreements. While the first type of region represents the classical administrative model, collocated on a merely subnational plane, the other two introduce instead other acting levels, characterizing perfectly the modern political arenas: in fact, in a globalized world the regions are run over by phenomena, which are caused by external factors and for which the borders are only thin lines drawn on geographical maps¹¹. The natural consequences are therefore the enlargement of the regional spheres of activities and also the formation of crossborder actors, such as the transnational and international regions, having as main aim the coordination of the involved actors’ efforts. These move their hub of action from the national to the upper level, acting with only one voice in the international and European decision centres, formulating in this way their common

¹⁰ Cfr. Bauer, Ursula (1994). *Europa der Regionen – Zwischen Anspruch und Wirklichkeit*, Wien, p.7.

¹¹ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*”, pp.403-404.

regional interests, such as institutional matters or the design of partnership in policy implementation and the general principle of subsidiarity and its interpretation.

Also at the European level, like for the national one, does not exist a unique concept of region: an example of these multiple definitions could be the description of the region by the European Parliament: this is "...a territory, which constitutes, from a geographical point of view a clear-cut entity or similar grouping of territories where there is continuity and whose population possesses certain shared features and wishes to safeguard the resulting specific identity and to develop it with the object of stimulating cultural, social and economic progress."¹² On the other hand in the first article of its *Declaration on Regionalism in Europe* the Assembly of European Regions has defined it as

- "the territorial body of public law established at the level immediately below that of the State and endowed with political self-government (Art. 1.1).
- the region shall be recognised in the national constitution or in legislation which guarantees its autonomy, identity, powers and organisational structures (Art.1.2).
- the region shall have its own constitution, statute of autonomy or other law which shall form part of the legal order of the State at the highest level establishing at least its organisation and powers. The status of a region can be altered only in cooperation with the region concerned. Regions within the same State may have a different status, in keeping with their historical, political, social or cultural characteristics (Art. 1.3)" ¹³.

This lack of uniformity is given by the presence in the European Union of 27 member states with many constitutional systems, subdivided in their turn in a lot of different regional divisions or degrees of autonomy, making very difficult the creation of an homogeneous categorization. Just for this the European Union classifies the regional subsystems of the member states utilizing their internal subdivision in administrative units and regrouping them in three levels: the *Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques* (NUTS) permits not only a political classification, but puts also the basis for the European financing of the regions¹⁴. All the definitions

¹² Art 1.1 of the *Community Charter of Regionalization*, in: *Resolution on Community regional policy and the role of the regions and Annexed Community Charter of Regionalization*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://aei.pitt.edu/1758/01/ep_resolution_regional_11_88.pdf on the 25th April 2008.

¹³ *Declaration of the Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.a-e-r.org/publications/aer-declaration-on-regionalism.html> on the 25th April 2008.

¹⁴ The NUTS-1 comprehends for example the German and Belgian regions, the Spanish autonomous communities (e.g. the Catalonia), the entire state in Luxembourg, Ireland and Denmark, while in the

reported above and in the consulted literature give us many different conceptions of the regions with reference to diverse points of view, but focusing at the same time only on limited aspects; as it has just been written at the beginning of this paragraph it is practically impossible to outline a unique definition of the regional system, because two of the same kind do not exist. But they can be described utilizing one or more elements, which could give a more precise characterization like its administrative function as territorial subdivision of a nation state, its economic role, the importance of its historical and cultural roots, the sense of identity felt by its citizens or political actors. Other important aspects are the degree of Europeanization of its political leadership and its lobbying power in the European decision centres or the degree of autonomy and self-decision from the centre state; an higher administrative decentralization represents not only the basis for a better management of the regional level, but also for a wider crossborder and transfrontier cooperation. This aspect holds a primary importance, because as it is written in the final consideration of the *Declaration on Regionalism in Europe*, if “the region is the best form of organisation for resolving regional problems in an appropriate and independent manner” (Art. 13.3) [...] the development of a regional identity based on transfrontier cooperation promotes political and social stability” (Art. 13.5) ¹⁵.

1.1.2. Regionalism and its derivations

As for the core concept of region, also for the notion of regionalism a unique definition cannot be found: therefore, I do not agree with the idea, developed in the work of Petutschnik, which defines the main scope of regionalism “only” as the creation of a regional autonomy in the form of a territorial self-government and self-administration in the central state¹⁶. Like for the region, this definition focuses only in the territorial and administrative character of the regionalism, not considering therefore other aspects; in fact it is clear that regionalism is a subnational and crossborders process of social mobility and organization, which has as main aim the

other member states they could be subsystems with different names but with a similar administrative decentralization and largeness. The second level (NUTS-2) represents among the others the German *Regierungsbezirken*, the French and Italian regions and the counties in Belgium and Holland; in the NUTS-3 are included the German *Kreisen* and the French *Départements*.

¹⁵ *Declaration of the Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe*.

¹⁶ Cfr. Petutschnig, Frank (1998). *Österreichs Bundesländer im Europa der Regionen. Die Stellung der Regionen auf europäischer und innerstaatlich-österreichischer Ebene und ihre Mitwirkung am EU-Integrationsprozeß* (Magisterarbeit), Wien, p.15.

achievement of regional interests in the disparate fields like the political, cultural or economical one. And it describes not only the policies, but the involved actors too, which represent both the region itself and its interests in contraposition of those of the central state¹⁷. As already written in the chapter above, these actors are active both inward and outwards and their acting on the regional programs through the regional competencies can be defined regionalism.

However, this phenomenon has never remained the same, but it has changed during the centuries, following the transformations in the nation states structures; so can be outlined four main characterizations of regionalism:

- The “*Old Regionalism*”: it has a conservative and traditional matrix and it is one of the most important components of the nationalism; its strategy is the limitation of the “foreign” in favour of the “own”’s interest. The territorial identity plays an important cultural role and manifests itself in the attempt to eradicate the “foreign” through deportation or massacres.
- The “*New Regionalism*”: its characteristics are in the regionalisation and decentralisation of the nation states and also in the attention and protection of the regional identities’ rights. It sets itself against the standardization and unification of the national, political and economical structures, in favour of the central states and against the levelling down of regional identities; also this regionalism has a strong nationalist nature, in this case tied up with the separatist or autonomist movements. Although this conception of regionalism has had a considerable influence on the experts of the matter, it has not been able to explain in the last decades the rise or the renewal of the independence movements in most of the European countries (i.e. the Basques in Spain, the Corsicans in France or the electoral victories of the Northern League in Italy); in the opinion of many authors the New Regionalism propagates attractive and persuasive theories, which are largely a fiction. It fails not only to explain the contemporary economic developments, but it gives also a poor general guide to the regional policy information.
- The “*Post-modern Regionalism*”: it does not set itself against the nation states’ centralism, but it can be understood as the small institutional actors’ answer to the process of globalization. Here the most important aspect is not the regional

¹⁷ Cfr. Brunn, Gerhard (1999). *Regionalismus in Europa*, in: Nitschke, Peter (Hg.). *Die Europäische Union der Regionen. Subpolity und Politiken der dritten Ebene*, Opladen, p.20.

culture, but instead the capacities of leadership in the political and economical field, above all in the small territorialities, as well as the find of flexible solutions to the local problems and the use of the globalization's positive characteristics. It is not an organized political movement as the New Regionalism, but the adaptation of the most advanced region at the new processes, influencing the modern world.

- The “*Transnational Regionalism*”¹⁸: while the Post-modern Regionalism focused its action and the development of the regional actors only in the economical field, continuing to reproduce the regional disparities, tries the Transnational Regionalism to get over these limitations through the transnational cooperation; its field of action comprehends all the interactions both at the European level and the global one.¹⁹

The regionalism in all its meanings is therefore the expression of the growing politicisation of the subnational actors, which receive the main part of their power from the principle of subsidiarity, principally promoted by the European Union. It permits through the undertaking of public competencies the protection of the local interests and the possibility for the region to play an important role both at the national and supranational level. This politicization and the consequent power can derive from two approaches, oriented towards two opposite directions, but reaching the same result; in fact the regionalism can be propagated through a bottom-up or a top-down process: in the first case it is called “regionalization”, while in the second one it is being described by the French word “*régionalisation*”. In general the “regionalization” is a decentralisation of competencies or the development of the subnational actors’ potentialities, but also the inclusion of the regional decision-makers in the decision centres of the nation states. It could be understood as “the process of encreasing “regioness”, whose concept can refer to a single region as well as to the world system”²⁰; this “regioness” is promoted above all from the bottom, from the regions and their networks themselves, because it is indispensable to built that cooperation between the regional actors, which is the basis to resolve the most common problems in a subnational level and to give the impulse for the integration in the crossborders areas. Also the European Union plays an important

¹⁸ It will be better developed in the paragraph 1.2.2.

¹⁹ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*”, pp.407-410.

²⁰ Hettne, Björn/Inotai, Andras/Sunkel, Osvaldo, in: Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*”, p.389.

role in the process of “regionalization”, improving the participation of the regional actors at the different decision levels within the Community:

- The centralisation and the drifting from the competencies of the nation states has brought with it the strengthening of the regional mergers as well as an European Commission interest in the direct control of its political advantages in the regional decision-makers.
- Another reason for a wider “regionalization” have been the excessive demands of the nation states, which has had as consequence the increase of the aids at the regional organizations.
- At the same time politics and economy have linked each other in the regions and these networks act problem-oriented, actors-oriented and above all decentralised. And this form of horizontal interdependence of both political and economical decision centres makes easier the development and strengthening of the regional political perspectives.²¹

The concept of *régionalisation* represents therefore the other side of the medal; in fact it describes the promotion of a regional autonomy from an upper level, through a top-down process. It must not to be seen as a danger for the nation states or for their administrative subsystems (like the regions or the counties), but as an instrument to develop a geographical entity, promoted by an higher-level actor like a nation state or the European Union²².

1.1.3. The idea of a “Europe of Regions”

The idea or the project to build an “Europe of Regions” is the logical consequence of the regionalization process, which has brought the regional actors to act within multiple decision levels; in fact it describes that political concept, for which the regions should have been supported not only in their regional identity and autonomy, but also in their acting at the European level. This idea of a future Europe based on the regions has developed itself above all through notions of political and

²¹ Cfr. Fürst, Dietrich (1995). Region/Regionalismus, in: Nohlen, Dieter/Schultze, Rainer-Olaf (Hg.). *Politische Theorien*, Band 1, in: Nohlen, Dieter (Hg). *Lexikon der Politik*, München, pp. 541-542.

²² Cfr. Strejcek, Gerhard (1996). *Regionalisation in Österreich und Europa*, in: Strejcek, Gerhard/Theil, Michael (Hg.). *Regionalisation in Österreich und Europa: eine Untersuchung über rechtliche, politische und ökonomische Aspekte regionaler Entwicklung*, Wien, pp. 22-23.

economical nature strictly correlated one to each other; under the political aspect the concept of “Europe of Regions” has faced in the 1980's from two different points of view:

- the possibility for the regions of a wider participation in the supranational level and their recognition as political “acting units” with the insertion of the subnational level in the general treaties’ dispositions.
- the recognition of the regions through forms of national crossborders cooperations between subnational territorial entities in Europe.²³

The results of these conceptions can be seen in the innovations brought by the European Union in the last decades: the most important were certainly the promotion of the subsidiarity principle and the formation of the Committee of the Regions introduced with the Maastricht treaty or the following widening of powers with the Amsterdam and Nice treaties. The crossborders cooperation has been helped with the approval of a series of documents, decisions and regulations as the *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between territorial Communities or Authorities* and its Protocols or programs as the Interreg one.

But the attention of the European Union to the regional level has manifested itself not only through the innovations of political character, but also through a wide economical support. The European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund are only some examples of the European financing structure for the regions: their main scope is to attenuate the economical disparities between the richest and the poorest regions. But this strategy has both positive and negative aspects:

- “Between the positive must be counted the innovation rush, which is involving the European regions; in fact the European institutions are working together with the national governments to promote regional growth, controlling in this way the negative effects of the globalization.
- Another advantage is concerned with the regionalized industrial policy and became now one of the most important aim of the European financing; in fact it has permitted a bigger consideration of the needs of regional firms: so the regions try now to attract both

²³ Cfr. Raich, Silvia (1995). *Grenzüberschreitende und interregionale Zusammenarbeit in einem “Europa der Regionen”*. Dargestellt anhand der Fallbeispiele Grossregion Sar-Lor-Lux, EUREGIO und “Vier Motoren für Europa”- Ein Beitrag zum Europäischen Integrationsprozess, Baden-Baden, p.26.

foreign and domestic investors to speed up the land use and to spur higher education, training and specialization.

- A negative aspect is the growth's concentration by geographic areas: in fact there is a disequilibrium between urban areas and rural ones, because the industries look for low production cost, which will find above all in the first ones.
- Another problem is just that specialization, used by the regional firms to attract new investors: it brings the so called structural unemployment, which occurs when the consumer's demand changes over time and the industry cannot predict it and modify its production.
- One last negative aspect of a "Europe of Regions" is that population moves where employment is, bringing in this way a depopulation in the less favoured regions and killing their economies".²⁴

It is clear that the present European Union is moving toward a "Europe of Regions", but characterised by a different degree of political and economical development: in fact enormous disparities exist in the degree of autonomy between the regions in the today's European Union, because those in centralised states are clearly in a unfavourable condition for what concerns the representation and defence of their interests. The project of giving more independence to the regions is certainly very important for the future of the Community, but at the same time "it can work only if focused on the less developed regions"²⁵.

1.2. New theoretical approaches on the regionalism concept

1.2.1. The "Multi-Level Governance" theory

The "Multi-Level Governance" is one of the new approaches to the regionalism field of study; it has started to develop itself at the begin of the 1990's and it is a concept in continuous evolution, just for the reason that follows the challenges and the changes within the European Union. It builds a conception of the Community, which can be described as an "overlapping competencies among multiple levels of governments and the interaction of political actors across those levels"²⁶; therefore

²⁴ *Western European Politics: Europe of Regions*, essay downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.wowessays.com/dbase/ae4/lmy6.shtml> on the 25th April 2008.

²⁵ *Western European Politics*.

²⁶ Marks et al. in: AAlberts E., Tanja (2004). *The Future of Sovereignty in Multilevel Governance Europe – A Constructivist Reading*, in: JCMS, Volume 42, Number 1, p.24.

the European Union acts through “multiple levels of governance”, which offer a series of opportunities for the subnational actors to play an important role in direct contact with the European institutions, bypassing in this way the “gatekeeper-role” of the nation states. This process clearly brings a lot of changes in the field of institutional relations, above all for the end of the classical separation between national or domestic and supranational or international areas of competency.

So Hooghe and Marks summarize in their work “*Multi-level Governance and European Integration*” the three main elements of this theory:

- “Rather than being monopolized by national governments, decision-making competencies are shared by actors at different levels. As such, supranational institutions have become actors in their own right, playing an independent part in policy-making (rather than functioning merely as agents of national governments).
- A new mode of collective decision-making has emerged, similarly resulting in loss of control for national governments.
- The traditional separation of domestic and international politics has been undermined because of transnational associations.”²⁷

They make a further distinction between two types of multi-level governance (type I and type II), describing with the first “a patchwork of polycentric authorities” and with the second one a structure “coming close to federalism”²⁸.

With the multi-level governance a new era for the European Union has started, beginning with the introduction of the subsidiarity principle, towards the creation of a “Europe of Regions” or better a “Third Level Europe”; and the speciality of this theory lays in its being different from the other supranational approaches, trying to explain these changes through new points of view. In fact “it does not regard the European Union as a state; the idea is not one of governance *above* the state (which would mean a reconstitution of the state with all its constituents on a higher institutional level), but rather of governance *beyond* the state”²⁹. And now it is task of the regional actors to complete this project, acting in first person to promote common interests and reach the highest level of welfare.

²⁷ Hooghe, Liesbet/Marks, Gary (2001). *Multi-level Governance and European Integration*, Lanham, pp.3-4.

²⁸ Hooghe, Liesbet/Marks, Gary (2001). *Types of Multi-Level Governance*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2001-011a.htm> on the 25th April 2008, pp.6-7.

²⁹ AAlberts E., Tanja (2004). *The Future of Sovereignty in Multilevel Governance Europe*, p.28.

1.2.2. The Transregionalism

The Transregionalism can be defined as “the crossborders interaction between neighbour and not neighbour regions or their actors without the intermediate control of the nation states”³⁰. It takes all the elements from the post-modern regionalism, but it does not focus its action as well as the development of the regional actors only in the economical field, continuing to reproduce the regional disparities, but it tries to get over these limitations through a crossborders cooperation at regional level; moreover it pursues the policy of a greater presence of the regional actors in all the fields and aspects of the life, both at European and supranational level. In this way the globalization and the same process of European integration are not seen as political developments to be passively accepted, but – on the contrary – as opportunities giving to the regional decision-makers the possibility to become important actors in the European arena.³¹ The Transregionalism has elected the administrative region as its horizontal basic unit, while the vertical one is formed by the subnational and transnational region; but more important than involved territories are the acting players, which can be divided in three groups: individual, social and collective actors. The first are those persons, groups or organizations, which have a particular interest and a material or symbolic competence, which helps the reproduction of the regional systems; they are part of the regional society, but pursue more their own interest than the common one (e.g. private firms, organisations, societies and businessmen). The social actors are instead those institutions or organisations of public or private character, which have as duty only a material or symbolic reproduction. They are not responsible for, or do not represent the interest of the entire regional society, but of only of a specific sector (i.e. Chambers of Commerce). The last type of actors play instead an important role both outwards and inwards, pursuing the real reproduction of the regional system and having as principle interest the common good³². Their acting as collective actors of transregionalism gives life to four different empirical types of regions:

- Regions as subnational acting units: these regions become transregionalist actors, if they build crossborders relations, both horizontally with others regions

³⁰ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*”, p.406.

³¹ Cfr. Ibid., p.411.

³² Cfr. Ibid., pp.416-417.

or vertically with institutions of European regionalism; it means that from one side they are actor of crossborder cooperation between neighbouring and not neighbouring regions and to the other side they do not accept in a passive manner the participation to the European process of consent, becoming in this way active subjects of the European regionalism and regional politics.

- Regions as transnational acting units: the transnational regions (e.g. EUREGIOs) build a unique level, only if they act as units. They represent no more only one subnational interest, but bi- or multinational regional interests.
- Crossborder networks of regions: if this crossborder interest is not given only by a geographical proximity (as for the EUREGIOs), but also through a sectorial characters (i.e. the industrial regions), can the crossborder networks be built, helping an exchange of experiences for the solution of common problems.
- European regional organisations: the most general level is built by the European regional organisations, like the Assembly of the European Regions, which try to represent the regional common interests at the European level.³³

As already written above the Transregionalism acts with a double strategies, through both a vertical and horizontal level; the vertical one focuses itself on the national and European regionalism and regional politics as well as on all the political fields, interesting directly the region. As consequence, the regions are the object of the European and national regional aids, while they can become real subject only if they can take part to the national and European decision process. For what concerns the horizontal strategy, it develops itself through two levels: first, the multilateral and crossborders relations between neighbouring regions and their actors, through the creation of common institution and rules; this has the main scope both to develop inwards this space and to represent outwards common interests. The Euregios represent a micro-form of the transnational region described above, while a meso-form is constituted by crossborders relations, covering the subeuropean acting spaces. The second type of transnational region concerns crossborder relations of not neighbouring regions and their actors. It includes both the bilateral relations of interregional cooperation and the multilateral relations, which regroup a wide part of the European regions³⁴.

³³ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). *"Transnationaler Regionalismus"*, p.419.

³⁴ Cfr. Ibid., pp.420-421.

1.2.3. The Transfrontier Cooperation

Also the Transfrontier cooperation can not be defined through a single definition, because like as for the "Region" it depends on several factors and by the considered points of view; and as well as for the above studied elements, must be applied a flexible way of research. Moreover the main part of the literature disagrees not only about the interpretation of transfrontier cooperation, but also about its label: in fact, depending on the consulted fonts, it can be called "Transfrontier cooperation" or "Crossborders cooperation". The latter is present above all in the German literature, which have a long tradition on the regionalism's field of study and its derivations. Schmitt-Egner defines it as "the transnational interaction between neighbouring regions and their actors for the maintenance, control and development of a common living space"³⁵. But this dualism is also present at the European level: if the Assembly of European Regions (AER) in its *Declaration on Regionalism in Europe* dedicates an entire paragraph to the transfrontier cooperation³⁶, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Council of Europe (CoE) utilise in their official documents the term "cross-border co-operation", intending with it "the co-operation of adjacent regions in order to foster the integrated regional development and to develop local economic and social centres through the implementation of infrastructure projects as well as "soft" projects (connected with culture or people-to-people contacts)"³⁷.

It is clear that whatever expression is used, it describes in its essence a co-operation going over the borders of the nation states and trespassing the limits of the administrative units to build an integrated living space; in these areas are experimented new development strategies, which have as objective not only the end of the conflicts, but also the resolution of common problems and the pursue of common interests. The cooperation has the scope to minimize the concurrence and

³⁵ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). „Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit“ in Europa als Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Forschung und Strategie transnationaler Praxis. Anmerkungen zur Theorie, Empirie und Praxis des Transnationalen Regionalismus, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, p.63.

³⁶ Cfr. Article 11 of the *Declaration of the Assembly of European Regions on Regionalism in Europe*.

³⁷ *Similarities and Differences of Instruments and Policies of the Council of Europe and the European Union in the Field of Transfrontier Co-operation (2006 edition)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage www.a-e-r.org/.../EventsAndMeetings/2006/Strasbourg/WorkingDocuments/Working_documentsoct-2.doc on the 25th April 2008, p.10.

maximize in this way the profits for the all involved actors, limiting the contrasts between the different powers acting in the territory.

Its unexpected appearance and fast development on the European stage has brought not only a reaction on the European institutions (“top-down” reaction), but also on the same regions (“bottom-up” reaction), giving life to three very important processes:

- the continue development of regionalism through new European regional policies (top-down policies) and the strengthening of the regions’ right position as objects of the European politics.
- the right and material strengthening of regions as acting units of European politics (bottom-up politics and polities), i.e. a new variation of the European regionalism.
- a revolution in the quantity and quality of the borders.³⁸

A fourth consequence could be seen in the raising of new and more wider forms of cooperation, spreading out in all the member states of the Community, involving more and more fields of activity. This phenomenon has been so intense that the European Union has been forced to put order, regrouping the different forms of inter-territorial cooperation in the following definitions:

- ““cross-border co-operation” implies bi-, tri- or multi-lateral co-operation between local and regional authorities (semi-public and private players may also be involved in this context) operating in geographically contiguous areas. This applies also in the case of areas separated by sea;
- “inter-territorial or inter-regional co-operation” implies bi-, tri- or multi-lateral co-operation between local and regional authorities (semi-public and private players may also be involved in this context), operating in areas which are not contiguous, but having contractual relations for cultural, technological, commercial or other reasons;
- “transnational co-operation” implies co-operation between national, regional and local authorities in respect of programmes or projects. This form of co-operation covers larger

³⁸ Cfr. Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). *Die Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit von Regionen in Europa als Feld der Integrationspolitik und Gegenstand der Forschung*, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, p.15.

areas and involves players from at least two EU Member States and/or non-EU states.”³⁹

Only the first two forms of cooperation can be considered as direct variations of Transregionalism; the third one can be seen instead as an institutional container through which the cooperation is extended to the transnational level, becoming in this way the builder of a true European regionalism; however, in spite of this common derivation a lot of differences exist between the cross-border and inter-regional cooperation:

- while the inter-regional cooperation can orient itself also to the transnational, the cross-border cooperation is not related with fixed economic and commercial sectors, but is based on a common economic space, which is conceived as a common living space;
- while the border regions⁴⁰ are defined through a common living space, which creates also common problems, the inter-regional cooperation has to elaborate additional, complementary and voluntary actions;
- while for this reason the border regions must focus themselves also on common development aims to find long term solutions for common problems, the inter-regional cooperation is based on a punctual, temporary added value, which orients itself to the success;
- while in the border regions the entire regional society is affected (work market, economy, environment, culture), for the inter-regional cooperation it concerns only some elements;
- while the cross-border cooperation play a long term role as junction and mixing point of integration, with both economic and also cultural consequences for the praxis, the inter-regional cooperation tries merely to take advantage from this network structure;

³⁹ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/documentation/library/transfrontier_cooperation/tfc_handbookTC2006_EN.pdf on the 25th April 2008, pp.41-42.

⁴⁰ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). „Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit“ in Europa, p.37: With border regions are intended all subnational units, which can be i.e. the regional and local territorial units situated at the land or sea nation borders.

- while the cross-border cooperation institutionalises itself more and more and could become an anchor for the integration, the inter-regional one takes place often through an *ad hoc*-basis;
- while both the peripheral and poorest regions can take part to a cross-border cooperation, given its lower administrative and financial costs, an inter-regional cooperation can take place only through strong regions (the so called “four engines”) or if the public agencies dominate these forms of cooperation.⁴¹

Only through a cross-border or transfrontier integration there is the formation of that transnational region, outlined by the transregionalist approach, which can pursue more than one subnational interest, representing the interests of bi- and multinational regional actors in geographically contiguous areas; its most common form, which is the main object of my study and is called Euroregion or EUREGIO⁴², is the concretization and the realization of a process, born in theoretical manner with the Transregionalism and developed through the transfrontier or cross-border cooperation. The transnational region in the form of a Euroregion acts therefore within a crossborder space, constituted by subnational territories from at least two EU Member States; if in this area common institutions as well as common structures are built, the transnational region can play an important role as real “acting unit”. Moreover it has no more as point of reference only the nation state, but acts in a closer relationship both with the local level and with the European institutions.

Concluding, two observations must be made about transfrontier co-operation: “it is spreading throughout Europe and it is irreversible. The corollary of the spread of transfrontier co-operation should be the appearance of fully-fledged multidimensional transfrontier regions and the gradual “defunctionalisation” of international frontiers, which will in future knit areas together instead of separating them”⁴³.

⁴¹ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2001). “*Transnationaler Regionalismus*”, pp.423-424.

⁴² The Euroregion with all its forms and derivations will be analysed in the third chapter.

⁴³ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.168.

2. Regions, Regionalism and Transfrontier cooperation in the EU: an “on going” process

The aim of this chapter is to outline the main steps in the historical process of regionalism, which has brought not only a continuous development of the role of regions at the European level, but also the birth and spread of Transfrontier cooperation between the member states. To better analyse this long period, which covers almost six decades of European history, I recover the classification in four phases made by Schmitt-Egner, completing it with a fifth period:

- from the end of 1950s to the first part of 1960s: it is started by the border regions, but still dominated by the national interests on a crossborder politics of territorial planning.
- from the end of the 1960s to the end of the 1970s: the Council of Europe starts to care for these themes and for the problems of transfrontier cooperation.
- from the end of the 1970s to the middle of 1980s: the first border regions begin to integrate each other and to build new European regional organizations.
- from the end of the 1980s to the end of the 1990s: there are several new developments, thanks above all to the greater interest of the European Community for the transfrontier cooperation topic.
- the last eight years: the birth of a new series of legal and economic documents for the developments of the transfrontier cooperation and its vision as future of the European regional level.⁴⁴

I'm going to delineate the main developments within all of these phases, deepening also those documents or programmes, which could be considered as fundamental or milestone for the progress of regionalism as well as transfrontier cooperation not only at the level of the European Union, but also in the member states.

⁴⁴ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen. Akteure und Netzwerke des transnationalen Regionalismus von A bis Z*, Baden-Baden, p.257.

2.1. The foundation of the European Communities: the “take-off-phase” for the European regionalism

The rebuilding, which followed the devastations of the World War II, has brought not only an economic reconstruction, but also a renewal of the political activity; the constitution of new international organizations like the United Nations had as main aim the creation of a new way to think the relations among the states, based on the refusal of the military violence and on the pacific resolution of the controversies. If the first signs of the Cold War and the formation of the two blocks slowed down from the very beginning not only a greater cooperation between the states of the world, but also the action of the newly born ONU, these did not prevent the development of a tighter collaboration within the European states. The 5th May 1949 was instituted with the Treaty of London the Council of Europe: between its tasks the promotion and protection of the common patrimony and ideals as well as the economic and social development of the European countries. Hereafter the Schuman declaration was signed on the 18th April 1951 the treaty institutive of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC): it was created to facilitating the cooperation in the coal and steel field in sight of a future economic union of the European states. In the same year was instituted two important organizations: the *Conseil des Communes d'Europe* (Council of European Municipalities), born to protect and guarantee the local autonomy within a future European Union, and the Committee of the local and regional affairs of the Advisory Assembly within the Council of Europe: as forerunner of all the successive local and regional organizations it was important above all for its capacity to put the attention of the upper institutions to the subnational level. An example of its importance could be the creation in 1957 of the Conference of Local Authorities of Europe, which was conceived by the Committee of the local and regional affairs and has become, after many transformations, the third organ of the Council. In 1957 there was also the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the EURATOM, which has had as main scopes the creation of a common market and common policies in the sector of nuclear energy. After this first phase of raising activity and cooperation between the European states, there was a transitory period (1957-1969) which elapsed between the signature of the EEC treaty and the achievement of the customs union: during it the member states committed themselves to the progressive reduction of theirs customs duties. In 1965

the newly born European Communities faced with one of its lots of crisis: the French government opposed itself to two proposals of the EEC Commission, i.e. the institution of an autonomous balance for the Communities and the strengthening of the EEC Assembly's powers (the future European Parliament). This opposition, called *the politics of the empty chair*, had as consequence the interruption of all activities within the Communities for seven months. It finished the 29th January 1966 with the Compromise of Luxembourg, which decided upon the substitution of the majority vote with the unanimity for those Council decisions, which were of fundamental importance for the member states.

2.2. The birth of the first forms of aggregation at the local and regional level and the beginning of a European regional policy

The 1960s ended with the creation of a common Council and Commission for all three Communities, sign of a tighter cooperation and collaboration between the member states; in the same year (1967) within the Council of Europe was instituted the new European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR), focused on the promotion of local and regional affairs.

The following decade will be characterised by a greater interest of the Council of Europe for the transfrontier cooperation, which was spreading in all the European countries, but contrasted at the same time by the nationalism of the member states; this phenomenon was born as a spontaneous collaboration between villages, cities or counties, speaking often the same dialect or having a common culture and tradition, even if divided by national borders. Anderson describes this as a period in which

“more down-to-earth initiatives were in the area of cross-border co-operation between local and regional authorities, developed particularly in the 1970s, inspired by infrastructure planning, and anti-pollution and environmental campaigns. Transfrontier labour markets emerged, sometimes at the frontiers of two EC Member States as on the Rhine frontier, sometimes between a Member State and a neighbouring state such as at the Basel and Geneva frontiers. Transfrontier flows of people, goods and information increased to levels

which raised vague concerns about the ability of states to control and police their frontiers and the activities which took place on their territories”⁴⁵.

It was just to govern this state of things that the main involved actors, i.e. the border regions, gave birth in 1971 to the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR); still today its aim is making clear, which are the problems, possibilities, functions and working processes of the border and cross-borders regions. The Association represents their common interests in the national and international parliaments, organs and institutions as well as promotes, supports and coordinates the cooperation between the regional authorities everywhere in Europe: it has always played so an important role at the European level, that few years after its creation it was admitted between the non-governmental organizations with advisory vote in the Council of Europe. Moreover it has helped the exchange of experiences and informations to find possible solutions for every type of cross-borders problems, formulating in this way common interests and initiatives. Among its duties there is just the promotion of that transfrontier cooperation, which is seen as the perfect way to build a common living space between different actors or transnational authorities; the institutionalization of this cross-borders collaboration takes place through the creation of a transfrontier organization of public law between regional or local authorities of different countries. This instrument, called Euroregion, is leaded by a permanent secretariat, formed with technical and clerical staff, which acts in more than one level of competencies like the political, administrative and legal one⁴⁶.

Even though in the first decades from the creation of the European Communities there was already a considerable number of regional organizations and committees, it was started a real European regional policy only in 1975 with the creation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF); in this first phase⁴⁷ (1975-1987) the regional policy focused itself on limited technical-financial aids, financed by the member states in relation with their GDP (*Gross Domestic Product*).

⁴⁵ Anderson, Malcolm (1998). *European Frontiers at the End of the Twentieth Century: An Introduction*, in: Anderson, Malcolm (Hrsg.). *The frontiers of Europe*, London, p.1.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, pp.260-273.

⁴⁷ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.41; the author divides the european regional politics in three phases, i.e. 1975-1987, 1988-1993, 1994-1999. But this subdivision, considering the new developments in the regional politics of the European Union, proves as outdated and it is just for this, that I will use in my work a new classification: 1975-1987 (first phase), 1988-1993 (second phase), 1994-2006 (third phase) and 2006 onwards (fourth phase). Every one of these periods will be better analysed in the following pages and paragraphs.

In the same year the Conference of Local Authorities of Europe increased for the first time its sphere of influence to the regional level and became the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE); this change makes clear how in the first period after its creation the Conference was dominated above all by the local authorities than the regional ones. Another transformation, in the name but not in its essence, there was in 1979 when it was reappointed as the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. But the 1979 will be remembered for other two important events: the first one is the creation of the BLORE, the Bureau of Liaison of Organisations of Regions of Europe, a first regroup of the subnational actors' permanent offices at the European level, while the second one is the first election with universal suffrage of the European Parliament. Within it there was a further innovation with the institution of a Committee for regional policy, which has up till now among its duties:

- the common regional policy as structural policy for the advancement of the convergence between the economics, of the economic and social cohesion, of the harmonic development of European Community and the abolishment of disequilibrium;
- the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of all regional political plans and measures of the European Community, concerning above all the development of neighbouring regions, of regions in industrial decline and rural regions;
- the particular problems of regions, which are discriminated on the basis of their predominant rural economy or in consequence of the crisis their industries;
- the consequences of the other European Community's policies in those fields, which are matter of the regional policy;
- the consequences of any enlargement of the European Union and the treaty of association to the regional policy;
- the requests linked to the administration, efficiency and control of the European Regional Development Fund as well as to the other regional policy instruments of the European Community;
- the requests linked to the effective utilisation and utilisation's criteria of regional intervention of the European Community and the coordination of the regional aids in the member states;

- the connection to the local and regional bodies in the spirit of the treaties and their participation to the organisation of the regional policy;
- the transfrontier cooperation.⁴⁸

The attention for the regional level and for the subnational actors with their interests and problems increased, addressing big resources and funds from the European Community; their development became more and more fundamental for the process of cohesion in Europe and for the Community's future strategies.

2.3. The 1980s and the beginning of the institutionalization process of Transfrontier Cooperation at the European level

The 1980s will be a first fundamental turning point in the development of the regionalism in Europe; the changes in this decade will be forerunner not only for the successive process of regionalisation within the member states, but also for the same institutional structure of the European Union. The first step was made by the Council of Europe with the adoption on 21st May 1980 of the *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities* (the so called Madrid Convention); its purpose was defined by the European Ministers responsible for Local Government as to "outline the general, legal and common bases on which bilateral co-operation could be founded, in the framework of the national sovereignty of each country. This co-operation should be adapted to the specific conditions of each country and region"⁴⁹. The aim of the Convention is the promotion of the transfrontier cooperation as far as possible to contribute in this way to the economic and social progress of the frontier regions:

- "Each Contracting Party undertakes to facilitate and foster transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities within its jurisdiction and territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of other Contracting Parties. It shall endeavour to promote the conclusion of any agreements and arrangements that may prove necessary for this purpose with due regard to the different constitutional provisions of each Party (Art. 1);

⁴⁸ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.77.

⁴⁹ *Explanatory Report on the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Reports/Html/106.htm> on the 25th April 2008.

- For the purpose of this Convention, transfrontier co-operation shall mean any concerted action designed to reinforce and foster neighbourly relations between territorial communities or authorities within the jurisdiction of two or more Contracting Parties and the conclusion of any agreement and arrangement necessary for this purpose. Transfrontier co-operation shall take place in the framework of territorial communities' or authorities' powers as defined in domestic law. The scope and nature of such powers shall not be altered by this Convention (Art. 2.1.);
- For the purpose of this Convention the Contracting Parties shall, subject to the provisions of Article 2, paragraph 2, encourage any initiative by territorial communities and authorities inspired by the outline arrangements between territorial communities and authorities drawn up in the Council of Europe. If they judge necessary they may take into consideration the bilateral or multilateral inter-state model agreements drawn up in the Council of Europe and designed to facilitate co-operation between territorial communities and authorities. [...] (Art. 3.1.);
- Each Contracting Party shall endeavour to resolve any legal, administrative or technical difficulties liable to hamper the development and smooth running of transfrontier co-operation and shall consult with the other Contracting Party or Parties concerned to the extent required (Art. 4);
- The Contracting Parties shall consider the advisability of granting to territorial communities or authorities engaging in transfrontier co-operation in accordance with the provisions of this Convention the same facilities as if they were co-operating at national level (Art. 5).⁵⁰

The Convention has in its Appendix a graduated system of models and outlines, which are “designed to provide states on the one hand, and territorial communities on the other, with a choice of forms of co-operation, the most suitable to their problems; they are capable of providing an additional legal basis for any agreement which such authorities may conclude and also to furnish states with various means of supervision and control for ensuring observance of the principle of state sovereignty wherever necessary”⁵¹.

In the same year the Council of Europe, as further step toward an European regionalism, created within the CDLR the new Committee of Experts on Transfrontier Co-operation (LR-R-CT), constituted by a group of the major experts

⁵⁰ *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=106&CM=1&CL=ENG> on the 25th April 2008, pp.2-5.

⁵¹ *Explanatory Report on the European Outline Convention*.

belonging to the member states most involved in the Transfrontier cooperation; among its realisations there are several studies on the supplying of public services between the local authorities as well as researches on the Transfrontier cooperation between different ethnic groups within the same regions⁵².

After few years, in 1984, the European Parliament organized the first Conference of the Regions; where the future developments of the European Parliament and European Community's regional policy were decided. This was based on three pillars: a coordinated policy of European regional planning; the regional investments and infrastructure projects within the national programs have to be coordinated with the concepts of the regional policy and, last but not least, the regional policy should have included the integrated programs of the Union, acting in accordance and cooperation with the representatives of the regional authorities and with a direct earmarking of funds to the regions.⁵³

Always in 1984 the *Conseil des Communes d'Europe* became the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), i.e. an organization, which in a united and democratic Europe takes care of the local and regional autonomies' interests. Its general competences can be resumed in five special fields of activity:

- the Council, accepting the requests of the national sections and members, supports the foundation of partnerships between cities, comprehending two or more local authorities;
- the Council tries to encourage the interregional and interlocal cooperation between local and regional authorities, which exceed the classical partnerships between cities, being characterised by more concrete, economic and technical projects. This makes easier the research and acquisition of co-financing programs by the Community;
- the Council helps the local authorities in the evaluation of all Community's projects, related with the local administration;
- another field of activity from the beginning of 1990s can be identified in the interlocal cooperation in Central- and East-Europe;
- the CEMR tries to contribute in the cooperation between local and regional authorities in the Mediterranean area; moreover it tries to concretize the principle

⁵² Cfr. LR-R-CT Homepage at http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/main_bodies/sub%2Dcommittees/LR-CT/default.asp#TopOfPage

⁵³ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.72.

of subsidiarity, above all for the third (regional) and fourth (local) levels of European policy, and to introduce them in the political praxis of the European unification.⁵⁴

In the meantime the Council of Europe extends its promotion of the subnational levels and the support of the local and regional actors, adopting the 15th October 1985 the *European Charter of Local Self-Government*: its purpose “is to make good the lack of common European standards for measuring and safeguarding the rights of local authorities, which are closest to the citizen and giving them the opportunity of participating in the making of decisions affecting their everyday environment”⁵⁵. As states the Charta:

- “local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population (Art. 3.1.);
- local authorities shall be entitled, in exercising their powers, to co-operate and, within the framework of the law, to form consortia with other local authorities in order to carry out tasks of common interests. (Art. 10.1.)
- the entitlement of local authorities to belong to an association for the protection and promotion of their common interests and to belong to an international association of local authorities shall be recognised in each State. (Art. 10.2.)
- local authorities shall be entitled, under such conditions as may be provided for by the law, to co-operate with their counterparts in other States. (Art. 10.3.)”⁵⁶

Not long after the *European Charter of Local Self-Government* was issued a *European Charter of Regional Self-Government*, which had as main aim always the strengthening of the autonomy and the protection of the subnational interests, but concerning in this case the regions. And after few months, as following step, the European regions created in a spontaneous matter the Council of European Regions, which will give birth after few years to the Assembly of European Regions.

Furthermore since 1985 the regions started to install in Brussels their information offices; they have as main function the maintaining of informal contacts with the

⁵⁴ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, pp.419-421.

⁵⁵ *Explanatory report on the European Charter of Local Self-Government*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Reports/Html/122.htm> on the 25th April 2008.

⁵⁶ *European Charter of Local Self-Government*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/122.htm> on the 25th April 2008, pp.2-5.

European decision-centres and members as well as the collection of essential informations for the achievement of economic or political aids. As writes Staudigl “lobbying, understood and practised in the right way, is not only necessary for the organisations and groups to articulate their interests, but also to better awake the politics to economical, social and ecological developments and problems as well as to create a wider knowledge and consciousness, which are the premises for a effective and fair exchange”⁵⁷.

One year after and precisely the 28th February 1986, it was signed the Single European Act; the first European treaty had among its duties the realization of a common market before the 31st December 1992, the search of tighter economic cohesion between the European regions, the improvement of the social policy, the strengthening of the monetary cooperation, the addition of rules on the environment’s field as well as for the scientific and technological research. The European Regional Development Fund (Art. 130c) was integrated in it and this action had as consequence the administrative creation of the Directorate General of the European Commission, Regional Policies and Cohesion (the so called DG XVI), which represents the last act of the first regional policy’s phase. This is responsible for the actions of the Community in the support of the economical and social cohesion, which could reduce in this way the differences in the socio-economical development state of the European regions. There are above all three factors, which are characteristic for the initiatives of the Community and have been financed with the cohesion funds for the achievement of further benefits:

- the supporting of transnational, transfrontier and interregional cooperation,
- the concept of a “bottom-up” implementation,
- the visibility in the place of the Community’s activities and priorities.⁵⁸

In 1987, as it was just said above, the Council of European Regions was renamed in Assembly of European Regions (AER), establishing in this way one of the most important actor for the development of regionalism in Europe; its mission comprehends:

⁵⁷ Cfr. Staudigl, Fritz (2006). *Erfolgreiches Lobbying aus der Perspektive der Regionen*, in: Laimer, Simon M. M. (Hrsg.). *Euregio – quo vadis?*, Bozen, p.93.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, pp.42-56.

- “the promotion of the principle of subsidiarity and regional democracy;
- the increase of the regions' political influence within the European institutions;
- the support of the regions in the process of European enlargement and globalisation;
- the facilitation of interregional cooperation across wider Europe and beyond.”⁵⁹

It acts as hinge between the nation states and the subnational actors: the AER must not be considered as a lobbying group for the representation of particular interests, but as a pressure mean in the hands of the regions. Its role can be perceived as unorthodox spin doctor and critical attender of the European regional and regionalism policy, as strategic bridging function for the non EU-regions and direct representative of the European regions. However the precondition is that the AER concentrates itself on the one hand on the fundamental regional future tasks, but to the other acts as learning organization: as place for interregional and transnational learning, through the transnational exchange of experiences, models and methods⁶⁰.

2.4. The Transfrontier Cooperation as fundamental basis for the creation of the modern European Union

With the 1988 begins the second phase of the regional policy and it starts with an important document created by the European parliament: in fact the 18th November this Assembly issued the *Community Charter of Regionalization*. The Charta encourages the member states and the same regions to promote the transfrontier cooperation in all the subnational levels and above all in the interregional field (“*the regions shall have capacity to participate actively in transfrontier cooperation, especially at the interregional level*”); as cooperation instrument, the European Parliament encourage the institution of associations between the frontier regions or association with common interests and problems, creating in this way common instruments of permanent information, programming and action. The member states instead must to engage themselves in engaging and supporting the transfrontier cooperation among its regional authorities and in the fields of their competence⁶¹. In the same year the European Commission, solicited by the Assembly of European

⁵⁹ Cfr. the Internet Homepage <http://www.aer.eu/>

⁶⁰ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.502.

⁶¹ Cfr. *Resolution on Community regional policy and the role of the regions and Annexed Community Charter of Regionalization*.

Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, instituted the Consultative Council of Regional and Local Authorities; this could be considered as the predecessor of the Committee of the Regions, which will be created in 1992 with the Maastricht Treaty and will become an Organ of the future European Union. Among its duties the Council had to advise the Commission about all the requests for regional developments, in the formulation and successive realization of the regional policy as well as in the effects of the Community's policy on the regional and local authorities. At the beginning of the 1990s a lot of assistance programmes were started, like the LACE project or the Interreg programme⁶²: the first one, the *Linked Assistance and Cooperation for the European Border-Regions* (LACE), financed with 4,1 Million ECU (European Currency Unit) networks of scientific teams, technical advisers as well as experts in the border regions. Moreover it contributed with workshops, seminars, conferences, exchanges of experts and informations as well as with publications to create a close relationship between these networks. More important, not only for its economical character but also for its duration, is the Interreg programme, even if the record for the transfrontier cooperation of its first phase, the Interreg I (1990-1994), was not an impressive one: and this for a variety of reason, i.e. the lack of coordination with other EC programmes and unclear guidelines, which delayed work on the projects or other features of the programme and its implementation, not providing effective general stimulus for the transfrontier cooperation. Two years after there was a new fundamental stage in the process of European integration, when the 7th February 1992 was signed in Maastricht the Treaty on European Union; the Maastricht Treaty has created the European Union, consisting of three pillars: the European Communities, the common foreign and security policy and police (CFSP) and the cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs (JHA). In this context, the Treaty of Maastricht responds to five key goals:

- “strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the institutions;
- improve the effectiveness of the institutions;
- establish economic and monetary union;
- develop the Community social dimension;

⁶² For both the LACE and the INTERREG programs cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, pp.273-275; Anderson, Malcolm (1998). *Transfrontier Co-operation – History and Theory*, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, p.87.

- establish a common foreign and security policy.”⁶³

Moreover, “it expanded not only the role of the European Parliament to new areas but also the qualified majority voting within the Council; it has established the principle of subsidiarity as a general rule, which was initially applied to environmental policy in the Single European Act. This principle specifies that, in areas that are not within its exclusive powers, the Community shall only take action where objectives can be better attained by action at Community rather than at national level. Article A provides that the Union shall take decisions as close as possible to the citizen.”⁶⁴ Another very important innovation was the creation of the Committee of the Regions; this assembly has in the opinion of one of its general secretary three main tasks: “to exercise its influence over the decision process within the European Union, to keep watching the application of the subsidiarity principle and act as mediator for a “Europe of citizens””⁶⁵. But more than these tasks the experts have outlined other three important functions, which are also the fields of work and strategies of the Committee:

- a “polity-function”: i.e. to acquire and strengthen the position of the Committee of the Regions in the ambit of the European treaties’ following development;
- a “politics-function”: the building of stabile work and communication relationships with the Community organs (Parliament, Commission) as well as with the national governments and parliaments in relation to its participation to the European law and decision process;
- a “policy-function”: i.e. to be interested in all aspects of Community policy in the ambit of its consultative function, not only in the regional policy, but also in all political fields, interesting the regional and local authorities.⁶⁶

The Committee is formed at the moment by seven subcommissions, attending to a lot of different fields of activities; but the most important remains the first

⁶³ Cfr. *Treaty on European Union* downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://europa.eu/scadplus/treaties/maastricht_en.htm on the 25th April 2008.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Dietrich Pause in: Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.110.

⁶⁶ Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.110.

subcommission, which is concerned with the regional policy, the cohesion funds, economical and social interests, transfrontier and interregional cooperation⁶⁷.

With the year 1994 not only the Interreg I but also the second phase of the regional policy ends; at the same time begins the third phase, which will last until 2006. In the same year there was another administrative reorganization, when the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe became the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, obtaining in this way its definitive structure. Even if it has doubled the number of its components, the tasks are remained almost the same, comprehending:

- the contribution of the local and regional delegates to the support of the ideals of the European unity;
- the participation of the local and regional delegates to the management of the European politics in the ambit of the Council of Europe;
- the help for the new democracies in East Europe with the building of efficient local self-management structures;
- the strengthening of the cooperation between regions, above all through transfrontier measures;
- the support to peace, tolerance and economic growth;
- the participation of the citizens to the democratic agreement in the municipalities and regions;
- the help to make easier the integration of non-indigenous ethnic groups and other minorities and disadvantaged persons;
- the control of the application of the local and regional self-management in the member states.⁶⁸

But also the following year was very important for the development of the regionalism and in particular for the transfrontier cooperation in Europe; in fact in 1995 began the Interreg II (1995-1999), which consisted of three different fields of action: the first one (A) focused itself on the regional cooperation within the inner borders of the EU; the second one (B) was utilized to finance above all transfrontier energy nets, while the last one (C) covered the transfrontier spatial planning. In the same year and precisely the 9th November the Council of Europe issued the

⁶⁷ Cfr. <http://www.cor.europa.eu/>

⁶⁸ Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, p.86.

Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities; the enactment of an Additional Protocol was necessary above all to get over the several obstacles, which limited the effectiveness of the Madrid Convention: as it has been written in the Explanatory Report of the *Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, these are above all two:

- “the Outline Convention does not contain any specific undertaking by States, which are merely invited to “facilitate”, “promote” or “encourage” initiatives by territorial communities or authorities. There is no real recognition of the right of such communities or authorities to conclude transfrontier co-operation agreements;
- the Outline Convention does not bring sufficient legal detail to Contracting Parties’ national law to resolve the problems arising from transfrontier co-operation [...]”⁶⁹

The main task of the Additional Protocol is to solve the legal problems arising in national law from the Outline Convention: among the main changes,

“the territorial communities must have responsibility for the matter with which the agreement deals, but they must comply with the procedures and other rules laid down by the national law of the State to which they belong when concluding and implementing their agreements (Art.1). Moreover once a decision has been implemented in the national legal systems in the required manner, it has the same legal force and effect as a measure taken in the national context (Art.2); the transfrontier cooperation agreement can set up a cooperation body, which can have public or private law legal status (Art.3), even if this can be defined only by the law of the State where the body’s headquarters is located (Art.4).”⁷⁰

Two years after the process of European unification made another step forward: in fact the 2nd October 1997 was signed the Amsterdam Treaty. Among the several changes comprised in the Treaty there were new guarantees to protect fundamental rights within the European Union, the freedom of movement within the borders of the Community as well as new policies linked to the free movement of persons.

⁶⁹ *Explanatory report to the Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/159.htm> on the 25th April 2008.

⁷⁰ *Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/159.htm> on the 25th April 2008, pp.2-3; cfr. *Explanatory report to the Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention..*

Moreover the concept of European citizenship was developed and it was tried to extend the scope of the common commercial policy as well as to reform the common foreign and security policy (CFSP); among the institutional questions the role of the European Parliament was strengthened, the structure and operation of the European Commission was modified, the role of the Committee of Regions was enhanced as well as consolidated the subsidiarity principle.

In 1998, an year after this change in the main structure of the European Union and only three years after the first Additional Protocol, the Council of Europe issued a second Protocol to the Madrid Convention: the 5th May 1998 was signed the *Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Interterritorial Co-Operation*. The Outline Convention and the first Protocol “were addressed principally to those communities, which were geographically connected either directly or indirectly, but in reality lots of relations between territorial communities were emerged between geographically remote authorities. With the Protocol No.2 the Council of Europe tries to extend to these types of relations the international legal framework, given by the Outline Convention and its Additional Protocol”⁷¹. This period of reforms ended with a new improvement for those structures, in the field of regional affairs: in fact the Committee of regional policy (REGI) of the European Parliament widens its duties including the sector “transport and foreign transport”; this is a clear sign of the growing importance within the European institutions of the regional actors and their representatives or associations.

2.5. The Transfrontier Cooperation in the XXI century: a new phase in the process of Europeanization

In the year 2000 begins the third phase of the Interreg programme with the Interreg III (2000-2006); as the Interreg II also the third edition was divided in three

⁷¹ *Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Interterritorial Co-Operation*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage [http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvfg/export/sites/default/RAFVG/AT11/ARG8/allegati/2Protocol to the Madrid outline convention 169 .pdf](http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvfg/export/sites/default/RAFVG/AT11/ARG8/allegati/2Protocol%20to%20the%20Madrid%20outline%20convention%20169.pdf) on the 25th April 2008, pp.2-4; Cfr. *Explanatory report to the Protocol No. 2 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Interterritorial Co-Operation*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Reports/Html/169.htm> on the 25th April 2008.

fields of action, which were very important for the supporting of the transfrontier cooperation:

- “Interreg III A (cross-border co-operation in the true sense)

To focus solely on the establishment of social and economic hubs with a view to sustainable territorial development, the main fields selected in the NUTS III Transfrontier zones are: urban, rural and coastal development; development of entrepreneurial spirit through networks of SMEs; sharing of human resources through training, research and innovation; environmental protection; improvements in transport; the establishment of administrative crossover points; and so on.

- Interreg III B (transnational co-operation)

This type of co-operation, which aims to promote a higher degree of integration within Europe by supporting groupings of regions and states such as the Alpine Arc and the Baltic area, focuses primarily on “polycentric and sustainable development” in both the territory of the Community in general and more specific areas; this “polycentric and sustainable development” depends, and will continue depend, on suitable transport networks, access to information and advanced technology, optimum use of natural and human resources, integration of peripheral, island and mountain regions and so on.

- Interreg III C (interregional co-operation)

The main purpose of INTERREG III C is to establish a framework for interregional relations by means of a horizontal partnership (between regions themselves) or suitable interregional networks in a wide range of fields, preferably connected with: technological development; the “information society”; innovation through cutting-edge SMEs, leading to specialised jobs; protection of the environment and of the cultural and economic heritage; winter, summer, cultural and leisure tourism; and so on.”⁷²

Even if it was not so important for the improvement of the transfrontier cooperation, the Treaty of Nice, signed the 26th February 2001, is one of the cornerstone of the European history; “its mandate was to prepare the European Union for enlargement by revising the Treaties in four key areas:

⁷² Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.124.

- size and composition of the Commission;
- weighting of votes in the Council;
- extension of qualified-majority voting;
- enhanced cooperation.

It did not drastically change the institutional balance but rather made some adjustments, mainly to the function and composition of the institutions and enhanced cooperation”⁷³. In the same year ended also the third phase of the European Monetary Union (EMU), decided in 1988, which has brought the adoption of a common currency unit, i.e. the Euro. If the importance of the regions’ role within the European Union had not place in the Treaty of Nice, was underlined instead in several official papers and meetings, like the Laeken Declaration in 2001, when the European chiefs of state emphasized the positive effects of the European integration above all on the poorest regions. Another example was the Helsinki Declaration in 2002, where it was stated that:

- “In so far as national and/or European law allows, regional authorities shall have the right to be involved in or to be represented through bodies established for this purpose in the activities of the European institutions (Art. 7.1.).
- Regional authorities may co-operate with territorial authorities of other countries within the framework of their competences and in accordance with the law, the international obligations and the foreign policy of the state (Art. 7.2.).”⁷⁴

In the following Krakow Conference (2-4 October 2003) was also declared that

“cross-border and interregional co-operation is an essential part of the European integration process as an effective tool for overcoming historical divisions, eliminating stereotypes in mutual perception, strengthening good-neighbouring relations between nations and ensuring stability, peace and socio-economic development” as well as that “territorial communities and authorities should be helped to develop their co-operation across the borders. A sound legal basis for the establishment of institutional forms of co-operation between neighbouring communities and regions should be developed at domestic

⁷³ *Treaty of Nice* downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://europa.eu/scadplus/nice_treaty/introduction_en.htm on the 25th April 2008.

⁷⁴ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p..56.

and international level, having regard to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Local Authorities and in particular to its first Additional Protocol”⁷⁵.

The year 2004 sees plenty of developments concerning the Transfrontier cooperation; in fact on 7th October the Association of European Border Regions issues the *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions*. In it the idea that “Borders are scars of history” is supported and also that

“Cross-border cooperation helps to mitigate the disadvantages of these borders, overcome the peripheral status of the border regions in their country, and improve the living conditions of the population. It encompasses all cultural, social, economic and infrastructural spheres of life. Having both knowledge and an understanding of a neighbour's distinctive social, cultural, linguistic and economic characteristics - ultimately the well-spring of mutual trust - is a prerequisite for any successful cross-border cooperation”. [...] “regional and local cooperation below the government level, between various social partners and segments of the population across international borders, promotes peace, freedom, security and safeguarding of human rights and encourages the protection of ethnic and national minorities. Border and cross-border regions are thus building blocks and bridges in the process of European unification, on behalf of the coexistence of European populations, including minorities.”⁷⁶

For the *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions* the main purposes of the transfrontier cooperation can be outlined in:

- “improving infrastructure
- promoting locational quality and common economic development
- improvement of cross-border protection of the environment and nature
- promotion of cross-border cultural cooperation
- making realities of subsidiarity and partnerships”⁷⁷

Concluding, the charter states that “bilateral or trilateral cross-border cooperation at regional/local level will therefore remain a necessity over the long term, not just in order to prevent cross-border conflicts and overcome psychological barriers, but, above all, in order to facilitate partnerships that will balance and reconcile these

⁷⁵ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.57.

⁷⁶ *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (New Version)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://portale.regione.veneto.it/NR/rdonlyres/5C507779-CF38-4568-A7B1-69066EA68741/0/EuropeanCharterAEBR.pdf> on the 25th April 2008, p.3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

differences, through Euroregions and similar structures. Partnerships of this kind need to be cultivated within regions, with all the often very different social partners on either side of each border, and externally, with national governments”⁷⁸. An year after the Council of Europe, agreeing with the proposals of the Association of European Border Regions, created the Centre of Expertise on Local Government Reform; among its main tasks “the promotion of innovative methods in the management of the local authorities through the improvement of their action’s effectiveness, the transparency of methods and citizen participation in public life at the local level.”⁷⁹

Also the year 2006 has represented a turning point in the history of the regionalism at the European level: in fact it ended the third phase of the regional policy and at the same time opened the fourth one. This period has begun with the issue of four fundamental Regulations: three of these, the *Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999*, the *Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999* and the *Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999*, regarded with the new programming and distribution of the European structural funds for the period 2007-2013. From 2007 the nine aims and six instruments of the old programming are been replaced with three main objectives (convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, European territorial cooperation) and three financial instruments (the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund)⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (New Version)*, pp.8-13.

⁷⁹ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.175.

⁸⁰ Cfr. *Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage www.interreg4c.net/load/2006-1080%20ERDF%20Regulation%20en.pdf on the 25th April 2008; *Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_210/l_21020060731en00120018.pdf on the 25th April 2008; *Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2006/l_210/l_21020060731en00250078.pdf on the 25th April

The fourth Regulation, the *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)*, “aims at creating entities, called EGCT, with a legal identity, composed of members (public institutions mainly) from at least 2 Member States, whose goal is to develop projects of common interests”⁸¹. The EGCT must be thought as a place or a institutional seating in which it is practised a fundamental activity of political agreement among the representatives of all involved actors. It plays an important role both on the coordination of the politics adopted by the local authorities and in the harmonization of the different normatives, making easier in this way the building of a transfrontier or interregional cooperation. As recites the *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006*:

- “(1) The third subparagraph of Article 159 of the Treaty provides for specific actions to be decided upon outside the Funds which are the subject of the first subparagraph of that Article, in order to achieve the objective of social and economic cohesion envisaged by the Treaty. The harmonious development of the entire Community territory and greater economic, social and territorial cohesion imply the strengthening of territorial cooperation. To this end it is appropriate to adopt the measures necessary to improve the implementation conditions for actions of territorial cooperation.
- (2) Measures are necessary to reduce the significant difficulties encountered by Member States and, in particular, by regional and local authorities in implementing and managing actions of territorial cooperation within the framework of differing national laws and procedures.
- (3) Taking into account notably the increase in the number of land and maritime borders in the Community following its enlargement, it is necessary to facilitate the reinforcement of territorial cooperation in the Community.
- [...]
- (7) It is likewise necessary to facilitate and follow up the implementation of territorial cooperation actions without a financial contribution from the Community.
- (8) In order to overcome the obstacles hindering territorial cooperation, it is necessary to institute a cooperation instrument at Community level for the creation of cooperative

2008; Pittella, Gianni. *I fondi europei nel 2007/2013*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.dsbasilicata.it/cp2006/fondieuropei.html> on the 25th April 2008.

⁸¹ INTERACT Office Vienna. *Project Fact Sheet. Information and Training Package on the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage www.a-e-r.org/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/RegionalPartnership/EGTC/Project_Fact_Sheet.doc on the 25th April 2008, pp.1-2.

groupings in Community territory, invested with legal personality, called 'European groupings of territorial cooperation' (EGTC). Recourse to an EGTC should be optional.

- (9) It is appropriate for an EGTC to be given the capacity to act on behalf of its members, and notably the regional and local authorities of which it is composed.
- [...]
- (11) An EGTC should be able to act, either for the purpose of implementing territorial cooperation programmes or projects co-financed by the Community, notably under the Structural Funds in conformity with Regulation (EC)No 1083/2006 and Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund (5), or for the purpose of carrying out actions of territorial cooperation which are at the sole initiative of the Member States and their regional and local authorities with or without a financial contribution from the Community.
- [...]
- (15) The conditions for territorial cooperation should be created in accordance with the subsidiarity principle enshrined in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve its objectives, recourse to an EGTC being optional, in accordance with the constitutional system of each Member State.
- (16) The third subparagraph of Article 159 of the Treaty does not allow the inclusion of entities from third countries in legislation based on that provision. The adoption of a Community measure allowing the creation of an EGTC should not, however, exclude the possibility of entities from third countries participating in an EGTC formed in accordance with this Regulation where the legislation of a third country or agreements between Member States and third countries so allow.
- [...]
- 1.2. The objective of an EGTC shall be to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and/or interregional cooperation, hereinafter referred to as 'territorial cooperation', between its members as set out in Article 3(1), with the exclusive aim of strengthening economic and social cohesion.
- 1.3. An EGTC shall have legal personality.
- 1.4. An EGTC shall have in each Member State the most extensive legal capacity accorded to legal persons under that Member State's national law. It may, in particular, acquire or dispose of movable and immovable property and employ staff and may be a party to legal proceedings.
- [...]

- 7.1. An EGTC shall carry out the tasks given to it by its members in accordance with this Regulation. Its tasks shall be defined by the convention agreed by its members, in conformity with Articles 4 and 8.
- 7.2. An EGTC shall act within the confines of the tasks given to it, which shall be limited to the facilitation and promotion of territorial cooperation to strengthen economic and social cohesion and be determined by its members on the basis that they all fall within the competence of every member under its national law.
- 7.3. Specifically, the tasks of an EGTC shall be limited primarily to the implementation of territorial cooperation programmes or projects co-financed by the Community through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and/or the Cohesion Fund.”⁸²

The *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006* represents therefore another fundamental cornerstone in the long way toward the creation of a more homogeneous Europe, a Europe of Regions or Macro-Regions.

Also the 2007 has been an important year, for what concerns the changes within the European Union: in fact on the 13th December the EU leaders signed the Treaty of Lisbon, which is not a Constitution, but amends the current EU and EC treaties, without replacing them. Notwithstanding the problems above all with the process of ratification in some Member States, it represents an important step toward the future of the Community; for what concerns the regional and local level there are few changes, regarding above all the Assembly of Regions. The subsidiarity principle has been extended to the regional and local level too and the Assembly of Regions has become the “subsidiarity keeper”, protecting in this way the application of its norms within the European Union⁸³. Also the *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-Operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities* and the *European Charter of Local Self-Government* have been considered so important to be cited in the Treaty of Lisbon. In the same year has started also the Interreg IV

⁸² *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:210:0019:0024:EN:PDF> on the 25th April 2008.

⁸³ Cfr. Art. I-3.3, I-5, I-11, I-19.1, I-32, III-220, III-386, III-387, III-388 of the *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community* downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:SOM:EN:HTML> on the 25th April 2008; Cfr. Toggenburg N., Gabriel (2006). *Die regionale Dimension des EU-Verfassungsvertrages: Betrachtungen im Dreieck zwischen Mitbestimmung, Identität und Subsidiarität*, in: Laimer, Simon M. M. (Hrsg.). *Euregio – quo vadis?*, Bozen, pp.27-49; Ebner, Michl (2006). *Erfolgsaussichten einer Stärkung der Regionen im Institutionengefüge der Europäischen Union*, in: Laimer, Simon M. M. (Hrsg.). *Euregio – quo vadis?*, Bozen, pp.183-193.

(2007-2013), presenting the same spheres of action as in the third edition, but with an increase in the available funds.

The last innovation in the field of the transfrontier cooperation was the creation in 2008 of the M.O.R.E.⁸⁴: the Council of Europe in collaboration with the Italian government has given birth to the first *Transfrontier Co-operation Database for Matching Opportunities for Regions in Europe*. This is an instrument, which permits to research in very quickly manner all forms of regional or local cooperation activated within the European borders.

As we have just seen also in the chapters above, there are a lot of regional organisations at the European level, which can have similar duties or not; Schmitt-Egner proposes in its work a classification or better a diversification of these organizations through two different categories, which can help us to make order in the world of the regional representation within the European Union: from one side there are the European regional organization as representatives of common region interests. In this group there are associations as the Assembly of European Regions or the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, acting without intermediaries for the protection of the all regions or local authorities' interests; other organizations, like the Assembly of Regions or the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe can represent the common interests of these actors, but only through their member states or within the acting spheres their associations. From the other side there are the European regional organizations standing for the regional particular interests; this group divides itself in three sub-categories: in the first one are comprehended the geographical associations as for the Association of European Border Regions, while the second group represents the associations of regions of particular sectors as the vine-producing regions or the union of the Chambers of Commerce. The last one regroups the interests of particular geographical associations as the maritime regional organizations or the European mountain macro-regions (Alps-Adriatic Working Community and Alpine Region Working Community-Alps).⁸⁵ Just these last examples are the nearest forms of association to those transnational or transfrontier regions, which are discussed in the next chapter under the name of Euroregions.

⁸⁴ *Transfrontier Co-operation Database for Matching Opportunities for Regions in Europe* (M.O.R.E.) <http://www.loreg.coe.int/more/DefaultTransborder.aspx>

⁸⁵ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (2000). *Handbuch der europäischen Regionalorganisationen*, pp.30-34.

3. Building the future Europe: Euroregions and the institutionalisation of Transfrontier cooperation

As it is explained in the Gabbe's paper, the Transfrontier cooperation must have three fundamental features to be effective both now and in the future:

- should be characterised by common activities from the beginning. Every aspects of the everyday life in the border regions must be involved: this means not only the economy or the labour market, but also the culture, the social affairs as well as the territorial planning and so on;
- it should happen on regular and everyday basis and involve from the beginning partners of both sides;
- it should be managed at all levels: national, regional and local.

Moreover the principle of partnership, which must be developed, consists of two elements: a vertical partnership within the two sides of the border and a horizontal partnership along the border among partners, which are often very different each other. The vertical partnership focuses itself on the relations with the European level as well as with the national and regional or local levels at both sides of the border; the vertical organization and the structures, created for this aim, must be added to or complete those already present, but at the same time must not compete with or substitute them. The horizontal partnership on the other side refers itself to the relations among these partners (both organizations and structures) on both sides of the border: this principle has its basis in the equality among the partners, not considering therefore their geographical size as well as their economical or political importance.⁸⁶

Whether it develops horizontally or vertically, the transfrontier cooperation needs permanent transfrontier structures; usually these structures are the consequence of an adaptation process, which step by step is able to find pragmatic solutions to several legal, administrative and political problems. Moreover the experience, born from the reality of the cooperation within the borders of the European Union, has

⁸⁶ Cfr. Gabbe, Jens (2003). *L'Euroregione come spazio per la realizzazione della cooperazione transconfinaria*, in: *Euroregione. Il regionalismo per l'integrazione europea*, anno XII, n. 3-4 dicembre 2003, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index_.php on the 25th April 2008, pp.1-7.

demonstrated how first should come the cooperation and only in a second moment the structures. Gabbe points out also the obstacles to the direct participation of the transfrontier regions (above all regional and local agencies) in the management of the transfrontier programs:

- because does not exist a single instrument in the public law, which is valid everywhere in Europe and can be utilised for the transfrontier cooperation, the implementation activities of specific programmes must be governed by bilateral agreements among the nation states, depending above all from the will of the involved partners;
- some national legal systems entitle the regional or local level in taking part directly to the initiatives connected with the transfrontier cooperation and therefore in the management of the programs. The participation of the regional agencies in international agreements varies from country to country within the European Union, having a negative effect on the degree of decentralisation in the transfrontier programs' management;
- because the control on the public funds is guaranteed, the transfrontier cooperation, which is funded on private law, is perfect to administrate the programmes, developed and put into effect by public agencies. But at the same time the forms of cooperation based on the public law can be more far-sighted and guarantee a wider democratic involvement to the programmes.⁸⁷

It is clear, that notwithstanding the several obstacles, a permanent transfrontier structure represents today the final aim of the transfrontier cooperation; indeed, in the opinion of Gasparini, the transfrontier cooperation must be finalized to the creation of a particular type of permanent transfrontier structure, i.e. the Euroregion.

This is a region, which is conceptually the crossing of several belongings: the nation states for what concerns the sovereignty, Europe for what concerns the standardization of the development and organization parameters, itself for what concerns the culture, the economy and the society⁸⁸. There are also other types of

⁸⁷ Cfr. Gabbe, Jens (2003). *L'Euroregione come spazio*, p.3.

⁸⁸ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Processi di Istituzionalizzazione: Vademecum per una "buona" Euroregione*, in: *Euroregione. Il regionalismo per l'integrazione europea*, anno XII, n. 3-4 dicembre 2003, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index_.php on the 25th April 2008, p.1.

transfrontier structure like the so called Working Communities, which are very similar to the Euroregions, but which have not legal personality.

This chapter is dedicated to these associations or permanent structures, which represent not only a fundamental phase in the process of European regionalization, but also a step toward the idea of another European Union. In the following pages will be researched the origins as well as the historical developments of the Euroregions. I will also try to define them, analysing their common features, aims and different theoretical structures. The second paragraph will focus on the Euroregions in the reality, i.e. the problems in their implementation or creation as well as the deficits or points of force in their everyday life within the European Union. This chapter ends with a kind of decalogue, which gathers the trends for the successful development of modern Euroregions.

3.1. Defining a Euroregion

As in the first chapter, it is very difficult to find a unique definition for an organization or structure, which has in the reality a lot of differences in size, organisation and composition. Moreover several “labels” are used to categorise this type of cooperation instrument: “Euregio”, “Euregion”, “Euroregion”, “Europaregion”, “Grand Region”, “Regio” and “Council”. The majority of these words have in common the term “*Regio*”, which comes from the Latin “*regere*” and means to draw a line or border; so within of this “*Regio*” the transfrontier structures can be intended as “arrangements for co-operation between units of local or regional government across the border in order to promote common interests and enhance the living standards of the border populations”⁸⁹. But this is only one of the several definitions, which can be found in the literature; some Council of Europe texts, for example, identifies the Euroregion as “an organizations for transfrontier or Interterritorial co-operation between territorial communities or authorities of two or more contracting Parties (...) with general responsibility for promoting, supporting and developing neighbourly relations between its members in their common areas of responsibility insofar as this is in keeping with the contracting Parties’ international

⁸⁹ Cfr. the Internet Homepage www.coe.int.

commitments”⁹⁰. In the work of ÖROK, the “Europaregion” (using the German term for Euroregion), is defined as:

- “cross-border cooperation of economic areas with more than regional relevance” respectively
- “regions, where settlement and economic interlinks have gained a strong cross-border character and therefore there is a need for cross-border cooperation”.⁹¹

Also the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) has contributed with its classification; it used the following criteria for the identification of a “Euroregion”, firstly in terms of organisation:

- “amalgamation of regional and local authorities from both sides of the national border, sometimes with an assembly;
 - according to private law based on national associations or foundations from both sides of the border according to the respective public law;
 - according to public law based on international treaties which also regulate the membership of regional authorities.
- cross-border organizations with a permanent secretariat and experts and administrative staff.”⁹²

Thanks to these different approaches to the structure Euroregion, it is therefore possible to try to create a common definition: it can be described as a “transfrontier institution, with or without legal personality, involving public and private participants, which establishes transfrontier relations of a promotional nature between local, regional or national authorities, always with the approval, or under the auspices, of central government”⁹³. But a Euroregion can be defined also by its particular tasks or aims, for whose it has been created; it is clear that the main objective of Euroregions is supposed to be the implementation of the “idea Europe” at regional level, but the creation of a transfrontier structure is only the consequence of more real and imminent needs. The starting point can be a common problem or a change of the geopolitical framework, but owing to their great diversity, it is also very difficult

⁹⁰ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.27.

⁹¹ Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „Europaregionen“ – Herausforderungen, Ziele, Kooperationsformen, Geschäftsstelle der Österreichischen Raumordnungskonferenz (ÖROK), Wien, p. VI of the summary.

⁹² Cfr. *European Charter for Border and Cross-Border Regions (New Version)*; Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.28.

⁹³ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.29.

and without sense to write out a list of all possible targets of Euroregions⁹⁴. What I try to do here is to identify instead which objectives should be pursued by transfrontier structures:

- First of all should be deepened the reciprocal comprehension of the historical memory, as well as the fears and positive expectations of the neighbours (above all those ones, which are also present today): i.e. learn how to avoid the historical and mental obstacles to the reciprocal understanding, to identify the hidden borders, which can bring latent obstacles to the cooperation in all fields of life; to the other side it is very important also to find common roots, which provide the chance to build new trusts.
- Connected to the above objective, there is the importance to identify common but also different future interests on the basis of a wide conflicts' reduction in the presence.
- Another fundamental aspect is the institution of a neighbourly exchange, i.e. the development of common problem definitions and the implementation of common problem solutions to develop a sustainable common cross-border living space.⁹⁵

Therefore it is clear that the Euroregional regimes are fundamental above all to manage specific problems of multilevel governance in the border areas; in fact they are the “roof” under which can be institutionalised the relationships and exchanges among the actors acting along the borders of the European Union.

3.1.1. Historical Development

The first forms of cross-border cooperation, which have given birth to permanent structures of transfrontier collaboration, were created since the 1950s along the German borders. And in fact for some experts, the term “Euroregion” is born in this area of the old Europe, deriving from the German words *Europäische Region* (European region). The cooperation between the German *Länder* Nordrhein-Westfalen and Niedersachsen and the Dutch *Provincies* of Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe was institutionalised in 1958, while it was named Euregio for the first time in 1965. This type of Euroregion acts in an efficient way above all for three

⁹⁴ For these refers to the Figure 1, p.71.

⁹⁵ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). „Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit“, p.68.

reasons: the first one is the total support of three association of local authorities (two Dutch and one German), which are the basis of the Euroregion. These are public law association creating the legal status for the transfrontier structure in the involved territories; the second one is the capacity to pay attention to the needs and demands of the population, thanks above all to the activity of the Secretariat. The last one is the presence of a political organ, the *Euregio Rat* (Council of the Euroregion), of which members, appointed to the three associations of local authorities, take sides in transfrontier political parties. Within it are taken the most important decision about the future developments of the transfrontier cooperation, about the Euroregion and the coordination of the cross-border activities. The experience of the *Euregio* was considered so positive, that have been created other five Euroregions along the German-Dutch border: the *Euregio Rhein Waal* in 1963, the *Euregio Maas-Rhein* in 1976, the *Ems-Dollart Regio* in 1977, the *Euregio Maas-Rhein-Nord* in 1978 and the *Neue Hanse Interregio* in 1991⁹⁶.

Another classic example of institutionalization of cooperation has been developed along the borders between Swiss, France and Germany; among its main features there are the presence of multiple structures, cooperating each other, and the involvement of the national authorities in addition to the local ones. The core of the cooperation in this area is represented by the *Regio Basiliensis*, born in 1963; this is a Swiss association with also German and France partners. After several years in the same area other types of Euroregions were developed: the *Regio Trirhena* was the first core of classical cooperation in the Upper Rein area. Its main organ is the *Regiorat* (interlocal Council), within which the municipalities of the area act; it is important to note, that within this zone it has been possible to create a further type of collaboration: in fact the city of Basel, not having enough space to develop itself within the Swiss borders, developed itself toward the France and German territory and today part of the peripheries are beyond the Swiss borders. In the same area have been created in 1975 the *Upper Rein* Euroregion and in 1989 the Euroregion *Pamina*⁹⁷.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the most involved area for what concerns the development of the transfrontier cooperation and in particular for the creation of

⁹⁶ Cfr. Pasi, Paolo (2001). *Quale Euroregione per la zona frontaliere tra la provincia di Udine, la Slovenia e la Carinzia?*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Progetto di sviluppo e conoscenza reciproca Italo-Slovena*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.49-50.

⁹⁷ Cfr. Ibid., pp.50-51.

Euroregion was the Centre-Eastern Europe. This phenomenon has regarded above all the German east borders, along which eight new Euroregions have been created: three on the German-Polish border (*Euroregio Pomerania*, *Euroregio Viadrina*, *Euroregio Spree-Neisse-Bober*), four on the Czech-German border (*Euroregio Egrensis*, *Euroregio Elbe*, *Euroregio Erzgebirge-Krusne Hory*, *Euroregio Bayerischen Wald-Sumava*), while the last one has involved all three nations (*Euroregio Neisse*). The creation of these Euroregions was inspired by the classical examples of those transfrontier cooperations presented along other European borders, but unfortunately they have not the same operative capacities of their reference models; in fact the local authorities of the East European countries are characterised by inadequate competencies as well as financial resources.

For what concerns the implementation of transfrontier cooperation and structures along the Italian borders it has started in the 1990s; the first Euroregion, the *Regio Insubrica*, was founded in 1995 along the Swiss-Italian border. Among its tasks there are the promotion of the transfrontier culture, an integrated environment management, territorial planning and a common planning for the development of tourism. Another project of Euroregion it is developing in the area involving the Italian region Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol and the Austrian *Land* of Tirol: this process of cooperation is in on-going evolution, with ups and downs, since ten years⁹⁸.

3.1.2. Categorization and classification of Euroregions

Because each transfrontier region has its own specific features, does not exist an unique classification for the Euroregions; therefore I'm going to propose in this paragraph three of the several possible categorizations present in the literature. I try to outline in the following pages the huge diversities among the European transfrontier structures, while in the next paragraph I will concentrate myself on the research of possible common points.

As first, I analyse the category of Euroregions based on the process of formation; Fabbro, Macchi and Spizzo assert the existence of three main types:

⁹⁸ Cfr. Pasi, Paolo (2001). *Quale Euroregione*, p.51.

- The *autonomous generation* of Euroregional structures: they are the result of a convergence of expectations among a certain group of actors (which act in more than one level), without any sort of institutional engineering. Therefore it is a spontaneous process, in which the interaction between the actors, in some functional sectors, produces a minimal “order without law”. A border area becomes a transfrontier region through the capacities of the local societies to work together on the definition and solution of specific transfrontier problems and guaranteeing in this way the stability for a process of social construction without the creation of new institutions. This is a pragmatic approach, which starts from a bottom-up prospective and makes clear the importance assumed by the dynamics of cooperation and spontaneous participation for the Euroregional level; these bottom-up confidential links can support a strong convergence of the involved actors’ expectations in pursuing several common objectives.
- The *negotiable generation* of Euroregional regimes: they are created in consequence of a conscious process of negotiation among the parts. The main aim is to reach an agreement, which permits the institutionalization of several social relations through a clear rules and procedures definition at the level of protocols, treaties or statutes.
- The *imposed generation* of Euroregions: the creation of these transfrontier structures is supported by a limited number of influent actors, which can impose to other actors the acceptance of particular norms, rules and institutional procedures. This imposed model can be singled out in the obligatory creation for the European law of common management and payment authorities as well as of technical secretariat for the realization of the Interreg III A Italy-Austria or in the present tries of the European Commission to “suggest” its ideal model of Euroregion.⁹⁹

The second categorization makes instead a distinction among the multiplicity of the themes and dimension for the organisation of Euroregions, based on the permanent available funds (in the form of structure, human or/and financial capital), giving birth to four different types of transfrontier permanent structures:

⁹⁹ Cfr. Fabbro, Sandro/Macchi, Gianfranco/Spizzo, Daniel (2006). *Verso la costruzione dell'Euroregione alpino-adriatica. La pianificazione congiunta e condivisa del territorio come pratica di coesione transfrontaliera* (Atti del Convegno “Euroregione e cooperazione internazionale” tenutosi a Rovigo il 5 ottobre 2005), downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvfg/export/sites/default/RAFVG/AT6/ARG4/allegati/euroregioneEcoopInternazOttobre2005.pdf> on the 25th April 2008, pp.49-51.

- The “*signal-organisation*” has as main task to focus the attention on the needs or possibilities for actions. The implementation through political summits, press conferences and similar activities requires comparatively a minor assignment of resources.
- The “*project organisation*” is specific funded to attend to particular subjects area. This type of organisation requires concrete resources in form of human resources and currency and is implemented through associations, assignment of existing agencies or through syndicates. The implementation of projects results oft within the existing Interreg-programs.
- The “*network organisation*” undertakes the task of encouraging and coordinating the transfrontier activities of other actors. It can cover a lot of subjects area and requires comparatively lower additionally resources, i.e. in form of customs duty and co-ordinating employed person.
- The organisation of types “*local/regional authority*” receives relevant resources (in form of human resources and currency, but also in form of competencies) and it is responsible for a widespread themes spectrum. This type of organisation has the highest degree of formalization among all types of organization. Own competencies, administrative offices, regional parliaments or similar characterise this form of organisation.¹⁰⁰

The last classification of Euroregional structures bases itself on the legal “possibilities” of cross-border cooperation and on the different degrees of institutionalisation; in the opinion of the authors the collaboration between subnational authorities on different sides of the border can take three different forms:

- “At the lowest level an *informal or non-formal* form of co-operation can be seen: the characteristics of this category is the non-binding character of the co-operation. The forms of interactions between the actors are of pure informal nature and mostly formed on an *ad hoc* basis, without any appearance of institutionalisation. In the opinion of the authors it is better to speak of co-ordination than of co-operation, because the modest relations between the involved actors are characterised by only informal contacts and exchange of information. Within this category it is possible to draw a distinction between

¹⁰⁰ Cfr. Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „*Europaregionen*“, pp.19-20.

co-operation with a low and co-operation with a high degree of institutionalisation (in both types there is no sort of democratic legitimisation):

- Low institutionalised cooperation: characterised by legal non-binding agreements, that are of a political-moral nature, that have very often only an *ad-hoc* character, that are only *ad hoc* working groups and mostly supported by only few people.
- High institutionalised cooperation: characterised like the first by legal non-binding agreements, which are of political-moral nature. There are, however, more frequent contacts within a quasi-formal organisation between lots of people.
- *Co-operation based on civil law*: characterised by the fact that there is some kind of institutionalisation of the cooperation based on the civil law of one of the participating countries; it is also possible that the co-operation is based on both (or more) law systems. There are several problems related with the cross-border cooperation based on civil law: the first one is that the new established authority can act in a public sense only within some subjects (or fields), second, it can not take legally binding public acts (if it has not a public law basis) and third, there is a very low level of democracy.
- *Co-operation within public law*; compared to the previous two forms there are several advantages:
 - it is possible to hand over certain legislative and/or administrative tasks to this new public body;
 - in a further elaborated form, this public co-operation could even take into account the cross-border judicial protection of civilians living within the Euroregional area; this leads to the fact that several sectoral government tasks (environment, spatial planning, education) can be dealt with, although there still will be a large degree of dependency on national authorities;
 - a next advantage is that there can be a directly or indirectly chosen public body representing the interest of the civilians living within the Euroregion. The co-operation is based on a formal legal document;
 - finally, most often there is a good organisational structure connected to this form of public co-operation.”¹⁰¹

As I have already written, in the previous pages only few examples of the possible categorization of Euroregions has been proposed; then the same combination of categories and/or characteristics reported above can create new forms of

¹⁰¹ Denters, Bas/Schobben, Rob/van der Veen, Anne (1998). *Governance of European border regions: a legal, economic and political science approach with an application to the Dutch-German and the Dutch-Belgian border*, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, pp.139-140.

transfrontier cooperation with own features or specific tasks, rendering very difficult to delineate in univocal manner the Euroregional phenomenon. Moreover, the same Euroregions represent only one of the several forms of permanent cross-border structures; in fact, the wide range of legal instrument (European, binational or multinational, inter-regional or multiregional) can give birth not only to public or private-law agreements on transfrontier cooperation between local, regional, national or European authorities, but also to other transfrontier legal forms. In the list below have been reported only some examples of the structures acting on the European territory:

- “a transfrontier consortium, such as a SIVOM (*Syndicat Intercommunal à Vocation Multiple*/multi-purpose inter-municipal consortium) or SML (*Syndicat Mixte Local*/local joint consortium);
- a European cooperation consortium with a specific role; a European company (under Community law);
- a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG);
- a local transfrontier co-operation grouping (GLCT);
- a European transfrontier co-operation grouping (GECT) (under Community law);
- a Eurodistrict, Euroregion, working community or conference;
- a transfrontier conurbation or metropolis;
- a transfrontier arrangement between municipalities and/or transfrontier district;
- a European or transfrontier territorial authority;
- a local semi-public company (SEML);
- a public interest grouping (GIP) and/or Consortium, and so on.”¹⁰²

3.1.3. Common characteristics of Euroregional structures

Notwithstanding the various differences among the several forms of Euroregions, exists a set of common issues or experiences, which are fundamental for the majority of the transfrontier structures; in addition to the implementation of the “idea Europe” at regional level, the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) has individualize in its paper six fields, in which can be summarised what all Euroregions have in common:

¹⁰² Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.106.

1. "Euroregions come into existence by political initiative; the political decision makers have an important and difficult role in the development and implementation of Euroregions; already existing cross-border cooperations and networks of the political decision makers are important success criteria for Euroregions.
2. Euroregions comprehend cross border areas that are characterised by:
 - different level of complexity and hierarchies,
 - different density of economic, social and political interlinks,
 - different extent of perception as common area (region) and
 - different preconditions for cooperation.
3. Euroregions are not limited to areas which have the "best" preconditions. In fact they can be established at all different framework conditions, when they are designed to match the situation. The match has to cover
 - their objectives and strategies
 - their activities, core process and their range of services and
 - their form of organisation.
4. Euroregions can be organised in many different ways. The study names four organisation logics that are used in an adequate mix¹⁰³:
 - "political logic" as essential basis of Euroregions, to set signs for cooperation to the regional actors
 - "project logic" to work on specific problem settings in a very focused manner and to test out cooperation
 - "regulation logic" to achieve (formally) binding commitments
 - "network logic" to integrate, activate and support many different actors
5. Euroregions are in an ongoing conflicting situation between reduction of complexity (clear borders, clear rules and clear structures) and increasing their scope of capabilities by including relevant competences and resources.
6. The effects of Euroregions can be found mainly in the field of awareness building. These effects are the basis for a long-term process within other - spatially visible – effects. Most of the time the effects of Euroregions can be hardly directly allocated to concrete activities and often the effects are hard to measure. Even if at the beginning are achieved prevalingly "soft" effects, these should not be underestimated. The resulting awareness and trust is a fundamental basis for more tangible future results." ¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Cfr. paragraph 3.1.2., p.61.

¹⁰⁴ Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „Europaregionen“, pp.VII-IX of the summary.

3.2. Euroregions in the everyday life

3.2.1. Implementing Transfrontier structures

In the opinion of Schmitt-Egner there are five pre-conditions for the implementation of transfrontier cooperation:

- articulation and definition of common and different interests,
- the creation of mechanisms for the conflicts' resolution, solving objective and interests' conflicts,
- the availability of formal and material competence (resources) as suitable way to reach the scope,
- the motivation to realise through this suitable way common interests and
- the trust in the capacity and will of partners for what concerns the realisation of their part of the strategic aims.¹⁰⁵

Among these features another important pre-condition, which is bind with the place, where the Euroregion must be implemented: this should be collocated above all in those border areas which are economically and/or socially marginal to the system. As consequence, the "where" of the Euroregion could be legitimated by several elements:

- prevailing of the advantages for the (transfrontier) local development, coming from the attraction and cooperation of the resources on one side and on the other side of the border, and not prevailing the advantages, coming from the own state belonging. This is a consequence of a border, which is no more an income, but more and more a virtual barrier and with little economic relevance;
- to not substitute the loosening of the political border with the hardening of the inner border of every state comprehended in the Euroregion and the strongest areas of own country, avoiding in this way a conflict between the idea of Euroregion and the idea of nation;
- it is very important to support the idea of Europe and at the same time benefit by the programs of the Community;

¹⁰⁵ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). „Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit“, p.69.

- to have common cultural, historical, social roots between the communities and populations living along the borders¹⁰⁶.

For what concerns the size of the involved area it depends instead by the functions and tasks, which must be worked out: however it is better if the surface of transfrontier Euroregions is not too wide. In fact, it is easier to develop stronger relationships between neighbouring territorial communities or to create weaker contacts between local partners, characterised by an higher diffusion. In a smaller area is possible that the neighbouring communities (villages as well as small towns) can develop both common networks (such as streets, but also cultural activities and institutional actions) and common economic programmes (such as common infrastructure for the tourism or for the valorisation of the region's natural landscape). On the contrary, it is also possible that in the Euroregional area are mostly present organizations or institutionalised actors, which have a wider acting sphere than the local communities; in this case, it is obvious that also the surface characterised by the transfrontier cooperation will be wider. Instead, more and more wider will be the area of a third type of Euroregion: in this are developed above all macro infrastructures and cross-border agreements, which will guarantee true advantages to the involved populations and economies. A Euroregion can be more or less large as it is also possible, within the wider Euroregions, the presence of smaller transfrontier structures with specific tasks and duties, sometimes very different from the wider Euroregion's ones¹⁰⁷; the connections and the close relationships between these different types of transfrontier structures would form a sort of multilevel Euroregion.

The Euroregional structures show different characteristics both for what concerns the surface and for the involved internal or external networks; specific intertwined relations would be created not only between different political or economic classes, but also between different administrations as well as civil societies or social partners. In the smallest type of Euroregion the concentration of activities (above all economical) in a non-wide zone would establish a specialization in the area, while the presence of networks systems would improve the contiguity of firms and infrastructures, connecting each other. In the second type instead, the relations are between firms and institutions, establishing systems, differentiated by resources,

¹⁰⁶ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Processi di Istituzionalizzazione*, pp.2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Cfr. Ibid., p.4.

services and exchanged informations. This model of networks would be present above all within the Euroregion and would be so wide to generate a cooperation between operational organizations. In the last type, the leading players would be no more the single persons or the associations, because the structures and macro-structures Euroregion would be characterised by networks formed by large communities or villages as well as wide organizations or institutions. Moreover, these networks would connect not only the inner elements of the Euroregion each other, but would connect them also with the external elements, uniting the Euroregional structure with other national, international or global levels.¹⁰⁸ The presence of wide internal networks and close relations between transfrontier players, acting at the same time in a double level of representation, would be however a fundamental aspect for the survival of the Euroregion: in fact if through a common bottom-up lobbying towards the national decision-makers could be increased the chances to reach common objectives, creating a win-win situation for all involved actors, it is only thanks the close relations with the European Union that it possible to accede to European funds or economical programs like the ERDF or the Interreg programme¹⁰⁹.

3.2.2. Limits and obstacles to the institutionalization of permanent transfrontier structures

Impediments to transfrontier cooperation and therefore to the institutionalization of the permanent transfrontier structures (i.e. Euroregions) may have various sources; in the official documents and studies on transfrontier cooperation five of these main factors have been specifically highlighted:

- “The biggest problem has seemed to be the lack of a common legal framework: this aspect refers particularly to the construction of a (private or public) legal personality accepted in the both sides of the border. Moreover this legal personality is established within a certain national legal system (principle of the *loi unique*), to whom must be subjected also the cooperation partners of other countries. In fact the choice of the Member State, which will have the body’s headquarters of the EGTC, will have as consequence also the application of the

¹⁰⁸ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Processi di Istituzionalizzazione*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁰⁹ Cfr. Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „*Europaregionen*“, p.28-30.

national rules to all cases, not directly disciplined by Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 and by the acts establishing the EGTC (Convention and Statute). The biggest obstacles in this case are not only the presence and co-existence of different legal systems, but also the transfer of national tasks to a transnational authority, which always means for a country a restriction of its territorial sovereignty¹¹⁰. There is the fear that the central government could not support the initiatives for the propagation of the EGTC and for the Euroregions' constitution. These structures, designed to act outside the national borders, propose themselves as autonomous and direct interlocutors of the same European institutions; as a consequence the central government could consider this as a limit to its competencies and feel threatened in its own role as guarantor of the national unity in foreign politics. Another important point is the individuation of the national authorities in charge of the supervision of the proceedings for the constitution of the EGTC and with the control of the European rules for its right operation. These are a very complex and sensitive point, on which the experts are obviously working. Unfortunately the EGTC is a modern European legal instrument without any real application within the European Union, even if its utility will be probably tested in the next years. Therefore it is difficult to foresee which could be the real future problems from the operative point of view.

- Another important problem can be the lack of funding, more so in those states which do not receive EU funding such as the Interreg and PHARE CBC (the specific funds for the development of the cross-border cooperation within and at the borders of the European Union). A further problem is that remains in certain circumstances a lack of consistency and compatibility between different EU funding programmes; also this last aspect seems to be considered by the organs of the Community, which with the *Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006*, *Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006* and the *Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006* have opened a new programming and distribution of the European structural funds for the period 2007-2013¹¹¹. The replacement of the nine aims and six instruments of the old programming with three main objectives and three financial instruments have put to an end the disorders, concerning the compatibilities between the

¹¹⁰ Cfr. Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). *Die Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit*, p.19; Ferrara, Walter (2001). *La cooperazione transfrontaliera e le Euroregioni: la normativa europea*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.38-39.

¹¹¹ Cfr. Paragraph 2.5., p.47.

different EU funding programmes, even if it seems unworthy to reduce the difficulties for the poorest regions.

- A third problem are the differences in administrative competences of territorial communities or authorities; if the cooperation of local authorities is limited to their domestic competences, lack of similar competences across the border may seriously reduce the scope of co-operation. Moreover, as co-operation gradually increases, such issues as discrepancy in national legislation between neighbouring states and differences in administrative cultures may affect co-operation in a negative way. Only a number of “crossover points” in public or private law could compensate these transfrontier administrative and institutional imbalances; also here the new legal instruments introduced with the *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006* seem to assist in creating these crossovers.
- Other obstacles facing transfrontier co-operation include lack of experience in developing transfrontier co-operation (lack of trained personnel), the language barrier, low-priority given to transfrontier co-operation by local and regional authorities and political problems.
- For what concerns instead the goodwill to develop transfrontier co-operation between states, which are not members of the European Union, there is the possibility that they may be sabotaged by stringent visa requirements and very long waiting times to cross the frontier.”¹¹²

3.2.3. Euroregions and their place in the European Union of today

Euroregions are the final product of a process of transfrontier cooperation, which is in continuing evolution since decades; they are also no more a peripheral phenomenon within the territory of the European Union, but can be considered the pulsing core of the European integration. In fact they are at once:

- ““custodians” of (transfrontier) subsidiarity or better still “bearers” of the subsidiarity culture;
- indicators of (transfrontier) economic, social and territorial cohesion;

¹¹² Cfr. Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.142; cfr. *Report on the Current State of the Administrative and Legal Framework of Transfrontier Co-operation in Europe (2006 edition)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage www.coe.int/.../local_and_regional_democracy/Documentation/Library/Transfrontier_Cooperation/default.asp on the 25th April 2008, p.23.

- vectors of (transfrontier) intercultural dialogue
- fabrics of relations carried on in (transfrontier) synergy;
- key protagonists of (transfrontier) democratic governance;
- catalysts of genuine devolution and/or regionalisation and consequently of (transfrontier) partnership
- real-life settings of (transfrontier) solidarity”¹¹³

With the implementation of the European common market and the free circulation of persons, goods, wares and services since the middle of 1980s, the regional transfrontier cooperation (and also the Euroregions) has played a more and more important role in this process; all the involved actors have become so fundamental for the development of the European politics, that they have been integrated formally or informally in the Community.¹¹⁴ Their importance has also increased thanks to several contact points with European Institutions and organizations such as the Committee of the Regions or the Association of European Border Regions, as well as the Assembly of European Regions: for the Euroregions, these institutions represent the most suitable decision centres to lobbying and pursuing their own interests. Also the national level is interested in the institutional lobbying of the Euroregional structures, but whereas the Euroregions try to overcome the national borders and the close control of the central governments, the nation states still have some important competences and resources both in the field of cross-border infrastructures and in the legal system. Even if there is a lot of scepticism and latent conflict towards the Euroregions, which are seen by the nation states as a threat to their territorial integrity,¹¹⁵ the central governments will be forced to allow an increasing degree of autonomy to the association of regions, also in application of the principle of subsidiarity. In conclusion, the Euroregions are a fundamental “roof” for activities, contacts, relations and communications of their members. The roof of a two-storey building, where the ground floor with the foundations is given by the regional and local cooperation, the first floor by the collaboration at national level, while the top floor represents the European cooperation. The Euroregions are exactly this: structures deep rooted in the territory, with European ambitions but that will have to come to terms with national leaders.

¹¹³ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.198.

¹¹⁴ Cfr. Schellander, Harald (2007). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in einem Europa der Regionen. Eine theoretische Annäherung an das Kooperationsinstrument Euroregion* (Magisterarbeit), Wien, p.73.

¹¹⁵ Cfr. Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „Europaregionen“, p.88.

Organisation	
- amalgamation of regional and local authorities from both sides of the national border, sometimes with a parliamentary assembly; - cross-border organisations with a permanent secretariat and experts and administrative staff; - according to private law based on national associations or foundations from both sides of the border according to the respective public law; - according to public law based on international treaties which also regulate the membership of regional authorities.	
Method of working	
- development and strategic-oriented co-operation, no measures based on individual cases, - always cross-border-oriented, not as national border region, no new administrative level, - hub for cross-border relations; citizens, politicians, institutions, economy, social partners, organisers of cultural events etc., - balancing between different structures and powers on both sides of the border and with regard to psychological issues, - partnership co-operation, vertically (European, governmental, regional, local) as well as horizontally beyond the border - implementation of cross-border decisions at national level and according to procedures applicable on both sides of the border (avoidance of competence and structural power conflicts), - cross-border participation of citizens, institutions and social partners in programmes, projects and decision-making processes, - direct initiatives and the use of own resources as preconditions for help and support of third parties,	
Content of cross-border co-operation	
- definition of fields of action according to joint interests (e.g. infrastructure, economy, culture), - co-operation in all areas of life: living, work, leisure time, culture etc., - equal emphasis on social-cultural co-operation as on economic-infrastructure co-operation, - implementation of treaties and agreements and concluded at European level between countries to achieve cross-border practice, - advice, assistance and co-ordination of cross-border co-operation, particularly in the following fields:	
- Economic development - Transport and traffic - Regional development - Environmental protection and nature conservation - Culture and sports - Health affairs - Energy - Communications	- Tourism and leisure - Agricultural development - Innovation and technology transfer - Schools and education - Social co-operation - Emergency services and disaster prevention - Waste disposal and Public security.

Figure 1: Table summarizing the fundamental features of the Euroregional phenomena
(source: Gabbe, Jens (2005). *Governance and cross-border co-operation*, p.7).

3.3. Steps for the successful development of Euroregions

There are several different versions, concerning the steps for the success criteria in the development of cross-border integration and therefore of Euroregions, but the most complete and up-to-date it is the one proposed by Schmitt-Egner, consisting of two preconditions, two starting phases and nine main stages.

Preconditions:

- a degree of transfrontier structural interdependence (spatial interdependence, capital interdependence, infrastructure interdependence, ecc...)
- a degree of transfrontier cultural interdependence (past cultural area, historical roots)

Starting Phases:

- a degree of transfrontier (economic) transactions (wares, goods, persons and services) between border regions and individual actors involving individual actors with particular interests as well as through the border regions (as gates towards the national markets)
- a degree of transfrontier interactions and communications (between collective actors) in form of informations and ideas' exchange of regional common interests, of transfrontier interests' consultations, of a) negative (avoidance reciprocal dysfunction) and b) positive coordination (information addresses itself to common objective)

Main Stages:

- a degree of transfrontier cooperation (material interaction): problems solution for the mutual advantage through punctual and temporary projects as well as institutional and permanent cooperation
- a degree of interaction: as result of a permanent cooperation (informal transfrontier networks between individual and collective actors)
- a degree of institutional organisation as result of the interaction activity: development of common obliging rules and institutions, competent organs for the conflicts resolution and solution of common problems and tasks.

Formal and material degree of competence of the transfrontier institutions as precondition for the successful planning and implementation of transfrontier structures

- Formal degree of identity: identification and perception of a new acting unit through the population
- Material degree of identity: perception and utilisation of the transfrontier cooperation as transnational economic and social area
- Cultural or symbolic degree of identity: perception and utilisation of transfrontier cooperation as common transnational cultural area

- Transnational region as living area inwards: perception of the population and the activities of actors address themselves to a permanent development of this area, in which the contrasts between economy, work and environment are minimized and the synergies regarding these objective are maximized.
- Transnational regionalism as acting unit outwards in a network of horizontal cooperation with subeuropean (Meso) regions and vertical integration between transnational “bottom-up”- and European “top-down” perspective. The step from a small towards a larger area of transfrontier cooperation is based on wider synergic effects.¹¹⁶

In conclusion, the papers, the studies as well as the researches at the European level have made clear how the transfrontier cooperation and its institutionalisation are important for the future of the European Union; and in order to create the Community of tomorrow, the cross-border collaboration and its permanent structures must be not only supported from all the involved actors both at the supranational and national level, but also stimulated:

- “economically, with a stronger participation of private capitals and by readjusting flows and exchanges;
- administratively, by way of devolution and transfrontier administrative crossover points even where powers are differently apportioned on each side of the border;
- politically, through a more effective political will of decentralisation, regionalism, even autonomy at least in the administrative sense;
- Culturally, by encouraging regional identities and transfrontier collective representations;
- environmentally, through land use planning jointly controlled in a perspective of sustainable development.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Cfr. Schmitt-Egner, Peter (1998). „Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit“, pp.65-66.

¹¹⁷ Ricq, Charles (2006). *Handbook of Transfrontier Co-operation*, p.179.

4. Veneto and the project of an Upper-Adriatic Euroregion: the story so far

The considered area as future territory of the Euroregion, as it is also possible to see in the Figure 2, comprehends the regions of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Italy, Carinthia in Austria, the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar in Croatia as well as the Republic of Slovenia; this area, notwithstanding the belonging to four different countries, has notable common roots, resulting from a common living in a territory, which has been for centuries core of military expansions, objective of economic installations as well as political administration.



Figure 2: Map of the area involved in the Euroregional project (source: Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia www.regione.fvg.it)

In fact, if the Republic of Venice has dominated for almost 800 years (1000-1797) not only the area comprehending Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, but also the Istria and Dalmatia, the control of these territories was assumed later with the Campoformio Treaty by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Habsburgs ruled in Istria and Dalmatia till 1918, except a short period (1806-1813), while *the Serenissima* was annexed to the Italian Reign only in 1866. For what concerns the Croatia and

Slovenia, they remained under the dominion of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire from the Thirties of 1500 to the first years of XIX century, to come back after few years till the end of the World War I in 1918. After this historical introduction, it becomes clear, why this territory is more suitable than others to give birth to a permanent transfrontier structure; an Euroregion, which takes advantages of these common roots, but also of the differences present in the area, building and improving new forms of cross-border cooperation. Its main aim is the creation of a common living space, where the language, social, political and economical diversities could find common forms of collaboration, which are fundamental to face the challenges of the modern world as well as discover practicable solutions to common problems.

In the first part of this chapter, as possible basis for the institutionalisation of the Euroregion, will be analysed the last forms of cooperation activated in the area, from the end of the World War II to nowadays; the second part will deepen instead the legal, economic and political frameworks of the involved regions, relating them also with the future creation of a Euroregional structure. The last paragraph is a personal analysis of the problems concerning the realization of the project and its possible solutions. This chapter, introducing the considered area as well as the main actors, can be seen as the antechamber to the next one, which will treat more specifically the development of the project “*Euradria*”.

4.1. Cooperation in the Upper-Adriatic area

The first form of cooperation in this area goes back to 1965, when the so called *Trigon* was founded, i.e. an association without institutional structure, which had as main aim the promotion of the collaboration between Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Slovenia and Carinthia. Few years after, in 1969, was instituted the *Quadrigon*, the first interregional institutionalised organisation, formed by the members of the *Trigon* and the Western Croatia¹¹⁸. But the first true transfrontier organisation in this area was officially christened in Venice the 28th of November 1978; in the opinion of Strassoldo, “the Working Community Alpe Adria echoed the word *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, stressing in this way the role played by the German partners

¹¹⁸ Cfr. Toresini, Camilla (2005). *L'Euroregione quale strumento di cooperazione europea: l'impegno della RAFVG per superare le difficoltà di realizzazione*, in: *Governance della cooperazione transfrontaliera. Marema. Metodi e contenuti del management regionale*, anno XIV, n. 1 aprile 2005, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index_.php on the 25th April 2008, p.13.

as midwives”¹¹⁹. The original full members, besides the Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia, Slovenia and Croatia, were the Austrian *Länder* of Salzburg, Upper Austria and Styria, and the Italian region of Veneto. The working programme “reflected closely the Community’s stated goals and the setting up of a series of working committees for specific problems: the first concerned with the regional planning and environmental management, while the others dealt with transport, culture, science and sports, economy and tourism, agriculture, forestry, animal production and mountain economy, health and social affairs”¹²⁰. For what concerns the organization it consisted of “a Plenary Assembly of the heads of the member regions (*Länder*, Republics), setting the goals and taking all political implementations. The chairmanship of the Assembly, as well as of all Committees, rotates every two years. For a long time there was no standing Secretariat and no common budget: the organizational costs were sustained by each region”¹²¹. In a short time other regions applied to join the original group: to the west, Alpe Adria was enlarged to Lombardy, Trentino Alto Adige/*Südtirol* and the Swiss canton of Tessin and to the east, to the Austrian Burgenland and the Hungarian counties of Győr-Sopron, Vas, Zala, Somogy and Baranya (see figure 3).



Figure 3: Today's Working Community Alpe Adria (source: www.alpeadria.org)

¹¹⁹ Cfr. Strassoldo, Raimondo (1998). *Perspectives on Frontiers: The Case of Alpe Adria*, in: Anderson, Malcolm (Hrsg.). *The frontiers of Europe*, London, p.80.

¹²⁰ Strassoldo, Raimondo (1998). *Cross-Border Cooperation from the perspective of the ARGE Alpe-Adria. Empirical Findings*, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, p.174.

¹²¹ Ibid.

The wide success of this transfrontier initiative was given by the fact, that Alpe Adria

“was seen as a way to support the economic exchanges already underway by private initiatives as well as to ease business combinations and joint ventures. Another important interest concerned with the development of transports and communications, which, in an area characterised by natural obstacles and territorial difficulties, required not only huge investments, but also wide political capacities; features, that the regions could not sustain alone. But more than important developments in the economical and political fields, the Alpe Adria has produced a feeling of mutual knowledge and understanding, of goodwill and community among the highest officials and political leaders of the area, becoming a reality in the consciousness of ordinary citizens”¹²².

The next forms of cooperation took life only twenty years after; in fact in May 1998 were subscribed some Protocols of Transfrontier cooperation between the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Republic of Slovenia, concerning seven main fields: economic transfrontier cooperation, collaboration in the transport and communication field, collaboration in the work and social security, territorial planning and environment protection, border mountain passes, collaboration in the scientific and technological sector through the universities and the own research centres, protection of the minorities. An year after the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia signed a bilateral agreement and a Protocol respectively with the Istrian region and the *Land* of Carinthia; for what concerns the first Protocol it was decided that the collaboration should concentrate in the cultural, scientific, economic and administrative field as well as the presentation of common development projects to insert also in the programmes of the Community. The strategy comprehended also the improvement of the train-motorway infrastructural connections (Transeuropean Corridor n.5) as well as the maritime ones besides a tighter cooperation in the sectors of economy, environment, work and professional formation. Other aspects of collaboration concerned the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of Istria, cultural and scientific exchanges as well as the protection of the Italian minority in the region. Also with the Austrian Carinthia the sectors of reciprocal interest and collaboration were individualized in the economic activities and above all in the trade, in the promotion of contacts between the small and medium firms and the bilateral development of the labour market. Great consideration had the transport system,

¹²² Strassoldo, Raimondo (1998). *Cross-Border Cooperation*, p.174-175.

connecting the two regions and comprehending also in this case the Transeuropean Corridor n.5 and the Adriatic corridor. Moreover were included the agriculture, the protection of the environment and of the water resources, the territorial planning, the improvement of the tourism, the supporting of cultural contacts between the regions as well as the scientific research and the twinning between the local authorities.¹²³

But more important was the letter of intents, which was signed on 28th October 1999 during a meeting in Carinthia between the leaders of the regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, *Land* Carinthia and the Slovenian minister of economy. It foresaw the institution of a society called "*Senza Confini*" ("Without Borders"), acting as a cultural, economic, tourist and sportive centre in the core of the Alpine area. This macro region had as main objectives the improvement of the cooperation in the common areas of environment and energy, infrastructure and transport; among the other tasks the development of the economic and labour market sectors, as well as the valorisation of the cultural exchanges and human resources¹²⁴. In the year 2000 instead began two important transfrontier programmes with the Republic of Austria and Slovenia; the Interreg programme Italy-Austria had as main task the interregional collaboration between six regions: Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano/*Bozen* for the Italian side and the Austrian *Länder* Carinthia, Salzburg and Tirol. The strategy foresaw the integration of the transfrontier territory, developing in a sustainable manner the involved areas, the overcoming of the national barriers and of the peripheral conditions as well as the valorisation of the human resources. For what concerns instead the cooperation with the Republic of Slovenia the main aim was the support of sustainable development processes and the integration of the involved territories through transfrontier collaborations above all with the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia¹²⁵.

Moreover in 2001 the Austrian *Land Steiermark* started a neighbouring politics toward the South-East borders of the European Union with the main scope to support the development and coordination of activities in connection above all with the process of enlargement of the Community. An year after and precisely the 26th

¹²³ Cfr. Vespasiano, Carlo (2001). *Gli accordi di cooperazione transfrontaliera del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.153-172.

¹²⁴ Cfr. Ibid., pp. 153-154.

¹²⁵ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento di Programmazione Economico-Finanziaria 2005 (DPEF)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/NR/rdonlyres/355A6C53-E864-424B-A1DB-1A05B36B4099/0/DPEF2005.pdf> on the 25th April 2008, pp.185-186.

April 2002 was signed in Graz a Memorandum of Understanding for the cooperation on the initiative “EU-future region” (“*EU-Zukunftsregion*”); the involved regions were the Austrian *Bundesländer* Steiermark, Carinthia and Burgenland, the Italian regions Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, the Republic of Slovenia and Croatia and the Counties Baranya, Győr-Moson-Sopron, Somogy, Tolna, Vas und Zala in Hungary¹²⁶.

The strategy focused itself on the creation of a transnational working group with representatives of all involved partners, aiming the preparation and implementation of Interreg III B projects. The area concerning this cooperation would have been characterised by a relative high intensity interdependence above all in the free-time and economic sector (Austria and Italy are also nowadays the greater investors in Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary). There would not have been prevailing centres, but a polycentric built-up areas. Notwithstanding the general composition, the area would have been particularly heterogeneous thanks some factors:

- the partners would have been characterised by important differences for what concerns their status and their competences: in fact, Slovenia and Croatia are nation states (moreover the Slovenia has not subnational administrative units), the Austrian *Länder* and the Italian regions have almost similar functions and they are both comprehended in the NUTS II level, while the Hungarian counties are in the group of NUTS III and have limited resources and competencies to act in the international relations.
- the macro-region would have comprehended two functional parts with intensive interdependence, which could be more differenced:
 - Adriatic area (Western Croatia, South-West Slovenia, Carinthia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto)
 - Pannonian area (Hungary, Burgenland, Steiermark, North-East Slovenia and Central-Eastern Croatia)
- an interdependence between these two parts would have been possible only for some features (i.e. the transport connection or an economic cooperation).
- the Steiermark, not included in any of the two areas, could have been an actor in both.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Cfr. Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „*Europaregionen*“, pp.54-55.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

For what concerns the possible advantages and disadvantages of this cooperation it is important to consider the interests of the involved actors: for the Austrian and Italian regions there would have been above all economic interests (market chances with the EU-enlargement towards East). All partners saw in the participation of this EU-future region the possibility to overcome the disadvantages of several borders within a small area, taking position in the European regional competition as well as in the cooperation between centres. A common interest would have been given by the utilisation of the Interreg funds. The most important advantages would have been in the spatial proximity, in the several connections as well as in the possibility to work out common themes (transport, infrastructure, spatial planning and regional development). The disadvantages would have concerned instead the size and the heterogeneity of the area (and in consequence in the capacity to express common interests), in the different languages and administrative procedures¹²⁸. This project has never been implemented, reaching only the phase of preliminary talks.

However, this first try of interregional and transfrontier cooperation was important for the region of Veneto, which acted in the following years more actively in the field of cross-border collaboration: in fact the 22nd July 2004 the President of the region, Mr. Giancarlo Galan and the *Landeshauptmann* of Carinthia, Mr. Jörg Haider, signed a Protocol of Understanding. Main objectives were the implementation of 16 common Interreg projects (with an investment of 12,5 millions of Euro from the side of Veneto and 8 millions of Euro from Carinthia) as well as the improvement of the import-export relations and the development of the air and road connections between the two regions¹²⁹. Few months later was underscribed in Venice a bilateral agreement with the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia; the two regions threw themselves in a common project of cooperation, aiming to the creation of a structure for the transfrontier cooperation based on the public law, with legal personality and opened to the participation of Austrian, Slovenian and Croatian subnational levels. Thanks to this agreement were posed the basis for a future Euroregion, but until that moment the two regions decided to improve wide forms of voluntaries cooperation in fields of common competencies like the institutional regulations, economy, transport infrastructure, health, professional formation, public utilities' services, research and innovation. Moreover the two involved actors promoted a common action towards

¹²⁸ Cfr. Bauer-Wolf, Stefan (Bearb.) (2005). „*Europaregionen*“, pp.54-55.

¹²⁹ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1177 del 22/072004, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

the European Union to achieve the creation of a transnational organism with legal personality; in fact even if this bilateral agreement was based on the Convention of Madrid, the chance to implement an Euroregion was subordinated in the Italian law to a preventive bilateral agreement between the nation states of the involved regions, creating therefore several difficulties to the implementation of the future Euroregion. It is also important to notice the participation to this meeting of representatives for the economical groups, universities and local and regional institutions, which welcomed with enthusiasm the initiative¹³⁰. In 2005 started another form of cooperation in the above considered area: in fact in this year was implemented the program MATRIOSCA (*MANagement Tools, effective Relations for new Interregional Organisation aimed at Strengthening the Cooperation among Alpe Adria regions*), which proposed a consolidation of the territorial cooperation in the Alpin-Pannonic area comprehending the Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Carinthia and Steiermark, several Hungarian Counties, the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar in Croatia as well as the Republic of Slovenia (see figure 4).



Figure 4: Area involved in the MATRIOSCA project (source: www.matriosca.net)

¹³⁰ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1564 del 11/10/2004, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008; notwithstanding these interests the implementation project of the Euroregion involves in the present phase only the institutional level of the regional government.

This project should make possible the creation of an interregional agreement of wide geo-political size, inheriting the almost thirty-years old experience of the Working Community Alpe-Adria, based on the knowledge and mobility networks. It aims to the management of the new transfrontier, transnational and interregional programmes for the period 2007-2013 as well as the research of the chances to implement a new transnational institutional structure (i.e. an Euroregion)¹³¹. The MATRIOSCA project represents a further try to implement transfrontier cooperation in the considered area, but because of its geo-political and territorial wide size as well as to its being still in the initial phase, it concerns only in marginal matter the core of my work. Notwithstanding the participation at the programme introduced above, the region of Veneto has continued in the cross-border negotiations with its neighbouring regions; the 6th September 2005 there were in Venice the first transfrontier meetings with Jörg Haider, *Landeshauptmann* of Carinthia. In the opinions of the two leaders there were several obstacles for the creation of a common Euroregion, but there was also the idea that forward steps had to be taken through tangible actions and that if the common projects would have been approved, the implementation of a Euroregion would have come as a direct consequence ("We are regions, which are ready to do their part within our given set of possibilities and one of these is called Euroregion. The pessimists live history in a passive manner, the optimists make history. We are optimists"). The improvement cooperation between the two regions concerned in this case 33 projects, of which 23 financed by the Interreg Italy-Austria, 4 with the Interreg alpine area and 6 with Interreg CADSES. Another common idea, which came out from these transfrontier meetings was that the other big initiative born with the Working Community Alpe-Adria had a different role in comparison with the project of an Euroregion; in fact, the last one was a more innovative instrument, concerning above all the management of the European funds¹³². As consequence there was after few days from these agreements (22nd September) the meeting between the health councillors of Veneto, Carinthia and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The agreement underscribed in Klagenfurt had as objective the creation of a International Academy for the formation of health professionals; this project was not only a first concrete step towards a common

¹³¹ For more informations about the programme MATRIOSCA cfr. www.matriosca.net; see also Toresini, Camilla (2005). *L'Euroregione quale strumento di cooperazione europea*, pp.18-19.

¹³² Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1079 del 06/09/2005, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

permanent transfrontier structure, but also an important initiative, aiming to the creation of an international and interdisciplinary centre for the formation, improvement and refresher in the health sector. Moreover, the personnel trained in this structure could be engaged indifferently in the health sector of the involved regions¹³³.

In the February of the following year there was a trilateral meeting, in which was formalised for the first time a project of cooperation between the region of Veneto, Carinthia and Friuli-Venezia Giulia; this collaboration will be opened in a future to the Croatian Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar as well as to the Slovenian Republic. The subjects of the trilateral agreement concerned the transport and health sector, the tourism promotion, the culture and the scientific cooperation.¹³⁴

With the 2007 the interregional and cross-border collaboration between the regions became more and more active and frequent, not only thanks the new Interreg programme 2007-2013 Italy-Austria and Italy-Slovenia, which foresaw for the first time the implementation of the several projects under a “lead partner”, but also for the first trilateral Protocol of Collaboration signed on the 11th of January. With this meeting was institutionalised the core of the future Euroregion, which will comprehend in a future also Slovenian and Croatian subnational levels; the project involved for the moment only the two Italian regions and the Carinthia. The decision to proceed with a trilateral cooperation, but with the possibility to involve other regions or actors, was given by four elements: the advanced collaboration between the three regions, the difficulties to coordinate different levels of administration and autonomy as well as the fact, that the transfrontier cooperation interesting the Euroregional area, could be implemented only between Italy and Austria (in accordance with the position of the Italian Government); and this because the cooperation referred to the Outline Convention of Madrid and to the International Agreement of cooperation signed by the two countries. Last but not least, the possibility to create in short times the Euroregion, thanks the approbation of a European Regulation issuing the *European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)*¹³⁵. With this Protocol the partners bound themselves in creating of a

¹³³ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1192 del 22/09/2005, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

¹³⁴ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 406 del 21/02/2006, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

¹³⁵ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 45 del 11/01/2007, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

Working Group articulated in different themes, in conformity with the sectors of common interests (Art.1 par. “e”); this Working Group is formed by the Presidents of the several Administrations, the Councillors as well as the responsible regional officers and experts engaged by the parts (Art.2). Among the tasks the implementation of the Collaboration Protocol, the valuation of the state and prospective of collaboration as well as the outlining of priorities, formulation of proposals and realization of projects for the support of common interests’ initiatives (Art.3). For what concerns the interregional cooperation it focus itself in the following fields:

- yielding activities, with particular consideration to the handicraft, trade, the small and medium firms and the trilateral development of the labour market between Carinthia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, developing cooperation between enterprises and enlarging the export network between the three regions;
- transport and communication infrastructure connecting Carinthia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, and above all:
 - the constitution of a mixed Working Group, which would deepen the possible solution for a infrastructural connection between Carinthia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, respecting the needs of the three regions;
 - the pursuit of a tight activity of connection at the informative and operative level with the competent national organs with the main aim to strength the railway connections, the harbours and airports, and also in the area of the European Corridors 5 and Adriatic, through the international axis Pontebbana (Axis Adriatic-Baltic and Axis of Tauri);
- agriculture, comprehending the biological cultivation, farm holidays, animal production, rules for the products’ certification, valorisation of the natural mountain products;
- territorial protection and mountain development;
- civil protection, supporting common initiatives aiming to the protection of the local population in the case of dangerous events of natural or human origin;
- tourism, comprehended the natural one, developing synergic actions towards a common offer, addressed to the valorisation of the trilateral area to international level, also in collaboration with other nation states or regions;

- formation, with particular regard to the learning process of the languages spoken in the involved regions, and exchanges of mothertongue teachers as well as students;
- culture, promoting the contacts between the institutions, the entities and associations of the three regions, as well as the exchange in the ambit of expositions, exhibitions and the organisation of common events;
- the scientific research and the technological innovation, favouring the contacts between the Universities and the Research Centres;
- the social and health sector;
- the twinning between the local authorities and other associations(Art.4).

To reach these objectives the partners have bound themselves:

- to a coordinated utilization of the operative and financial instruments given by the European Union, with particular regard to the new period of programming of the structural funds 2007-2013;
- to a reciprocal information and a constant coordination both for what concern the relations with the European institutions and with the Associations, representing the regions at the European level;
- to the continuity of the cooperation within the Working Community Alpe-Adria, aiming to support the common interests of the involved regions and the safeguard of the several cultural identities of the European Union¹³⁶.

After a month there was a meeting between the health councillors of the three regions to approve the working programme in sight of the Euroregion creation; among the discussed themes there were the collaboration between the hospitals, the common formation of the personnel, the collaboration in the medical formation and training as well as the utilisation of the smart medical cards. But the most important step towards the creation of a common transfrontier structure was made the 21st June of the same year, when the representatives of Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia and the Croatian Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar have signed a formal Protocol for the future constitution of a *European grouping of*

¹³⁶ Cfr. *Protocollo di Collaborazione Trilaterale tra Land Carinzia, Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia e Regione Veneto*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvfg/export/sites/default/RAVFG/AT11/ARG8/allegati/Print_prot_trilaterale_senza_protocollo.pdf on the 25th April 2008, pp.2-7.

territorial cooperation (EGTC), representing the perfect institutional structure for the Upper-Adriatic Euroregion. Thanks to the EGTC the regions, through a unique transregional authority with law personality, would be able to organize and manage transfrontier cooperation programmes in several fields like the health and social services, culture, tourism and the protection of the linguistic minorities, innovation and research, territorial management, professional training, infrastructure and transports, energy, telecommunication and civil protection¹³⁷. In a further meeting in November only between the regional councils of Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Carinthia was improved the also just decided cooperation in the health matter. This trilateral meeting can be considered an anticipation of the Euroregion, currently blocked due to the inertia of the Italian government, which has not implemented either the Protocols of Madrid Convention or the Regulation n° 1082/2006. Another problem is the position of Slovenia, which took part to the meetings with Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, but has not yet signed the Protocol of Collaboration¹³⁸. Although there are differences in the process of institutionalisation, the final project foresees the involvement of all six actors; in fact, as has said the President of the Veneto region in a interview during the last political election “we inhabitants of Veneto feel at home in Trieste as well as in Ljubljana, in Klagenfurt as well as in Fiume¹³⁹. We know very well that a “northern problem” exists, but in this filed, the historical, cultural, economic and social area towards which we look is the North-East”¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁷ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 995 del 21/06/2007, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

¹³⁸ In a first phase, the Republic of Slovenia has preferred to continue its work within Alpe Adria, above all with the birth of the Matriosca project and with the possibility, bound to the creation of a much wider Euroregion, to have the head office in Ljubljana. During the collegial meetings the partners have already put attention to the difficulties, which could be born from the coexistence of several forms of cooperation; single regions could take part at the same time to several EGTC, but the experts are of the opinion that this could happen only if the cooperation structures should have different finalities and scopes.

¹³⁹ Fiume is the Italian name for the Croatian town of Rijeka.

¹⁴⁰ Cfr. Giani, Roberta (15 marzo 2008). *Galan difende l'Euroregione: io e Illy puntiamo a Est*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage of the “Il Piccolo” <http://ilpiccolo.repubblica.it/dettaglio/Galan-difende-l-Euroregione:-io-e-Illy-puntiamo-a-Est/1434439?edizione=Trieste> on the 25th April 2008; these affirmations are completely shared also by the Regional Council of Veneto, which supports continually their development.

4.2. Main actors involved in the Euroregional project

4.2.1 Legal Framework

Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia: As states the *AER Study on Regional Policy 2014+*

"in Italy there are fifteen regions with "ordinary" status while the other five (among these the Friuli-Venezia Giulia) have a "special" status recognized by the Constitution. Italian regions perform their functions through three main bodies: the Regional Council which exerts the legislative power and can submit bills to the national parliament, the Regional Committee which exerts the executive power and has overall administrative competences and the President of the Committee who leads the Regional Committee policies and officially represents the region. The work of the three main bodies is supported by a complex of departments and services which carry out administrative functions. The competences of the Italian regions are mentioned in Article 117 of the Constitution: regions have exclusive legislative powers in any matter not expressly reserved to State law and not included in concurrent legislation. The following domains are considered under concurrent legislation: international relations with other regions and with the EU, external trade, education, health-protection, land-use regulation and planning, etc. Italian regions are financially autonomous and they can conduct their own foreign policy being allowed to sign agreements with other regions or states. However, the draft agreement has to be transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that, within thirty days, expresses its view"¹⁴¹.

For what concerns the field of interregional transfrontier cooperation there is always a tight control from the side of the national organs; for example the Convention of Madrid in 1980 was signed, subordinating the implementation of transfrontier cooperation projects to two preconditions: the signature of a bilateral agreement between the States of the involved regions and the implementation of the cooperation only between neighbouring regions or between regions comprehended in an area of 25 kilometres from the border¹⁴². But a first solution to this legal

¹⁴¹ *AER Study on Regional Policy 2014+*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.aer.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/MainIssues/CohesionRegionalPolicy/AER-Study-FutureRegPolicy-2014-FIN.pdf on the 25th April 2008, pp.28-29.

¹⁴² Cfr. Zeller, Karl (2006). *Die rechtlichen Grundlagen für eine verstärkte Zusammenarbeit in der Europaregion Tirol*, in: Laimer, Simon M. M. (Hrsg.). *Euregio – quo vadis?*, Bozen, pp.68-69; see also Bartole, Sergio (2005). *Ipotesi di Euroregione: soluzioni istituzionali alternative e differenti quadri di riferimento*, in: *Le Regioni*, anno XXXIII, n. 6, dicembre 2005; Caretti, Paolo (2003). *Potere estero e*

impasse has been offered by a sentence of the Constitutional Court in 2004, which has refused the conflict of attributions raised from the Italian government in relation to the underscribed transfrontier cooperation agreements, in the ambit of the Interreg III A Italy-Austria, between the *Länder* Carinthia, Salzburg and Tirol and the regions Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. In fact the Constitutional Court has established that “to the transfrontier cooperation agreements signed to implement a European regulation and the following implementation deeds can not be applied the dispositions of the Madrid Convention, because in this case must be implemented legal instruments addressed to the utilisation of European funds, having their subject in European sources with direct application in the internal law of the State.”¹⁴³ Therefore the limitations cited above can not be applied also to a permanent transfrontier cooperation, which has among its main aim the management of European funds or financial programmes. Moreover, the Italian government has not subscribed till today the Protocol as well as the Protocol no.2 to the Madrid Convention: both instruments are important for the realization of cooperation projects through the implementation of Euroregions. With the ratification of the two Additional Protocols to the Madrid Convention, the constitution of true autonomous organisms of cooperation with countries which are non-EU members should be simplified: in fact, the Outline Convention has been planned in the ambit of the Council of Europe, which makes possible the cooperation with a greater number of countries in comparison with the members of the European Union (47 countries against 27). With regard to the first Additional Protocol, two ratification bills have been recently presented, the first one to the House of Deputies and the second one to the Senate of the Republic (April and May 2008).

For what concerns the EGTC, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Frattini, during his last visit in Friuli, has promised that the Italian government will put into effect in short time the European Regulation institutive of the EGTC. The Regulation allows the territorial authorities of the Member States to make transfrontier cooperation agreements for the implementation of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation, leaving open also the possibility for future participation of third countries. Moreover, Minister Frattini has promised to care for the political position of Slovenia, which in the last period has manifested the intention to undersign transfrontier cooperation

ruolo “comunitario” delle Regioni nel nuovo Titolo V della Costituzione, in: *Le Regioni*, a. XXXI, n. 4, agosto 2003.

¹⁴³ Cfr. Toresini, Camilla (2005). *L'Euroregione quale strumento di cooperazione europea*, pp.16-18.

agreements for the future constitution of a Euroregion with Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

- Carinthia: In the AER Study on Regional Policy 2014+ is stated that

“Austria is a federal state. It is divided into nine *Länder* which have their own distinctive identity. An important clause in favour of the *Länder* is enshrined in Article 15 of the Constitution: as far as a matter is not expressly assigned to the Federation for legislation and also execution, it remains within the *Länder*’s autonomous sphere of competence. A special feature of the Austrian federal system is the “indirect federal administration”: in so far as no Federal authorities exist, the *Landeshauptmann* and the *Land* authorities subordinated to him exercise the executive power of the *Bund*. The organs created as regional authorities will thus functionally act as federal authorities. As part of their duties in the context of indirect federal administration, the *Länder* implement federal laws in the following areas: trade and industry regulations, railway, air and waterway transport, hazardous waste, certain areas of environmental protection, water management, etc. On the other hand, *Länder* have few legislative powers. *Länder*’s legislative competences consist of *Land* constitution, *Land*’s budget laws, electoral laws, organisation of local authorities, physical planning, building matters, protection of nature and landscape, protection of animals, tourism, hunting and fishing, sports, housing promotion, some professional laws, service code for and staff representation rules of civil servants and employees of *Land* and local authorities. However, Article 10 of the Federal Constitution assigns more and the most important-legislative powers to the federation. As far as the international relations are concerned, the *Länder* can conclude treaties with neighbouring states and international or interregional agreements with their counterparts subject to public law (Art.16)”¹⁴⁴.

It is also true, that the Article 17 gives to the *Länder* the chance to conclude agreements of transfrontier cooperation based on the private law. Differing from the Italian government, the Austrian Republic has signed and ratified both the Madrid Convention (without limitations) and the two Protocols: as consequence all Austrian regions can act at the international level with other European subnational actors. Notwithstanding this aspect, the Austrian *Bundesländer* have a small treaty-making power; their competencies are limited not only from the point of sight of the contents, but also by the wide rights of interference of the Federation as well as by the limitation in the chose of the possible counterparts (States or federal States which

¹⁴⁴ AER Study on Regional Policy 2014+, p.17.

have a treaty-making power). Another limitation is the impossibility to assign to international organs the power to issue binding decisions, concerning the sovereign powers of the *Länder*¹⁴⁵. Also in Austria as in Italy the rules for the implementation of the Regulation 1082/2006 are under adoption.

- Slovenia: the Slovenian Constitution issued on 25th June 1995 has outlined a very centralised legal system: the local self-government is based on the municipalities and on the “other local authorities” (Art.138), while there are not local authorities that are similar to the regions. The national government strictly controls not only the legality (Art.144) and the adequacy of the municipalities’ activities (Art.140), but also their ascription are very limited to the local questions, which can be ruled in autonomous manner by the municipality and concern only the municipality’s population. These can decide in autonomous manner to connect each other and form in this way upper self-government authorities, or provinces, to govern and carry out local questions of wider importance. In accordance with them the central state can transfer several issues of own competence under the new decision power of the enlarged local authorities; however these Provinces are only an association of municipalities without a clear financial structure. Thanks to the law on the local self-government (issued in 1993 with following modifications) there was a multiplication of the municipalities (from 68 to 193) and the following weakening of their role. This fragmentation has had negative consequences also for the transfrontier cooperation, making scanty the financial resources of the local authorities. For what concerns the Madrid Convention, the Republic of Slovenia is the only one among the Euroregional actors that has signed and ratified it, both Protocols and that has just adopted the Regulation 1082/2006. Anyway, notwithstanding neither the Constitution nor particular legislations limit the transfrontier cooperation, the fragmentation and the financial problems discussed above as well as the lack of a regional level are really big obstacles for the implementation of cross-border

¹⁴⁵ Cfr. Hattenberger, Doris (2001). *Basi giuridiche della cooperazione transfrontaliera dei Bundesländer austriaci con riguardo al diritto del Land Carinzia*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.71-72; see also Müller, Thomas (2006). *Verfassungs- und völkerrechtliche Eckpunkte für eine interregionale grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit aus österreichischer Sicht*, in: Laimer, Simon M. M. (Hrsg.). *Euregio – quo vadis?*, Bozen, pp.75-83; Zago, Moreno (2001). *La fattibilità di un'Euroregione per la zona frontaliere tra la provincia di Udine, la Slovenia e la Carinzia*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Progetto di sviluppo e conoscenza reciproca Italo-Slovena*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.61-81.

collaborations with other subnational authorities¹⁴⁶. A first sign of change there was in 1999 when the Slovenian Parliament issued the law on the incentives for the regional sustainable development, which has represented a first step towards the implementation of regional development programmes as well as a first administrative adaptation to the cohesion programmes of the European Union¹⁴⁷.

- Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar: for what concerns the transfrontier cooperation, there are not specific constitutional norms, even if the articles about the local self-government (128-131) and international relations (132-134) can be considered important. The Constitution issued on 22nd December 1990 has created a centralised model of local government, which is valorised above all by the Counties (*Zupanije*); these act as in the Napoleonic model with functions of connection and control over the autonomies. Also for what concerns the international relations, the articles 132-133 outline relations centre-periphery, based above all on the prominence of the centre. Among the several Conventions, Protocols and Regulations on transfrontier cooperation only the Madrid Convention has been signed and ratified by the Croatian Republic. To strengthen the process of democratization at the local level, three agencies for the local democracy have been instituted in Croatia, under the shield of the Council of Europe and the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities. These agencies, recognized by the Croatian government, act to implement four types of programmes, concerning the local activities and the participation at the territorial level. In particular they pursue:
 - the promotion of the local democracy (training for the deputies elected in the local administration);
 - the promotion of the socio-cultural exchanges (exchanges between cities, meetings between cultural associations)
 - the promotion of the information (implementation of the transfrontier communication)

¹⁴⁶ Cfr. Zago, Moreno (2001). *La fattibilità di un'Euroregione*, pp.63-64.

¹⁴⁷ Cfr. Race, Aljoša (2001). *Aspetti giuridico-istituzionali della cooperazione transfrontaliera della Repubblica di Slovenia con i paesi confinanti*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.73-85; see also Race, Aljoša (2001). *Gli enti locali in Slovenia nella prospettiva della cooperazione transfrontaliera con i paesi confinanti*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Progetto di sviluppo e conoscenza reciproca Italo-Slovena*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia pp.23-36.

- promotion of initiatives for the economic development (logistic support for the foreign partners, creation of databases for the investments, relations with the economical actors, promotion of the tourism).

The activities of these agencies are integrated in several European programmes: a further step towards a full membership in the European Community¹⁴⁸.

4.2.2. Economic Framework

	Surface	Inhabitants	Living Density	GDP (Millions of ECU)	Administrative Division
<i>Veneto</i>	18.399 km ²	4.699.950	265,9 inh./km ²	127.930,6	7 Provinces and 581 Municipalities
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>	7.858 km ²	1.204.718	159,0 inh./km ²	30.331,9	4 Provinces and 219 Municipalities
<i>Carinthia</i>	9.536 km ²	559.891	59,7 inh./km ²	13.069,6	10 Districts
<i>Slovenia</i>	20.273km ²	1.997.590	99,2 inh./km ²	35.790,7	210 Municipalities
<i>Istria</i>	2.813 km ²	209.850	74,6 inh./km ²	3.034,4	10 Towns and 31 Municipalities
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>	3.590 km ²	305.339	85,1 inh./km ²	3.668,7	14 Towns and 21 Municipalities

Table 1: Surface, Inhabitants, Living Density, GDP, Administrative Division of the involved regions and state- year 2004 (source: Regione del Veneto-Statistiche Flash, Anno 7-Novembre 2007)

Before to start an economic analysis of the involved area, I have gathered in a table the most important informations concerning dates of general character, as the surface, the inhabitants, the living density, the GDP (*Gross Domestic Product*) as well as the administrative divisions of the involved regions; this introduction has the purpose to outline the main geo-political characteristics of the considered area, giving also a representation of the non-economic features (See table 1). In the following tables, instead, are proposed some series of pure economic data,

¹⁴⁸ Cfr. Scarciglia, Roberto (2001). *Profili giuridico-istituzionali della cooperazione transfrontaliera nell'esperienza della Repubblica di Croazia*, in: Gasparini, Alberto (a cura di). *Problemi e prospettive dello sviluppo di Euroregioni sul confine nord-orientale italiano: il caso del Friuli-Venezia Giulia*, Collana Interreg, Isig, Gorizia, pp.87-98.

concerning the Euro per inhabitant as well as the Purchasing Power Parities¹⁴⁹ per inhabitant and their percentages in comparison of the EU average. These surveys refer to three different time series (1995, 2000, 2005) and comprehend, other than the involved regions' data, other information concerning both EU-27 and EU-25; moreover I have inserted the values of the North East (the district in Italy comprehending the region of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia), Austria and Croatia to underline possible differences or similarities between the regional (or macro-regional) and the national data. For what concerns the Croatian regions they are regrouped in three macro areas, i.e. the North-Western, the Adriatic and the Central-Eastern Croatia; for this work the statistics of the first two have peculiar significance.

Euro per inhabitant				
	time	1995	2000	2005
<i>European Union (27 countries)</i>		14627.8	18995.9	22400.2
<i>European Union (25 countries)</i>		15560.8	20160.6	23601.8
<i>North East</i>		18553.5	25726.7 p	29000.7
<i>Veneto</i>		17807.4	25069.2 p	28643.3
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		17461.5	23358.6 p	27263.0
<i>Austria</i>		23051.6	26261.1	29797.3
<i>Carinthia</i>		19384.6	21813.2	25361.8
<i>Slovenia</i>			10618.9	14120.3
<i>Croatia</i>				
<i>North-Western Croatia</i>				
<i>Central-Eastern Croatia</i>				
<i>Adriatic Croatia</i>				

Table 2: Euro per inhabitant (source: Eurostat)

¹⁴⁹ Purchasing power parity (PPP) is a theory which states that exchange rates between currencies are in equilibrium when their purchasing power is the same in each of the two countries. This means that the exchange rate between two countries should equal the ratio of the two countries' price level of a fixed basket of goods and services. When a country's domestic price level is increasing (i.e., a country experiences inflation), that country's exchange rate must depreciated in order to return to PPP; for more informations see the Internet Homepage of the University of British Columbia-Sauder School of Business at <http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/PPP.html>

Euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average				
	time	1995	2000	2005
<i>European Union (27 countries)</i>		100.00.00	100.00.00	100.00.00
<i>European Union (25 countries)</i>		106.04.00	106.01.00	105.04.00
<i>North East</i>		126.08.00	135.04.00 p	129.05.00
<i>Veneto</i>		121.07.00	132.00.00 p	127.09.00
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		119.04.00	123.00.00 p	121.07.00
<i>Austria</i>		157.06.00	138.02.00	133.00.00
<i>Carintiha</i>		132.05.00	114.08.00	113.02.00
<i>Slovenia</i>		53.04.00	55.09.00	63.00.00
<i>Croatia</i>			23.07 s	31.04.00
<i>North-Western Croatia</i>			29.05.00 s	40.04.00
<i>Central-Eastern Croatia</i>			17.06 s	21.07
<i>Adriatic Croatia</i>			22.05 s	29.09.00

Table 3: Euro per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average (source Eurostat)

Date of extraction: Wednesday 27 August 2008

Last Update: Monday 19 May 2008

Legend: s (Eurostat estimate)

p (provisional value)

From the first two tables emerges clearly that the first three regions, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Carinthia are the richest, even more than the European average; in particular, if the Italian regions are also lined up with the data of their area of belonging (North-East), the *Land* of Carinthia is quite below the national average. For what concerns the Slovenia it presents not particular encouraging data, above all if we consider that it refers to a national value; also for the three macro-regions in Croatia the taken data are under the European average. This must not surprise, considering the fact that they are independent states since only fifteen years (1991) as well as the consequences of the civil war, in which they were involved. But what really surprise are above all the percentages in the second table, which register two contrary phenomenons: in fact, if for the three richest region the period 2000-2005 is a period of economic crisis with lower values in the last year of survey in comparison with 2000 (Veneto from 132.00 to 127.09, Friuli-Venezia Giulia from 123.00 to 121.09 and Carinthia from 114.08 to 113.02), for the other actors is a period of greater economic development and growth. Incredible are above all the data of Croatia, of which macro-regions increase a lot their economic potential (Central-Eastern Croatia from 17.00 to 21.07, Adriatic Croatia from 22.05 to 29.09 and the North-Western Croatia from 29.05 to 40.04!). Also the next two tables seem to underline the same trends:

Purchasing Power Parities per inhabitant				
	time	1995	2000	2005
<i>European Union (27 countries)</i>		14627.8	18995.9	22400.2
<i>European Union (25 countries)</i>		15326.8	19940.5	23318.2
<i>North East</i>		21728.0	27370.1 p	28037.0
<i>Veneto</i>		20854.3	26670.6 p	27691.4
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		20449.2	24850.8 p	26357.1
<i>Austria</i>		19852.6	25359.0	28852.1
<i>Carinthia</i>		16694.6	21063.9	24557.4
<i>Slovenia</i>		10620.2	14968.7	19461.8
<i>Croatia</i>				11192.4
<i>North-Western Croatia</i>			10122.9 s	14393.3
<i>Central-Eastern Croatia</i>				
<i>Adriatic Croatia</i>				10667.3

Table 4: Purchasing Power Parities per inhabitant (source: Eurostat)

Purchasing Power Parities per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average				
	time	1995	2000	2005
<i>European Union (27 countries)</i>		100.00.00	100.00.00	100.00.00
<i>European Union (25 countries)</i>		104.08.00	105.00.00	104.01.00
<i>North East</i>		148.05.00	144.01.00 p	125.02.00
<i>Veneto</i>		142.06.00	140.04.00 p	123.06.00
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		139.08.00	130.08.00 p	117.07.00
<i>Austria</i>		135.07.00	133.05.00	128.08.00
<i>Carinthia</i>		114.01.00	110.09.00	109.06.00
<i>Slovenia</i>		72.06.00	78.08.00	86.09.00
<i>Croatia</i>			42.07.00 s	50.00.00
<i>North-Western Croatia</i>			53.03.00 s	64.03.00
<i>Central-Eastern Croatia</i>			31.08.00 s	34.05.00
<i>Adriatic Croatia</i>			40.06.00 s	47.06.00

Table 5: Purchasing Power Parities per inhabitant in percentage of the EU average
(source: Eurostat)

Date of extraction: Wednesday 27 August 2008

Last Update: Monday 19 May 2008

Legend: s (Eurostat estimate)

p (provisional value)

The next series of economic data has the main scope to propose a comparison between the involved regions and state in the number of local units and employed persons in three of the most important fields for the regional level: manufacturing, transport, storage and communication as well as research and development. The first one represents the basis of the economy with its several specialisations; among these I have selected the two sectors, which have in the considered regions the highest number of local units: they are the food, beverages and tobacco

manufacturing for Carinthia and the manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products for the other regions. The second field is an important value to estimate the circulation of goods in the territory, while the last one represents a clear sign of the investment in the future. Unfortunately, for what concerns the Croatian Counties the main part of the data has not been found; here are available the number of local units and persons employed in the manufacturing and transport, storage and communication sectors only for the year 2005. In the research and development sector are instead available only the values at the national level for the period 2000-2004.

Number of local units – Manufacturing					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		615556	593714	578481	563071
<i>North East</i>			145309	138897	136147
<i>Veneto</i>		78074	66841	63642	62074
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		12903	12170	12122	11851
<i>Austria</i>		30222	33206	34792	34754
<i>Carinthia</i>		2138	2287	2447	2467
<i>Croatia</i>					11101
<i>Istria</i>					807
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					866
<i>Slovenia</i>		19025	18797	18398	17731

Table 6: Number of local units – Manufacturing
(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

Number of persons employed – Manufacturing					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		4822563	4775644	4676099	4604955
<i>North East</i>			1373988	1344733	1330478
<i>Veneto</i>		644514	645403	622037	604840
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		136049	127576	132822	132468
<i>Austria</i>		630022	629858	619636	618985
<i>Carinthia</i>		37156	38156	38376	37922
<i>Croatia</i>					243325
<i>Istria</i>					14332
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					17361
<i>Slovenia</i>		246589	250579	239059	232114

Table 7: Number of persons employed – Manufacturing
(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

Number of local units – Manufacture of food products; beverages and tobacco					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		76311	76629	79369	76723
<i>North East</i>			15928	14863	14487
<i>Veneto</i>		7706	5254	5532	5037
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		1313	1231	1174	1183
<i>Austria</i>		6413	6347	6389	6354
<i>Carinthia</i>		429	412	407	410
<i>Croatia</i>					
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		939	998	1018	1031

Table 8: Number of local units – Manufacture of food products; beverages and tobacco
(source: Eurostat)

Number of persons employed – Manufacture of food products; beverages and tobacco					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		434832	447599	460535	460814
<i>North East</i>			131819	132080	135275
<i>Veneto</i>		43711	43483	46183	44146
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		10122	9418	9393	9033
<i>Austria</i>		79008	77892	76589	75381
<i>Carinthia</i>		4346	4294	4104	4152
<i>Croatia</i>					
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		22100			18788

Table 9: Number of local units – Manufacture of food products; beverages and tobacco
(source: Eurostat)

Number of local units – Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		113368	107330	111933	107698
<i>North East</i>			27793	28384	27303
<i>Veneto</i>		19583	12610	11997	11960
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		2309	2279	2287	2178
<i>Austria</i>		3728	4272	4731	4813
<i>Carinthia</i>		269	329	382	392
<i>Croatia</i>					
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		4783	4692	4606	4440

Table 10: Number of local units – Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated products
(source: Eurostat)

Number of persons employed – Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		812035	821201	839137	839794
<i>North East</i>			232845	240004	241693
<i>Veneto</i>		104076	107307	111195	110087
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		24401	24478	25089	25533
<i>Austria</i>		97818	100148	101198	102702
<i>Carinthia</i>		4219	4235	4674	4898
<i>Croatia</i>					
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		39368	41556	40400	40669

Table 11: Number of persons employed – Manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products (source: Eurostat)

Date of extraction: Wednesday 27 August 2008
Last Update: Monday 27 August 2008

In the table 5 and 6 are included the data concerning the number of local units and employed persons in all types of manufactures; in the first research on the Eurostat database have been extracted thirteen different series of values, regarding as much as types of manufacturing: manufacture of foods products, beverages and tobacco; of textiles and textile products; of leather and leather products; of wood and wood products; of pulp, paper and paper products as well as publishing and printing; of coke, refined petroleum products and nuclear fuel; of chemicals, chemical products and man-made fibres; of rubber and plastic products; of other non-metallic products; of basic metals and fabricated metal products; of machinery and equipment; of electrical and optical equipment; of transport equipment. Among these I have selected for every region only those, which have had the highest values in the last year of the survey (2005)¹⁵⁰; this choice has been suggested by two elements: from one side the necessity to analyse only the fundamental sectors, on which the economy of the considered regions it is based and on the other side to refer to the last values, putting in evidence only the present trends in the economic process of the involved actors. As it has just been written above, the results have pointed out how the most important sector for Carinthia is represented by the manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco (sign of the also nowadays great importance

¹⁵⁰ More data on the Eurostat Homepage at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL as well as on the Crostat Homepage at http://www.dzs.hr/default_e.htm

for this Austrian *Land* of the primary sector), with 410 local units and 4.152 employed persons in 2005, while for the regions of Veneto (11.960 local units and 110.087 employed persons), Friuli-Venezia Giulia (2.178 local units and 25.533 employed persons) and the Republic of Slovenia is the manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products (4.440 local units and 40.669 employed persons). The Croatian Counties instead, notwithstanding a good developed manufacturing sector (807 active entities in Istria and 866 in Primorje-Gorski Kotar), seem to be specialised also in other two sectors, i.e. the wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles, motorcycles and personal and household goods (2169 local units in Istria and 2663 in Primorje-Gorski Kotar) as well as the real estate, renting and business activities (1853 in Istria and 1647 in Primorje-Gorski Kotar). But a more important aspect is the number of employed persons: in fact, in Istria in the 807 local units of its manufacturing sector are employed almost the same number of persons (14332) employed in the sum of the other two sectors quoted above (14398). Similar are the data concerning the employment in the other analysed County (17361 persons in the manufacturing sector, 15196 in the wholesale and retail trade and 6366 in the real estate one). For what concerns instead the *Land* of Carinthia, the economical data underline also a strong presence of local units in the manufacture of wood and wood products (production connected to its primary sector) as well as of basic metals and fabricated metal products. The Veneto, in addition to the strong manufacture in the field of metal products, has an high textile (7548 local units with 71514 employed persons) as well as of machinery and equipment production (6120 local units); these three branches represent the 41% on the total local units involved in the manufacturing sector, making clear the prevalence of the second (industrial) sector in Veneto. In Friuli-Venezia Giulia more than a good manufacturing production of metals products exist two important sectors concerning the manufacture of wood and wood products and of electrical and optical equipment, respectively with 1454 (12,2%) and 1461 local units (12,3%). These data point out the presence in the region of a good economic equilibrium between the first two sectors of production (the agriculture and industrial ones). A wider equilibrium among the several sectors of manufacturing production can be found in Slovenia: here at the second place after the manufacture of basic metals and fabricated metal products there are the manufacture of pulp, paper and paper products as well as publishing and printing (1822 local units); the manufacture of wood and wood

products (1631 local units), of electrical and optical equipment (1630 local units) and of machinery and equipment, involving 1474 units. From the six tables above and from the further data reported in these pages can be deduced several informations: first of all the industrial core in the Euroregional area is given by the production of Veneto; the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Republic of Slovenia represent the two actors with a more equilibrated economic process, both with a good industrial and primary sector development. Notwithstanding the number of local units involved in the manufacture of food products in Carinthia are twelve times less than in Veneto (410 against 5037), they represent in the economy of the Land an average double in comparison with the one of the Italian region (16% against 8%); but notwithstanding this also the Carinthia has a good industrial sector. From the available data concerning the Croatian Counties is also possible to understand the good development of the industrial sector in Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar, even if it is not the field with the greater number of local units.

In the next two tables are reported instead the data on transport, storage and communication fields; they concern above all the land, air and water transports as well as the transports via pipelines.

Number of local units – Transport, storage and communication					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		175445	172196	218266	169833
<i>North East</i>			45073	89623	44690
<i>Veneto</i>		17406	17195	63569	17224
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		4034	3688	3572	3591
<i>Austria</i>		18759	21289	22220	22666
<i>Carinthia</i>		1446	1468	1482	1494
<i>Croatia</i>					4504
<i>Istria</i>					513
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					602
<i>Slovenia</i>		11044	10606	10181	9653

Table 12: Number of local units – Transport, storage and communication
(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

Number of persons employed – Transport, storage and communication					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		1158870	1176398	1189219	1188955
<i>North East</i>			235380	218601	238019
<i>Veneto</i>		97384	93272	87858	96204
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		27233	25656	21607	23543
<i>Austria</i>		243174	244565	243713	234630
<i>Carinthia</i>		14841	13214	13387	12757
<i>Croatia</i>					79187
<i>Istria</i>					3070
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					9933
<i>Slovenia</i>		51335	53013	51069	51552

Table 13: Number of persons employed – Transport, storage and communication

(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

Date of extraction: Wednesday 27 August 2008

Last Update: Monday 27 August 2008

It is interesting to see that in Veneto between 2004 and 2005 there was a drastic reduction of almost 40.000 local units involved in the transport, storage and communication field; this is an extraordinary value, above all if it is considered that only in Slovenia there was in the same period a reduction of units (but of almost 500 elements), while the others actors have improved their presence in the sector. Always for what concerns the region of Veneto it is also important to notice that in its 17224 units were employed almost the half of the employed persons of the entire North East (i.e. Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Trentino Alto-Adige/Südtirol). The data concerning the Friuli-Venezia Giulia and the Carinthia put in evidence two very different trends: from one side in the Italian region after five years of crisis in the sector of the transport, with a more and more reduction of the involved local units, there was in 2005 an increase in the number of elements and employed persons; on the other side the Carinthia has experimented a continuous increment in the amount of local units, but at the same time the decrease in the number of persons employed in the sector, maybe sign of a greater rationalization of resources in this field. Also the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar present relatively low data, even if the number of employed persons seems to indicate a well developed sector. Also here as in the other economic areas, the leading actor is the region of Veneto, thanks above all to its size and its specialisation in the industrial sector.

The last two tables regard the number of local units as well as the number of employed persons in the most important area for the future of the here considered actors; in fact the sector of research and development represents the only way through which can be revealed and successively activated new forms of productions. It permits to build the economy of the future, piloting not only the choices of the economic class, but also of the political elite; the primacy of a determinate actor is based on its capacity to predict the future development of the economy, intending the global economy and no more the regional, national or European ones. The territories, determinated to maintain a relevant position in the strategic international sectors of future, must to develop innovation if they want to remain reference actors in the most advanced fields. In the economic literature the role of the investments in research and development is recognised as essentially and has been demonstrated that the productivity increases in proportional manner to the increment of expenditure in the sector research and development. Moreover, the objectives of Lisbon foresee that the two third of the expenditure for the research and development must be financed by the industrial sector¹⁵¹. The tables 14 and 15 are accompanied by two maps concerning the regional employment in high-tech sectors and the human resources in Science and Technology (HRST); as for the research and development also the high-tech sector is a good indicator to understand the economic development of the considered actors. In fact the high-tech represents the leader sector above all in the most developed countries, because is characterised by a low level of concurrence and just for this allows large profits. The economy in the present globalized world is guided by the high-tech sectors, whose products have the higher demand ratio.

¹⁵¹ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento di Programmazione Economico Finanziaria 2007 (DPEF)*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/NR/rdonlyres/4A972B26-2037-4086-8F85-D397E51F83BA/0/DPEF2007vol1DCR91.pdf> on the 25th April 2008, p.20.

Number of local units – Research and development					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		9380	10478	11508	12027
<i>North East</i>			2161	2324	2420
<i>Veneto</i>		636	718	781	803
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		212	235	285	328
<i>Austria</i>		131	543	541	618
<i>Carinthia</i>		2	11	14	16
<i>Croatia</i>		140	141	230	
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		318	356	396	485

Table 14: Number of local units – Research and development
(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

Number of persons employed – Research and development					
	time	2000	2002	2004	2005
<i>Italy</i>		23011	24670	26489	27776
<i>North East</i>			4615	5001	5094
<i>Veneto</i>		989	1252	1192	1310
<i>Friuli-Venezia Giulia</i>		653	652	722	678
<i>Austria</i>		2528	4409	5065	5964
<i>Carinthia</i>			39	48	116
<i>Croatia</i>		11666	13366	15159	
<i>Istria</i>					
<i>Primorje-Gorski Kotar</i>					
<i>Slovenia</i>		1946	1687	2330	3022

Table 15: Number of persons employed – Research and development
(source: Eurostat; Crostat)

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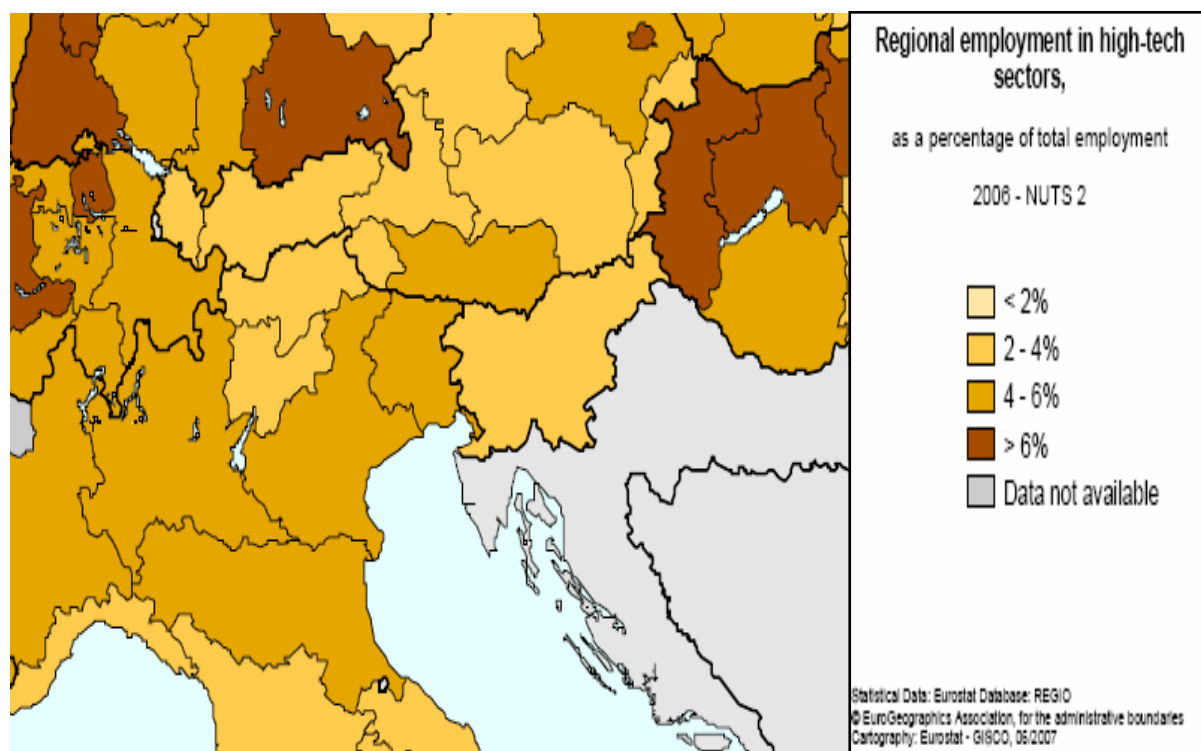


Figure 5: Regional employment in high-tech sectors as a percentage of total employment
(source: Eurostat)

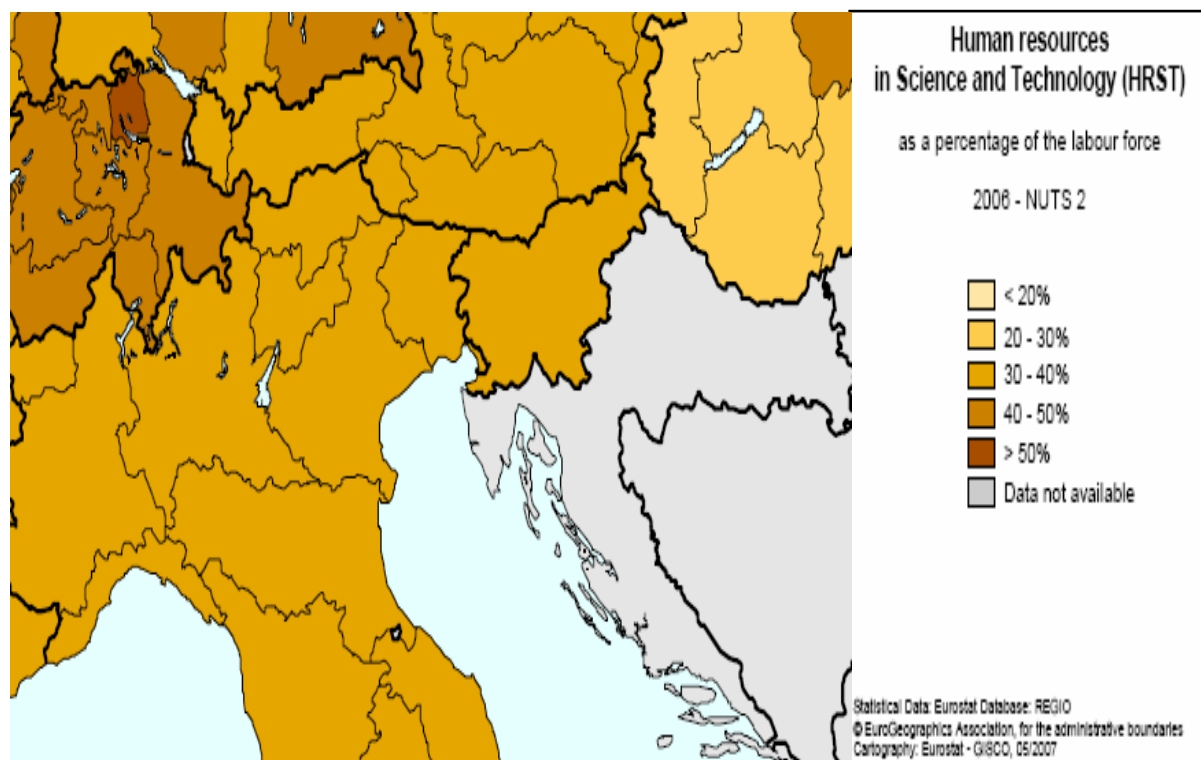


Figure 6: Human resources in Science and Technology (HRST) as a percentage of the labour force
(source: Eurostat)

The data, emerging from the above tables, present a paradoxical situation: in fact notwithstanding the Veneto has a number of local units involved in the research and development double than Slovenia (803 contra 485), this has three times the number of employed persons (3022 contra 803). The result is that in Veneto there is an average of 1,6 person for each local unit, while in Slovenia this average is of 6,2 persons for unit; this value is exceeded only by Carinthia, which employs an average of 7,25 persons in each of its 16 local units. From these values can be deduced that the most developed sector of research and development is in Slovenia (and this supports also the good economic growth of the last years), while the Austrian *Land* has based its strategy on a concentration of research centres. On the contrary, the Veneto presents a non-optimal situation, where the great number of local units corresponds to few employed persons, outlining therefore an underdeveloped sector characterised by a great dispersion. Also the data of Friuli-Venezia Giulia are not exciting, with its 328 local units and the 678 employed persons (average of 2,06 persons for each unit). The values concerning the Republic of Croatia show how both the number of local units and employed persons in the research and development sector increased in the analysed period; notwithstanding the lack of more present data this is certainly a good signal. The first map puts in evidence few differences with the above data, above all for the Republic of Slovenia, which is the only one among the actors of the Euroregional area with an average lower than the 4% in the regional employment in high-tech sectors (see Figure 5). For what concerns the Human resources in Science and Technology as a percentage of the entire labour force all actors are comprehended in the target 30-40%.

Concluding, the future Euroregional area is quite homogeneous under several aspects: very important is the industrial development, which is predominant in almost all the involved actors; only the *Land* of Carinthia presents a greater development of the primary sector in comparison with the other partners. Also the data concerning the transport, storage and communication field put in evidence very similar process of territorial presence. In the analysis of the research and development values there were quite positive replies, even if these have pointed out a better strategic management in Slovenia and Carinthia than in the Italian regions. Very similar data and also conclusions for the regional employment in high-tech sectors as well as for the human resources in Science and Technology. It is clear that the region of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, followed by the Austrian *Land* of

Carinthia, are the richest region in the considered area, but it is also true that in these last years there was a greater economic growth in the Republic of Slovenia as well in Croatia. Based on these disparities, it is possible to prefigure the birth of a “multi-speed” Euroregion, but it is more probable that the future developments will be built on more cohesive economic processes.

4.2.3. Political Framework

- Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia: notwithstanding these two regions have been guided in these last years by different political elites (a right coalition in Veneto and a left one in Friuli-Venezia Giulia), with different programmes for the inner politics, they presented themselves at the European level with the same ideas and future projects. The incentives, that these regions have given in the past decades to the transfrontier cooperation have been evident:, from the Working Community Alpe Adria to the series of bilateral, trilateral contacts as well as agreements with the other Adriatic actors. It is clear that within the promotion of the cross-border cooperation there is for these regions also the protection and improvement of the own economic interests, but it is also true that this is not the only aspect. In fact, the support and the demand for a permanent transfrontier structure goes over the protection of the economic interests; from a pure economic point of sight the implementation of a Euroregion is not necessary. The bilateral and trilateral agreements as well as the protocols of understanding could be enough adequate to reach the aims. This implies that the transfrontier structure has other objectives, both political and social; this could be easily demonstrated by the involvement in the meetings between the counterparts of several representatives of the civil societies like universities and associations. The Euroregion represents the perfect way to overcome the limits and the obstacles constituted by the nation states and act together at the European level, reaching and supporting common interests as well as obtaining funds to build common projects. This policy has surfaced not only in the political declarations and programmes, but also in the political activities of both regional Councils. The biggest obstacle at the political level remains the inertia of the central government in the implementation of the European regulation.

- Carinthia: the motivations reported above can be worth also for the *Land* of Carinthia; but in the opinion of certain streams of thought, notwithstanding the region has been for decades an important element for the improvement of the transfrontier cooperation, it has not embraced the idea as well as the policy of the Euroregions. By these streams the support given to the Working Community Alpe Adria has not been translated in the same support for the implementation of the Euroregions after the collapse of the Communism. On the contrary has been developed a strategy of networking, which till recent years has blocked every try to create transfrontier political institutions. At the basis of this strategy there are historical elements of a radicated regional sovereignty and identity. However, notwithstanding the decline of the Working Community, the transfrontier cooperation has deepened and enlarged its fields of activity; this process has also been complemented by a change in the involved actors. Today the transfrontier activities are implemented by local managers and important political figures and leaders and in this process the Carinthia is living an important transformation; in fact the intensity of the ethnic conflict between German-speaking groups and Slovenian-speaking groups is diminished and has been replaced by Alps-Adriatic ambitions¹⁵². The development of this new strategy has among its elements, both for Carinthia, Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, the participation to several forms of cooperation as the MATRIOSCA project.
- Slovenia: for what concerns the Republic of Slovenia, there is a more and more common sensation that this is no more interested in a active participation in the interregional and cross-border cooperation. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia these initiatives represented, for at that time federal republic, important opportunities to demonstrate the own (limited) international legitimacy. The cooperation with the Carinthia, Friuli-Venezia Giulia or Trentino Alto Adige/Südtirol were fundamental elements in the approach to the European Union, which represented in those years the greater aspiration for Slovenia. But today the Republic of Slovenia, because of its independence, aims to disregard these forms of cooperations, trying to demonstrate to be different from the

¹⁵² Cfr. Langer, Josef (2003). *Le Euroregioni tra nuovi orientamenti economici e vincoli storici: Carinzia – Friuli-Venezia Giulia – Slovenia*, in: *Euroregione. Il regionalismo per l'integrazione europea*, anno XII, n. 3-4 dicembre 2003, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index_.php on the 25th April 2008.

Austrian or Italian regions. However, because the lack of a subnational level within the Slovenian territory and of the economic weakness of the Slovenian local authorities, the national government is obliged and above all interested in the intensification and improvement of good relations with the neighbouring regions. These are nowadays of strategic significance for Slovenia, not only for the importance of the future development in the economic, cultural, scientific relations between the local authorities, but also for the creation of strong communication and transport networks as well as for the strengthening of the fundamental initiatives for the future European integration¹⁵³.

- Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar: the transformation process of the government form in Croatia has reached a further phase of consolidation of the democratic principle and participation to the European institutions. Thanks this, the initiatives of transfrontier cooperation can develop themselves following the standards of the member states of the European Union. Moreover, there are no more reserves on the participation of Croatia to the European projects as well as on the implementation of the transnational cooperation between non-neighbouring municipalities and local authorities, the transeuropean one between big cities and inwards between urban nets, prefiguring a step-by-step insertion process in the European Union¹⁵⁴.

4.3. Feasibility of a Euroregion in the Upper-Adriatic area

Legal Framework				
	Austria	Croatia	Italy	Slovenia
<i>Signature and ratification of the Madrid Convention (1980)</i>	+	+	+/-	+
<i>Signature and ratification of the Protocol n°1 (1995)</i>	+/-	-	+/-	+/-
<i>Signature and ratification of the Protocol n°2 (1998)</i>	+/-	-	-	+/-
<i>Implementation of the rules of the Regulation 1082/2006</i>	+/-	--	+/-	+
<i>Signature of bilateral agreements on transfrontier cooperation concerning organizations with legal personality</i>	+	-	+/-	-
<i>Similar competences of local authorities on both sides of the border</i>	+	+/-	+	-

¹⁵³ Cfr. Race, Aljoša (2001). *Aspetti giuridico-istituzionali*, pp.80-81.

¹⁵⁴ Cfr. Scarciglia, Roberto (2001). *Profili giuridico-istituzionali*, p.98.

Political-administrative Framework				
	Austria	Croatia	Italy	Slovenia
<i>Non-centralized State (federal or highly regionalized), characterised by wide competences to the local authorities</i>	+	-	+	--
<i>States, which also provide transfrontier relations as competence of the local authorities</i>	+	+/-	+	-
<i>States, which consider the activities of the own territorial authorities in the cooperation field as support of the own foreign policy (European)</i>	+	-	-	-
<i>"Cold" borders, accepted both from the States and the populations</i>	++	+/-	++	++

Economic Framework				
	Austria	Croatia	Italy	Slovenia
<i>Local authorities with good financial capacity</i>	+	+/-	+	-
<i>Important involvement to Interreg and/or Phare-CBC programmes</i>	++	++	++	++
<i>Recent past characterized by the presence of "filter borders" (trade exchanges, transfrontier workers) with positive effects on both sides of the border</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>High degree of economic integration, characterized above all by relevant aspects of complementarity</i>	+	+	+	+

Cultural Framework				
	Austria	Croatia	Italy	Slovenia
<i>Common language or diffuse knowledge of the neighbouring languages in both sides of the border</i>	+	+/-	+/-	+
<i>Common historical evolution</i>	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
<i>Traditions of cooperation activities</i>	++	++	++	++

Table 16: Recapitulation of the legal, political-administrative, economic and culture frameworks of the actors involved in the future Euroregional area (source: Cfr. Zago, Moreno (2001). *La fattibilità di un'Euroregione per la zona frontiera tra la provincia di Udine, la Slovenia e la Carinzia*, p.81)

Legend: ++ very positive situation
+ positive situation
+/- neither positive nor negative situation
- negative situation
-- very negative situation

The main problems to the implementation of a permanent transfrontier structure in the Upper Adriatic area are under the legal aspect the lack of signature to the Protocols of the *European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation*

between *Territorial Communities or Authorities* by the side of the Italian and Croatian governments; moreover the first one has imposed at the moment of the ratification of the so called Madrid Convention, that “the Italian territorial authorities empowered to conclude the agreements and arrangements covered by this Convention must, unless they are directly adjacent to a foreign State, be situated within 25 km of the border”¹⁵⁵. Also the Austrian and Slovenian governments have imposed some limitations, which however do not obstacle the cooperation. The ratification of the above mentioned Protocols should simplify the constitution of true autonomous organisms of cooperation also with countries, which are non-Eu members: in fact, the Outline Convention has been planned in the ambit of the Council of Europe, which makes possible the cooperation with a greater number of countries in comparison with the members of the European Union (47 countries against 27). Among the biggest legal-administrative problems there are also the lack of subnational level within Slovenia and the fact that Croatia is not a member of the European Union. On the base of these premises, is not easy to suppose a unique legal instrument, which could regroup in the same institutional structure different legal systems as well as diverse administrative traditions; but thanks to the *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)* both the cooperations between regional authorities and nation states (Art. 3.1.) and between entities of Member and non-Member States ((16)) are possible¹⁵⁶, even if it depends how and when these rules will be adopted. For what concerns the economic framework, the other sector with more possibilities to create obstacles to the cooperation, could rise some problems in the management of the European financial flows, which could not be sufficient for a wider area as the one considered above. But it is also true, that a Euroregion will be able to receive wider funds from the European institutions as well as at the same time to attract greater private and international investments. Another consequence could be an excessive competition for the obtaining of the funds between economic actors as well as industries and firms within the Euroregional area: here a possible solution could be the implementation of common commercial strategies for the inner market as well for

¹⁵⁵ Cfr. the Internet Homepage of the Council of Europe
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeDeclarations.asp?NT=106&CM=1&DF=&CL=ENG&VL=1>

¹⁵⁶ Cfr. *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006*.

the external one, reducing in this way the concurrence among the actors through a wider cooperation in the logistic and infrastructure services as well as a greater specialisation of the production chain. However, the true basis of cooperation could be given only by the culture and political frameworks, representing on one side the feelings of the population, built through centuries of common living and radicated in the past, and on the other side the intentions and plans of the political elites, which are obviously projected in the future. If all these aspects are present, the Euroregion comes as natural and direct consequence.

5. Proposal for the implementation of a new institutional actor: the “Euradria” Project

In the previous chapters more than one models of Euroregions¹⁵⁷ have been presented; in particular those along the German-Dutch border have been analysed as well as the forms of cooperation between the Swiss Confederation, France and Germany. While, in the first case, the transfrontier cooperation has been managed through a series of Euroregions, in the Upper Rhein area has been implemented an organization based on more than one level. In fact, here acts the Upper Rhein Euroregion, which has among its main tasks the resolution of problems through the cooperation with regional and national organs, like the regional transport policy or the regional economic policy. Within it there are the *Regio Trirhena* and the *Pamina*, which take care of the cooperation at the local level as the preparation and implementation of specific Interreg programmes or the day to day diffusion of the transfrontier cooperation. More and more interesting is the presence of the *Nachbarschaftsgespräche* (neighbouring talks) in the city of Basel, which have as main task the problems resolution of a city, of which peripheries extend in French and German territory. From the above examples, it is possible to obtain some general informations such as that:

- it is possible to begin with small size Euroregions and permit the future participation of other actors;
- the transfrontier cooperation along a border could be organized in a horizontal way, i.e. with several Euroregions, each one close to the others;
- the transfrontier cooperation along a border could be organized in a vertically way with the presence of organizations, acting on different aspects of cooperation in conformity to the possibility of management at the regional (national) or local level;
- generally the cooperation is more continue and felt in a different manner in the small size Euroregions, where it is managed above all at the local level¹⁵⁸.

As in the Upper Rhein area also the future Upper Adriatic Euroregion should be organized through institutional multilevels and different operative strategies. In fact,

¹⁵⁷ See paragraph 3.1.1.

¹⁵⁸ Cfr. Pasi, Paolo (2001). *Quale Euroregione per la zona frontaliere*, pp.52-53.

as points out Ferrara, a transfrontier policy must be at the same time a sectorial and global policy, must act through adequate phases to the several operative ambits and to the diversities of the border situations as well as must to search an adequate involvement of the state institutions, leaving at the same time a wider liberty of action and initiative to the local communities¹⁵⁹. All these features could be applied also to the “*Euradria*” project; this model of Euroregion, which will be better explained and deepened in the following paragraph, has been developed and published on several papers by Alberto Gasparini; as it is possible to see in the figure 7 it is formed by three different Euroregions, with own areas and spheres of influence.

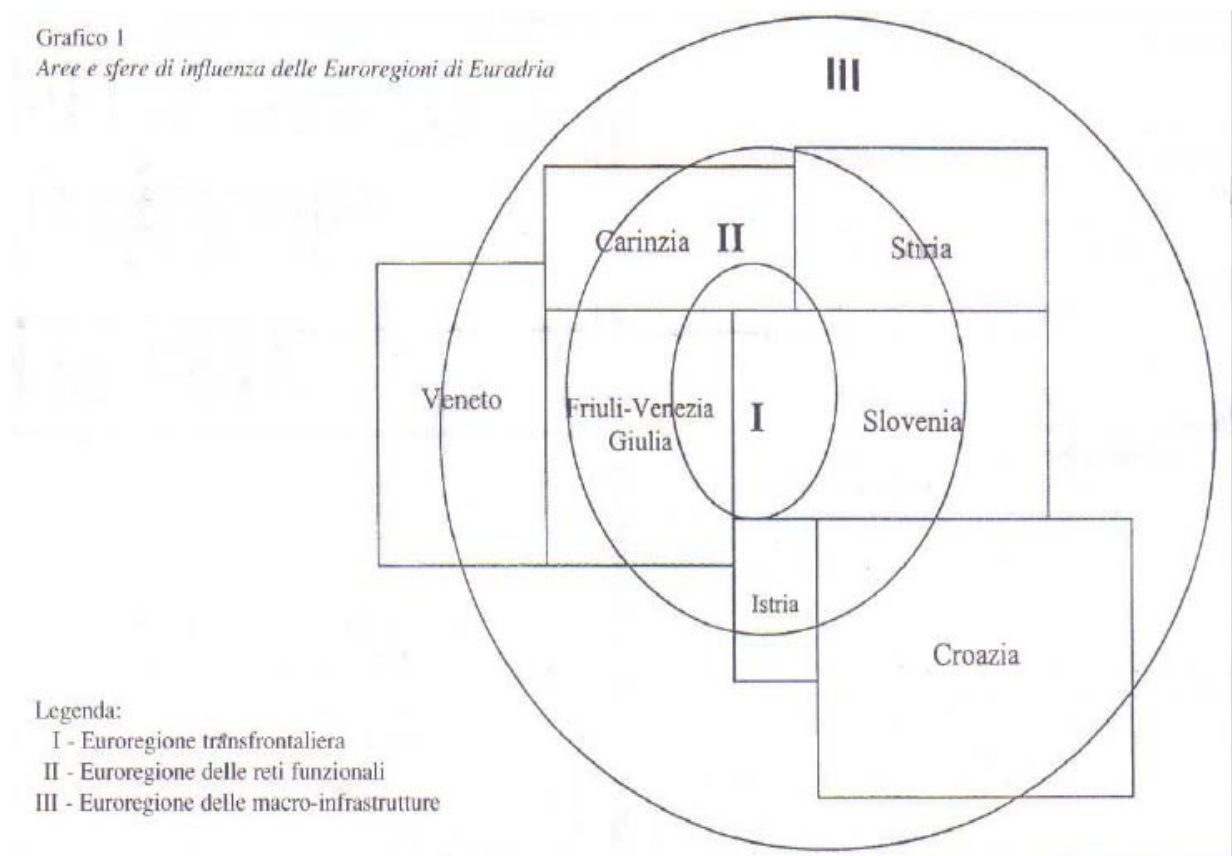


Figure 7: Areas and spheres of influence of the Euroregions in *Euradria*
(source: Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Progetto per le Istituzioni di Euradria*, p.1).

The first concentric circle (*Cross-border Euroregion*) aims to plan a context, and therefore to create the conditions in which cooperation between the populations on either side of borders becomes an increasingly normal part of everyday life. The second concentric circle (*Euroregion of functional networks*) has the general

¹⁵⁹ Cfr. Ferrara, Walter (2001). *La cooperazione transfrontaliera e le Euroregioni*, p.29.

objective of facilitating the formation of an economic, social and cultural space between players (private companies, local bodies, associations, public institutions), in which they will find a useful environment for the functioning of privileged action networks. The third and widest concentric circle (*Euroregion of macro-infrastructures*), comprehends areas with the general objective of facilitating cooperation within a strategic macro-economic space¹⁶⁰. The proposal for the future Euroregion, which I will discuss in these pages, will be based on the institutional and strategic structure of the Gasparini's project, but with several differences as well as modifications, as consequence of the last developments of the transfrontier cooperation process in the involved area. This project has as its main purpose the discussion of how *Euradria* should be, how it should act, which should be the role of its institutions and what characteristics should have the transfrontier cooperation in an area in which the Euroregional structures should support the civil society, but not substitute it. It is also clear that the legal framework, on which will be built the *Euradria*, would be given by the *Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006* and the following creation of a *European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)*.

The relations between the three types of Euroregions carry out above all two functions, i.e. the pre-requirement and the context. With the first one is supported the consideration that every one of the *Euradria* Euroregions are the pre-requirement for the existence of the other two; in fact, if does not exist a transfrontier cooperation (Cross-border Euroregion) this can be obtained from the outside through infrastructures, which make easier the transfrontier exchange, and through relations between institutions and firms, supporting a wider network of neighbouring contacts. But if there is already a transfrontier cooperation (basis for the cross-border Euroregion), this must be inserted in a macro-infrastructures system (Euroregion of the macro-infrastructures) and in a wider economic-cultural and social system (Euroregion of functional networks), permitting to the same transfrontier cooperation to take advantage of the globalisation aspects and transforming them in advantages.

The function of context is exercised instead only by the Euroregion of the macro-infrastructures and the Euroregion of functional networks; so the macro-

¹⁶⁰ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Progetto per le Istituzioni di Euradria*, in: *Euroregione. Il regionalismo per l'integrazione europea*, anno XII, n. 3-4 dicembre 2003, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index.php> on the 25th April 2008, p.1; cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*.

infrastructures can also touch only in marginal way the transfrontier area, but offering at the same time lots of different types of transport (air, sea, land transport), permitting the creation of more and more wider hinterlands as consequence of the offers presented by the transfrontier areas. For what concerns the context of the Euroregion of functional networks, it creates a task environment both for the activities and for the players, acting within the transfrontier region: this zone offers models of efficiency and visibility for the activities of players, acting in an area wider than the transfrontier one¹⁶¹.

5.1. The “Euradria” project

5.1.1. The Cross-border Euroregion

The main objective of the Cross-border Euroregion is the creation of context and conditions, because the cooperation of the populations on this side as well on the other of the borders becomes a daily accepted practice. The cooperation must take advantage of the spatial continuity of these areas and transform the border in a more and more virtual line, put there for national reasons, but overcome by the everyday life. Therefore the main aim of the Euroregion is the support of the activities, the feelings and the relations, which need a spatial continuity. This encourages the cooperation in the daily activities (above all in the economic, but also in the social ones) and in the cultural as well as sportive formation, transforming in this way the collaboration in a unique, special and primary element.

The area of the Cross-border Euroregion is, as it is possible to see also in the Figure 6, astride the borders, between Italy, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia or better Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia, Slovenia, Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar. In this first phase of cooperation the Municipalities of the first and second zone (the “red zone” in the figure 8 has only a demonstrative character) should be included.

For what concerns the public administrations, the implementation of forms of collaboration in a so small territory should take some advantages like the savings, as consequences of the common organization of health, infrastructural, road, sportive and cultural services. From the point of sight of families and single people, the advantages should concern the work opportunities (transfrontier labour market)

¹⁶¹ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Progetto per le Istituzioni di Euradria*, pp.2-4.

and more quality and savings in the cost of the everyday life. Also for the firms should be more advantages above all with a wider products and raw materials market. Moreover, the investments in the tourist sector or in the valorisation of the local productions could take advantage to similar potentialities, present on the other side of the border¹⁶².



Figure 8: Area involved in the Cross-border Euroregion

The above considered area can be also divided in more than one transfrontier subsystems; if in the Gasparini's original project the created micro-regions of transfrontier collaboration were six¹⁶³, in the above "red zone" can be much more. New forms of cooperation will be created everywhere the municipalities on one side and on the other of the border will consider a transfrontier collaboration with the neighbouring counterpart as fundamental. In some parts this cooperation could involve only municipalities of two nation states (i.e. along the border between Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Slovenia or between Slovenia and the two Croatian regions), while in others more states could be concerned, as in the area between Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Carinthia or between Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia and

¹⁶² Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, pp. 196-236

¹⁶³ Ibid., p.203.

the Republic of Slovenia. To these forms of primary and local cooperation the highest degree of liberty and flexibility must be left, because it must be a bottom-up process, demanded from the local municipalities for the local municipalities. In fact, only these can be acquainted with the real necessities or problems of the persons living in the area; moreover, a top-down strategy could result negative also for the different needs and expectations of local communities, covering a very wide and variegated territory. Therefore must be the municipality the main institutional actor, which must exert the administrative competences bound to the satisfaction of the population needs, in conformity with the principle of subsidiarity. But it is also true, that very often the municipalities are too small and fragmentised to exert with efficacy their own functions. As consequence, the only institutional solution to obviate to this problem should be the creation of associated forms of municipalities, reaching in this way that “critic mass”, which could render the public participation more effective and efficient (similar to the Dutch model). The alternative should be the dispossession of the local authorities of their functions and their transfer to an upper institutional level: this should be able to exert them, but at the same time it would be more distant from the citizens¹⁶⁴.

In this area are important not only the administrative and political functions of the involved communities, but also the cooperation in the economic ambits. As it has just been written above, there are different types of territory in the considered area, with own characteristics, needs and problems. Just for this the transfrontier economic collaboration could change its basis processes from zone to zone or from community to community. For example in the mountain areas the cooperation could focus on the high mountain tourism or in the structure for the formation of personnel; this could bring with it a greater development of the handicraft activities as well as of the industries bound with the tourism. At the same time would be important the development of cultural initiatives focused on the reciprocal confront between the different cultures involved in the project and a common valorisation and protection of the local environment. In the flattish area could be developed initiatives focused on

¹⁶⁴ Cfr. Russo, Francesco (2008). *Euroregione sì, Euroregione no*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.francescorusso.it/2008/02/29/euroregione-si-euroregione-no/> on the 25th April 2008; cfr. also Toresini, Camilla (2006). *Euroregione e cooperazione internazionale. L'esperienza di cooperazione transfrontaliera della Regione Friuli Venezia Giulia* (Atti del Convegno “Euroregione e cooperazione internazionale” tenutosi a Rovigo il 5 ottobre 2005), downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.fvg.it/rafvig/export/sites/default/RAFVG/AT6/ARG4/allegati/euroregioneEcoopInternazOttobre2005.pdf> on the 25th April 2008, p.64.

the farmers culture as well as on the wine production; also here could be possible to implement activities for the tourism bound to the territory as farm holidays or national parks. Other important aspects concern the trade and the development of the tertiary sector as well as the business and professional formation; this area is naturally in close relation and connection with the Adriatic one, where in addition to the tourist sector could be improved the ambit of the infrastructures and of the small-medium industry, connected also with the harbours. Here the harbour system (Venice, Trieste, Monfalcone, Koper, Rijeka) has high-differentiated potentialities and advantages, but also a greater complementarity; the competition could be important to face better the challenges coming from the global system, but at the same time should be developed complementary synergies to improve the specialisation and dimension. Another important sector could be given by the high-technologies, which could be applied to the industry, to the economic production, but also become an important sector of specialisation, giving birth to wider forms of pure and applied research¹⁶⁵.

The institutionalization, as consolidation of the above forms of cooperation involving the considered territories, would be therefore a fundamental and obligatory step towards the creation of a true Euroregion. This should be given by several elements:

- it should involve already existing structures, improving however their functional complexity
- in the political and administrative institutions should be incorporated elements of the civil society as social, economic and cultural groups.

From these premises it is possible to suppose the implementation of two organs:

- The “*Secretariats*” with the main aim to publicize the Euroregional area and its major actors, making in this way clear and transparent the decisional process as well as its realisation. This visibility would be obtained through the exchange of projects, of budgets as well as of opinions and their variations. They should become a sort of local information databases and just for this be present in every association of municipalities; among the advantages the fact that they would not be too much expensive, they would limit the construction of permanent and too

¹⁶⁵ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, pp. 208-231.

specific structures and could create multi-task poles, where could be concentrated all the most important functions for the local communities.

- The “*Local Assembly*” would play the role of main organ in every association of municipalities, regrouping these also in wider institutionalised area (like the mountain area or the central one as well as the Adriatic region); it is also possible that this could become the Parliament of the entire cross-border Euroregion, where every association of municipalities sends its own delegates. This Assembly should give a political support both to the integration actors and to the Secretariats, should express consultative valuations as well as be the acquaintance of the citizens to the problems of the Euroregional area and permit the vote of their representatives.¹⁶⁶

5.1.2. The Euroregion of Functional Networks

In this Euroregion the involved area would not be formed by a continuity of central and peripheral built-up zones as in the cross-border Euroregion, but by a spider web of relations between organizations (private firms, local authorities, public institutions and so on), which would develop reciprocal relationships, becoming in this manner contact points of different networks. This means that there would be as many networks as the number of involved resources and informations (economic activities, administrative as well as cultural actions). At this level of cooperation also the relations would be managed no more by single persons, but by organizations; these would be the only ones able to manage the production and the labour market as well as the macro events and cultural activities at different levels. This Euroregion would aim from one side to the formation of a economic, social and cultural space among the same Euroregional actors, in which they could find a more adequate ambit for the development of privileged networks; to the other side instead the objective would be the obtainment of the greatest advantages from the superimposition of the two Euroregions¹⁶⁷.

As it is also possible to see in figure 9 (the “yellow zone” has only a demonstrative character) the involved area would be much wider than in the first Euroregion; here main actors would be the Italian Provinces, the Austrian Districts and the Slovenian Provinces (or better associations of municipalities) situated along the borders; for

¹⁶⁶ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, pp.235-236.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., pp.237-245.

what concerns Croatia, where there are not subnational levels similar to the Italian Provinces or the Austrian District, the local communities or their associations not comprehended in the first or second zone, but also far-off from the borders, would be involved.



Figure 9: Area involved in the Euroregion of Functional Networks

The Euroregion of functional networks, as it has just been explained above, would be based on a integrated system of relations and connections between actors of different provenience; it would be given by formal and informal networks, in which would be realised that system of economic conveniences between firms and institutions collocated in a territory astride different nation borders. It would create a privileged and contiguous market for the firms, with several advantages for what concerns the savings in the costs of goods' places and transfers. It is clear, that this Euroregion, formed by a relation network able to create a market, will have to have several economic characters with special conditions such as competitive prices in comparison with those coming from outside, similar tastes in the population of the different regions, a wide market with an heterogeneous clientele and with similar economic conditions.

In Gasparini opinion, the institutionalisation of this type of Euroregion would have as consequence the creation of three different organs:

- The “*Conference of the Presidents of the associations and public institutions*”, which would be a Conference formed by the Presidents of the Regional Councils, by the Presidents of the Provinces (or similar), of the Chambers of Commerce, by the most important economic associations, by the mountain communities, personnel of the Euroregion of functional networks and rectors of universities. This organ would have the aim to support the networks’ actions, to decide and implement concrete actions, to control the status of the Euroregion and propose changes or correctives. It would meet only if is necessary and its secretariat would have the main function to keep all actors updated on the different developments.
- The “*Permanent Office of coordination*” would have as main objective the coordination of the several networks and above all their activities. This office would have its own personnel and could be associated to one of the institutional authorities of the Euroregion.
- The third organ would be formed by “*Private law societies*”, which would project and implement actions of special and specific character within the networks of the Euroregion.¹⁶⁸

5.1.3. The Euroregion of Macro-Infrastructures

The main objective of the Macro-Euroregion would be the support of the cooperation in a strategic macro-economic area. This space would have therefore the main aim to concretize the economic policies of the involved regions, but also to decide about the necessity to build big strategic works, finding the best way to implement them, coordinating the complementarity and the good use of the present as well as future big infrastructures of the Euroregional area. It means, not only to outline the economic policies, but also to manage common interventions for new and renovated macro-infrastructures like the road system (the Transeuropean Corridor 5 and the other European Corridors) or the general system of transport. Moreover, it should avoid the wastes through the coordination of the parallel infrastructures existing in Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia, Slovenia and Croatia. In few words, the objective of this third type of Euroregion would be the

¹⁶⁸ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, p.245.

improvement of the accesses in the Euroregional area of the international markets, rendering more visible and available to the other markets not only the products of the functional networks, activated from the firms and public institutions of the second Euroregion, but also the tourist and economic areas put in evidence by the cross-border Euroregion¹⁶⁹.



Figure 10: Area involved in the Euroregion of Macro-Infrastructures

As it is also possible to see in figure 10 (the “green zone” has only a demonstrative character), the Euroregion of Macro-Infrastructures would be formed by all the involved regions. Its institutionalisation would not need the creation of *ad hoc* offices, because the relative functions could be performed by segments of regional offices already present in every one of the regional administrations involved in the project. And it is just for this that would be also possible to suppose the creation of not permanent coordination offices. Gasparini has individuated for the Macro-Euroregion three important organs:

¹⁶⁹ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, pp.255-256.

- The “*Permanent Conference of the President of the Regions*”, comprehending the Slovenian regional delegates for the Macro-Euroregion. This conference should meet periodically and above all when there are important decisions to take or when would be necessary to value the state of the cooperation. The contacts between the involved parts would be maintained through workshops or through the administrative offices.
- The second organ would be given by a “*Working Group*”, formed by regional officers, which would meet together, preparing common actions and resolving common problems.
- The third institutional organ would be represented by “*Ad hoc Private structures*”, created to plan and implement big works already individuated by the political elites in the Permanent Conference of the President of the Regions and financed by both public and private sources¹⁷⁰.

In its work Gasparini supports also the creation of an independent organ, which should have the main purpose to coordinate the efforts and the activities of the three Euroregions (“*Permanent Secretariat of the three Euroregions*”)¹⁷¹. It should gather informations at all level of the transfrontier cooperation, aiming to inform the involved actors about the projects and plans of their counterparts, offering possible solutions for the common problems and coordinating their activities. In my opinion, this function should be performed by the “*Working Group*” or by a special section of it; in fact, a further organ would signify only more bureaucracy and at the same time less authority on the involved actors. The function of coordination should be performed, in my opinion, by the Euroregion of the Macro-Infrastructures, both for its wider size and for the greater interests involved; this function should refer always to the principle of subsidiarity, for which the sublevels of the Euroregion should have the possibility to implement their initiatives, but always in compatibility with the objectives pursued at the upper dimensions.

¹⁷⁰ Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto/Pegoraro, Lucio/Rinella, Angelo (2001). *Regione Euro Adria*, pp.255-256.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., pp.256-258.

5.2. Phases of the “Euradria” implementation

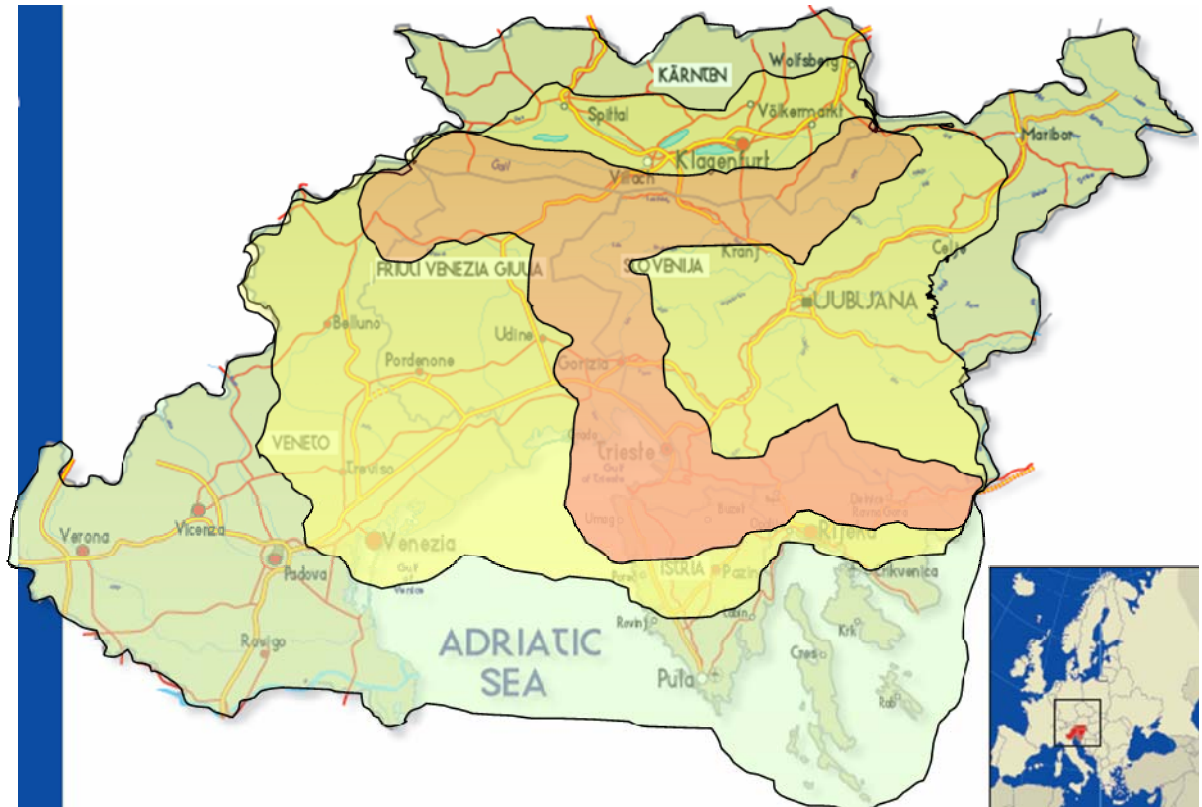


Figure 11: Spheres of influence of the three Euroregions of “Euradria”

The surface involved in the project “Euradria” is more than 60.000 km² (62.448 km²), in which live more than 9 millions people (9.202.724 ca persons); the institutional structure is represented by 11 provinces, 10 districts, 24 towns and more than thousand municipalities, divided in four different nation states. The implementation of this multi-level Euroregion is certainly an ambitious project, which notwithstanding presents many difficulties and obstacles in its development, could be reached through three main phases:

- The *political phase* would be strictly connected with the population, to the their needs as well as interests and objectives, which could be reached through the transfrontier cooperation. It should be institutionalised through the “*Local Assemblies*”.
- The *organizational phase* would imply the project of concrete answers, organization of operative strategies, realization of objectives, transformation of

general needs in concrete actions. These functions should be performed by the *Permanent Conference of the President of the Regions* in collaboration with the *Conference of the Presidents of the associations and public institutions*.

- The *operative phase* should concern those institutionalised functions, connecting the past with the future through the daily gathering of informations, their conservations, their cataloguing and distribution. This phase should be performed by the *Working Group of the Permanent Conference of the President of the Regions* in collaboration with the *Permanent Office of coordination* and the *Secretariats of the Local Assemblies*. They should organize the distribution of information among the involved actors (public institutions, political elites or associations) and the population; they should carry out not only the routine activities, but also the administrative functions, which are fundamental for the survival of the Euroregional structure.¹⁷²

If the phases reported above are fundamental to implement the Euroregion, there are other institutional elements, which will have to be reinforced with special interventions to prevent problems or obstacles in the future cooperations:

- must act to prevent the formation of rigid structures, which could cancel the possibility to act on the social, economic, cultural and transfrontier reality;
- a constant attention to the processes of formation, mobilisation and transformation of the associations, firms, organizations, to realise organizational structures always more adequate to the transfrontier cooperation;
- the creation of concrete occasions in order to make the transfrontier cooperation indispensable and its advantages appreciated;
- the activation of mechanisms for the limitation of the competition among the involved actors (for example in the harbours, trade or tourist sectors), developing the specialisation and the complementarity; the elaboration of new strategies addressed to the creation of networks among the parts to take advantage of the expansion towards the national, international and global hinterlands.¹⁷³

Until nowadays only the regional level has been involved in the process as well as it has been spoken about organs, but only within the terms foresaw by the EGTC

¹⁷² Cfr. Gasparini, Alberto (2003). *Progetto per le Istituzioni di Euradria*, p.6.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.14.

regulation (i.e. an Assembly and a Director). However, any organ of the Euroregion would be chosen directly by the citizens; every one would be composed by delegates nominated on behalf of the national or regional authorities, taking part to the Euroregion-EGTC. Moreover the realization of projects, for which all actors involved in the Euroregion had manifested a common interest, has been studied. It is also possible, that in the future in the Euroregional area some projects of prevalent interest for only one or more actors and of secondary importance for the others could be implemented. However, it is agreed that a minimal involvement of all territorial communities of the Euroregion should be guaranteed.

Last but not least has been already decided that the “capital” of the future Euroregion will be Trieste; therefore to the Euroregion-EGTC will be applied the Italian law. The region of Veneto will play an important role within the Euroregion, not disowning at the same time the role of lead partner of the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia, which has the merit to have led the other regions to the present very good results.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I try to give an answer to the research questions proposed at the begin of the work; here are collected the main ideas, opinions as well as conclusions concerning not only the actuality but also the future practicability of a project, which could represent one of the most developed form of transfrontier cooperation in Europe. The first part is just dedicated to the deepening of the results, obtained through the analysis both of the Euroregional phenomenon in general and in the specific case of *Euradria*; these will be put successively in relation with the original research questions, giving in this way more complete answers. The second part instead is reserved to the open issues, which are already present and could have an increasing influence on the future processes.

6.1. Answers to the Research Questions

- *Why is important, if not necessary, the creation of an Euroregion in the Upper Adriatic area?*

There are above all four main reasons for the creation of an Euroregion in the Upper Adriatic area: the first two are of political character. In fact the permanent transfrontier structure would have a pivotal influence towards the European Union; it would play an important role not only in the identification and coordination, but also in the preparation and implementation of common projects, financed by the European funds through the increasing of its own contracting power, releasing them from the national decisions and promoting in this way a more articulated and careful development of the local realities. The second one is its possible influence as well as stabilizing action on the Balkan area; in these countries, unique in Europe to be involved in wars and civil conflicts in the last fifty years, several programmes could be implemented, aiming to the strengthening of the territorial integration or of the regional concurrence, efficiency and growth. The running of several projects as the “*Veneto in Europe for the development of the Balkans*” or the Interreg III A Transfrontier Adriatic would have positive effects on all involved actors: from one side a greater economic and social cohesion as well as a development and strengthening of the infrastructures and transport nets of countries as Serbia,

Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the other side a more stabile political situation with greater possibilities of economic penetration as well influence for the actors of the Euroregion. A greater stability in the area could signify not only an acceleration in the adhesion process in the European Union, but also huge material advantages above all for the neighbouring countries¹⁷⁴. The third element, which makes fundamental the creation of the Upper-Adriatic Euroregion, is purely economic and is given by the fact that this would become an obligatory hinge in the north-south and west-east exchanges. Today the considered area is influenced by three main phenomena¹⁷⁵: the first one is the economic polarization of Germany. All the actors involved in the Euroregional project have economic privileged contacts and relations not only with Germany, but with the German-speaking countries in general; moreover these economic flows, concerning also the countries of the Balkan area, are supported by the European transport nets and in particular by the so called Corridor I, connecting (as it is possible to see in the figure 12) Berlin with the Italian city of Palermo.



Figure 12: Maps of the Transeuropean Corridors involving the Italian territory

(source: Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti della Repubblica Italiana

<http://www.trasporti.gov.it/page/NuovoSito/site.php>)

¹⁷⁴ Cfr. Regione del Veneto – Documento di Programmazione Economico-Finanziaria 2005 (DPEF), pp.176-184.

¹⁷⁵ Cfr. Bari, Roberto (2005). *Le strutture viarie e logistiche dell'area euroregionale*, in: *Processi di transizione alla scomparsa del confine. Pilot come piano per gestire il passaggio da una società e una economia di confine a una società e una economia senza confine*, anno XIV, n. 3 ottobre 2005, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.isigmagazine.isig.it/index.php> on the 25th April 2008.

The Corridor I goes through the Veneto region, having one of its most important node in the city of Verona. The second phenomenon is given by the Japanese commercial and economic penetration in the Mediterranean Sea: this and the evolution in the organization of the global trades has had as consequence the shifting of the greater part of the naval traffic towards the hubs in the Mediterranean (Gioia Tauro, Malta and Taranto). The containers are unloaded in these hubs and successively re-shipped towards the North-Italian harbours (Genova, La Spezia, Venezia, Trieste); in a third phase the goods continue their journey towards other Italian regions, but also toward the countries of Central Europe, not transiting therefore through the main European harbour of Rotterdam.

But the strengthening of the Upper-Adriatic harbours is not given only by the development of these new commercial routes, but also by the improvement from the side of the European Union of the so called “Motorways of the Sea” (the blue lines in the figure 12 and 13).



Figure 13: Map of the Transeuropean Corridors and “Motorways of the Sea” in Italy
 (source: Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti della Repubblica Italiana
<http://www.trasporti.gov.it/page/NuovoSito/site.php>)

The third one is a direct consequence of the fall of the Berlin wall and of the following collapse of the Communism: these two events have brought a shift towards East of the barycentre of EU interests. The following step has been the progressive integration of the East European countries in the economic and political system of the European Community, which has generated huge flows of commercial traffic towards West. The last researches have shown not only that these trends are increased a lot in the last years, but also that they will increase even more above all with the completion of the Transeuropean Corridor 5 from Lisbon to Kiev (see figure 12). As it is possible to see also in figure 13 this Corridor will go through Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Slovenia, but generating huge investments and economic profits for all neighbouring areas. From the pure economic point of sight the above question answers by itself: the future Euroregion would cover an area, characterised by huge flows of goods as well as of capitals and investments, connecting the markets of North Europe with the Mediterranean basin and therefore with Africa and at the same time the Western countries with the Central and Eastern Europe, with Russia as well as Asia. This could become one of the richest area in the world, only if it will be able to be not a simple crossing station along the trade chain, but a fundamental decision centre and strategic gate-keeper. It is also clear that the Euroregion would be necessary to implement the fundamental innovations in the infrastructures of the involved zone as well as to coordinate the efforts of the several actors to the achievement of common objectives, maximizing in this way the profits and minimizing the costs. In fact, the impact of these transformations on the political, economic and social structures of the single regions could be extremely negative; unable to conform themselves to the coming challenges or not having the necessary resources to do it, the regions could be overwhelmed by the events. But a permanent structure with its own organs and institutions, formed by the delegates of the several actors, could be successful where the singles entities would fail.

The last reason for the implementation of an Upper-Adriatic Euroregion is the social function that this could have: it would be an instrument of social cohesion among populations, living in an area with similar traditions and common roots, but divided between more than one country. It would help these people to overcome their national differences, bringing their common past to light and giving them the possibility to build a common future within the European Union. Moreover it would

have a function of economic cohesion, helping with more aimed measures and funding the development of the backward regions or communities.

- *Why is fundamental for the future of Veneto the participation to the Euroregion?*

Also here the main reasons are of political, economic and social character: for what concerns the political aspect, the participation of Veneto to the Euroregion would permit a greater institutional lobbying towards both the national government and the European Community. And just in relation with the European level it would permit not only the pursuing of common aims through the Euroregional structure, but also an easier achievement of particular advantages for the single region. Anyway, it is also true that there are several circumstances, for which is neither possible nor convenient a common acting. For example, when particular aims do not concern the Euroregional cooperation or when they concern instead only the relations with the own national government. In the first case is therefore fundamental the development of different process or programme of institutional lobbying: some would have as main task the achievement of particular interests for the region of Veneto, while others would pursue Euroregional common strategies. A programme as the *VENICE (Veneto Experts Network to Improve Chance in Europe)*, issued by the region of Veneto in 2004, is a perfect example of this first aspect of institutional lobbying; its main aim is to support the presence of experts of Veneto within the European institutions. These professional figures are of great importance both for the lobbying activity and also for the support to the projects and actions leaded by the regional system in the own sectors of interest¹⁷⁶. Other fields of work as the activities within the Committee of the Regions or in the health sector as well as the promotion of the territory and culture could be included instead in the Euroregional lobbying sphere. In the second case, i.e. in the relations concerning the national government, the region of Veneto would act no more as a normal region, but on the contrary as European region, could improve much more its contractual power and its chances to influence the national decision process.

Under the economic aspect, as it has just been outlined above, there are several reasons for the participation of the Veneto region to the project *Euradria*: the Italian North-East and in particular Veneto are already nowadays at the centre of huge

¹⁷⁶ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento di Programmazione Economico-Finanziaria 2005 (DPEF)*, p.174.

flows of goods, coming not only from the north-south, but also from the west-east guiding principle. For what concerns the first one, the privileged relations with Germany (one of the most important market for the exportations of the Veneto's goods and the principle market for the goods' victualling of the region with a share of 22% on the total¹⁷⁷) has brought in the last years a considerable increasing in the trade traffic along the north-south guiding principle. On the Brennero axis (connecting the North-Italy with Austria and Germany) circa 30 millions tons of goods run every year; in accordance with the last statistics this type of trade traffic has risen in the last ten years of about 8% with a probable annual increment of 5% in the next years, reaching in 2010 a trade traffic of about 45 millions tons. With the completion of the Corridor 1 there would be in a near future an increase both in the utilisation of the so called "Motorways of the Sea" and of the Upper-Adriatic harbours, which have already experimented in the past years a growth in their trade traffic (the Venice harbour of 92,6% in the period 1990-2003). On the west-east guiding principle the development of the commercial flows towards the main markets of the East Europe, since many years important economic partners for Veneto's economy, has to be remembered. The exportations in 2006 have registered considerable increases towards Eastern countries as Poland (+21,7%), Russia (+26,5%), Romania (+18,2%) and Turkey (+18,6%) as well as towards Slovenia (+13,4%). In several of these states are present initiatives of productive delocalisation, which have increased the flows of imported goods (Romania +3,9%, Slovakia +8,9%, Croatia +6,5% and Czech Republic +5%)¹⁷⁸. But these close economic relations are given also by the high percentage of foreign entrepreneurs in Veneto: in the last years their number has known an increase of 78,8%, above all among the Rumanian (+53,1%), Albanian and Serbian¹⁷⁹. It is clear that the main part of these entrepreneurs maintain close relations with their homelands, translating also in continue commercial exchanges. The strategic connection with these markets has had as consequence the increase also in the transport infrastructure of Veneto, both on the motorway net (+54,1%), on the railway net (+36,3%) and on the air traffic (+152,4% i.e. from 2,3 millions to 5,8 millions

¹⁷⁷ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento di Programmazione Economico-Finanziaria 2007 (DPEF)*, pp.14-16.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento Strategico Regionale – Programmazione dei fondi strutturali 2007-2013*, p.32.

passengers)¹⁸⁰. The above data translate in number, what is also possible to see in the figure 14: the region of Veneto is one of the contact points between the two branches of the Big Tau, i.e. the commercial and trade flows formed by Transeuropean Corridors 1 and 5.



Figure 14: The Big Tau

(source: *Regione del Veneto – Documento programmatico territoriale per le consultazioni*, p.55)

It is clear that the privileged position of Veneto within these trade flows would bring considerable advantages for the economic web of the region, but it is also true that these would wield extensive pressures on the infrastructures system. Moreover, it could have negative consequences not only for the political class, but also for the social web, above all if the advantages of this economic prosperity would be shared among few actors, not being re-invested in the territory. In addition the region could hardly develop alone an infrastructure system able to manage these economic flows: both for the indispensable huge investments and for the necessity to coordinate these interventions with those of the neighbouring areas, affected by the same phenomena. The non-implementation of these strategies would reduce the

¹⁸⁰ Cfr. all data in: Bari, Roberto (2005). *Le strutture viarie e logistiche dell'area euroregionale*.

possible advantages, increasing on the contrary the disadvantages; and it is just for this, that the creation of a Euroregion becomes fundamental: it would maximize the profits and would minimize the costs through a coordination and cohesion of the actors' efforts. These conclusions are shared also by Cappellin: among the factors which may create a favourable environment for the development of the local economy, in his opinion there are important elements such as regional identity and sharing of a common development strategy, logistics and internal transportation networks, quality of the local social environment, local administrative capabilities, local autonomy and foreign policy of the region as well as international profile.¹⁸¹ Another important aspect, which is put in relevance by the Italian author, is "that a modern industry (as well as a modern economy) should be absolutely integrated at the national and international level and that this requires investments in the sectors of transport and logistics. The crucial factor is not the cost of transportation, but rather the time constraint in the relationships between the firms, which in a modern industrial system should allow an increasing specialisation and "just in time" forms of cooperation".¹⁸² In this new model of industrial and economic organization the activities and strategic programmes of the large and international firms are based on a tight integration of subsidiaries localised in more than one countries as well as in several areas called macro-regions. "These macro-regions may also be interpreted as complex networks of urban centres, performing a complementarity and competing role on the European scale. In a transportation perspective these macro-regions may be interpreted as "just in time regions" or "one night regions", which allow a tight integration of the productions of the various firms"¹⁸³. Therefore in the Cappellin's opinion within economically advanced macro-regions is fundamental the implementation of networks of firms, characterised both by geographical contiguity and by a "tight integration of the several productions". The first element would be necessary to increase the speed of reaction to markets' opportunities, while the second one would allow the maximizing of the benefits and the minimizing of the costs within an area, characterised by continue forms of interregional cooperation.

¹⁸¹ Cfr. Cappellin, Riccardo (1998). *The „Network-Concept“. A Theoretical Approach and Analytical Instrument for Research on Transnational Regionalism*, in: Brunn, Gerhard/Schmitt-Egner, Peter (Hg.). *Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit in Europa. Theorie – Empirie – Praxis*, Baden-Baden, pp.99-102.

¹⁸² Ibid., p.99.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.100.

The Cappellin's idea agrees with the project of the Euroregion of functional networks outlined in the previous chapter.

For what concerns the social aspect, the Euroregion would be for Veneto a fundamental instrument of social cohesion, acting along three main guiding principles: first, it would help the integration of the several minorities present within the region of Veneto, improving their sense of appurtenance to something that is no more a simple region; they would be no more foreign people in a part of Italy, but European citizens as the other inhabitants of Veneto. Second, the borders could really become "scars of history", while the common roots as well as the common historical traditions could transform a remote past in the basis for a near future. Third, it would bring the Europe nearer to the citizens and would transform the region of Veneto in the perfect contact point between the two realities.

- *Which role will play the Veneto in the future Euroregion?*

The region of Veneto will not be able to play a unique role in the future Euroregion, but as much roles as will be the forms of cooperation. In fact, it should be active in all types of Euroregion described in the previous chapters, coordinating at the same time its activities. It will have to act in the Cross-border Euroregion, supporting the principle of subsidiarity and management efficiency of the several local communities, valorising the autonomy and allowing the self-government. Moreover, it will have to improve the reciprocal acquaintance of the common history, binding the inhabitants to a common culture and identity, becoming a guarantee in the dialogue, confront and cooperation with the other European populations and countries. For Veneto this will concern principally the local communities along the borders with Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Carinthia or with both the regions, where the highest degree of autonomy in the building of transfrontier relations will have to be created; and these communities will form only with real necessity and intentions on both sides of the border. The region will have to support the initiatives of transfrontier relations, but at the same time will be able to ask a tighter coordination through the formation of associations of local communities. Here the forms of cooperation will involve all fields of everyday life, from the organization of common sportive events as well as culture manifestations to synergic forms of territorial planning or delivery of services. The core of *Euradria* is also the core of the

transfrontier cooperation, where the political and economic aspects are overcome by the social ones; here the Euroregional project is being built day by day.

The region of Veneto will have to act also in the Euroregion of functional networks: the need of “building networks” is continually reminded in the field of economy in order to accept and confront oneself with the increasing complexity of the European and global settings as well as of the international challenges. This need concerns above all the city and its context, where become evident not only the several problems, but also the lacks as well as the several contradictions. The pressing need of coordination, asked by all levels, is given by the critical development processes outlined above, by the contradictorily results of the sectorial interventions and of the local willing¹⁸⁴. The “building networks” will have to involve not only the economic actors, but also the political ones as well as the civil societies of the considered area; the coordination of the efforts among the several players will be necessary to minimize the concurrence within the Euroregional area and maximize the advantages through a higher degree of specialisation. These networks will be the real structure of the future Euroregion, because will be the vital channels through which will flow the main part of the local economy. Following the idea of Cappellin cited above and expanding it to the *Euradria* project of Gasparini, the region of Veneto will have to support the formation of different networks in relation with the number of the involved resources and informations (economic activities, administrative as well as cultural actions), concerning in this case not only firms or industrial agglomerates, but also local authorities, public institutions or universities. The presence of similar partners in the other regions of *Euradria* and their tight integration both in the material production as well as in the delivery of similar services and implementation of particular partnerships, could allow to Veneto the creation of a privileged and contiguous market for its actors, with several advantages for what concerns the savings in the costs of goods’ places and transfers. It would bring therefore to the formation of a economic, social and cultural space among the Euroregional counterparts, in which they can find a more adequate ambit for the development of privileged networks. A perfect example of the several fields, in which could be implemented a interregional and transfrontier networks’ integration among the Euroregional actors, could be found in the first

¹⁸⁴ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento programmatico territoriale per le consultazioni*, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.regione.veneto.it/NR/rdonlyres/1E6A96A3-03DF-463E-AFAE-8F2E69E5BC1D/0/Documento_prog_prelimin.pdf on the 25th April 2008, p.14.

trilateral Protocol of Collaboration, signed on 11th of January 2007 between Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Carinthia¹⁸⁵.

At last, the participation of Veneto to the third type of Euroregion, i.e. the Euroregion of Macro-infrastructures is also fundamental; this aspect, if not the most important, it is surely the most basic and necessary. In fact, in Veneto there are few big infrastructures, which are no more able to face the flows investing the region everyday. As it has just been exposed above, along the north-south guiding principle there are only two big ways of communication, i.e. the Brennero railway and the Pontebbana Axis (which departs from Udine); even if these ways are not located within the administrative territory of the region, they hold a fundamental importance also for the economy of Veneto. Very similar is the situation along the other guiding principle, i.e. the west-east: here are present a motorway and the railway, connecting Milan and Trieste. This system of infrastructure as well as the system of the Upper-Adriatic harbours (in particular Venice), as it has been also possible to see from the data cited above, are absolutely insufficient. It is therefore clear, that the region of Veneto will have to improve its infrastructure nets to be able to remain competitive at the European and international level. As it has just been planned, the strategic axis of Brennero will have to be strengthened as well as the other important communication ways towards the North of Europe; also the stretch of the Transeuropean Corridor 1 within the Venetian territory will have to implement very quickly. All these measures could allow the integration in a next future of the economic area of Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol, maybe widening in this way the sphere of influence of *Euradria*.

Other important infrastructural nodes will have to be resolved, such as the high capacity connection Milan-Trieste (part of the future Transeuropean Corridor 5): part of the 94 millions euro of the European funds 2007-2013 will be invested in the strengthening and improvement of the strategic transport nodes and of the intermodal platforms¹⁸⁶. The other big infrastructural system is that formed by the Upper-Adriatic harbours: in fact, with the implementation of the project "Motorways of the Sea", there is the real chance, that part of the commercial traffic of the Central Europe countries addresses itself no more towards the harbours of North Europe (i.e. Rotterdam), but towards the Upper-Adriatic area, where could reach its

¹⁸⁵ See paragraph 4.1., p.84.

¹⁸⁶ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1514 del 02/10/2007, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

destinations in shorter times and with lower costs. This could allow also the creation of a true harbour system in the Upper Adriatic, integrating first the Italian harbours and successively the Slovenian and Croatian ones¹⁸⁷. Moreover it would avoid the development of strategic transport nodes toward Greece, supported by non-Eu countries such as Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania¹⁸⁸.

Since here have been exposed cases of insufficient infrastructural planning and situations, connecting the region of Veneto with its European and international environment; but a similar situation is also present within the regional territory. Transport services alternative to the motor transport will have to be developed, new actors and forms of investments (above all private) in the railway market as well as new strategies also in the harbour system will have to be supported. This should be strictly related to the characteristics of the regional productive system, integrating its forms of organisation and transforming the harbours in centres delivering plurimodal logistic services (the so called *interporti*). Moreover, in connection with the transport and harbour system should be improved the inner navigation: it offers not only an economic convenience and a limited environment impact, but also a greater transport security and the capacity to transfer exceptional loads. The region of Veneto would offer favourable general conditions for the inner commercial navigation, above all if this would be connected and integrated with the Adriatic one¹⁸⁹.

The region of Veneto has begun in these last years a considerable process of innovation and renovation in lots fields of own competence; this process has been implemented and supported thanks above all the European funds, which in the opinion of Patrick Amblard, member of the General Directorate "Regional Policy" of the European Commission, "have been managed with great capacity"¹⁹⁰. But the regional administration will have to continue not only on this way, but also increase its efforts as well as its interventions, because the role and vitality of Veneto can not tolerate further delays.

¹⁸⁷ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento programmatico territoriale per le consultazioni*, p.103-104.

¹⁸⁸ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento Strategico Regionale – Programmazione dei fondi strutturali 2007-2013*, pp.201-202.

¹⁸⁹ Cfr. *Regione del Veneto – Documento programmatico territoriale per le consultazioni*, p.100-102.

¹⁹⁰ Cfr. Comunicato Stampa n. 1929 del 22/11/2007, downloaded from the Internet Homepage <http://www.regione.veneto.it/Notizie/Comunicati+Stampa/> on the 25th April 2008.

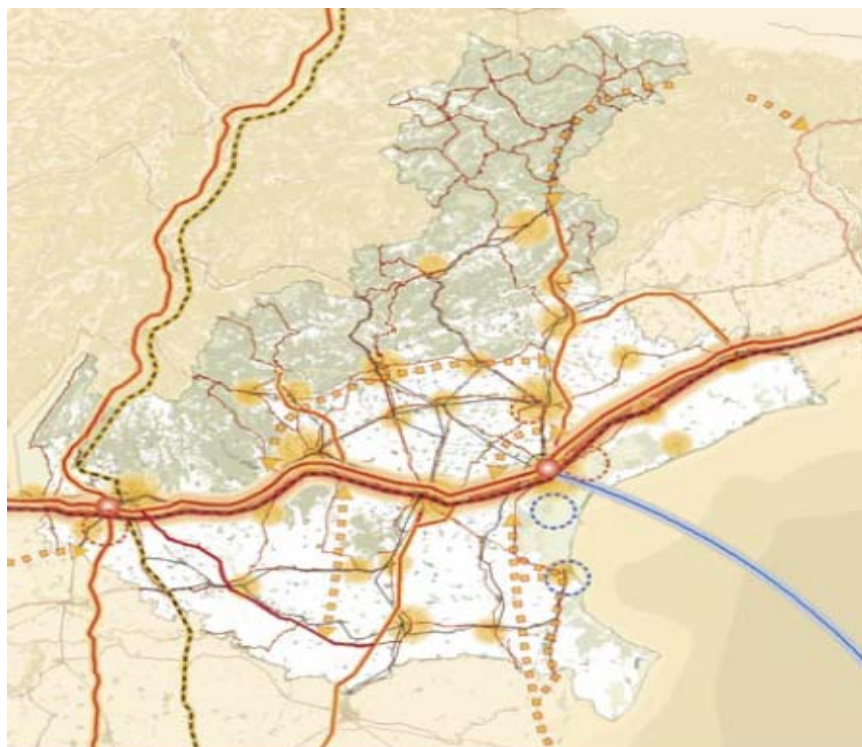


Figure 15: Map of the main infrastructural nodes in Veneto

(source: Regione del Veneto-Documento programmatico territoriale per le consultazioni, p.98).

The conclusions of the socio-economic analysis puts in evidence several territorial handicaps, shared with the region of the Po lowlands and above all with the North-East, such as the delays in the logistic and mobility system along the Transeuropean Corridor 5 as well as 1. In the regional operative programme for the period 2007-2013 are also put in evidence as geographical elements collocate the region of Veneto in the final end of the West-East Po axis and in the Corridor on the southern part of the Alps transforming it in a gate (also maritime) towards the enlarged Europe. This phenomenon requires an approach to economic development and socio-territorial integration, which must be negotiated with both Italian and European regions and in accordance with European policies. In the practice, for the Veneto Region this means the institutionalisation prospective of a Euroregion with the neighbouring entities of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Carinthia, Slovenia and the two Croatian Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar¹⁹¹.

¹⁹¹ Cfr. Regione del Veneto – Programmazione 2007-2013, Obiettivo “competitività Regionale e Occupazione”, Programma operativo regionale (POR) parte FESR, 16 agosto 2007, downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.dps.tesoro.it/documentazione/QSN/docs/PO/POR_Veneto%20FESR_SFC2007.pdf on the 25th April 2008, p.148.

Concluding, the implementation of *Euradria*, together with the adaptation of the towns as well as of the services and infrastructures nets to the new needs of quality and innovation, could offer new perspectives in the field of exchanging and sharing experiences as well as develop the potentialities of the society in Veneto. It could create relations and synergies between private and public administrations and contribute in this manner to the construction of a “Third Veneto”, i.e. the Veneto of the third millennium, the Veneto of future.

6.2. Open Questions

There were, but also there are several events, which could modify the approach of the involved regions to the project *Euradria*; first of all the political election of 13th and 14th April 2008 , which have had as consequence not only the fall of the Prodi’s government, substituted by the fourth government of Berlusconi, but also considerable changes also in the new majority with a wide electoral victory of the Northern League. The change at the top of the Italian politics has brought also changes in the subnational levels, such as in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, where the President of the Region, Riccardo Illy, has been substituted by Renzo Tondo . Illy has always been a strong supporter of a greater integration with the neighbouring regions through the implementation of a Euroregional structure. It is therefore logic to pose the question, if the new President of the Region will continue the strategy of Illy or there will be a change in the policies of Friuli-Venezia Giulia¹⁹². Another important aspect is the fact that with the electoral victory of the Northern League the project of *Euradria* could be stopped at the top level, because the leaders of the party have always set themselves against it, favouring instead a greater cohesion among the regions of North Italy (and the re-creation of the so called “*Lombardo-Veneto*”). It seems here licit to wonder, whether the electoral power within the new majority could influence the future plans for the Euroregion. The last novelty brought by the right-wing government has been the implementation of the fiscal federalism, which could exclude one of the most important economic element at the basis of Euroregion, i.e. the availability of greater financial resources. However the experts remain sceptic about the possibility of immediate and direct effects on the

¹⁹² The new President of the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia has recently demonstrated open-mindedness to the prosecution of the Euroregional project with Veneto.

development of the Euroregional project, even if it is possible that there will be some positive consequences, thanks above all to the recognition to the regions of a greater autonomy. Last but not least the death of the Landeshauptmann of Carinthia, Mr. Jörg Haider, in a tragic car crash on 10th October 2008; the Presidents of the regions of Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, attending the funeral ceremony in the Dome of Klagenfurt, have affirmed that the Euroregion will have to be implemented “also and above all in the name of Haider”¹⁹³, who had always supported the project. Some of the open questions as well as other important points have been discussed with experts of the Direction for the Institutional reforms and delegation processes, General Secretariat for the Programming of the Veneto region¹⁹⁴. The information gathered during these informal meetings has been of fundamental importance to include in my final work updated data on the last developments of the Euroregional project as well as its state of the art.

¹⁹³ Cfr. Corriere della Sera (18 Ottobre 2008), downloaded from the Internet Homepage http://www.corriere.it/esteri/08_ottobre_18/haider_funerali_klagenfurt_00144f02aabc.shtml on the 18th October 2008.

¹⁹⁴ For this reason I want to say thanks to Mrs. Maria Antonietta Greco of the Direction for the Institutional reforms and delegation processes, General Secretariat for the Programming of the Region of Veneto; Mrs. Greco has worked for a long time in the Working Groups born with the first Trilateral Protocol. Her answers are the result of a concrete experience in the field of transfrontier cooperation and in particular in the implementation of Euradria or “Euroregion of Villa Manin”, as she calls it.

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Committee of the Regions (CoR) <http://www.cor.europa.eu/>

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)
http://www.coe.int/t/Congress/default_en.asp

Corriere della Sera www.corriere.it

Council of Europe (CoE) www.coe.int

Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise on Local and Government Reform
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MATRIOSCA (*MA*nagement *T*ools, *e*ffective *R*elations for new *I*nterregional *O*rganisation aimed at *S*trengthening the *C*ooperation among *A*lpe *A*dria regions)
www.matriosca.net

Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti della Repubblica Italiana
<http://www.trasporti.gov.it/page/NuovoSito/site.php>

Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia www.regione.fvg.it

Regione del Veneto www.regione.veneto.it

Standing Committee of Regional Development (REGI)
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/committees/homeCom.do?language=EN&body=REGI>

The European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR)
http://www.coe.int/t/e/legal_affairs/local_and_regional_democracy/Main_Bodies/Steering_Committee/default.asp#TopOfPage

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<http://fx.sauder.ubc.ca/PPP.html>

Working Community Alpe-Adria www.alpeadria.org

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Ich habe mich bemüht, sämtliche Inhaber der Bildrechte ausfindig zu machen und ihre Zustimmung zur Verwendung der Bilder in dieser Arbeit eingeholt. Sollte dennoch eine Urheberrechtsverletzung bekannt werden, ersuche ich um Meldung bei mir.

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Abstract

In an era in which the limits of the states are under the eyes of everyone, the regions have started not only to play a bigger role in the national area, but have also increased their links with the upper level. Their role as active partners of the European Institutions is today a reality insomuch as we can speak about a second level of political actors, after the states or about a "Third Level Europe". In fact, the European regions represent the perfect administrative level because are quite small to be near at the citizens' needs and to substitute the states in giving the basis services of everyday life as well as quite big to act to an upper level, whether national or international it is. In a closer relationship with the European Union, the regions can move around and come through the limits of the nation states, which clamp down their progress, while the supranational actor has the chance to build a Community closer to the citizens. It is just for this, that the European Union has helped during the last decades the rise of a transfrontier culture with a lot of dedicated programmes; the main idea was that the best results can be obtained only through a tight cooperation, trespassing the national borders.

But the development of a true transfrontier cooperation needs the implementation of permanent transfrontier structures to institutionalise a cross-border collaboration among several neighbouring entities: these structures are very often only the consequence of an adaptation process, which step by step is able to find pragmatic solutions to several legal, administrative and political problems. Among the instruments for the institutionalisation of cross-border cooperations the most important is the so called Euroregion (or "Euregio", "Euregion", "Europaregion", "Grand Region", "Regio"), i.e. a region, which is conceptually the crossing of several belongings: the nation states for what concerns the sovereignty, Europe for what concerns the standardization of the development and organization parameters, itself for what concerns the culture, the economy and the society. Like for the definition of other concepts, such as "Region", "Regionalism" or "Transfrontier cooperation", it is difficult to find a unique explanation for this phenomenon, which can be defined also by its tasks or objectives, for whose it has been created.

Starting from the current situation, the work "Veneto in the European Union: the Project of a new Euroregion in the Upper-Adriatic area" investigates not only the

present conditions, but also the future developments of the transfrontier cooperation in a particular area, which is the Upper-Adriatic. Within it, I have focused my attention in particular to the region of Veneto: in fact, in my opinion Veneto represents one of the best example of the uneasy life of regions, closed between the limits of the nation state and the future chances at the European level. Keeping in mind these limits, the future of Veneto will be played on the field of the European Union, in accordance with its border regions, through that transfrontier cooperation that is one of the first order of business of the Community; in fact, this would allow to Veneto to act in an area (the Upper-Adriatic), which has not only common historical and social roots, but also a big economic potentiality. In the work is tried to outline which could be the best way to reach not only an economic, but above all a political and social cohesion in the area and if the creation of an Euroregion could represent the perfect institutionalization of a project, which involves five regions (Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia in Italy, Carinthia in Austria, the Counties of Istria and Primorje-Gorski Kotar in Croatia) and a central state (the Republic of Slovenia). Moreover, I have tried to underline, which could be the role of the Veneto region both in the considered area and above all in the future Euroregion, pointing out its possible benefits like as disadvantages.

The work is divided in six chapters, of which the first two represent the theoretical part, while the last but two put their focus in the more concrete aspects of the project; the third chapter, with its both theoretical and practical approach to the institution of Euroregions, represents the point of connection between the two parts, while in the last one the conclusions has been summarized.

Abstract (German)

In ein Zeitalter, in dem die Grenzen der Staaten so evident für alle sind, haben die Regionen nicht nur eine große Rolle auf nationaler Ebene angefangen zu spielen, sondern haben auch eigene Kontakte mit der Europäischen Union verstärkt. Ihre Rolle als aktive Partner der europäischen Institutionen ist heute eine Realität und um so mehr kann man von einer zweiten Ebene, den politischen Akteuren neben den Staaten oder von einer "Dritten Ebene Europa" sprechen. Denn die europäischen Regionen stellen die perfekte administrative Ebene dar, weil sie ziemlich klein sind und somit besser auf die Bedürfnisse der Bürger eingehen können bzw. die Rolle der Staaten in der Versorgung der Grunddienste des Lebens besser erfüllen können. Sie sind aber auch in der Lage auf einer höheren (auf nationaler bzw. internationaler) Ebene zu agieren. Durch eine enge Verbindung mit der Europäische Union können die Regionen die staatlichen Grenzen umgehen bzw. überwinden, während der supranationale Akteur die Möglichkeit hat eine bürgernahe Gemeinschaft aufzubauen. Das ist der Grund, für den die Europäische Union in den letzten Jahrzehnten den Anstoß einer grenzübergreifenden Kultur, mittels vielen speziellen Programmen, gegeben hat; die Grundidee war, dass die besten Resultate nur durch eine enge grenzüberschreitende Kooperation erreicht werden können.

Aber die Entwicklung einer richtigen grenzüberschreitenden Kooperation braucht die Implementierung von permanenten grenzüberschreitenden Strukturen, um die grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit zwischen verschiedenen benachbarten Behörden zu institutionalisieren: diese Strukturen sind sehr oft nur die Folge eines Adaptierungsprozesses, der Schritt nach Schritt pragmatische Lösungen zu verschieden legalen, administrativen und politischen Problemen finden kann. Zwischen den Instrumenten für die Institutionalisierung einer grenzüberschreitenden Kooperation ist das wichtigste die so genannte Euroregion (oder "Euregio", "Euregion", "Europaregion", "Grand Region", "Regio"), das heißt eine Region, bestehend aus verschiedenen Zugehörigkeiten: den Staaten betreffend die Souveränität, Europa betreffend die Standardisierung der Entwicklungs- und Organisationsfaktoren, während der Euroregion betreffend die Kultur, die Ökonomie und die Gesellschaft. Wie für die Definition anderer Konzepte ("Region",

"Regionalismus" oder "Grenzüberschreitende Kooperation"), es ist sehr schwierig eine einzige Erklärung für dieses Phänomen zu finden, das durch die Aufgaben bzw. Ziele bestimmt werden kann, für die es geschaffen wurde.

Die Arbeit "Veneto in the European Union: the Project of a new Euroregion in the Upper-Adriatic area" beginnt bei der aktuellen Situation, um nicht nur die derzeitigen Bedingungen, sondern auch die zukünftigen Entwicklungen der grenzüberschreitenden Kooperation im Ober-Adriatischen Raum nachzuforschen. Innerhalb dieses Gebietes habe ich mich auf die Region des Veneto fokussiert: meiner Meinung nach stellt das Veneto eines der besten Beispiele des uneinfachen Lebens der Regionen dar, das sich zwischen den staatlichen Grenzen und den zukünftigen Möglichkeiten auf europäischer Ebene abspielt. Unter Berücksichtigung dieser Grenzen wird sich die Zukunft des Veneto in der Europäischen Union abspielen, vor allem in Übereinstimmung mit seinen Nachbarregionen, durch die grenzüberschreitende Kooperation, die eines der wichtigsten Projekte innerhalb der Gemeinschaft ist; denn diese würde der Region des Veneto erlauben, innerhalb eines Raumes zu agieren, nicht nur mit gemeinsamen historischen und sozialen Wurzeln, sondern auch mit einem großen ökonomischen Potenzial. In die Arbeit versucht man zu skizzieren, welches der beste Weg wäre, um nicht nur eine ökonomische, sondern auch politische und soziale Kohäsion innerhalb des Gebietes zu erreichen. Gleichzeitig gehe ich der Frage nach ob die Schaffung einer Euroregion die perfekte Institutionalisierung eines Projektes repräsentieren könnte, welche fünf Regionen (Veneto und Friaul Julisch Venetien in Italien, Kärnten in Österreich, die Provinzen von Istrien und Primorje-Gorski Kotar in Kroatien) und einen zentralen Staat (die Republik von Slowenien) miteinbezieht. Außerdem habe ich versucht zu skizzieren, welche Rolle von der Region Veneto im obengenannten Raum sowie innerhalb der zukünftige Euroregion gespielt werden könnte und was die möglichen Vorteile bzw. Nachteile sein könnten.

Die Arbeit ist in sechs Kapiteln untergegliedert, wo die ersten zwei den theoretischen Teil darstellen, während sich die vorletzten zwei auf die konkreten Aspekte des Projektes fokussieren: das dritte Kapitel stellt mit seiner theoretischen und praktischen Annäherung auf die Euroregionale Institution den Anschlusspunkt zwischen den zwei Teilen dar, während in dem letzten die Schlussfolgerungen zusammengefasst wurde.

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Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende schriftliche Arbeit selbstständig verfertigt habe und dass die verwendete Literatur bzw. die verwendeten Quellen von mir korrekt und in nachprüfbarer Weise zitiert worden sind. Mir ist bewusst, dass ich bei einem Verstoß gegen diese Regeln mit Konsequenzen zu rechnen habe.

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