

Contributions made by decentralised
cooperation between the European
Union and Latin America
to territorial cooperation in Latin
America

Issues for debate

Research Papers / Number 1



A European Union-Latin America Observatory
on Decentralised Cooperation publication

Coordination

María del Huerto Romero

Regional experts

Gerardo Caetano

Víctor M. Godínez

Antoni Niubó

Contents



Presentation

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives of the study

1.2. Methodology

1.3. Key concepts and categories used in the study

1.4. Contents of the study

2. State profiles in Latin America and the European Union

2.1. Social and economic indicators

2.2. Main State characteristics and jurisdiction over cooperation

2.2.1. State models in the European Union

2.2.2. State models in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries

2.2.3. State models in the Southern Cone countries

2.3. Key features

3. Territorial cooperation practices in the European Union and Latin America

3.1. Territorial cooperation practices in the European Union

- 3.1.1. Spontaneous territorial cooperation initiatives in the European Union
- 3.1.2. Territorial cooperation practices within the framework Community programmes and initiatives
- 3.1.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in Europe

3.2. Territorial cooperation practices in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries

- 3.2.1. Cross-border cooperation
- 3.2.2. Transnational cooperation
- 3.2.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries

3.3. Territorial cooperation practices in the Southern Cone Countries

- 3.3.1. Cross-border cooperation
- 3.3.2. Transnational cooperation
- 3.3.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in the Southern Cone countries

4. The contribution made by European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation to territorial cooperation

4.1. The phenomenon of decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America

4.1.1. "Natural" cooperation dynamics between local/regional entities

4.1.2. Particularities of decentralised cooperation

4.1.3. The URB-AL Programme

4.2. Current impact of European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation on territorial cooperation

4.3. Prospects for decentralised cooperation supporting territorial cooperation

4.3.1. Thematic areas covered by territorial cooperation in Latin America

4.3.2. Possibilities for support from European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation

5. Executive summary and final observations

6. Bibliographic references

Presentation

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the study “*Contributions made by decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America to territorial cooperation in Latin America. Issues for debate*”, which is the first document in the series of Research Papers to be published by the European Union-Latin America Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation (OCD).

Like the rest of publications of the OCD, this serie has been conceived as a tool at the service of elected authorities and technical staff from sub-national governments who are participating in decentralised cooperation initiatives. However, it is also intended to help people from other institutions and the public in

general who are interested in public decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America to understand this phenomenon better.

Local and regional government action in the area of foreign cooperation has gained importance in recent years, to the extent that the relevance of studies of this kind becomes daily more evident. While it is not without obstacles, the progress being made in this kind of cooperation is substantial. Therefore analysis and reflection such as that contained in the present study have a double objective: to disseminate the knowledge accumulated in this type of initiative and to analyse existing practices in order to keep on improving this kind of cooperation.

This study is the result of a joint effort between a group of experts and the Observatory's own staff. After three regional reports were commissioned to evaluate the state of territorial cooperation –the term here used to define cooperation between sub-national authorities from the same region– on both continents, the Observatory considered it worth presenting the results in a single study.

In coordination with the Observatory's staff, María del Huerto Romero presents the main results of the studies carried out by the regional experts Gerardo Caetano (Southern Cone), Víctor M. Godínez (Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries) and Antoni Niubó (European Union).

This study first briefly outlines the main characteristics of the state in Latin America and the European Union and then goes on to identify the main territorial cooperation practices on both continents. On the basis of this research the study then analyses the contributions made by decentralised cooperation to territorial cooperation. The dynamics of cooperation between sub-national governments are studied in this section, as well as the particularities of this type of cooperation and the contributions of European initiatives to Latin American initiatives.

In Europe territorial cooperation has been promoted throughout the Community. The deciding factor in the dynamism

of European territorial cooperation has been the political will to promote European integration through the strengthening of horizontal relations between sub-national governments. However, these practices have given way to new dynamics that have emerged spontaneously. The end result is the appearance of zones of thematically and/or geographically based territorial cooperation of great importance.

These practices contribute to the institutional strengthening of the participant local and regional governments, hence, the vital importance to support similar initiatives in Latin America. So far, territorial cooperation practices between sub-national governments in Latin America are less significant, due to the fact that it is a phenomenon that does not yet enjoy the same degree of dynamism as in the European Union, although it is growing in importance. This study identifies a significant number of very interesting territorial initiatives in cross-border cooperation. Nonetheless, these initiatives have a weak institutional basis, while also having outstanding potential.

The Observatory shares this horizontal approach to understanding public decentralised cooperation and dedicates a good deal of effort to visualising the initiatives underway and to analysing them with the aim of improving this new model of cooperation.

Finally, in this presentation I would like to thank the participation of all those people and institutions that contributed to this study, especially the experts who collaborated in its preparation and the member institutions of the Observatory's consortium, as well as the European Commission, without the support of which through the URB-AL Programme, undertakings such as the Observatory would hardly have been practicable.

Agustí Fernández de Losada

General Coordinator
EU-LA Observatory
on Decentralised Cooperation

1. Introduction

1.1. Objectives of the study

The present study is the result of a process of reflection carried out under the auspices of the Observatory on Decentralised Cooperation (OCD) between the European Union and Latin America regarding the phenomenon of territorial cooperation in both regions. Its aim is to reflect upon the relevance and potential that public decentralised cooperation between Europe and Latin America has to strengthen in a decisive manner the territorial cooperation processes already underway in Latin America.

The starting point for the study is the conviction that the territorial cooperation dynamics that have emerged in the heart of the European Union have been especially rich and that the experience accumulated in this field represents a fundamental contribution to regional integration processes.

The second important point of departure is the recognition that public decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America is an emerging phenomenon, whose dynamism and specific characteristics make it a privileged channel for the exchange of experiences between both regions and a means of enhancing local authorities's administrative capacities and strengthening policies to promote social cohesion from a territorial perspective.

It is these two premises that stimulated the Observatory's interest in researching the extent to which decentralised cooperation could contribute to making territorial cooperation in Latin America more dynamic.

1.2. Methodology

It is Observatory practice to include multiple visions on all the topics that it researches, in order to reflect the variety of experiences and diverse standpoints regarding cooperation between the two regions.

Therefore, in order to achieve the present study's stated objective (see above), the Observatory commissioned three experts to analyse the subject from the European, Central American and South American viewpoints respectively. Drawing on these three regional surveys, another expert was then given the job of writing up the present report, in coordination with the Observatory's technical team.

1.3. Key concepts and categories used in the study

Several key concepts used in the present study may have different interpretations and applications according to the sphere within which they are used. Therefore, without denying the validity of other possible interpretations, this section aims to provide conceptual clarification of the meaning given in this study to the main analytic categories used.

a) In geographic terms the present study covers the 17 countries of **Latin American** and the 25 member States of the **European Union**. In the latter case, because of the relatively recent incorporation of the ten newest members, the study places greater (but not exclusive) emphasis on the 15 countries that made up the European bloc before the entry of the most recent new members. Latin America is grouped into two subregions:

Region: Latin America	
Subregion Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries	Subregion Southern Cone
Bolivia Colombia Costa Rica Ecuador El Salvador Guatemala Honduras Nicaragua Mexico Panama Peru Venezuela	Argentina Brazil Chile Uruguay Paraguay

b) In a broad sense, territorial cooperation may be understood as cooperation between sub-national governments from different countries.¹ When the local authorities involved are from the North and the South (as in the case of the European Union and Latin America), territorial cooperation may be equated with the concept of public decentralised cooperation for development. However, for the sake of clarity, the term territorial cooperation will be used to refer only to cooperation between sub-national governments from the same region (Latin America, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other hand). And the term public decentralised cooperation will be used to refer to territorial cooperation initiatives that involve local or regional governments from both Europe and Latin America.

c) This concept of territorial cooperation in turn is explored in three dimensions: **cross-border, transnational and inter-regional**.

d) In line with the approach adopted by the Observatory, the present study focuses on public decentralised cooperation (co-operation activities carried out by local and regional governments) and, within this category, on direct cooperation (the direct relations established between European and Latin American territorial authorities). Within this framework, decentralised cooperation is understood as the set of public initiatives in cooperation for development, which, under the leadership of local/regional authorities,² are designed to strengthen the capacities of territorial actors and promote more participative development. Under this approach, **decentralised cooperation** is understood to be based primarily on principles of multilateralism, mutual interest and partnership, and to tend increasingly towards initiatives that give the activities an added value, in line with the specific nature of the jurisdictional spheres and experience of the territorial bodies.

1.4. Contents of the study

The present study is structured in five parts. Following this Introduction, which constitutes the first chapter, a summary of the different State models and organisational structures currently existing in Latin America and the European Union is presented in the second chapter, in order to give an idea of the diversity of situations in each of the regions. It is hoped that this will later facilitate the task of establishing parallels between the European and Latin American actors and territorial institutions. At the same time, this starting point allows the jurisdiction and degree of autonomy of the different sub-national institutions with respect to international cooperation to be more clearly situated.

The third chapter focuses on identifying the main characteristics of the cross-border, transnational and interregional territorial cooperation practices carried out in each region. This provides an overview of the processes generated in Europe and Latin America, the forces behind them and their thematic contents, as well as the agents directly participating in them.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to examining the contributions of European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation and its potential contribution to territorial cooperation in Latin America. Following this, certain issues considered relevant to the latter are signalled, especially in relation to its cross-border version, and some proposals are formulated for future support initiatives from European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation.

Lastly, the fifth section presents the document's central ideas in an executive summary.

Notes

1 The term territorial cooperation may even be understood to cover cooperation between local/regional bodies in the same country, but such an interpretation exceeds the limits of the present study, which is confined to the "international" dimension of territorial cooperation.

2 This does not rule out the possibility that they may act according to and with the participation of other local agents or that non-governmental actors may be executors of specific actions, but always under the leadership of regional governments.

2. State profiles in Latin America and the European Union

This section offers an overview of the main characteristics of Latin American and European Union States in order to identify territorial, socio-demographic, economic and political differences and similarities between both regions that will subsequently allow us to evaluate the relevance and prospects for cooperation among territories.

2.1. Social and economic indicators

The demographic and economic indicators presented in Table 1 reflect degrees of disparity between the countries comprising the European Union. These differences are more evident if we compare old and new member States, since in the case of the former the differences have been reduced, largely as a result of the European integration process.

The bloc is made up of 25 States of very diverse size, both physical and in terms of population. Of a total population of 456.8 million inhabitants (2004), two thirds belong to five States: Germany, Spain, France, United Kingdom and Italy. Furthermore, four European Union countries have a gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant 50% lower than the value of the same indicator in

the bloc's economically more developed countries. In relation to the level of urbanisation, important differences between the countries may also be observed.

Despite the heterogeneous nature of the bloc, some similarities between the countries can be detected, in particular: the stagnation in population growth and the significant weight of the State in the economy. It can be noted that, beyond the conspicuous variations, public expenditure represents a high percentage of GDP in European countries: an average of 48.1% for 2004. This figure is in stark contrast to the figure for Latin American countries, where public expenditure only accounts for 28% of average GDP.

An analysis of the panorama in Latin America also shows clearly the great diversity within the region, although the disparities are more extreme than in the European case, as can be seen in Table 2.

In the first place, four countries in the region have a particularly strong impact in terms of both their economy and population: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico. Together they account for 82% of Latin America's GDP and 72.5% of its total population (in both cases Brazil is the country with the greatest weight, accounting for 39% of GDP and 36% of the population).³

A fundamental disparity can be observed with respect to GDP per inhabitant, which ranges from 7,515 USD in Argentina to 820 USD in Nicaragua. There are also important differences in terms of what percentage of GDP public spending accounts for, ranging from States where public expenditure does not reach a fifth of the GDP, to those where it exceeds 40%.

Differences among Latin American countries can also be observed with respect to fundamental human development indicators (life expectancy, poverty, and inequality in income distribution, measured using the Gini coefficient):⁴ ranging from Bolivia with a life expectancy of 63.8 years to Costa Rica with 78.1; from Honduras where 77.3% of the population is living in poverty, to Uruguay with 15.4%; from Brazil with a Gini coefficient of 0.621 (one of the highest of the world) to Uruguay with 0.455.

Table 1 / Population and economic indicators in the states of the European Union, 2001

Country	Population			Economy	
	Area (km ²)	Population (millions) 2004	%Urban population 2003 (*)	GDP/inhabitant 2005 (**)	Public expenditure as % of total GDP 2003
Germany	357000	82.5	88.1	24,600	48.5
Austria	83900	8.1	65.6	28,000	51.2
Belgium	30158	10.3	97.2	27,300	50.5
Cyprus	9251	0.73	69.2	19,000	46.7
Denmark	43100	5.4	85.4	28,300	55.8
Slovakia	49035	5.4	57.5	12,900	n.d.
Slovenia	20273	2.0	50.8	18,500	n.d.
Spain	505000	42.3	76.5	22,600	39.5
Estonia	45227	1.3	69.5	12,200	36.4
Finland	338100	5.2	61.0	26,900	50.6
France	547030	59.9	76.3	25,600	54.6
United Kingdom	241820	59.6	89.1	28,000	42.5
Greece	132000	11.0	60.9	19,200	47.2
Holland	41526	16.2	65.8	27,400	48.9
Hungary	93030	10.1	65.2	14,600	n.d.
Ireland	70300	4.0	59.9	31,600	35.2
Italy	301300	57.8	67.4	24,000	49.0
Latvia	64589	2.3	66.3	10,700	35.4
Lithuania	65300	3.4	66.8	11,600	34.1
Luxembourg	2600	0.45	91.8	50,700	46.4
Malta	316.2	0.39	91.6	16,500	n.d.
Poland	312685	38.2	61.9	11,300	n.d.
Portugal	91900	10.4	54.6	16,800	47.9
Czech Republic	78866	10.2	74.3	16,800	44.5
Sweden	449964	8.9	83.4	27,100	58.3

Source: Own elaboration based on World Local Authorities information, www.almwla.org/anglais/default.htm; United Nations Development Programme (2005); Eurostat (2005); Borges (2004).

Notes: (*)The information is based on national definitions of what constitutes a city or Metropolitan zone; therefore, any comparisons between countries should be duly cautious. The information refers to projections of the average variance.

(**) Estimated values; expressed in PPP (purchasing power parity).

Table 2 / Socio-economic indicators in Latin American countries

	GDP per inhabitant, 2004 (in year 2000 dollars)	Total population (millions), 2005	Life expectancy (years), 2000-2005	%Total poverty (*)	Gini (**) (***)
Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries					
Bolivia	1 009	9.42	63.8	62.4	0.614
Colombia	2 073	46.03	72.2	50.6	0.575
Costa Rica	4 337	4.32	78.1	20.3	0.488
Ecuador	1 460	13.21	74.2	49.0	0.513
El Salvador	2 088	6.87	70.6	48.9	0.525
Guatemala	1 708	12.7	68.9	60.2	0.543
Honduras	962	7.34	71.0	77.3	0.588
Mexico	5 916	106.14	73.4	37.0	0.516
Nicaragua	820	5.48	69.5	69.4	0.579
Panama	4 175	3.22	74.7	25.3	0.515
Peru	2 209	27.94	69.8	54.7	0.523
Venezuela	4 596	26.57	72.8	48.6	0.500
Southern Cone Countries					
Argentina	7 515	38.59	74.3	29.4	0.537
Brazil	3 542	187.59	71.0	38.7	0.621
Chile	5 429	16.26	77.7	18.7	0.552
Paraguay	1 288	6.21	70.8	61.0	0.570
Uruguay	5 771	3.45	75.2	15.4	0.455

Source: Own elaboration based on information from ECLAC (2005).

Notes: (*) Includes people living under the poverty line, and in extreme poverty. The information corresponds to the following years, depending on the country: 2004 (Argentina and Mexico); 2003 (Brazil, Chile and Peru); 2002 (Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela); 2001 (El Salvador, Nicaragua and Paraguay).

(**) Available information regarding the Gini coefficient does not come from the same year in all cases: Venezuela, 1990; Paraguay, 2000; El Salvador and Nicaragua, 2001; Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay, 2002; Brazil, Chile and Peru, 2003; Argentina and Mexico, 2004.

(***) Calculated from the urban population's per capita income distribution.

A diversity of situations exists not only between the different Latin American countries, but also within them. As the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has manifested in many studies (Machinea 2005), national averages hide significant differences between the various social groups or geographic areas within each country. This is often reflected, for example, in the border zones, which are usually less developed than the countries' central areas.

Inequality has long been a characteristic of societies in the region, most sharply manifested in its hugely unequal distribution of income, which makes Latin America the most backward region in the world in terms of equity. But inequality in income distribution "is both a cause and effect of other inequalities, such as those generated in education and employment, or those reproduced intergenerationally as a result of ethnic and gender attributes, spatial distribution or demographic dependence. Another relevant element to bear in mind is the impact of the macroeconomic expansion and contraction cycles that have occurred over the last two decades (such as the 2002 Argentinean crisis and its effects on other Southern Cone countries), which represent another factor intensifying income concentration" (Machinea 2005: 17, 50). As a result, inequalities are reproduced in a wide range of social indicators.

Finally, another point worth mentioning is the evolution of the level of urbanisation. As can be observed in Table 3, while in 1975 Latin America lagged far behind the countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in terms of urbanisation, today it is the most urbanised region on the planet.

Table 3 / Urban population in select regions of the world, 1975-2015 (*)

	1975	2003	2015
Latin America and the Caribbean	61.1	76.7	80.9
Central and Eastern Europe and the CEI	56.8	62.9	63.8
OECD	67.2	75.9	78.9
Arab States	41.7	54.7	59.1
Eastern Asia and the Pacific	20.4	41.0	51.0
Southern Asia	21.3	29.8	34.2
Sub-Saharan Africa	21.0	35.6	42.4

Source: Own elaboration based on information from the United Nations Development Programme (2005). **Notes:** (*) As percentage of the total population.

Latin America's urban population ranges from a minimum of 46% in Guatemala to a maximum of 92% in Uruguay followed by Argentina (90%), Venezuela (87%), Brazil (83%), Colombia (76%) and Mexico (75%), according to data from 2003 (UNDP 2005).

These figures generally signal the end of a period of rapid urbanisation, although this has taken place in a diversity of ways in each country. Migration flows from the countryside to the city have by and large come to an end, with the exception of some countries, especially those in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama). In almost all countries in the region urban growth is now accounted for exclusively by the natural growth of the population already living in cities (Jordan 2003).

The distribution of the population in Latin America during the last century was marked not only by the urbanisation process but also by "selective urbanisation" (Jordan 2003). This phenomenon implied, the prioritisation of the main cities and the involvement of cities previously considered as secondary that have played an important role in the configuration of each country's territory and economy.

While the number of cities with over ten million inhabitants increased from two in 1980 (Mexico City and São Paulo) to four in 2000 (in addition to the latter two, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro), those that today have a population of between five and ten million are Bogota, Lima and Santiago de Chile; the cities with less than five but more than one million inhabitants increased from 22 in 1980 to 43 in 2000, and for the same period, those having between 500,000 and one million went from 27 to 56. Of the latter, 21 are to be found in Central America and Mexico (the great majority in Mexico, where the growth of secondary cities has been particularly rapid) and 33 in South America, mostly in Brazil (Jordan 2003).

This urban population growth has meant an overall increase in the number of cities. For example, between 1980 and 2000 the main two partners in MERCOSUR have registered a significant increase in the number of cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants: they represent 53% of cities in Argentina and 92% in Brazil. In the year 2000 the territorial units of this size numbered 989 in the five partner countries of MERCOSUR, including among them some of the most populated cities on the continent and in the world (CEPAL 2005).

At the same time, as has been shown in several studies (Jordan 2003), in the context of the the urbanisation boom and as a consequence of the uneven income distribution within cities, poverty has been more concentrated in the cities.

The increased level of urbanisation and the “urbanisation of poverty” in Latin America have clear implications for the debate regarding national structures, instruments and the most appropriate spheres for the development of cooperation initiatives.

Indeed, local administrations, being the government authorities located closest to the citizenry, have to respond to the situations of poverty and all kinds of shortcomings, in the context of low or medium income countries, and in a region with the highest rates of unequal income distribution. This is why, although Latin American local authorities have the same classic jurisdic-

tional attributes of these levels of government as their European counterparts (providing basic services, urban management, etc.), the priorities of their respective agendas differ considerably in line with the urgencies and the social demands expressed in each context.

On the other hand, many Latin American local administrations are unable to assume in the same way nor to the same degree, the emerging roles that European municipalities have lately started to exercise, such as with respect to promotion of the local economy, intervention in the local labour market, environmental protection, elimination of gender discrimination, sustainable management of heritage and the territory, or international cooperation itself. This difference is also reflected in the agendas and capacities of the different institutional actors.

2.2. Main State characteristics and jurisdiction over cooperation

2.2.1. State models in the European Union

An analysis of State models in the European Union first requires dividing its member countries into two groups: the 15 longer-term European member States, on the one hand, and the new batch of member States, on the other.

In the first case, differences exist between the State models of the 15 countries, especially in respect of the degree of centralisation of functions and powers. These multiple realities are understandable in the light of these European States' different historical traditions and foundational processes.

In Europe, unitary State models persist, under which the central government continues to concentrate a large part of the State's powers, as in the case of France, Italy (which under a constitutional reform of 2001 has become a devolved-unitary State), Portugal (also devolved-unitary) and Greece. Alongside this model other models exist such as the federal State (Germany,

Austria and Belgium) or the model of autonomous communities (Spain), under which the regions have independent powers and legislative authority. In contrast, in other countries, especially in Scandinavia, the regions are structures generally lacking powers and it is the local authorities (counties and municipalities) that enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The United Kingdom could be said to lie halfway between the last two models, with two strong historic regions (Wales and Scotland), to which powers have been devolved, and a long tradition of local autonomy.

Most of the new member States of the European Union come from the former Communist bloc, with a tradition of strongly centralised unitary States. These countries are carrying out an important process of decentralisation, creating intermediate regional levels to manage structural funds. To a certain extent, their incorporation into the European Union is urging them to establish new State models.

Despite these differences in the degree of decentralisation, the countries of the European Union all share a multilevel institutional structure with different forms of sub-national entities depending on their historical traditions (see Table 4). However, it should be pointed out that, while there is a single concrete idea of what constitutes a “municipality”, especially with reference to the city, the notion of the “region” is vaguer or more open to interpretation, and can imply meanings and attributes ranging from legislative authority itself to simple administrative authority for exercising the powers delegated from the central power of the State.

Beyond the different State models that exist, there is a general tendency towards decentralisation and strengthening of sub-national authorities in the European countries. These processes have been favoured and even accelerated as a result of belonging to the European Union, which has developed a strategy of territorial cooperation and development targeting in particular the regions and promoting participation by local actors. Therefore, in general terms, it could be said that the supranational integration process is influencing State models in the European Union.

Table 4 / Institutional structure of the European Union States by territorial level

Countries	Territorial level			
	National	Regional	Intermediate	Local
Germany	Federation (Bund)	Federal states (Lander)	Districts	Local authorities
Austria	Federation	...	Lander	Local authorities
Belgium (*)	Federal level	Regions	Provinces	Municipalities
Chipre	National state	Districts	...	Municipalities and Community Councils
Denmark	State	Counties	...	Municipalities
Slovakia	National state	Regions	...	Municipalities
Slovenia	National state	Regions	...	Municipalities
Spain	Central state	Autonomous Communities	Provinces	Municipalities
Estonia	National state	Counties	...	Municipalities
Finland	Central state	Regional Councils Provincial State Offices	...	Local governments
France	National state	Regions	Departments	Municipalities
United Kingdom	Central government, (Westminister Parliament), Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, Northern Ireland State Department	Greater London Authority	Counties and County Councils	Districts and Districts Councils
Greece	National state	Regions	Departmental self-government institutions (Prefectures)	Municipalities and Communes
Holland	National state	Provinces	...	Municipalities

Hungary	National state	Territorial authorities (**)	...	Counties and Municipalities
Ireland	National state	Absence of decentralised bodies at a regional level	...	Very low level of autonomy for territorial collectives
Italy	National state	Regions	Provinces	Municipalities
Latvia	National state	Districts	...	Local governments
Lithuania	National state	Counties	...	Municipal Council
Luxembourg	National state	Municipalities (with a high level of autonomy)
Malta	National state	Local Councils
Polonia	National state	Regions	...	Local Executive Committee
Portugal	National state	Regions Autónomas	Districts	Municipalities and parish churches
Rep. Checa	National state	Regions	...	Municipalities
Sweden	National state	Regions County Council	...	Local level

Source: Own elaboration

Notes: The blank cells in the table indicate that no such structure exists or that, while formally existing, it lacks real power. (*) In the case of Belgium, it should be mentioned that Communities exist between the central state and sub-national territorial levels.

(**) The national parliament determines the legal status, duties and roles, operational guarantees, funding means and basic rules for the economic management of territorial authorities, together with the legal status of its representatives, the rules for its election and its rights and liabilities.

With respect to international cooperation, the legislative framework of the European Union States has generally conferred exclusive powers to central government. However, the possibility that cooperation may also be carried out by other government levels is recognised in some cases (either explicitly or as an area of international relations) while in others it is not so clear.

The diverse nature of the political systems and State models in the European countries presents a very broad spectrum of possibilities, with a varied range of situations:

- From a constitutional regime as in the Belgian case, under which Communities and Regions have the authority to sign international agreements on matters that lie within their jurisdiction, and where there are plans to decentralise cooperation for development, which currently falls within the sphere of the federal government.

- Through permissive political systems, although to a lesser extent than the Belgian case, as in Germany and Spain (where Act 23/1998 of International Cooperation for Development recognises the legitimacy of decentralised cooperation, and where international cooperation is carried out by all levels of government).

- Through cases in which the relative autonomy of local governments to act in the field of cooperation is limited by legal controls or requires prior authorisation by the Central State. Such is the case, for example, of the United Kingdom (which possesses one of the few European laws specifically authorising local authorities to establish external cooperation relations: the Local Government Overseas Assistance Act 1993); Italy, where since the 2001 constitutional reform regions have the legal authority to sign agreements with foreign counterparts) and France (where they only have the power to sign agreements with decentralised entities).

- To extremely centralised State models in terms of international cooperation, as in Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Greece.

A current tendency to be stressed in the majority of the countries is the growing prominence of regions in decision-making on cooperation. In this respect, the principle of subsidiarity is tending to shift towards the regional framework, as a consequence of the greater recognition given to the regions in the European po-

litical framework, while at local level the powers of local governments have not been given the recognition they merit in line with the active role they have played in cooperation programmes.

However, both local and regional authorities participate actively, with more or less explicit recognition of their jurisdiction, in international cooperation programmes, especially within the sphere of the European Union.

Nevertheless, the tendency towards extending institutional channels designed to promote cooperation proves the European Union's political will to strengthen sub-national authorities' capacity to be active in the sphere of territorial cooperation.

2.2.2. State models in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries

From a juridical-institutional perspective, in this Latin American subregion, two State models can be identified: federal States and unitary States. However, the fact that only two out of the 12 countries included in the subregion have a federal State (Mexico and Venezuela) shows a bias towards unitary models.

As observed in Table 5, despite the different State models, the countries as a whole share a multilevel institutional structure with a variety of forms of sub-national authorities.

Table 5 / Institutional structure of the States of Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries by territorial levels

Country	Territorial Level		
	National	Regional / Intermediate	Local
Bolivia	Central state	Departments and Provinces	Sections of Provinces (Municipalities) and Cantons
Colombia	Central state	Departments	Municipalities, Districts and Indigenous Territorial Entities
Costa Rica	Central state	Provinces/ Regions	Cantons (Municipalities) and Districts
El Salvador	Central state	Departments	Municipalities
Ecuador	Central state	Provinces	Cantons and Parishes
Guatemala	Central state	Departments and Regions	Municipalities, Community Town Halls or Auxiliary Town Halls and Mancommunities
Honduras	Central state	Departments	Municipalities
Mexico	Federation	Federal States and Federal District	Municipalities
Nicaragua	Central state	Departments and Autonomous Regions	Municipalities
Panama	Central state	Provinces and Native Regions or Territories	Municipalities
Peru	Central state	Regions, Departments and Provinces	Local Municipalities
Venezuela	Federal state	Federal States, a Capital District, Federal Districts and Federal Agencies	Municipalities, Parishes and Mancommunities

Source: Own elaboration.

One of the characteristics that defines practically all the States in this subregion (and in Latin America in general), beyond whether they are based on federal or unitary models, is the centralisation that has traditionally characterised their political and institutional culture.

This characteristic finds its explanation in the history of these States, whether in the pro-independence processes and their subsequent evolution, or in their colonial roots. They share a history of centralisation which dates back to colonial times, and although the autonomy of sub-national governments was registered from the beginning in the constitutional organic order of the majority of national States established in the nineteenth century after the wars of independence, the fact is that the centralising tradition remained intact.

Multiple factors restricted the development of autonomous regional/local dynamics in this subregion. Although the weight of the different factors varied historically from one country to another, they had similar long-term effects in all cases: an endemic lack of the resources needed to perform the different roles assigned to territorial administrations, impoverishment and marked economic and financial dependence on the central government, strong tendencies towards fiscal centralisation and, in some cases, abolition of local/regional elections or imposition of authorities by the central government through different means. The result was the conformation of fragile, inefficient sub-national government systems and structures, which were almost always dysfunctional with respect to the needs of economic and social development.

However, in recent years progress in decentralisation has been registered in almost all countries in the subregion, (Carrion s/f, Spear 2003), in territorial administration and a more prominent role for municipalities and other sub-national entities. Despite their great diversity, these processes present a common characteristic, being in almost all cases a process simultaneous with or at least a direct consequence of the democratisation wave which spread throughout Latin America from the 1980s. This is reflected, for example, in the relatively recent trend of democratic election of local authorities in the countries in this group.

Table 6 / Political structure of the States of Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries, 2002

Type of State and countries	Form of election of the territorial executive		Central government capacity to revoke local authorities
	Intermediate level	Local level	
Federal states			
Mexico	Elected (1917)	Elected (1917) (*)	NO
Venezuela	Elected (1989)	Elected (1989)	NO
Unitary States			
Costa Rica	Appointed	Elected (1970)	YES
El Salvador	Appointed	Elected (1984)	YES
Guatemala	Appointed	Elected (1985)	YES
Honduras	Appointed	Elected (1981)	NO
Nicaragua	Appointed	Elected (1990)	NO
Panama	Appointed	Elected (1994)	NO
Bolivia	Appointed	Elected (1987)	NO
Colombia	Elected (1992)	Elected (1988)	NO
Ecuador	Elected	Elected (1983)	YES
Peru	...	Elected (1981)	NO

Source: Own elaboration based on Inter-American Development Bank information.

Note: (*) The president of the Federal District, which is the seat of the federal authorities, was appointed by the President of the Republic until 1997, when the post started to be elected by popular vote.

The decentralising efforts of the twelve countries still look, in general terms, incipient and fragile (although the analysis of each case may show nuances):

- Although decentralisation and the strengthening of municipalities and other sub-national government bodies have

been undertaken in diverse ways by political actors and by the government authorities of the twelve countries, the actions taken tend in general terms to be slow, besides lacking, in many cases, sufficient support to prosper in the short, and maybe, even in the medium-term.

- Frequently, the most advanced projects or actions are controlled and managed mainly by central government employees, who are not always fully qualified for this purpose. Municipalities, intermediate government entities and local civic associations are not always consulted and their contributions are not necessarily taken into account in the development of the initiatives.

- In this context, the bills or policies on decentralisation, municipal strengthening and citizen participation frequently have little coherence, and some are even contradictory in their aims.

- In some countries, reforms seem to be more oriented towards privatising certain public services and less towards comprehensive policies for effective decentralisation, with the corresponding transfer of responsibilities, powers and resources to sub-national governmental authorities.

- Likewise, important weaknesses can be identified relating to technical capacity, logistics, and even in the ability to generate proposals, both in municipal and intermediate administrations and in civic associations.

The fact that in four of the ten unitary States the local authorities, despite being elected, may be revoked by the central government (as shown in Table 6) reflects the persistence of the predominance of national government authorities over sub-national authorities. This is reflected in the fact that intermediate government authorities are directly nominated in the majority of the unitary States.

On the other hand, the State model, whether federal or unitary, does not appear to be a variable directly determining decentralisation. This can be clearly observed by comparing the total percentage of sub-national government expenditure with total public expenditure for the whole State.⁵ Although the territorial bodies of the two federal States in the subregion show high spending coefficients in comparative terms (Mexico with 25.4% and Venezuela with 19.6%, which represent the third and fourth highest coefficients in this group of countries), two unitary States show the highest relative spending levels of the whole group: Colombia with 39% and Bolivia with 26.7%.⁶

At the other end of the scale four Central American countries (Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua and El Salvador) stand out, in ascending order, in that they present the lowest levels of decentralised expenditure (ranging from a minimum of 2.3% and a maximum of 6% of total national fiscal expenditure). Ecuador's situation is the most precarious: its level of decentralised expenditure is the lowest of all, and moreover must be shared between two different sub-national government levels. The three remaining cases correspond to Honduras, Peru and Guatemala, with levels of sub-national expenditure that, although also low, range between 10 and 12 percent of total fiscal spending.

Above and beyond these indicators, it is striking that while the two federal countries in the subregion –Mexico and Venezuela– maintain a relatively high level of centralisation, Colombia and Bolivia, both unitary States, are usually considered examples of the opposite case.

Jurisdiction over international cooperation is not usually mentioned explicitly in the Constitution of any of the countries in this subregion. When such jurisdiction is mentioned (as such or as an area of international relations), powers are usually attributed to the central State. Traditionally and in practice, central government structures (even in the federal States) have left a limited margin or none at all for the involvement of territorial authorities in the field of cooperation.

However, in recent times, a certain tendency towards openness can be noticed with respect to the participation of local/regional governments in international activities. An example of this is Art. 4 of the Municipal Code of Costa Rica which establishes that municipalities may: “Set up with national or foreign persons or entities, pacts, agreements or contracts necessary for the fulfilment of their roles”. Likewise, Art. 289 of the Colombian Constitution of 1991 establishes that: “According to Law, the Departments and municipalities located in border zones may directly engage, with the same-level territorial authority of the neighbouring country, in cooperation and integration programmes aimed at promoting community development, provision of public services and protection of the environment”.

This more open attitude has in practice also allowed sub-national governments to develop cooperation initiatives with the consent (explicit or implicit) of central governments, even when there is no explicit legal recognition of the territorial authorities’ power to do so.

2.2.3. State models in the Southern Cone countries

The two countries with the greatest weight in the Southern Cone in terms of their territory, population and economy, and which are also two of the most important countries in these terms in the entire Latin American region, share the same State model, especially in terms of centralisation of functions and powers.

Both Argentina and Brazil have a federal State system under which the 23 provinces (in Argentina) and the 27 federal states (in Brazil) have powers and full legislative authority (although each country has its special features). Within these intermediate governments there is a multilevel institutional structure, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 / Institutional structure of the Southern Cone States by territorial level

Country	Territorial Level		
	National	Regional / Intermediate	Local
Argentina	Federal state	Provinces	Municipalities (the country's capital has its own statute of Autonomous City)
Brazil	Federal state (Federation)	Federal States	Municipalities (Prefeituras)
Chile	Central state	Regions and Provinces	Communes
Paraguay	Central state	Departments grouped in regions	Municipalities
Uruguay	Central state	...	Departments Sublocal Level: Autonomous Local Committees

Source: Own elaboration based on Gallichio and Camejo (2005).

The other three countries that make up the subregion –Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay– are unitary States, although they also have sub-national structures which enjoy a certain capacity to take political action.

With the sole exception of the Governors in the Chilean Regions, the territorial-level executive and legislative positions are democratically elected in all the countries in this subregion. As in the rest of Latin America, a decentralisation process has been underway in the Southern Cone in recent years,⁷ together with a more prominent role being played by municipalities and other sub-national bodies, although both phenomena show characteristics and rates of progress that vary from country to country.

As has already been mentioned, one of the defining characteristics of almost all the Latin American countries, beyond their formal state structure (federal or unitary), is the centralisation that

has impregnated political and institutional life. However, in comparative terms, the centralising tradition has been less marked in Brazil and Argentina, countries that at least in administrative terms have always remained territorially decentralised.⁸ Consequently, “in these countries, progress in political decentralisation consisted mainly in making effective the exercise of powers recovered by the sub-national governments (by transferring the capacities concurrently developed by their national governments)” (Finot 2001).

In most other Latin American countries (including the rest of the Southern Cone) “territorial decentralisation represented an innovation, generally introduced as part of the process of State modernisation. In these cases, the reforms meant that the now elected sub-national governments were assuming powers that they previously did not enjoy. Furthermore, in several unitary countries, political decentralisation implied the creation of intermediate governments (Colombia, Chile, Bolivia)” (Finot 2001).

A noteworthy feature of the decentralisation process in Brazil, following the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, is the preponderance conferred to municipal-level governments (although it also includes state-level bodies). Art. 18 of the Constitution recognises the same autonomous status in the case of federal states and municipalities, and establishes a slightly higher level of fiscal transfers to the latter territorial bodies. In contrast, in Argentina the decentralisation process is mainly directed at the provinces, even though many of the powers that are transferred may (or should) be, in turn, transferred at some point to the municipal level.

Perhaps the particular nature of the centralising tradition in Argentina and Brazil (added to the fact that both are federal States) explains to a large extent the high level of participation by its sub-national governments in different fields of politics in comparison to the rest of Latin America. If we once again apply the indicator used in the analysis of the subregion of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries, public spending by sub-national entities in Argentina and Brazil represents a significant share of total public expenditure. In the first country, provincial spending

accounts for 53.1% of total public expenditure, municipal spending for 10% and national spending for 36.9%. In Brazil, federal state expenditure represents 30% of total public spending, municipal spending 15.7% and national spending 54.2%.

In contrast, sub-national authorities' share of total public spending is limited in Southern Cone countries with unitary State models: in Uruguay expenditure by the nineteen Municipal Governments scarcely reaches 10% of total public spending, while in Chile, municipalities account for 8.1% of total spending, while national expenditure accounts for 91.9% (which includes regions and provinces, as their role is to carry out delegated or deconcentrated functions). In 1997 in Paraguay municipalities only managed 2% of total public expenditure and in 2001 6%, jointly with departmental-level authorities (Finot 2005).

Historically, in the Southern Cone countries, from a juridical-institutional perspective and within the orbit of international relations, **international cooperation** has fallen within the jurisdiction of the central State.

However, in some countries, the latest constitutional and legal reforms relating to powers in the field of international relations present a varied subregional scenario, but within which there is an overall tendency to greater openness towards participation by sub-national entities in international cooperation initiatives.

In this respect, an important milestone was the granting to Argentinean provinces of certain attributes with respect to international matters, as part of the 1994 constitutional reform. The amended text of Article 124 states: "The provinces (...) may also sign international agreements as long as they are not incompatible with the Nation's foreign policy and do not affect the powers delegated to the federal government or the Nation's public funds, and with the National Congress being duly informed".

Although without conferring independent powers (as in the Argentinean case), in two centralised countries of the subregion (Chile and Paraguay) legal norms were also established to acknowledge participation by sub-national bodies in international cooperation initiatives (although not autonomously).

Art. 16 of the Constitutional Organic Law regarding Chile's Regional Government and Administration, establishes that the Regions may "participate in international cooperation actions in the region, in the frameworks established by the treaties and agreements that the Chilean Government signs for the purpose and in accordance with the procedures established in the respective legislation".

In Paraguay, Art. 16b) of the Departmental Government Statutes establishes that the Department's objective, among others, is to "participate in the international cooperation programmes in the Department within the limits established in the International Agreements, as well as to make use of national or international, public or private credit, in accordance with the Law". Likewise, under the 1992 Constitution, Art. 171 enables municipalities to associate with one another or with municipalities of other countries (by Law) in order to fulfil their objectives.

A different case is that of Brazil, where, faced with a rigid constitutional framework and with a Federation some of whose component members were active at international level, the central government chose to pursue a policy of so-called "federative diplomacy". Although some authors see this as an acknowledgement (implying a certain degree of tolerance) of sub-national international activity, others hold that "its objective is to substitute the federated bodies' demand to participate in foreign affairs, by taking into account the interests of such bodies and reflecting them in the federal State's foreign agenda, thus not admitting the possibility of direct foreign action by the federated bodies" (Lacerda 2004).

Beyond the juridical-institutional limits established in each country, the fact is that in the Southern Cone many territorial administrations (and even local civil society actors) have found in recent years, and especially as a result of the democratisation processes, space to assume the role of proactive cooperation agents.

As a result, structures responsible for international cooperation have been created (or strengthened, in those cases where they already existed) within local/regional authorities (for the most part

located within the division responsible for international relations). Although no specific studies exist, one plausible hypothesis is that in the Southern Cone the creation of the Mercociudades Network and the URB-AL Programme have promoted this phenomenon in local governments (particularly in large and medium-sized cities).

2.3. Key features

To close this chapter, a series of issues can be highlighted:

- Although in the European Union there are asymmetries in terms of social and economic development, particularly between old and new member States, this region shows less extreme disparities when compared to Latin America (where the different social groups or geographic areas within the countries are extremely heterogeneous).

- There are diverse State models in the European Union (federal, centralised unitary, decentralised unitary, etc.) as a result of complex historical processes. However, the dynamics of European integration have contributed to boosting in most countries a tendency towards decentralisation and some degree of increase in territorial administrations' powers and resources. In Latin America, the unitary or centralised State model is more common than the federal model. Independently of this fact, there is evidence of ongoing processes of decentralisation and strengthening of sub-national governments' capacity for action, although these are less developed than in the European Union and with different characteristics, degrees of progress and results depending on the country. These processes frequently come up against the centralist culture of Latin American States (even in the federal countries) or the sub-national authorities' lack of budgetary and technical

resources. In some cases the decentralising efforts still look, in general terms, incipient and fragile.

- Despite differences in the degree to which they have decentralised, the countries of the European Union all share a multilevel institutional structure with a range of types of sub-national entities, depending on their historical traditions. The Latin American countries also have multilevel institutional structures, although there are important variations in the different sub-national authorities' powers and capacity for political action. Only in those countries with federal State models does a sub-national administration structure exist that is relatively comparable to that existing in Europe.

- Generally, the legislative framework of the European Union and Latin American States has conferred exclusive jurisdiction to central government in relation to international cooperation. However, in European countries, the possibility that cooperation may also be carried out at other government levels is in some cases recognised and unclear in others. The degree of autonomy exercised by municipalities and regions in this field varies a great deal from country to country and among the different territorial levels. Likewise, in Latin America for some time now, some variation can be observed in the degree of openness towards participation by sub-national entities in activities of an international nature. In a few cases this involves constitutional (as in Argentina) and legislative reforms. In other cases, it is a question of central administrations allowing (explicitly or implicitly) initiatives developed by local/regional governments, even when the latter lack formal authority.

- The observations made in studies (of the European Union, Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries, and the Southern Cone) with respect to powers in the area of international cooperation raise a series of common questions, quite apart from the differences between and within the three geographical areas.

If the inadequate nature - or in many cases, the total absence - of powers exercised by territorial entities in international matters has not been a sufficient obstacle to prevent them from acting in international cooperation, then to what extent does the formal limitation of powers hinder the practice of cooperation? What other factors may limit or encourage action? One hypothesis that could be explored in future studies is that in addition to juridical-institutional variables, there are factors of a political nature (the balance of powers between the different State levels) and of an operational nature (economic, institutional and management resources and capacities) that may limit the participation of local/regional governments in international cooperation. The second type - operational factors - constitutes a major deciding factor in the case of Latin American sub-national governments, and their influence is also sometimes observable in the European case.

Notes

3 Obviously, the concentration of GDP in these four countries is explained by the weight of their respective populations.

4 The Gini coefficient is a statistical measure distribution inequality. In this case what is measured is the population's wealth unevenness.

5 Spending capacity is not the only thing that counts, but it undoubtedly represents a very significant dimension of the countries' local and regional political institutions' capacity and possibility to act.

6 Since accessing reliable, comparable and updated information is a difficult task, here we use information from the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank on fiscal spending and tax revenues of the different government levels at the end of the twentieth century. An examination of the partial information available for the post-year 2000 period reveals that in general terms there has been no significant variation in the scale of these figures.

7 It exceeds the scope of this study to analyse the range of different theoretical and ideological opinions regarding decentralization and its results in Latin America. Some of the observations concerning the latter made in section 2.2.2. for the subregion of Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries may also be, to some extent, applicable to the Southern Cone. An analysis of the debates over models and objectives of the decentralization processes in the region can be found in Gallichio and Camejo (2005).

8 This does not mean that the federal system in both countries has not come up against in the past, or is finding in the present, limits that distort to a certain degree the harmonious exercise of the juridical ordinance deriving from the federal State model. Such limits include, for example, the extreme concentration of productive forces and in the distribution of the population, the tax structure and tax collection procedures, and the political centralisation imposed during the periods of authoritarian rule in the past. In this respect, see Sánchez (2004) on the Argentinean case.

3. Territorial cooperation practices in Latin America and the European Union

This chapter analyses the main initiatives in the field of territorial cooperation in both regions, through the identification of the most relevant features of this phenomenon and reflections on its evolution and impact. Particular emphasis is given to cross-border cooperation, a type of territorial cooperation that has achieved important results in Europe and therefore, could be a reference for the implementation of future decentralised cooperation actions between Latin America and the European Union.

Methodologically, two initial criteria were used to identify, collate and describe the practices: a) the origin of initiatives (spontaneous or promoted), and b) the type of territorial cooperation (cross-border, transnational or interregional). However, some differences in the application of both criteria should be pointed out:

a) In the European Union, “promoted” refers to those territorial cooperation practices that emerge within the framework of community programmes that support this type of initiatives. In neither of the two Latin American subregions studied are similar supporting frameworks to be found (not even in bilateral or multilateral spheres), for which reason in these cases the label “promoted” is used to identify practices carried out within the framework of programmes or instruments developed by Central States to stimulate or regulate their systems of border relations, whether bilaterally or as part of regional integration processes. In other words, in Latin America “promoted” practices lack autonomy.

b) It is important to mention that although practices are analysed in terms of both above-mentioned criteria, it was considered more convenient to use the criterion **origin of initiatives** as the primary dimension of analysis for the presentation of European initiatives, since it reflects with greater clarity the richness and variety of the experience. In the case of Latin American initiatives, the criterion **type of cooperation** was prioritised as it permits easier identification of the respective subject areas to be dealt in chapter four of the present study.

c) Although it is clear that programmes supporting decentralised cooperation (such as URB-AL), and some specific initiatives by international organisations (such as the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP) have facilitated exchange and collaboration between local and territorial administrations in the entire region, the interregional cooperation is still somewhat limited in Latin America. This is why in the case of the Latin American subregions the analysis will only distinguish between cross-border practices (those between adjoining areas) and transnational ones (any other type of cooperation practices between territories within each of the two subregions).

3.1. Territorial cooperation practices in the European Union

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, European territorial authorities have been strengthened in their role as agents in the field of cooperation, independently of the formal powers that they wield in the sphere of international cooperation. This is the result of a combination of phenomena, among which the following are worth mentioning: the national decentralisation processes; the application of the subsidiarity principle; the recognition of local/regional governments as interlocutors of Community institutions; and the cooperation dynamics created around border zones (particularly in the framework of the INTERREG programme).

This capacity for action has generated a multiplicity of territorial cooperation practices with participation by sub-national entities within the European region. The former may be divided into two groups: spontaneous initiatives and promoted practices. However, it should be recognised that the dividing line between these two groups is not always well defined: some practices and projects may receive funding from the European Union and even continue once the subsidy ends.

3.1.1. Spontaneous initiatives in territorial cooperation in the European Union

A detailed analysis of existing spontaneous cooperation initiatives between European territorial community groups allows them to be classified in three categories: **spatial, thematic area and generic**. Those belonging to the first category may take the shape of cross-border or transnational cooperation practices, while the rest usually correspond to transnational or interregional initiatives.

Cooperation practices included in the spatial category consider the territory as both object and motive for the relation, whether in terms of geographic proximity (cross-border initiatives)

or because it falls within natural areas that extend beyond national limits and share common characteristics (transnational initiatives). Euro territories, of polycentric configuration, characterised by common needs and interests, illustrate this latter case. One example is the Union of Baltic Cities, an association of local authorities within the natural sphere of influence of the Baltic sea, which involves cooperation on issues such as transportation and protection of the environment, among others. Another case is that of Arco Latino, covering a geographical area extending from Portugal to southern Italy, and dealing with issues of immigration, tourism, culture (Mediterraneity) and cooperation with the Magreb.

The so-called “Euro-regions” also constitute a spatial form of territorial cooperation, although in this case it involves cross-border authorities. So, for example, the Euro-region comprising Languedoc-Rousillon, Midi-Pyrénées and Cataluña extends across the natural border of the Pyrenees, while that of Kent and Nord-Pas de Calais crosses the English Channel.

Although the Euro-regions are not identical in their formal structure or organisation, they share many common characteristics:

Main characteristics of the Euro-regions

- Permanent nature
- Identity independent from its members
- Own technical, administrative and finance resources
- Own decision-making bodies as well

Practically all Euro-regions within the European Union have been assigned an important role in the INTERREG Programme, on both the EU’s internal and external borders.

In contrast, **thematic** cooperation focuses on the contents of cooperation, which has to do with sector-specific public policies and common issues. In this sense, a multiplicity of thematic networks linking territorial authorities have emerged in Europe,

either spontaneously or under the umbrella of associations. The lines of work are varied: social action, culture, local economic development, education, youth, public health, transportation, etc. By way of example, the following experiences of thematic territorial cooperation may be mentioned: ELANET (European Local Authorities Telematic Network) in the sphere of the information society, the European Sustainable Cities for environmental topics and local Agendas 21, and the Association of European Textile Communities (ACTE) in the field of local economic development.

Finally, there is another type of territorial cooperation practices of a more **generic** nature whereby relations are based on the existence of similar realities, beyond territorial or thematic links. For instance, some territorial authorities cooperate on the basis of a shared identity: large cities (Eurocities), capital cities, dynamic regions (Association of the four European motors), provinces (Partenalia), cities and metropolitan areas for sustainable urban development (Cities for Cohesion), among others.

The examples of spontaneous initiatives mentioned represent some of the main practical instruments for territorial cooperation that have been developed within the European region. They can be summarised as:

- **Networks and associations** which constitute multilateral cooperation models bringing together members from different countries. This instrument (particularly appropriate in the case of transnational and interregional cooperation) has been strengthened by the fact that a great many community initiatives and programmes require the existence of transnational partnerships.

- **Twinning**, which involves bilateral cooperation initiatives between European municipalities/regions. Twinnings have been especially used to generate cross-border cooperation initiatives: Portugal-Spain, Spain-France, France-Germany, Germany-Poland, to mention only some of the borders within the European Union.

Both twinning and networking may receive community support and funding.

• **Working communities** are another of the institutional channels created to promote territorial cooperation, especially cross-border cooperation. In many cases, local or regional authorities, or their organisations, have decided to cooperate, for example, by signing a cooperation protocol or a non-binding legal agreement, creating this type of atypical structure that lacks independent legal status. These are permanent structures and in few cases do they have decision-making authority independent of their members. They usually maintain an inter-organisational structure for decision-making, so for instance, they participate in the committees, working groups, etc. of cross-border structures, acting as representatives of their own authorities. They generally have a rotating presidency; a secretariat and working groups, but have no financial or human resources of their own.

• Finally, it is worth highlighting the creation of new organisations or structures whose aim is to promote territorial cooperation between European Union members. On the one hand, the legally existing **European associations of economic interest**, which allow joint work between authorities from two or more different States. On the other hand, the proposal to create a legal instrument called **European Associations for Cross-border Cooperation (AECT)**, which will endow member regional and local authorities with the capacity to manage structural funds from a territorial and plurinational perspective. This proposal falls within the Regulations governing Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013.

3.1.2. Territorial cooperation practices within the framework of community programmes and initiatives

The European Union's initiatives and programmes and fostering ties of territorial cooperation have boosted and multiplied relations between local and regional European authorities. While the initiatives mobilise structural funds to enhance economic and social cohesion and are focused on the territory, the programmes pursue more specific and thematic objectives.

INTERREG III stands out among the **community initiatives**, with the purpose of promoting cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation, thus favouring the integration and a balanced and harmonious development of the European territory. This programme is considered an emblem within the territorial cooperation in the European Union, so the present study dedicates a special section to it.

However, it is worth mentioning, there are other community initiatives which due to the transnational component of the consortiums, also contribute to the establishment of territorial cooperation relations in the European space.

Table 8 / Main transnational community initiatives

Initiatives	Main Contents
ADAPT	Worker's adaptation to industrial transformations and labour market improvement.
EQUAL	Transnational cooperation to promote new methods for fighting against all kinds of discriminations and inequalities in relation to the labour market.
EUROFORM	Company creation.
HORIZON	Improve the possibilities of the society's most vulnerable groups of people to have access to the labour market, among them those physically, mentally and sensorially handicapped.

INTEGRA	Favour labour market integration for those groups with specific problems, such as immigrants and refugees, drug addicts, prisoners or ex prisoners, ethnic minorities, homeless people and others in situation of social exclusion.
LEADER	Rural development through cooperation between diverse territorial agents.
NOW	Promote equal employment opportunities for women, through professional education measures and support the access to promising jobs and management positions.
RECITE	Cooperation between local agents in terms of local and regional development.
URBAN	Economic and social regeneration of cities and neighbourhoods in crisis with the aim of promoting sustainable urban development.
YOUTHSTART	Youth labour integration.

Source: Own elaboration.

Thematic programmes, in turn, have stimulated the participation of local and regional actors in projects simultaneously implemented in more than one Member State. In this sense, the handling of programmes such as “Equal Opportunities”, “Culture 2000”, “INTI”, “LIFE”, or “Leonardo”, has generated new territorial cooperation dynamics in the field of social inclusion, culture, immigration, environment and training, respectively. All these thematic areas are part of the local/regional governments’ sphere of competences or, at least, are kept within the bounds of problems to be faced by them everyday.

The objective of the INTERREG III programme,⁹ is to enhance social and economic cohesion in the European Union through cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and to favour the integration and a balanced and harmonious development of the European territory. The third phase takes place after the success of INTERREG I (1989-1993) and INTERREG II (1994-1999).

Chapter “A” regarding Community initiative INTERREG III is wholly dedicated to **cross-border cooperation**, understood as the cooperation between the adjoining zones to develop and apply common strategies of sustainable territorial development.

Within this framework, the priority actions in cross-border cooperation are:

- 1) Promote urban, rural and coastal cross-border development.
- 2) Promote the entrepreneurial spirit and the development of small and medium enterprises, tourism and local development and employment initiatives.
- 3) Promote the creation of an integrated labour market and the social inclusion.
- 4) Increase cooperation in the spheres of research, technological development, education, culture, communication, health and civil protection.
- 5) Encourage environment protection, increase energy source efficiency and promote renewable energy sources.
- 6) Improve basic infrastructures of cross-border interest.
- 7) Develop juridical and administrative cooperation.

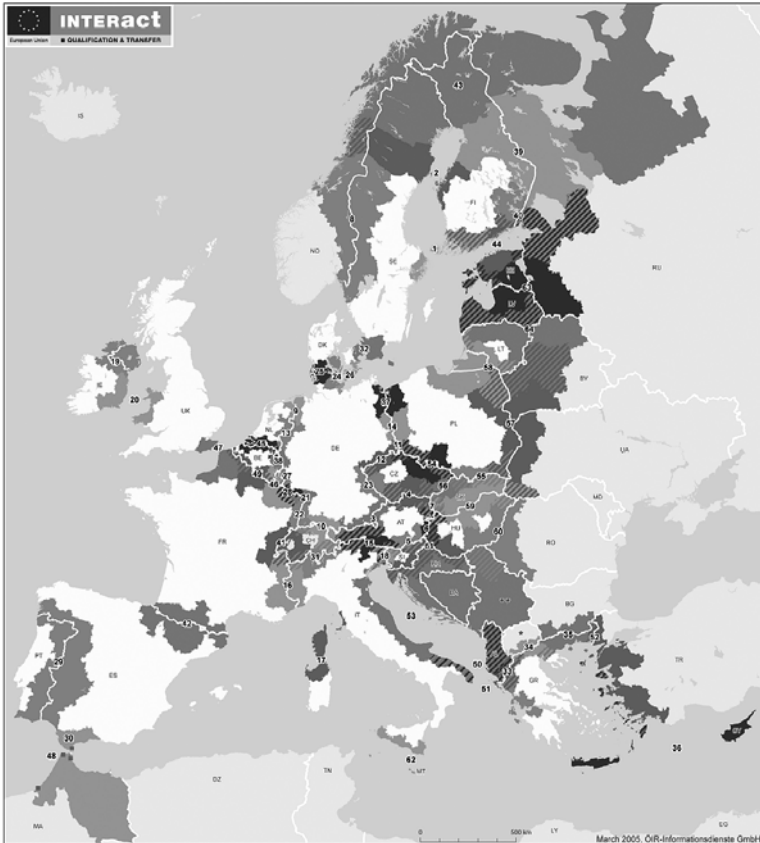
- 8) Promote cooperation between citizens and institutions.
- 9) Facilitate technical assistance.

In this case as well, the actions involve subject areas where the participation of sub-national entities is appropriate and necessary, whether because these topics constitute part of their agenda or because independently of their competences the local/regional governments decide to face them.

Figure 1, shows the cross-border cooperation programmes still in force in the framework of INTERREG III, which have increased from 53 to 64 as a result of the extension to 25 members of the European Union and the subsequent configuration of new external borders.

As it can be noticed, the programme zoning itself does not necessarily coincide with the regional unities, however this is an interesting opportunity for local entities in both sides of the border to cooperate (in fact, they have actively participated in many projects generated in INTERREG III).

Figure 1 / Map of the INTERREG IIIA programmes for cross-border cooperation in the European Union



Source: Eurogeographics Association for the Administrative Boundaries

Chapter B of INTERREG is devoted to transnational cooperation between national, regional and local public authorities (besides Universities, Chambers of Commerce and other social agents). The main objective is to promote a greater level of territorial integration between vast groups of European regions (totalling

13: West Mediterranean, Alpine Space, Atlantic Space, South-western Europe, North-western Europe, North Sea, Baltic Sea, Center, the Danube, Adriatic and Southeast, Northern Periphery, Archimed, Caribbean, the Azores, Madeira, the Canaries and the Indic Ocean). Likewise, it hopes to establish a sustainable, harmonious and balanced development in the European Union, as well as a better territorial integration with neighbouring countries.

The cooperation spheres are:

- Strategies for territory organisation.
- Development of efficient and sustainable transportation systems and the improvement of the access to the information society.
- Environment conservation and good management of the cultural heritage and natural resources, particularly water resources.
- Technical assistance for transnational cooperation projects.

In chapter C, INTERREG promotes interregional cooperation to improve efficiency on regional development and cohesion policies and instruments, through a wide exchange of information and experiences. Network integration, has been specially promoted by European regional and local authorities because they have found an excellent space for cooperation among them.

The importance granted by European countries to cross-border cooperation explains that in its first phase (1989-1993) INTERREG I conferred a central role to that type of initiatives. This importance is also reflected if we analyse the contribution of each State member to INTERREG III: at least 50% of its total endowment is destined to Chapter A.

Transnational and interregional cooperation has been specially developed as from INTERREG II (1994-1999) and INTERREG III (2000-2006).

3.1.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in Europe

At first sight, it can be inferred from the analysis made above that territorial cooperation dynamics in the heart of the European Union has been specially rich and the experience accumulated in this field includes diverse types of practices (spontaneous and promoted in the framework of Community initiatives and programmes; bilateral and multilateral; cross-border, transnational and transregional; of a generic nature or well centered in the territory or the subject areas).

The orientations of these practices, in general, have been basically centered on traditional topics of regional or local governments, which have strengthened its institutional capacity. Cooperation, does not imply more competences or roles to these levels not but what this is another way to carry out them, and the cross-border cooperation is a space where exercise them.

A second thought derived from the analysis, explains the importance of political will that has inspired the European integration process, as a starting point and main determining factor of the cooperation dynamics between territories.

In effect, the following can be highlighted among the decisive processes for the strengthening of sub-national unities as cooperation agents:

- The formulation and application of diverse political treaties that have promoted the construction of Europe.
- The European initiatives and programmes that have facilitated the access of municipalities and regions to the Structural Funds to finance local development projects. Transnationality, as a condition binding most of the initiatives, forced the establishment of cooperation relations.
- The transnational exchange in the framework of Community initiatives has generated new dynamics relations, especially in lo-

cal and regional levels, and also contributed to define new projects heading towards stable cooperation dynamics, supported by the Structural Funds.

- The relationship between transnational partners favours the creation of agreements and frameworks of stable relations between local/regional partners of several States, where some of these agreements have juridical recognition. The development of a strong stream in cross-border cooperation is determinant to achieve the agreements as a result of consecutive projects within the INTERREG Community initiative.

- Cooperation within transnational Community initiatives and programmes leads to create state cooperation and network structures where diverse agents, both local and regional, interact in diverse thematic areas, not always financed with by Community resources.

- The strengthening of institutional arrangements derived from the participation and involvement.

- Apart from the interborder spaces, cooperation has extended among local and regional territorial unities from different States, sharing concerning problems, local identity or future strategies. Cities and regions have created cooperation networks in a great diversity fields.

- The dynamics generated by Community initiatives, interrelating local and regional partners from many States, has transcended, establishing cooperation dynamics which are supported independently of the existence of financial funds specific for this purpose.

The INTERREG Community initiative constitutes the clearest expression of the European Union's political will to pro-

mote cooperation among territories. It has demonstrated great effectiveness, not only through networks and the creation of relations between sub-national authorities from different countries, but has also contributed to the social and economic cohesion of Europe as a whole. Since 2007, territorial cooperation stops being enshrined in a Community initiative to constitute a goal of the cohesion policy itself, specifically in goal number three, together with the convergence (goal one) and competitiveness (goal two).

3.2. Territorial cooperation practices in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries.

3.2.1. Cross-border cooperation.

The Latin American subregion, from Mexico through the Andean zone, is featured as a **border territory**: inland exits 12 binational borders.¹⁰ Furthermore, if it is considered the borders of this subregion with other countries of the continent, nine binational borders should be added.¹¹

This situation is particularly evident in Central America, where a third part of the territory and 12% of its population is situated in border areas. In Guatemala, 45,3% of the territory is a border, in Costa Rica these zones occupy around 36,5% of the territory, in Panama 30,2%, in Honduras 31,1%, in El Salvador 20,9% and in Nicaragua 18,6% (UNDP 2002).¹² As a whole, in Central American border areas are: 185 municipalities, 4 million inhabitants, 35% of international basins and 40% of the total protected areas of Central America.

In Mexico, the profile of **border territories** is also well known. It has nine federal border entities (six in the North, limiting with the U.S.A. and three in the South, bordering Guatemala and Belice) which cover altogether 47,7% of the national territory, being the settlement of almost 26% of the country's population and generate around 30% of the Nation's GDP (UNDP 2002).

This subregion presents other features, the border areas have a lower development level and a the precarious conditions of living in relation to the central geographic areas of the respective countries. These characteristics are particularly accentuated in Central America,¹³ where borders areas are still with strong social and economic weaknesses (despite some efforts and initiatives to promote development and cooperation spaces between different countries). Historically, the border regions have been in almost all of these countries, far-off spaces, distant from its national centers of power. They have been, on occasions, the scenarios of conflicts between the bordering countries, due to the differences regarding limit demarcation.

In turn, Mexico presents one peculiarity: the marked development difference between the Northern and Southern Bordering States. The six Mexican States of the northern border represent 40% of the total area, concentrating 17% of the total population and generating 24% of the total GDP. The three States of the southern border represent 7,7% of Mexican territory, 8,9% of its population and 4,6% of the GDP.¹⁴ These contrasts between Northern and Southern bordering zones, have influenced their own cross-border cooperation dynamics and topics.¹⁵

At a local level, cross-border relations along the subregion of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries usually show a strong interdependence: strong commercial exchange, shared infrastructures and natural resources, parental relations, labour migration, and an intense movement of people. For example, this happens in the bordering towns of Mexico and Guatemala and in Costa Rican and Panama's bordering towns.

However, in spite of the characteristics of border territories, or the strong interdependences between them, or the repositioning of the border zones assumed by the different integration processes where the countries are immersed (Andean Community, Central American Integration System and, in the case of Mexico, the treaties subscribed by Central American countries), they have not been translated into the generation of an articulated and consoli-

dated weave of cross-border cooperation initiatives between the subregion's territorial community groups.

Spontaneous practices

The **strong interdependences** gave rise, in certain cases, to spontaneous cooperation initiatives between local or regional authorities of both sides of the border, usually the signing of a protocol or a non-binding legal agreement (of general nature or of a specific topic). In some cases it has been possible the creation of local government associations (unions, federations, confederations) of bordering regions in some countries, such as Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, which contributed to the approximations at a binational, trinational, or regional level.

An original experience of spontaneous cross-border cooperation was the constitution of border assemblies in the Colombian-Venezuelan border (Viera 2004), an initiative promoted in 1986 by the state of Táchira (Venezuela) and the northern department of Santander (Colombia). The initiative lasted five years and then could not be maintained.

The low institutionalism of the great majority of initiatives in the subregion, added to the weakness of the sub-national government structure, the centralist inertia, and the deficit in the financial and technical capacities of the territorial community groups, were powerful brakes to the impetus oriented to strengthen cross-border cooperation and have frequently marked spontaneous practices of a limited scope and a reduced sustainability.

Few cases of spontaneous initiatives of cross-border cooperation having a higher degree of institutionalisation and consolidation have been disclosed. An example,¹⁶ is that of the Border Development Corporation created in 2002 by the Municipality of Huaquillas (Ecuador), the Municipal District of Aguas Verdes (Peru), their respective regional governments and the entities of civil society. Its objective is to promote the harmonious and

sustained development of border trade as well as to lead micro entrepreneurs and small traders of the shared border zone towards formality.

Promoted practices

For the institutions of the **Central American Integration System**, there are obstacles limiting its capacity to implement policies at a bloc level to promote cross-border cooperation in general and particularly, to promote territorial cooperation. Above and beyond the financial difficulties to develop programmes of support as in the case of the European Union, so far, there is no shared view (nor a sole juridical instrument) ensuring the coordinated programme implementation of cross-border cooperation, despite the fact that it has been proposed in different Central American Presidential Summits. Furthermore, in Central America there are still some terrestrial borders, subject to disputes or claims, which lead to permanent tensions of territorial and border nature (Costa Rica-Nicaragua, Honduras-Nicaragua, Honduras-Nicaragua-El Salvador, Guatemala-Belice, just to cite some of the most important cases).

This maybe explains that few mechanisms of border integration or cooperation between the States could be revealed (whether in a bilateral or multilateral way), that could open a space for territorial cooperation between sub-national entities of both sides of the border. An example of this type of mechanisms is the Trifinio Plan, subscribed by the States of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, with the objective of contributing to Central American integration through a joint action that would tend to a comprehensive, harmonious and balanced development of the border region of the three countries. The departmental Governors and the municipal Mayors of the Trifinio region, together with other institutions of the private sector and the civil society, constitute the Plan's Consultative Committee.

In Central America, the action of non-governmental regional organisations to promote cross-border territorial cooperation is observed. Such is the case, for example, of the “Cross-border cooperation in Central America” project, which since 1999 has been developing the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (FUNPADEM). The project proposes to have a bearing on the border regions through efforts oriented towards the consolidation of a policy set up to and from these regions, efforts that are channelled through municipalities and other local authorities. From the beginning, this project concentrated on the achievement of a solid approximation between the local governments of the cross-border space, which allowed the establishment of ties, alliances and associations, as well as the joint consideration of shared problems and their possible solutions. On these grounds, a Regional Association of Local Border Government is expected to be constituted, as a main executive instrument of a possible Central American Agreement on Border Regions, which is a still pending topic in the presidential agendas of the Isthmus and that FUNPADEM promotes as a strategic objective.

Likewise, the **Andean Countries** show great progress in terms of border policies and agreements as a bloc. In effect, the Andean Community of Nations (CAN),¹⁷ defined a Community Policy of Border Integration and Development through the Decision 459 (1999) that was conceived as an essential element for the strengthening and consolidation of the integration process. In this Decision, the main principles, general guidelines, objectives, institutionalism, and mechanisms kept within the bounds of that Community Policy are established.

One year later, and by Decision 501, the CAN establishes the community framework for the creation of the Border Integration Zones (ZIF) defined as “border territorial spheres adjacent to the CAN Member Countries whereby policies shall be adopted and plans, programmes and projects shall be executed, with the purpose of boosting the sustainable development and border integration in a joint, shared and coordinated way, oriented to obtain mutual benefits”.¹⁸

ZIF's objectives are, among others, to: a) contribute to diversify, strengthen and stabilise the economic, social, cultural, institutional and political ties between the Andean Countries, b) favour local community groups, boosting its productive, commercial and cultural capacities, c) contribute to delving into the national processes of economic and administrative decentralisation. Four ZIFs are nowadays operating: Colombian-Ecuadorean, Colombian-Peruvian, Ecuadorean-Peruvian, Bolivian-Peruvian. In ZIF's definition and demarcation (through bilateral mechanisms), the sub-national governments involved in each border zone had a significant role. Even one of the actions planned to be developed in the regulations framework of the ZIF is to "Promote the meeting and exchange of initiatives between local authorities, regional development organism and legislators of the member countries".

Despite the fact that Andean border integration and development policy is relatively well defined, its application in general has been hindered by a series of problems and difficulties.

An interesting experience of promotion of cross-border territorial cooperation between 2002 and 2004 by one of the organism of the Andean System of Nations, the Andrés Bello Agreement, is the "No border citizens" Programme.¹⁹

The programme started from a diagnosis of border zones showing, among other issues, that: a) border integration exists, as a matter of fact, by virtue of historic, geographic or social circumstances, etc., b) the remoteness of capitals and the degree of unequal development has obliged border localities to assume integrationist policies, independently from the decision of its Central States.

The programme's action strategy complied with a double objective:

Objectives of the “No border citizens” Programme

- Capitalise the experiences generated by local societies in terms of cross-border integration (particularly in the cultural and educative spheres).
- Generate all-embracing experiences of participative procedures as articulating and generating centres of alternative proposals.

The lines of activity which have been develop, among others are: the promotion of border citizen participation in undertakings that allow the overcoming of problems identified in the zone; the legitimisation in spaces corresponding to spontaneous integration relations which are generally the result of social and cultural practices, many times not recognised by jurisprudence; support to initiatives of the civil society oriented towards the development of an integrationist citizen awareness; promote the creation of a binational agenda in the framework of the regional, provincial, departmental or municipal government policies, to incorporate the integrationist demands of border communities.

The “No border citizens” Programme was implemented in five border zones of the CAN member countries, with the extraordinary inclusion of Argentina:

- Chilean-Peruvian: localities of Arica and Tacna.
- Bolivian-Argentinian: localities of Villazón and La Quiaca.
- Ecuadorean-Colombian: localities of Tulcán and Ipiales.
- Peruvian-Bolivian: localities of Yunguyo and Copacabana.
- Colombian-Venezuelan: localities of Cúcuta and San Antonio.

The objective population, was from sub-national governments involved and the community representatives of the border zones where it was implemented and the diplomatic representatives. Most of the cases were local/regional authorities who presided the project management committee.

Finally, in the cross-border relations between Mexico and Guatemala, only a territorial cooperation field has been identified in the framework of a central government's initiative: the High Level Panel on Border Security (GANSF). In their studies, directed towards optimising the efforts of border localities of both countries to improve security conditions, the local authorities are involved.

3.2.2. Transnational cooperation

In the subregion of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries, no initiatives, programmes or actions to **promote** cross-border territorial cooperation, have been identified.

With respect to **spontaneous initiatives**, only two have been registered: The Andean City Network and the Federation of Municipalities of the Central American Isthmus (FEMICA).

The Andean City Network,²⁰ was created on September 2003 by initiative of the cities of the Andean Countries, with two objectives:

- To attain the official and institutional incorporation of municipalities and local governments into the CAN's integration scheme. This goal was achieved under the constitution (by Decision 585 of the Andean Council of Foreign Affairs Ministers) of the Andean Council of Municipal Authorities,²¹ as a permanent consultative and advisory body of the Andean Integration System.

- Be constituted in an instrument of mutual support and united work "allowing municipalities to manage their cities in an efficient way, improve the life conditions of its population, fight against poverty and constitute competitive local societies".

For this purpose, five strategic axes were defined:

ANDEAN CITY NETWORK / Strategic Axes

1. Promotion of commercial relations and business' coordination to particularly relate micro entrepreneurs, as well as small and medium businesses.
2. Search for better connectivity conditions between cities and regions, through the use of all the pertinent transportation and communication systems.
3. Exchange of municipal management experiences, practices and initiatives, particularly in topics related to decentralisation and citizen participation to strengthen democracy.
4. Cooperation in the field of cultural and artistic activity.
5. Exchange in the academic and professional spheres.

The Network nowadays comprises 30 local governments of the Andean Countries. It has a defined institutionalism: an Executive Council, an Executive Secretariat, a plenary Assembly, and responsible for each one of the five axes. At least for an initial phase, municipalities of the capital cities shall be responsible for the axes: Bogotá, Axis 1; Lima, Axis 2; La Paz, Axis 3; Quito, Axis 4; Caracas, Axis 5.

Likewise, FEMICA, the regional organisation created on September 1991, is made up of Central American municipalities, associations, unions, leagues and federations, whether national, regional, departmental or provincial.²² Their purpose is to support municipal development in Central America through intermunicipal cooperation, the boost of decentralisation processes and municipal strengthening, the promotion of international cooperation and the technical assistance to municipalities.

FEMICA has several instruments to attain its goals, among which are their “dialog networks” and a Central American Archive (as a Web instrument of information, training and technical as-

sistance, ideal for the spreading of successful experiences in local management). It has also constituted two instances of specific work in its core: the “Central American Network for Decentralisation and Municipal Strengthening” and the “Network of Legislators”.

FEMICA’s current Action Plan establishes five priority areas and five transversal axes to work on.

FEMICA	
Priority areas	Transversal axes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency and probity • Local economic development • Comprehensive risk management • Citizen security • Municipal financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal training and technical assistance • Systematisation and diffusion of successful practices and experiences • Promotion of information technologies and communication • Knowledge management • Design, development and application of system indicators of municipal performance

FEMICA has a consolidated institutionalism, composed of: the Mayor’s Assembly, a Board of Directors comprised by six main members and the same amount of substitutes, representative of each country and an Executive Secretariat (permanent body). It is a member of the Consultative Committee of the Central American Integration System.

3.2.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries.

A general first thought is inferred from the analysis: territorial cooperation in the inlands of this Latin American subregion is still very weak.

Following the classification of practices used for the analysis of the European experience, the information compiled seems to indicate that in the subregion, only spontaneous experiences of the following nature have developed: a) special cross-border and b) transnational generic (Andean City Network and FEMICA, where the relation is maintained in the fact of being local governments belonging to common spaces of regional integration).

In the first case, we are dealing, in general, with spontaneous practices, with very low or inexistent institutionalism. In the second case, the two experiences revealed, possess greater institutionalism and are more consolidated (or in the process of consolidation).

No specific subregion programmes of support to territorial cooperation have been identified as in the European case. Maybe a close initiative was the “No border citizens” Programme, although with a very limited scope and with short duration in time.

On the other hand, some cross-border territorial cooperation practices have been indeed identified in the framework of participation spaces open to the local/regional government mechanisms established by central governments to promote its border relations (in a bilateral way or under the umbrella of Community policies). This is particularly marked in the case of CAN.

Territorial cooperation in the subregion is faced with obstacles that limit its development, particularly in its cross-border dimension. Among them, the most important are: the centralist culture, the institutional weakness of the territorial community groups, its deficit of financial, technical and human resources and the existence of border conflicts in some cases and internal tensions in others (as those derived from the conflict in Colombia

and its repercussions, particularly in the border zones). Likewise, the institutional and the border policies weaknesses, although with different degrees and dimensions, constitute other territorial cooperation limiting factors in the subregion.²³

A second thought inferred from the analysis, is the difficulty to systematise the thematic orientations of cross-border cooperation practices, by virtue of the characteristics that they adopt and the lack of registration. A summary of the main concerns of border local authorities of this subregion may offer, at least, a clue on the subject areas that are prioritised or that could be prioritised in future cross-border territorial cooperation practices. Due to their nature, many of these topics, which shall be presented in detail in subsection 4.3.1., are independent of the competences of local authorities and require a double cross-border cooperation: between territorial community groups and central governments.

In the case of cross-border initiatives their thematic orientations are clearly established, as it is noticed in the analysis of section 3.2.2. In general terms, they are centered in subject areas characteristic of local governments, including the new roles performed thereof. Subject areas independent of their competence are also present, but they impact or interfere on the territories (as decentralisation or academic/professional exchange).

3.3. Territorial cooperation practices in the Southern Cone countries

3.3.1. Cross-border cooperation

Border zones in the Southern Cone share, in general terms, the same characteristic indicated for the case of the subregion of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries: a low development level in relation to the countries' central areas.

Historically, these zones “were –with the exception of some few specific undertakings– recipient of the establishment of equipments and military activities, oriented by the ‘conflict hypothesis’”. They complied with the marginal “edge” role during

a long period of time that extends from independence till the end of the 80's (Laurelli 2002), when a process of easing of tension of bilateral relations in the Southern Cone begins. Nowadays, and as distinct from the other Latin American subregion studied, cross-border relations are not affected by territorial litigations, when a final admission of legality of common borders previously disputed was attained.

In the border zones of the Southern Cone two types of territorial cooperation practices coexist and interact: those developed spontaneously among local authorities of both sides of the border, and the promoted ones.²⁴

Spontaneous practices

In the beginning, spontaneous practices of cross-border cooperation in the Southern Cone are the result of a natural integration. Then they usually materialise in more or less formal cooperation agreements and in more or less formalised costumes too, that consequently the sub-national governments (and other local actors) assume as a normal exercise of a good border neighbourhood policy.

This type of initiatives usually occurs when at both sides of the border there are cities or communes (commonly named as a "border pair" or "twin cities") with strong interdependences which share functional, social and cultural relations and there are less structural discontinuities than those that can be presented in to its national unities (Valenciano 1995).

Interdependence and cross-border cooperation initiatives in certain cases are more marked among those twin cities sharing a dry border (as in the paradigmatic case of Rivera, in Uruguay and Santana do Livramento, in Brazil) or those linked by international bridges. An example of the latter is the case of the cities of Paso de los Libres (Argentina) and Uruguayana (Brazil), where an Integration Committee operates with representatives of the civil society and the regional governments involved.

Although there is no complete and updated register of cross-border territorial cooperation practices in the Southern Cone, some surveys in specific zones have been developed (unfortunately

not updated) showing certain dynamism of these initiatives. For example, based on the surveys carried out by a research center of the Paris University III (CREDAL), Figure 2 (see subsection 3.3.1.) shows a broad zone in the border Argentina-Uruguay whereby cooperation agreements exist. Other surveys carried out on the Uruguay-Brazilian border (Achard 1995), indicate the importance of cooperation agreements in the zone, particularly between Rivera (Uruguay) and Santana do Livramento (Brazil) and between the municipality of Bagé (Brazil) and the Department of Cerro Largo (Uruguay).

Likewise, the **Planning and Management Committee of the Integrated Municipalities of “Bajo Río Uruguay”**, is an example of spontaneous cross-border cooperation with a higher degree of institutionalisation and broader and more ambitious objectives. After almost one year of MERCOSUR’s creation, on February 22, 1992, thirteen municipalities of Argentina and Uruguay located at both sides of the Río Uruguay, made up the Committee, comprising one representative per municipality.

As its Executive Secretary explained in an article of 1995, together with the Committee, the municipalities were prepared to conquer new working spaces that so far were historically banned. This caused resistance, particularly derived from the centralist nature of the countries, which hampered the Committee’s operation (Carricart 1995).

Above and beyond these difficulties, the Committee attained its main objective: the consolidation of a binational institution for border development involving the local governments of the area.²⁵ The thirteen municipalities of the “Río Uruguay” managed the signing of the “Cartas Reversales” by the governments of Argentina and Uruguay on October 14, 1994, whereby the Committee for the Development of Border Zones Argentina-Uruguay (CO.DE.FRO) was created.

As far as the Southern Cone’s regional governments are concerned, there are, although to a less extent, spontaneous practices of cross-border cooperation. Such are the cases, for example, of the Argentinean province of Misiones with the southern Brazilian States and the Argentinean Province of Mendoza with Chile’s Region V.

Considering the integration process, which gathers full partners or associated members in the case of Chile and the five Southern Cone countries, no specific policies of territorial cross-border cooperation promotion have been developed. This has been difficult not only due to issues of financial nature, but due to the absence of a policy and of juridical instruments of the bloc's border integration as well.²⁶

Nevertheless, in the last years, some progress has occurred regarding this issue in the MERCOSUR, which reflects the concern for border integration and that may have its effects on territorial cooperation between sub-national border governments.

In effect, by means of Decision CMC Nr. 5, 2002 the MERCOSUR created a specific organisation within its institutional structure: the Ad-Hoc Group,²⁷ on Border Integration. According to this Decree, the Ad-Hoc Group “has the objective of creating instruments, promoting a greater integration of border communities boosting an improvement in the quality of life of its population”.

As part of its roles, the Group has prepared the “First Draft of Agreement on Border Communities of the MERCOSUR”, to provide an adequate regulatory framework for the effective integration of border zones and to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of border communities.

Time will tell about the effective approval of the First Draft and its implementation, to know if it includes measures, and of what type, aimed at promoting cooperation initiatives.

As regards to its bilateral border relations, the Southern Cone States have an instrument which, in most cases, opens a space for cooperation between the territorial community groups of both sides of the border: the so-called **Border Committees**.²⁸ It involves international mechanisms that develop from agreements (usually bilateral) between adjoining States, conceived to:

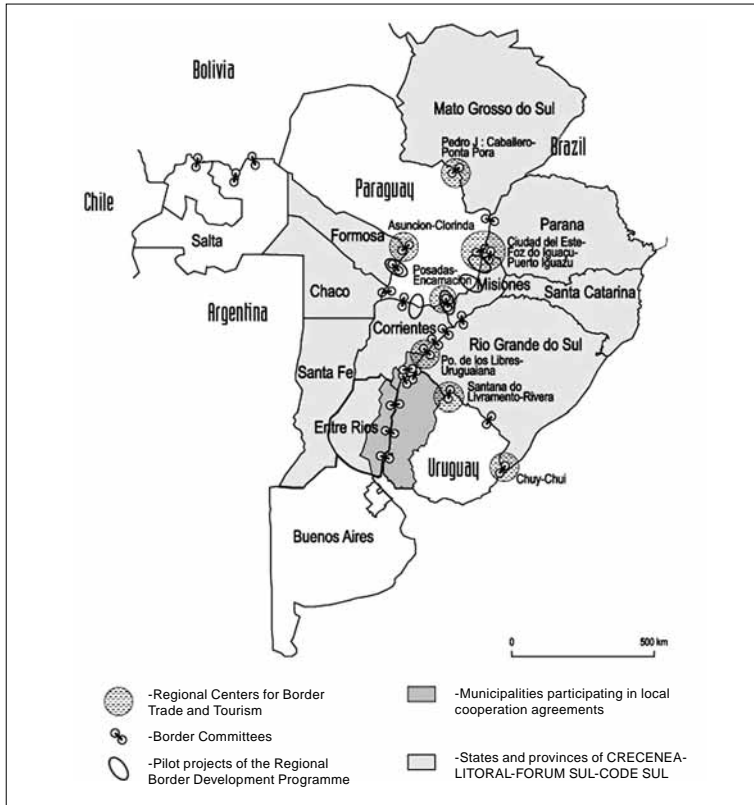
- a) Provide agile solutions to problems concerning the border zone or to “channel” the information for a resolution at the corresponding level.
- b) Promote cooperation in these areas.

Their expansion since mid 80's was boosted by three dynamics occurring in the Southern Cone: the democratisation processes, the disappearance of old conflict hypothesis and the pending border conflict resolution.

Although Border Committees are made up of Central States,²⁹ and were firstly devised so that representatives of border services and Chancery met to deal with topics of their concern, in most of the cases they implemented a political-juridical formula that allows the direct participation of provinces and municipalities of the border zone.

As it can be observed in the following figure, there are Border Committees in great part of Southern Cone's border areas:³⁰

Figure 2 / Territorial Cooperation in the Southern Cone



Source: CREDAL-Paris University III, Atlas du MERCOSUR, 2000

The Border Committees' agenda covers topics/problems of a very varied nature (Rondán Samaniego 1995) and are related to diverse aspects of border connections. Although the nature of the topics and their prioritisation varies according to the reality of each border zone where the Committees act, the most common subject areas are summarised in the following table.

Table 9 / Main subject areas of the Border Committees

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health• Movement of persons, goods and vehicles• Communications• Cooperation in the rendering of public services: urban passenger transportation, refuse treatment, basic sanitation, rural electrification and water supply• Tourism• Cultural and social expressions• Management of joint projects• Urban development• Environment.• In some cases (particularly in the triple Argentinean-Paraguayan-Brazilian border) the security topics (specially drugs, arms trade and terrorism) acquire a relevant order.
--

Source: Own elaboration based on information provided by CEFIR (1995) and Valenciano (1992).

As observed in the table above, many of the topics covered by the Committees, although they affect the border territories, they are outside the sphere of competence of sub-national authorities. In other cases, problem resolution requires investments or technical support not available at a municipal level and, therefore, not easy to be solved at that level.

An outstanding fact from the territorial cooperation perspective is that several of the topics-problems discussed in the Committees, and through them presented to the central government, have been already partially or totally solved in practice by the sub-national governments of the zone. The Committees seek to “legalise” a procedure, which is common in the border locality (Rondán Samaniego, 1995). Cross-border performance of firefighters or doctors is a typical case of this category. Also it happens with urban passenger transportation agreements, resulting from good neighbourhood policies between local authorities of both sides of the border (although they have not a juridical means of support for the private companies rendering the service).

Border Committees have been questioned in several opportunities, whether due to the pre-eminence of national logic over local logic, or due to their structural problems.³¹ However, its credibility and functionality as an instrument of border integration, as a collaboration space between the sub-national governments of the zone, varies in each case. In any case, and as held by Diego Achard (1995), it is striking that “Border Committees have not yet become valuable forums for the presentation of initiatives related to regional economic development”.

Another example of territorial cooperation in the framework of binational border initiatives of central governments is the already mentioned CO.DE.FRO. It was created with the purpose of organising the development of a cooperation and integration programme where actions and projects could contribute to local development by delving into cross-border relations, seeking mechanisms favouring a greater productive, technological, environmental and social coordination and complementarity for mutual benefit and consolidated in the demands and interests of local binational communities.

For this purpose, the management of plans, programmes and actions are conducted by a Permanent Committee formed by the Delegations of both countries, each one of them made up of:

- One representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presiding it.
- Two representatives of other State Departments.
- Two representatives of the municipalities involved.

At present, the central governments of Argentina and Uruguay are managing the institutionalisation of CO.DE.FRO. as a binational regional development agency.³²

3.3.2. Transnational cooperation

Just like the case of the Latin American subregion analysed in the present study, no initiatives, programmes or actions to promote cross-border territorial cooperation, have been identified in the Southern Cone.

Regarding spontaneous initiatives,³³ five outstanding experiences could be revealed: Mercociudades Network, Regional Committee of Foreign Trade of Northeast Argentina and South Council for integration and development (CRECENEA-CODE-SUL), Central-West South American Integration Zone (ZICOSUR), ATACALAR and Central Bioceanic Corridor Forum.³⁴

The MERCOCIUDADES NETWORK³⁵ was created in 1995 in the city of Asunción, Paraguay, by initiative of a group of eleven MERCOSUR medium-large sized cities (including Chile). Nowadays, the Network is composed of more than 160 local community groups (of diverse sizes),³⁶ of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.³⁷

The idea was to build an institutional sphere where the cities could participate in the process of the Southern Cone integration and, develop a space of exchange and cooperation between cities with similar problems. Within this structure, the objectives established in its Statute can be summarised in:

- Seeking Mercociudades' recognition in the MERCOSUR's institutional structure, pursuing the co-decision in its competence areas.

• Boosting the creation of city networks in its heart through the study of operational Thematic Unities developing varied actions, programmes and projects of intermunicipal common interests.

• Creating network communication mechanisms between the cities in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences.

In its evolution, the Network has gone through diverse phases and has generated modifications in its structure and programme of activities. Currently, the Network's authorities are: the General Assembly (Summit meeting), the Council, the Executive Secretariat, the Management Committee, the Permanent Technical Secretariat and the Thematic Unities.

The definition of the amount and thematic contents of the Thematic Unities has gone through modifications in respect of major topics and concerns. At present, the following Thematic Unities are operating, which reflect the thematic orientations of cooperation between the Network's cities:

MERCOCIUDADES' NETWORK / Thematic Unities and thematic orientations

- Autonomy, Financing and Local Management
- Science, Technology and Training
- International cooperation
- Culture
- Local Economic Development
- Social Development
- Urban Development
- Education
- Gender and Municipality
- Environment and sustainable development
- Strategic planning
- Tourism
- Youth
- Citizen security

One of the Network's major achievements was the MERCOSUR's decision to create in the year 2000, the Specialised Meeting of Municipalities and Intendencies,³⁸ as a consultative organism within its institutional structure, to deal with the issues of concern to the cities.

Four years later, and in response to demands of regional public powers, the MERCOSUR replaced that Specialised Meeting with the creation of the Consultative Forum of Municipalities, Federal States, Provinces and Departments (created on December 2004 by Resolution 41/04 of MERCOSUR's Common Market Council).

The Consultative Forum is made up of a Committee of Municipalities and a Committee of Federal States, Provinces and Departments, and its goal is to "stimulate dialogue and cooperation between the authorities at a municipal, state, provincial and departmental level of MERCOSUR's State Members" (Art. 1 Resolution 41/04).

Further, the Forum can "propose measures aimed at the coordination of policies to promote the well-being and improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of Municipalities, Federal States, Provinces and Departments of the region, as well as to formulate recommendations through the Common Market Group" (Art. 4 Resolution 41/04).

As indicated in section 2.2.3. of the present study, (the creation and operation of the Mercociudades' Network has been one of the main factors promoting international activity of local governments of the Southern Cone, constituting in some cases the first cooperation experience with similar entities beyond the national border.³⁹

CRECENEA-CODESUL is a cooperation initiative between the north-eastern Argentinean Provinces (Corrientes, Chaco, Formosa, Misiones, Entre Ríos and Santa Fe) gathered together in the north-eastern Argentinean Foreign Trade Regional Committee (CRECENEA),⁴⁰ and the Southern Brazilian States (Río Grande

do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catarina, where later on Mato Grosso do Sul shall be incorporated), which are a part of the South Council for Development and Integration (CODESUL). Figure 2 (see subsection 3.3.1.) shows the location of the regional government members of the initiative.

Jointly, CRECENEA-CODESUL constitute an extension zone of 1.437.546 km², with a population of 33.039.127 inhabitants and a Gross National Product of 176.571 million dollars.⁴¹

As from the Argentina-Brazil Integration agreement (July 1986) both regional organisations are developing a joint work, which extended in the framework of the Permanent Working Group of the Regional Border Protocol Nr. 23 (signed in 1988 by Argentina and Brazil, a CRECENEA-CODESUL proposal).

However, it was not until 1995 when the CRECENEA-CODESUL Agreement was signed, with the purpose of achieving the comprehensive and balanced development of the region and its influence zone. In the same year, the experience is formally recognised by central governments of Argentina and Brazil and its institutional and operational structure is established, which comprised of:

- CRECENEA-CODESUL Governors Forum
- Executive Secretariat
- Thematic Integration Groups

Later on, the Subregional Joint Parliamentary Committee was created, by agreement of the CRECENEA Legislators Forum and the “Parlamento do Sul” (which make up the Legislative Assemblies of the States of Santa Catarina, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Mato Grosso do Sul).

The Thematic Integration Groups define the initiative’s cooperation spheres.⁴²

CRECENEA-CODESUL / Thematic Integration Groups	
Topics	Subtopics
Border Aspects	Civil Defense Agriculture
Professional Associations and Councils	...
Infrastructure	Transportation Gas Pipeline Communications Electric Power
Science, Technology and Technical Cooperation	Information Bank
Education	...
Culture	...
Environment	...
Security	...
Health	...
Tourism	...

Within these thematic orientations, the Executive Secretariat regularly prioritises the working spheres for each period. In its last meeting carried out on October 2005 three topics were prioritised: environment, tourism and culture.

The **ZICOSUR**,⁴³ is an initiative created in 1997 by regions of three member countries (Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay) and those of the two MERCOSUR's associates (Chile and Bolivia). It is made up of: the Regions of Tarapacá, Antofagasta and Atacama from Chile; the Departments of Potosí and Tarija and Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in the south of Bolivia; the north-western Provinces

of Argentina: Jujuy, Salta, Tucumán and Catamarca, and the north-eastern Provinces of Argentina: Corrientes, Formosa, Chaco and Misiones; the States of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso Do Sul and Paraná in the west of Brazil; and all the departments of Paraguay.⁴⁴ Together they make up a region, which is coordinated from the Atlantic to the Pacific and has 30 million inhabitants distributed throughout an area exceeding the four million squared kilometres.

ZICOSUR emerges as a response to the double interest of the territorial community groups thereof: a) coordinate an economic complex to develop foreign trade with the markets of the Pacific Basin and especially with the markets of the Asiatic countries, b) define a horizontal regional strip of integration within MERCOSUR's framework (compared to the traditional vertical corridor from the Atlantic side).

Although ZICOSUR is born as a cooperation initiative between regional governments (accompanied by representatives of the entrepreneurs sector), basically aimed at the economic and commercial complementation, also covering aspects concerning education, culture, tourism and environment.

ZICOSUR's COOPERATION SPHERES

- Harbour integration
- Terrestrial transportation integration
- Energy source integration
- Culture
- Education
- Tourism

Its institutional structure became recently formal through the Campo Grande Protocol (Brazil), signed on November 21, 2005, date of the ZICOSUR's Governor's Plenary Meeting. It is constituted by:

- Plenary of Authorities (governors, regional mayors or prefects, etc.).

- Coordinating Committee.

- Executive Pro-Témpore Department

- Special Working Committees: Infrastructure and Related Services Committee; Production and Trade Committee; Culture, Education and Environment Committee; Committee on Animal, Plant Protection and Food Safety.

ATACALAR is an Argentinean-Chilean territorial co-operation initiative created in 1996 by Region III of Atacama in Chile and the Argentinean Provinces of Catamarca and La Rioja (later on the Provinces of Córdoba and Santiago del Estero are incorporated). Its purpose is to constitute a commercial, cultural and social integration platform between part of Northeast Argentina and Region III of Chile. Although a series of specific cooperation actions is registered (particularly in the cultural and social fields, as inter-school Sport Games in the region), ATACALAR has a low institutionality.

South America's Central Bioceanic Corridor Forum (CBC Forum),⁴⁵ is made up of the Brazilian States of Santa Catarina, Río Grande, Paraná and Sao Paulo; the Argentinean Provinces of Santa Fé, Entre Ríos, Córdoba, San Luis and Mendoza; the Montevideo Provincial Council Department from Uruguay and Valparaíso Region, Chile. It was created by initiative of state and provincial legislators, regional advisers and departmental councillor of these regions. However, according to its Statute, the following could be members: "state, provincial and departmental legislative entities, and regional councils or other similar ones which feel part of this interoceanic space, as well as the governments or executives of these sub-national territories".

Its creation, on July 2001, follows the necessity to establish a broad integration space between regional governments of

a territorial strip with the following characteristics: great urban concentration, technological development, agricultural and agro business potential, increasing economic flow east-west, interoceanic nature, generates 70% of the economic activity of the Southern Cone and the greatest flows of intraregional trade.

The association's objectives "are founded in the necessity to keep and increase the validity of this South American continental integration, delving into the linking tasks between governmental and non-governmental sectors in its States, provinces, regions and municipalities, as well as the promotion of specific activities and experiences in the length and breadth of its territory, consolidating institutional frameworks and intergovernmental relations allowing –in a foreseeable manner– to delve into the association and twinning of deconcentrated and decentralised autonomous political unities, networking and coordinating multi-purpose actions".

CENTRAL BIOCEANIC CORRIDOR FORUM

Thematic Areas

- Political and social aspects of integration
- Infrastructure, Land Management, Customs, Harbours and Borders
- Culture and Universities
- Commercial and Management Aspects

The CBC Forum consists of an organisational structure comprising an Executive Committee, a permanent Executive Secretariat and Thematic Areas. In the future, its structure aims at the constitution of a Region Network, whereby it should find the

convergence points between the signing parts, respecting internal regulations and making good use of the autonomy which, to a greater or less extent, may be able to develop.

3.3.3. Highlights and main characteristics of territorial cooperation in the Southern Cone countries

The existence of an incipient weave of territorial cooperation initiatives is recognised in the Southern Cone, though lacking the development, level of institutionality, scope and results of the European experience.

A first thought is inferred from its analysis: the set of these practices shows a complex and diverse scenario, in terms of development, goal achievement, institutionality, origin and validity of initiatives, within the cross-border practices and those of transnational nature and internal to each one of these groups.

Following the classification used for the European experience, in the Southern Cone were identified spatial initiatives of cross-border type, of transnational type and generic initiatives.

Cross-border practices are numerous, however most of them have very low or inexistent institutionality, and combine spontaneous practices with the participation of local community groups in initiatives, programmes or policies defined and carried out by central governments.

Transnational initiatives (CRECENEA-CODESUL, ZI-COSUR, ATACALAR, CBC Forum) and the generic initiatives (Mercociudades Network), are fewer in numerical terms. They have developed an institutional and operational structure, permanent and of its own, (at least in 4 out of 5 experiences) and constitute, in all cases, practices promoted, generated and staged by sub-national entities. In some cases, it is a case of local government initiatives, in others, regional initiatives (some promoted by their executive authorities and others by regional legislative powers).

A second thought, which is inferred from the analysis, is the difficulty to systematise the thematic orientations of cross-

border cooperation initiatives, by virtue of two factors. In the first place, the lack of institutionality and informality of the great majority of spontaneous practices, and as a consequence of the foregoing, the lack of complete and adequate registers. Only some partial surveys are available, which indicate that at least for the initiatives analysed therefore, the topics over which these practices are developed refer to the spheres distinctive of local government competence, particularly culture, urban environment, joint works, health, tourism, citizen security and rendering of public services.

Secondly, as cross-border cooperation experiences under central government initiatives (as in the case of Border Committees) are not autonomous, the thematic agenda shows a range of diverse topics, where urban-regional management and development are combined, as well as problems outside the competence of local authorities (although they have an impact on their territory).

A synthesis from the existing partial surveys and from the main concerns of border local authorities of the subregion may provide, at least, a clue on the subject areas that are prioritised or that may be prioritised in future cross-border territorial cooperation practices (see subsection 4.3.1.)

Likewise, thematic orientations of cross-border practices are more clearly established. In general terms, they are centered in the local or regional government's spheres of competence (depending on the actors of each initiative). However, several of this type of experience directed by regional governments include, moreover, subject areas, which in certain cases either are not of their competences (for example, energy source integration, harbours, gas pipelines, etc.) or require the interference of other institutions (for example, universities).

A great part of the obstacles indicated for the subregion of Mexico, Central America and Andean Countries as limiting factors for the development of territorial cooperation (centralism, deficit of financial, technical and human resources in the territorial community groups, etc.), are also present in the Southern Cone. Unlike

what has been indicated for this subregion, territorial cooperation in the Southern Cone is not limited by the existence of conflicts in the demarcation of border limits.⁴⁶

Although no specific promoted initiatives or programmes of territorial cooperation have been identified in the Southern Cone, it could find a mechanism to support territorial cooperation as from MERCOSUR's recent decision to create a Structural Convergence Fund.

So far, this initiative does not consider a specific programme of support towards territorial cooperation, but its implementation or activation is expected to enable local and regional actors the access to funds (particularly in Programmes I and III) for the development of initiatives, particularly in the cross-border dimension.

MERCOSUR's Fund for Structural Convergence

In December 2003, the MERCOSUR began to study the possibility of establishing Structural Funds and created a High Level Group with the purpose of:

- Identifying initiatives and programmes to promote competitiveness of Member States, particularly of minor economies, and structural convergence in the MERCOSUR.
- Proposing financing formulae for the implementation of the mentioned initiatives and programmes, as well as for the operation and strengthening of MERCOSUR's institutional structure.

Based on the work of the High Level Group, the Common Market Council (MERCOSUR's conducting body), by Decision Nr. 45 of 2004, created MERCOSUR's Fund for Structural Convergence (FOCEM). In 2005, other provisions of the Common Market Council established FOCEM's programmes and internal regulations.

FOCEM is intended to finance programmes to promote structural convergence; develop competitiveness; promote social cohesion, particularly of minor economies and less developed regions; and support the development of institutional structure and strengthening of the integration process.

Four programmes to be executed within the next ten years were defined (they can be reviewed after this deadline):

1. The Structural Convergence Programme: the projects, where resources shall be first and foremost assigned during the first four years, must contribute to the development and structural readjustment of minor economies and less developed regions, including the improvement of border integration systems and communication systems in general.

2. The Competitiveness Development Programme: the projects must contribute to the competitiveness of MERCOSUR's productions, including productive and labour restructuring processes that facilitate the creation of intraMERCOSUR commerce and projects of production line integration and strengthening of public and private institutionality related to production quality.

3. The Social cohesion programme: the projects must contribute to social development, particularly in border zones and may include projects of community interest in human health areas, poverty and unemployment reduction.

4. The Strengthening programme of institutional structure and integration process: the projects must deal with the improvement of MERCOSUR's institutional structure and its possible development.

The projects may include one or more of the Member States. These Member States submit the initiatives to MERCOSUR's competent authorities, although the projects may emerge

from initiatives of the States' "public entities" (it is not clear in the regulations to what type of public entities they refer nor to what government level).

The FOCEM shall be composed of annual contributions of the Member States characterised by non-refundable contributions and with percentages established considering the historical average of MERCOSUR's GDP:

- Argentina: 27%
- Brazil: 70%
- Paraguay: 1%
- Uruguay: 2%

The total annual amount of the Member States' contribution to FOCEM shall be of 100 million dollars. The Member States should participate in the project approved for their benefit with their own funds equivalent to a minimum of 15% of the total value of these projects.

It is worth mentioning, that up to date, the FOCEM has not been implemented.⁴⁷

Notes

9 Community funding, by virtue of INTERREG III, is kept in the bounds of application of Structural Funds and the provisions on expenditure subventions. The State members and the European Commission cofinance the Community initiative.

10 These are: Mexico-Guatemala, Guatemala-Honduras, Guatemala-El Salvador, El Salvador-Honduras, Honduras-Nicaragua, Nicaragua-Costa Rica, Costa Rica-Panama, Panama-Colombia, Colombia-Venezuela, Colombia-Ecuador, Colombia-Peru y Peru-Bolivia.

11 These are, at the North: Mexico-United States, in Central America: Mexico-Belice and Guatemala-Belice, in the Southern Cone: Venezuela-Brazil, Colombia-Brazil, Peru-Brazil, Bolivia-Brazil, Bolivia-Paraguay, Bolivia-Argentina, Bolivia-Chile and Peru-Chile.

12 It is worth mentioning, that the information for the entire subregion includes Belice, country not covered in the present study.

13 For example, in the total Panamanian border municipalities, 66,9% of ten-year-old persons are unemployed while 86,8% of ten-year-old persons don't know how to read or write. The situation in the Nicaraguan bordering regions is not very different than the latter. Herein poverty is an extended phenomenon. Information of the National Institute of Statistics indicates that around 80% of the population living in these regions live in a state of poverty or extreme poverty.

14 For a comprehensive analysis of long-term tendencies of regional development in Mexico see Godínez (2000).

15 The present study shall only refer to the bordering zones of southern Mexico.

16 Maybe the major institutionality and consolidation of this initiative derives, to a great extent, from the initial financial and technical support of the Spanish International Cooperation Agency and the CIDEAL.

17 The Andean Community is a subregional body with international legal status comprising the States of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (this country recently announced its withdrawal from the bloc). It is made up of the bodies and institutions of the Andean Integration System (SAI). The SAI is made up of a group of bodies and institutions, its objective being the Andean subregional integration, the promotion of its external projection and the strengthening of actions related to the process.

18 The text of Decision 501 has been extracted from the Internet site: <http://www.comunidadandina.org/borders/zif.htm>

19 Currently, the project is in a reformulation phase in order to provide same with a continuity in the framework of another program of the Andrés Bello Agreement called "Intercultural educative spaces".

20 For further information on the Network you can consult the Internet site: www.redandina-ciudades.org

21 The Consultative Council is composed of three representatives of each member country, one of them being the metropolitan mayor or magistrate of the respective city, government headquarters of the Member Country, and the other two are elected among registered mayoralties and those mayoralties registered in the Andean City Network.

22 For further information you may consult at the Internet site: www.femica.org

23 Weakness has been recently accentuated in the case of CAN after Venezuela's withdrawal decision.

24 It is reminded that the category of "promoted" is used for Latin America in a different way to that conferred to the European Union. In the first case, it is referred to the practices carried out in the framework of programs or instruments developed by the Central States to stimulate or regulate the system of its border relations, whether in a bilateral way or as part of its regional integration processes. Thus, practices promoted in Latin America lack autonomy.

25 This implied the virtual disappearance of the Committee.

26 So far, the border policies and the cooperation agreements in this sphere were in line with the juridical instruments of a bilateral nature. For example, the Regional Border Protocol Nr. 23, signed between Argentina and Brazil in the year 1988 in the framework of the Integration and Economic Cooperation Program between both countries.

27 The Ad-Hoc Groups constitute one of the auxiliary bodies of the Common Market Group (MERCOSUR's executive body).

28 For further information on Border Committees and their roles see Rondan Samaniego (1995) and Valenciano (1992).

29 The Consul accredited in the jurisdiction of the country where each meeting of the Committee is held, is the president of the Committee, alternately.

30 Although not included in the map, there are seven Border Committees along the Argentinian-Chilean border that operate too.

31 For example, it is held that their bodies don't have the adequate juridical framework; in some cases they are not part of private or public border actors; they have technical difficulties to identify problems, formulate and generate solutions to same; they lack the resolution capacity in certain topics; they do not have the necessary resources to face the multiple demands.

32 There is not enough information so as to evaluate CO.DE.FRO's performance to date, nor to analyse the results attained in relation to their initial objectives and purposes.

33 There were also other transnational cooperation initiatives that have not prospered, as the Southern Cone City-Harbor Network and others in an initial constitution phase, as the Southern Bioceanic Corridor City Network.

34 If the difference between border zones and border regions is considered, then the inclusion of some of these experiences within the transnational category could be discussed. However, in order to simplify its presentation, all of them have been gathered together in the same category.

35 For further information on the Network you may consult at Internet site: www.Mercociudades.org

36 Initially, only the capital cities could be partners or those with more than 500.000 inhabitants. This criterium became more flexible with time.

37 Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay are full members of the MERCOSUR. Chile, Bolivia and Peru are associated States.

38 The Specialized Meetings and the Ad-Hoc Groups constitute two of the auxiliary bodies of the Common Market Group (executive body of the MERCOSUR).

39 For an analysis of this effect, as well as the Network's main achievements, its limitations and obstacles, you may consult Romero (2004).

40 CRECENEA was created on June 8, 1984 by mutual agreement between the member provinces, members with the purpose of promoting the integration of said region with regional border governments, especially Brazil.

41 Information extracted for year 2004 from the Production Ministry of the Santa Fe Province Government (2005).

42 Although in its initial stages cooperation was focused on the commercial aspect, with the development of initiatives, joint working spheres started to extend.

43 For further information consult the Internet site: www.zicosur.org

44 It is worth mentioning that in ZICOSUR's official documents, the same geographic configuration of the initiative does not appear, in fact, in certain cases, regions of Peru are mentioned. In the present study, the configuration indicated in ZICOSUR's Internet site was chosen.

45 Information in this section has been extracted from the Internet site: www.forocbc.org

46 The recent conflict between Argentina and Uruguay as a result of the establishment of the cellulose plant (known as "the paper mill conflict") could represent a limiting factor for present and future cooperation practices between the cities of both sides of the "Río Uruguay". However, the short time elapsed since the beginning of the conflict, does not yet allow the evaluation of its impact on territorial cooperation.

47 For further information on FOCEM consult the corresponding provisions at the Internet site: www.mercosur.org.uy

4. The Contribution made by European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation to territorial cooperation

4.1. The phenomenon of decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America

4.1.1. "Natural" cooperation dynamics between local/regional entities

A recent report from the Development Assistance Committee (CAD 2005) and documents of OCD experts (Malé 2006) show that although what is involved is a recent practice, and in many cases within a weak legal framework, the decentralised cooperation of European territorial administrations is gaining increasing importance.

The territorial cooperation experience of these sub-national governments referred to the inner European space, especially as from the Community initiatives, as noted in section 3.1., had direct effects on its decentralised cooperation relations. Their qualitative jump assumed for the direct intervention and with the decision power in international cooperation projects, whether due to the binding transnationality of many Community initiatives or for considering cooperation as an objective in itself, facilitated its opening-up towards joint initiatives on a par with the Southern ones.

In the particular sphere of the European Union-Latin American relations, although in many cases a historical tradition of close ties of a political, economic and/or cultural nature already existed between sub-national governments of both regions, a spontaneous dynamics of decentralised cooperation relations has been created, especially at a municipal level. The territorial community groups of Spain and to a reduced extent, Italy, France and Germany, have been the most dynamical; while the most involved Latin American actors came from Central America, Cuba, Bolivia and to a reduced extent, the Southern Cone countries.

Traditionally, these decentralised cooperation initiatives were carried out through cooperation projects (of direct or indirect procedure), twinnings and, in certain cases, supramunicipal

mechanisms, which tried to promote local development plans and programmes. The contents of these actions have many times been of the assistance type, focused on the building and restructuring of economic and social infrastructures (especially in the case of Central America, after natural catastrophes).

Lately, cooperation between territorial community groups of the European Union and Latin America has been not only boosted, but also transformed. Undoubtedly, in both processes, the creation of the European Commission's URB-AL Programme constituted a determining factor.

In effect, although twinnings are still operating in their most classical conception and initiatives settled in an assistentialist view are still being developed, direct cooperation relations between local authorities of both regions based on **multilaterality and partnership** principles, present a renewed dimension. It is in the partnership where decentralised cooperation acquires importance due to the added value of its initiatives and because it provides innovative elements for the building of new relation and cooperation models.

4.1.2. Particularities of decentralised cooperation

Direct decentralised cooperation between territorial community groups from North and South introduce certain innovations regarding the nature, modes and subject areas of collaboration practices, which confer a special character to them.⁴⁸

In the first case, decentralised cooperation is based on the principles of partnership and promotion of a reciprocal and horizontal exchange between actors, leaving aside the classic relation between donors and recipients. These types of relation, together with the actor's type of decentralised cooperation (close to the realities wherein it is going to act) are factors that promote a better adaptation of initiatives to the necessities and an increase of local action appropriation and sustainability.

With respect to the cooperation modes, networking is a mode of decentralised practice management, although not a substitute of traditional modes, as twinnings, or specific projects. The existence of numerous networks is noted, wherein entities of both continents participate jointly, especially those having local actors, with a marked municipalist characteristic (United Cities and Local Governments, Interlocal-Ibero American Network of Cities for Culture, Union of Iberoamerican Capital Cities, etc.). These networks, apart from being of use for the specific objectives they pursue, they serve as a platform of relations between actors and as a generator of cooperation projects in diverse spheres.

In respect of decentralised cooperation subject matters, the enrichment and extension of the agenda's topics is noted, at the same time that they become more specific. On the one hand, the initiatives seek to make the best of territorial administration cooperation's potential: their distinctive experience and knowledge in respect of their competences therefore, bring add an added value to the activities, based on their distinctive specificity.

On the other hand, they propose to generate broader and more lasting impacts (than the simple transfer of resources), through actions aimed at strengthening local/regional government structures and capacities, at reinforcing and boosting the different development local/regional policies that they implement or wish to implement, at extending participation spaces and commitment of the different actors in the civil society's territorial base and at supporting the creation and development of horizontal structures of collaboration and mutual exchange through networking (Romero 2006).

Above and beyond the effects that decentralised cooperation may have on the improvement of territorial practices and policies, the former may also play an important role in the strengthening of what is "local" within the national and regional agendas, both in Latin America and in the European Union. It may contribute in that territorial public actors have an influence on debates and in certain policies planned within the state frame-

work but with repercussions in the territorial sphere (for example, decentralisation,⁴⁹ and cross-border cooperation). In these cases, the interlocution with actors at state or regional level is needed, wherefore apart from being a topic in debate, it requires that decentralised cooperation is provided with new mechanisms.⁵⁰

In any case, direct cooperation between sub-national public actors has specific contents distinguished from the rest of the cooperation's forms because:

- It can focus on local and territorial problems.
- It offers competence and know-how, which can be directly exchanged from local institutions.
- It has the capacity to establish medium and long-term cooperation frameworks, as the actors on stage, acting in general with their own resources, may fix the specific cooperation modes by themselves.
- It has the virtue of leading and promoting a broader relation that includes and makes other local social agents participate.
- It can guarantee a very direct relation with the citizens enabling a better control, a greater implication and participation from below.
- It offers a space for the establishment of alliances between sub-national actors, beyond the specific projects and actions" (Male 2006).

In summary, the specific dynamism and characteristics of the European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation make it a privileged vector of exchange of experiences between both regions and a enhancement mechanism of local powers man-

agement capacity and of the promotion of social cohesion policies from the territorial perspective.

4.1.3. The URB-AL Programme

Certain international States and organisations have developed strategies and mechanisms to support decentralised cooperation, recognising in this way, although in a slow and unequal manner, the sub-national government capacity of developing its own policies and initiatives. The European Union, through its URB-AL Programme, has contributed to stimulate cooperation practices based on the innovating elements indicated in the previous section.

URB-AL is a European Commission's programme addressed to local authorities (towns, metropolitan areas, provinces, regions, etc.) of the 25 European Union countries and 18 Latin American countries, where the authorities have been democratically elected, to develop direct and lasting relations between them, through the dissemination, acquisition and application of the best practices in the urban policies field.

With the introduction of networking and mechanisms of identification and formulation of common projects within each network, URB-AL has promoted new relation modes between sub-national governments.

In effect, the Programme was organised around 13 subject networks (eight created during the first phase and five in the second), each one coordinated by a Latin American or European city/region. In the network's framework, the territorial community groups and the associated members elaborate their own proposals of common projects.

When observing the subject areas of the different networks (Table 10) it is clear that all cases deal with the competence spheres of territorial community groups: in some cases the classical issues are covered and in others, the innovative subject matters that correspond to new roles to be faced by the local authorities.

Table 10 / Subject Networks developed in the URB-AL Programme according to its phases (I y II)

	Networks	Coordination
Phase I	Network 1 - Drug and towns	Municipality of Santiago (Chile)
	Network 2 - Conservation of historic urban contexts	Province of Vicenza (Italy)
	Network 3 - Democracy in towns	Ville d'Issy-les-Moulineaux (France)
	Network 4 - The town as a promoter of economic development	City Council of Madrid (Spain)
	Network 5 - Urban social policies	City Council of Montevideo (Uruguay)
	Network 6 - Urban environment	City Council of Málaga (Spain)
	Network 7 - Management and control Urbanisation	City Council of Rosario (Argentina)
	Network 8 - Control of Urban mobility I	Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart (Germany)
Phase II	Network 9 - Local finance and participative budgets	Prefeitura Municipal de Porto Alegre (Brazil)
	Network 10 - The fight against urban poverty	Prefeitura Municipal de San Pablo (Brazil)
	Network 12 - Promoting the role of women in local decision-making bodies	Barcelona Provincial Council (Spain)
	Network 13 - Towns and the information society	Freie Hansestadt Bremen (Germany)
	Network 14 - Citizen safety in towns	Municipality of Valparaíso (Chile)

Source: Own elaboration based on information of URB-AL Programme's Internet site: <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/projects/urbal>

After ten years of existence, the URB-AL Programme has contributed to a better awareness between partners from both con-

tinents and to the practice of working together. This is reflected, in a synthetic way, in some of the results of both URB-AL phases:

- It has gathered, during more than ten years of activity, around 1000 community local groups and regions of Latin America and the European Union.

- More than 400 local authorities have been directly involved in common projects.

- In the framework of its 13 subject networks, a total of 194 common projects have been developed.

- It has included new European and Latin American actors and different geographical impacts, in the decentralised cooperation dynamics in comparison to the more classical relations. Thus, for example, the cooperation ties generated by URB-AL have a stronger weight in the Southern Cone and less weight in the traditional actors of decentralised cooperation (Central American countries) (Male 2006).

4.2. Current impact of European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation on territorial cooperation

So far there is not enough information available, nor empirical studies that could show what has been until now the incidence and the working fields of the European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation in the diverse types of territorial cooperation carried out in Latin America. The few initiatives revealed, seem to indicate that the incidence is more visible in interregional and transnational cooperation than in cross-border cooperation.

In the interregional dimension, and as it has already been held in the URB-AL Programme, even when its objective has

been the establishment of lasting relations between European and Latin American territorial community groups, it has had parallel effects in the field of intra-Latin American relations: it has generated/promoted the territorial cooperation dynamics between Latin American cities.

In the cross-border dimension and beyond some specific actions (for example, of supporting to the Mercociudades Network), two decentralised initiatives in support to territorial cooperation in Latin America will be presented.

The first one involves a group of European regions (Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, CRPM) and a transnational cooperation initiative of a group of regional governments from the Southern Cone (CRECENEA-CODESUL),⁵¹ with a central linking role of the Xunta de Galicia.

It is interesting to note in this experience, that one of the three spheres where it is expected to be influential, is on the exchange of experiences and the technical formation in cross-border cooperation, taking advantage of the European experience in the subject.

Cooperation between the Xunta de Galicia, the CRPM and CRECENEA-CODESUL

The cooperation process between the Xunta de Galicia, as a Government of the Autonomous Community of Galicia, and CRECENEA-CODESUL, began in 1998 with the signing of the *Carta de Anhatomirim* (Anhatomirim Letter) and the Acta de Florianópolis (Memorandum of Action of Florianópolis).

From this outline agreement, the Xunta de Galicia, as a member of the CRPM, began an approximation process between this group of European regions and CRECENEA-CODESUL.

In 1999, the *Carta de Porto Alegre* (Porto Alegre Letter) established a Joint Working Plan between the regions that constitute CRECENEA-CODESUL and CRPM, and the Xunta de Galicia acting as a coordinator.

The Plan includes three working fields, creating a responsible Committee for each one of them:

a) The **International Trade Committee**, to develop activities of exchange of experiences and strategies about international trade development, from the prospects of regional integration.

b) The **Committee in the sphere of Culture, Education and Universities** with the purpose of analysing proposals to stimulate the link between education, cultural entities and promote region potentialities. To meet these objectives, the Committee seeks to make University exchange viable (specially in respect of the regional integration subject area), the implementation of Grants, the performance of cultural events and the creation of a Library on the CRPM/European Union (considering the exchange of information, specially in respect of the cooperation development process between the European regions).

c) **Interregional technical cooperation:** for the know-how exchange of experiences between parties on cross-border cooperation.

In year 2000 and through the Acta de Murcia (Murcia's Memorandum of Action), CRPM/CRECENEA/CODESUL agreed the first action in the framework of the Working Arrangements, the following can be distinguished:

- In the year 2002 the creation of an exposition of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the state of Paraná, coordinated by the region of Galicia, with the support of CRPM.

- To boost an annual seminar for training technicians in interregional cooperation and a long-distance course for training technicians in interregional and transnational cooperation.

The second identified experience is the South America Interregional Network for Territorial Development and Integra-

tion, developed by a non-governmental organisation, with the support of the Italian government. Actually, it is not specifically a decentralised cooperation initiative in itself, but rather a job for the identification of actors, thematic areas and modalities of interest that can later lead to specific cooperation projects between European and Latin American regional governments (particularly in the sphere of cross-border cooperation), in certain zones of the Southern Cone and Andean Countries. Anyway, the contents of this exploratory initiative, provide an interesting approach to the spheres where the incidence of Euro-Latin American decentralised cooperation is expected.

South American Interregional network for Territorial Development and Integration

The South American Interregional network for Territorial Development and Integration project, is an initiative of the Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI) in collaboration with the Instituto Italo-Latinoamericano and financed by the Cooperation for Development Department of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which started its activities in March 2006.

It is a pilot experience to build a South American **inter-regional network**. Its role is to define the ways of collaboration between Italian and European regions, on one side, and Latin American regions on the other side, to support the regional integration processes in South America. Within the network, training and technical assistance modalities will be done which, they shall become the basis for future and specific development and institutional strengthening projects. These projects will carry out by interregional associations that may have been constituted, sharing specific experiences, practices, knowledge, methodologies and technical assistance.

The project is developed around two main ideas:

- To follow regional integration processes with interregional cooperation programmes.

- To promote cross-border cooperation between South American sub-national governments.

In this first phase the project will concentrate on four South American integration areas:

- ZICOSUR.
- The area including the south of Brazil, the northeast of Argentina and all the departments of Uruguay.
- The Chilean-Argentina integration area.
- The cross-border integration zones of the Andean Community of Nations, involving several regions of Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru and Bolivia.

The thematic and/or methodological crucial points of collaboration in the process of training and technical assistance to the south american regions are: management of environmental resources; touristic integrated areas; promotion of local economic development; governance and territorial programming methodologies, such as design of regional operational programmes; territorial agreement; strategic environmental evaluation; etc. The european experience may also be very useful in relation to transversal topics such as sub-national institution consolidation, territorial internationalisation support and cross-border and interregional cooperation.

Through international meetings scheduled in different south american countries, a south american interregional focus group shall be created made up of regional administrators, government authorities responsible for decentralisation, international relations experts, which shall become a point of reference for the successive phases of research and project elaboration.

The first meeting was held in Chile on March 27 through April 1, 2006, with the purpose of defining an agenda for 2006

favouring the development of the ZICOSUR and Chilean-Argentinean integration areas.

So far, the international cooperation offices of the Italian Regions of Marche, Toscana, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Véneto and Abruzzo and the Spanish province of Huelva have adhered to the project.⁵²

4.3. Prospects for decentralised cooperation supporting territorial cooperation

The specificity (based on the experience and knowledge inherent to their competences as sub-national governments) and pertinence (for the improvement of local/regional practices and policies) of direct cooperation between territorial community groups has been pointed out in the present study. Likewise, the dynamism acquired in the type of decentralised practices in the space of Euro-Latin American relations has been noted.

However, everything seems to indicate that one of the spheres where these specificity and pertinence may extend, the enhancement of the territorial cooperation processes, particularly the cross-border cooperation, still constitutes a not very elaborated ground for decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America.

Precisely, the objective of the study's final section is to present some elements of analysis that may enable to reflect on the role of the decentralised cooperation to enhance the existing territorial cooperation processes in Latin America or those that could be generated.

With this purpose, relevant and sensitive topics will be identified, as well as the territorial cooperation dimensions in each case and the possible political and social actors that should be involved in these processes.

4.3.1. Thematic areas covered by territorial cooperation in Latin America

As it was pointed, in the present study, within the Latin America thematic orientations on territorial cooperation practices, the transnational dimensions are defined, but this does not occur in the cross-border dimension.

The insufficiency of complete and updated registers of spontaneous cross-border cooperation initiatives, and the lack of autonomy of “promoted practices”, hinders the possibility of identifying and systematising the thematic orientations of territorial cooperation (current or future) in the region.

An approach to these thematic orientations could be possible if an agenda of the most relevant topics for border local/regional governments, is built.

It will be presented **specific** agendas by Latin American geographic areas. Previously it is convenient to remember that these agendas share, with different nuances, common thematics: the low development level in relation to the countries’ central areas and the precariousness of the life conditions of the population residing in these geographical areas.

A) Andean Countries

- Inadequacies in the operativisation of the territorial policy defined within the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) framework.

- The necessity of economic and productive complementarity policies between border territorial community groups.

- Fight against drug growing, production and dealing. These three aspects require an overall comprehension and need to be developed an Andean territorial policy (with emphasis on the design of alternative strategies of productive development in drug-producing localities, in order to contribute to its restructur-

ing). However, the fight against drug dealing, acquires special characteristics in the border zones and requires the development of specific actions involving national, regional and local actors.

- Protection to the forest ecosystem of border zones through the promotion of microregional programmes, as in the case of the Peruvian-Bolivian border (Vicabamba-Amboró ecosystem), designed and managed by the territorial entities concerned (although with the participation of the institution responsible for CAN biodiversity).

- Conservation of water, land and other natural resources shared by border entities.

- Constitution of microfinancing territorial associations through social solidarity groups belonging to cross-border municipalities.

- Prevention of natural catastrophes, particularly in communities located in border zones with high seismic risk.

- Health and epidemic alertness in border zones. It is particularly required to provide management, control and coordination capacities in public health to territorial border administrations. The political limits between human settlements, do not preserve the diffusion or guarantee an efficient eradication nor fighting against epidemics and diseases. Multilevel cooperation and coordination between both sides of the border is essential (local entities and central government public health systems, as well as the Andean Health Organisation).

B) Central America

- Citizen security. Although today it is a problem shared by all Central American States and its territory, the border zones seem to be the privileged spaces for action.⁵³

- Prevention and attention to natural catastrophes. In this sense, Hurricane Mitch, and other natural phenomena, such as El Niño or earthquakes such as the one in El Salvador, proved the “vulnerability of Central American borders”. The Mitch harshly lashed the Basin of Coco River and especially the basin of Choluteca, both international. This situation claims a coordinated action between border territorial community groups, for the prevention and attention to disasters.

- Migrations. Migratory control and the vigilance of immigrant human rights and labour conditions are, or should be, a coordinated subject matter of the States.⁵⁴ However, their actions or omissions in this field have a particular impact on border territories. In this topic, Mexico should be included with Central American countries.

- Drug control. The borders of the Central American isthmus have been a paradise for drug dealing and in some cases for drug production. It is also evident that the effective fight against this complex problem, requires the cooperation between diverse levels of Central American States, among which the local/regional level is particularly important and strategic.

- Environment and preservation of shared natural resources. Basins shared by two or three States comprise more than one third of Central American territory. At the same time, the borders have a considerable portion of the forest and of the isthmus’ biodiversity. Depredation occurring in the borders areas and the importance of international basins for certain countries,⁵⁵ generate an atmosphere more prone to environmental conflict than to cooperation, situation that should be reverted.

- Transportation. Within the Central America regional integration process, transportation is one of the main aspects of the discussion agenda. Particularly, the development of the highway

system must respond to a joint effort of the countries, particularly in their border zones (as connectors of an overall isthmus system).

C) Mexico

The main topics of Mexico's territorial border agenda are inexorably related to many of the problems presented for Central America.⁵⁶

- Prevention and attention to natural catastrophes. Both in Central America and the South of Mexico, borders are also vulnerable to natural catastrophes, especially those derived from intense rain, hurricanes or droughts. This is a consequence of the depletion of certain key natural resources (as the land), the increasing deforestation, erosion, inadequate use of the land and lack of regulation, among other factors. A series of preventive actions is required to face these problems, wherefore local territorial entities are not prepared, besides lacking adequate resources (financial, material, institutional, human).

- Safety and the population flows⁵⁷ characterised by the traffic of undocumented people where criminal groups are involved.

Cultural and language diversity at both sides of the border.⁵⁸

- Cultural tourism development. It constitutes a favourable field to display cross-border territorial cooperation practices, especially in the case of border cities or cities close to the Mexican southern border or the Guatemalan and Hondurenean border, in the framework of the so-called "Mayan Corridor", with a high socioeconomic potential.

- Territorial cooperation practices for cultural tourism development could include actions on two other fields, with high

impact for border towns: environment (litter treatment, preservation of shared natural resources, etc.), development and conservation of physical infrastructures (road links, highways, electric interconnections, etc.).

D) Southern Cone

Despite of what in Central America, Mexico and the Andean Countries occurs, the territorial agenda of Southern Cone's sub-national governments is not influenced by security issues,⁵⁹ drug and migratory controls;⁶⁰ the only exception are those cities situated in the triple border zone (Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay), where these topics, added to illicit trade, acquire an special outstanding.

- The cross-border territorial cooperation agenda (existing and/or possible practices) is more oriented towards “proximity” topics: economic/productive complementarity, tourism promotion, coordinated rendering of public services by local authorities (public transportation, public works, health centers, ambulant trade, waste product recycling, common urban directing plans), culture, citizen's safety, etc. This is particularly evident in the zones with “twin cities”.

- There are topics that also gain importance, although they can or should require the intervention of other competence levels (Central state and/or intermediate levels), they have their impact on local development, such as education or transportation and communication infrastructures (particularly in the Argentinean-Chilean border).

- Water contamination is a topic of high concern in the subregion border zones, considering that the rivers comprising the “Cuenca del Plata” delimit many of them.

4.3.2. Possibilities for support from European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation

Once the general agendas of the more relevant topics for local/regional border governments by geographical areas of Latin America are identified, as well as the thematic orientations of the cooperation experiences in the transnational dimension, two final questions directed to all of Latin America are imposed:

1. What can the specific role of European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation to Latin American territorial cooperation be?

2. What should its thematic agenda be?

The answers should arise from the consideration of four elements, in an interrelated way:

a) The agenda of the priority topics of the Latin American actors involved.

b) The need to concentrate cooperation in a limited number of topics, according to its economic and social appropriateness.

c) The respect for specificity of decentralised cooperation (particularly its autonomy with respect to national governments and their means of supporting own experiences and spheres of competence of local/regional governments).

d) The areas of competence and experience of European sub-national governments.

From this last point of view, it is worth remembering that historically, European cross-border cooperation has not centered in topics of security, drug control or control of population flows. On the contrary, its experience is focused on the orbit of local/regional

development of border zones and on the homogenisation of socio-economic conditions of adjoining localities. This includes subject matters regarding economic promotion, activation of small enterprises, professional and job training, education, culture, health, territory protection and direction, environmental risk management, transportation infrastructures, etc.

As many of these topics are also part of the “general agendas” synthesised in section 4.3.1. for each Latin American sub region, it can be held that it would be appropriate to mobilise Euro-Latin American decentralised cooperation, with the purpose of supporting and activating cross-border cooperation processes in Latin America.

Within this framework, it is possible to design a “hard core” topics of cross-border cooperation where the European Union-Latin America decentralised cooperation could be preferably displayed:

Topics considered in the decentralised cooperation agenda supporting cross-border territorial cooperation in Latin America

- The elaboration of common strategies of sustainable territorial development.
- Enhancement of local and regional institution capacities for the conception, follow-up and evaluation of policies that shall develop and implement those strategies.
- Territory organisation and protection, handling of shared territorial elements (fluvial basins, etc.) and common environmental risk management.
- The homogenisation of economic conditions and reduction of isolation and differences between the varied parts of the territory, which constitute the objective of the intervention.

- The population's socio-economic stability (stable jobs, housing, etc.) and the improvement of the access to basic systems (water, electricity, information, communication, etc.).
- The shared use of certain economic and social infrastructures (health and education centers, equipments related to new technologies, etc.).
- The economic promotion and development of certain productive activities according to local capabilities (tourism, services, etc.).
- Employment and professional training, taking into account the complementarity and the possible integration of the labour market between both sides of a border.
- Transportation and trade improvement in the territory under consideration.

In summary, what is involved is a European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation agenda structured over two main axes:

- The territorial dimension of social cohesion policies
- The local/regional development.

An agenda of support to cross-border territorial cooperation in Latin America based on these two axes would enable decentralised cooperation to generate a double impact: contribute to the regional integration processes in course and work on the main problems faced by the border zones. In these zones, the incidence of the promotion initiatives of social cohesion from their territorial dimension is particularly relevant, due to the fact that: a) generally they are isolated areas where national policies are little displayed or do not entirely consider local realities; b) usually, the

regions/localities placed in both sides of a border, are strongly interrelated, which makes it possible to work jointly on social cohesion independently from the affinity or tensions between the respective central governments.

Euro-Latin American decentralised cooperation can also contribute to transnational cooperation in Latin America. The broad experience of European territorial community groups in this field, could contribute to the strengthening of the initiatives that are nowadays developed in Latin America (institutional and networking enhancement, support and exchange in the respective thematic spheres, etc.).

Concurrently, transnational practices in Latin America, due to the scope and nature of their thematic agendas, constitute an interesting platform to multiply at a subregional level, the contributions of decentralised cooperation to municipalities and intermediate government authorities on the grounds of their basic roles, and to the capacity development in the new roles being assumed in the framework of the different decentralisation processes.

Notes

48 The project on “Local European Union-Latin America Partnership”, coordinated by the Municipality of Valparaíso and the Council of Barcelona, with the co-financing of the EC, carried out a complete analysis of the “ways of making” decentralized cooperation of their own, which can be consulted in its Basic Document: “Balance and prospects of local European Union-Latin American decentralized cooperation on the grounds of urban policies”, Valparaíso, 2004 (www.conferenciaurbal.cl).

49 The Conference for State Decentralization and Local Development in Central America (CONFEDLCA) is a good example of how decentralized cooperation may contribute to generate a space where the different political levels are represented and agreed in the search of decentralization modes and models.

50 To develop this topic, see Malé (2006).

51 About this experience, see subsection 3.3.2. of this study.

52 For information: www.cespi.it

53 Kidnapping, extortion, theft and homicide are matters of increased concern in the border zones. It is frequent that delinquents use the territory of the neighbouring State as a shelter, limiting the authorities' capacity of action.

54 All Central American borders are immigrant's crossing points. The greatest flows are those of Central American and South American going from Mexico to the United States. Migration of Nicaraguans towards Costa Rica holds the second place.

55 El Salvador depends very much on the Lempa basin, which is shared with Honduras and Guatemala. Mexico intensely uses the Grijalba waters, where many of the nascent are in the Gutemalan altiplano. Nicaragua places great hopes in the River San Juan, over which it flaunts control, but most of its water comes from the Costa Rican tributaries. The River Choluteca pours huge amounts of pollutants to the Fonseca Gulf, shared by El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

56 Remember that this study does not include the borders of Mexico with the U.S.A.

57 Central American wars, especially violent in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, threw thousands of refugees to Mexican territory, particularly to the state of Chiapas, which one time housed almost 100.000 displaced persons.

58 In the South of the Mexican border line, in Guatemala, the language is Maya, quekchí, chuj, mam, kanjobal, ixil, which are the languages spoken by the great majority of speakers, besides Spanish. In the Mexican side, the mosaic of languages includes the Mayan Yucateco, Chol, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolabal, Chontal, Mam and Zoque, main languages coexisting with Spanish.

59It makes reference to the period subsequent to the democratization processes of the countries in the zone, as previously topics of military and crime security predominated.

60 This does not mean that these topics are absent, but rather that deliberation thereof in the border agenda is very scarce.

5. Executive summary and final observations

State Profiles

1. Differences between the European Union and Latin America, and in the inlands of each region is observed, in terms of: State model; institutional structure by territorial levels; degree of competence and autonomy of the sub-national governments and volume of resources managed by them. These differences, together with the dissimilar economic contexts, constitute central factors when the time comes to establish correspondences between territorial actors and institutions of Europe and Latin America and analyse the type of relations that may be established between them.

In the European Union

2. Among the 15 countries that used to make up the European Union before the last extension, the differences in terms of economic and social development have tended to a balance, to a great extent as a result of the European integration process. The majority of these countries present relatively high-income levels and a public sector with a very significant weight in the economy. On the contrary, the socioeconomic indicators show more evident asymmetries between old and new State members.

3. State models in the European Union are diverse (federal, unitary, centralised, unitary decentralised, etc.) as a result of complex historical processes. However, European integration dynamics has contributed to boost in most of the old 15 member countries, a tendency towards decentralisation and a certain increase of the territorial administration's competences and resources.

4. These countries share a multilevel institutional structure with varied forms of sub-national entities. In general, they have from one to several intermediate levels, between the Central state

and the municipality, which are consolidated in almost all cases, they have an important sphere of competences and a significant degree of autonomy, although it varies a lot depending on the countries involved. As a whole, sub-national administrations manage a significant part of total public expenditure. This means, that in general they have a solid administrative structure and a provision of human resources that enables them to assume their roles.

5. The situation of these intermediate administration levels is different in the ten countries that have incorporated to the European Union in its last extension. In general, they emerge from a tradition of strongly centralised unitary States and are making an important effort to develop decentralisation processes.

6. In general, the legislative framework of European Union States has granted exclusive competences to central powers in the spheres related to cooperation for development. However, the possibility that the latter is also carried out through other government levels is in some cases recognised and unclear in others. The degree of autonomy of municipalities and regions in this field becomes variable from one country to another and between the different territorial levels.

In Latin America

7. Pre-eminence of the unitary or central State model over the federal model is verified. In all cases, it involves countries with certain common characteristics when compared to the European: less resources; a much less developed public sector and a centralist tradition directly affecting resource distribution between the different administration levels and in management autonomy of local and regional affairs. However, these characteristics are presented with different levels and nuances among Latin American countries.

8. Latin American countries present a multilevel institutional structure, although with varied forms of sub-national entities and differences in their respective competences and capacity of political action. Only in those countries with federal State models, the sub-national administration structure is comparable, to a certain extent, to Europe.

9. In terms of economic and social development, indicators show very marked asymmetries between the countries of the region. Diversity is even more clearly reflected among different social groups or geographical areas inside the countries. For example, great part of the border zones are characterised by strong social and economic weaknesses and are less developed compared to the central geographical areas of the respective countries.

10. Urban population growth, the increase in the number of cities and “poverty urbanisation” are phenomena characterising the great majority of Latin American countries. Local administrations have to respond to poverty situation and to all kinds of deficit, in the framework of low or medium income, and in a region with the highest rates of differences in income distribution. Hence, although Latin American local authorities share the classic competences of these government levels (rendering of basic services, urban management, etc.) with their European homologous, the priority topics of the respective agendas differ considerably, according to the urgencies and the social demands expressed in their own environment. On the other hand, many of the Latin American local administrations could not develop in the same way, or with the same amplitude, the emerging roles that European municipalities started to exercise in recent years. This difference has also an effect in the agendas and in the capacities of the different institutional actors.

11. In Latin American countries and from a juridical-institutional perspective, international cooperation as an inter-

national relations sphere has been historically the competence of the Central state. However, for the last years, some variations are observed regarding the degree of openness towards the participation of sub-national entities in activities of international nature. In some few cases, it involves constitutional (as in Argentina) and legislative modifications. In other cases, it involves initiatives developed by local/regional governments and agreed (explicitly or implicitly) by central administrations, although some lack formal competences.

Territorial cooperation practices

In the European Union

12. Territorial cooperation dynamics in the heart of the European Union is especially rich and the experience accumulated in this field includes diverse type of practices (spontaneous and promoted in the framework of Community initiatives and programmes; bilateral and multilateral; cross-border, transnational and transregional; of a generic nature or centered in the territory or the subject area). From this experience both regions, as intermediate territorial governments, and municipalities have had leading roles.

13. The determining factor of the territorial cooperation dynamism in the European Union has been the political will to promote the European integration not only as from the agreements between Central States, but through the promotion of horizontal relations among the regional and local administrations. The Community initiatives and programmes, which under the condition of transnationality have facilitated the access of municipalities and regions to Structural Funds for project funding, obliged the settling of territorial cooperation relations in the European space. In this way, a cooperation practice was generated (cross-border and transnational) which led to a new relation dynamics.

14. As a result of these experiences, new territorial cooperation spaces transcending the national limits and acquiring an institutional recognition (for example, the Euroregions and the Euroterritories) have been established in Europe. A whole set of networks between cities and territories have been established, on a geographic or thematic basis.

15. The INTERREG Community initiative constitutes the clearest expression of the European Union's political will to promote cooperation between territories, in its three modalities: cross-border, transnational and interregional.

16. The thematic orientations of territorial cooperation practices in Europe, in general terms, have been basically centered on the topics typical of local and regional governments, a fact that has enabled to strengthen its institutional capacity. Cooperation, thus, does not contribute with more competences or roles to these levels but it is rather a different way of performing the already existing ones and, in the case of cross-border cooperation, a space where to exercise same.

In Latin America

17. Territorial cooperation is more embryonic in Latin America. The two basic conditions favouring the expansion of this phenomenon in Europe have not been given still a consolidated integration process and a programme package with specific resources to promote territorial cooperation. Likewise, the cooperation between Latin American local/regional community groups has to face obstacles that limit its development in different degrees depending on the diversity of realities, particularly in its cross-border dimension. Among these obstacles, the territorial community groups' institutional weakness, its financing, technical and human resource deficit and the centralist inertia. In the case

of the subregion of Mexico, Central America and the Andean Countries, limitations imposed by the existence of neighbouring conflicts and domestic tensions are added.

18. The insufficient complete and updated registers of spontaneous cross-border cooperation initiatives, as well the fact that “promoted” practices lack autonomy, makes it difficult to identify and systematise the thematic orientations that are prioritised, or that could be prioritised, in this type of Latin American territorial cooperation. An approximation to this is only possible with the elaboration, by way of example and not in an exhaustive manner, an “agenda with the most outstanding topics for local/regional border governments.

19. In the case of transnational practices in the two subregions studied, their thematic orientations are more clearly established. In general terms, it involves subject matters typical of sub-national administrations, both in the traditional spheres of local/regional development and in those generated from new roles played at present by territorial community groups. In certain cases, the national agenda’s subject matters (such as State decentralisation) or those subject matters which are totally or partially independent of the territorial community groups’ natural competence sphere (such as scientific or academic development or energy source or communications infrastructures) but which have strong local/regional impacts, usually constitute working axes as well.

20. Finally, interregional cooperation, is still rather limited in Latin America, although it can be maintained that decentralised cooperation support programmes (such as URB-AL) and some international organisations’ initiatives (such as UNDP) have made the exchange and collaboration among all the region’s local and territorial administrations easier.

21. The subregion is characterised for being a “border territory” and showing, in many cases, strong interdependences between adjoining localities. The information available seems to indicate that this situation has not generated an articulated and consolidated weave of territorial initiatives of cross-border cooperation. It deals, in general, with spontaneous cooperation practices between local and regional authorities from both sides of the border, with a very low or nonexistent institutionalisation and which usually do not last in time. Few spontaneous initiative examples have been revealed with a greater degree of institutionalisation, such as the case of Border Development Corporation created in 2002 by the Municipality of Huaquillas (Ecuador) and the District Municipality of Aguas Verdes (Peru) and its respective regional governments.

22. Certain cross-border territorial cooperation practices developed, though without autonomy, in structures created by central governments within the context of bi-or multilateral agreements, are also observed in the subregion. For example, in the Trifinio Plan (subscribed by the States of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) and in the High Level Border Security Group, between Mexico and Guatemala.

This type of practices is also registered in schemes created by the CAN (“No-border Citizens Programme” and the Border Integration Zones).

23. Security problems (in general and military in particular) and police control have dominated the cross-border relations’ agenda in the subregion. This explains, in part, that the principal actors have been the central States. Many subjects related to these problems (drugs, migration, security, etc) also constitute sub-

national government concerns of border zones, though they are not inherent to their competences. Nevertheless, the most precise analysis shows that the typical problems of these zones derive from a common characteristic: their low development level when compared to central areas and the precariousness of the living standards of the population living in these geographic areas. In this context, an agenda of topics to be covered by territorial cooperation initiatives would include issues such as: population's access to basic services, fight against poverty, improvement of mobility for exchanges and jobs, economic and productive complementarity, environment and protection of shared natural resources, cultural diversity, integration of labour market at both sides of the border, joint utilisation of specific social and economic infrastructures, etc.

24. In the transnational dimension of the subregion's territorial cooperation, both identified experiences, the Andean City Network and FEMICA, have a greater institutionality and are more consolidated (or are in the consolidation process).

Southern Cone

25. In the Southern Cone, the existence of an incipient initiative network of territorial cooperation is admitted, though not with the institutional development level, scope and results of the European experience. These practices show, as a whole, a complex and diverse scenario, in terms of development, goal achievement, institutionality, validity and origin of the initiatives, among those with border nature as well as the transnational ones and also within each of these groups.

26. Transnational initiatives, which are a few in numerical terms, have developed an institutional structure of their own and are in permanent operation (at least in four of the five identified

experiences). In all cases they constitute promoted, generated initiatives and are carried out by sub-national institutions. In some cases it involves local government initiatives (Mercociudades) and, in other cases, regional initiatives (CRECENEA-CODESUL, ZICOSUR, ATACALAR, Central Bioceanic Corridor Forum)

27. On the contrary, cross-border practices are more numerous, in their majority with a low or nonexistent institutionality. They combine spontaneous practices with the participation of local communities, in initiatives, programmes or defined policies carried out by central governments (Border Committees, CODEFRO). In MERCOSUR's sphere, the "Agreement draft on MERCOSUR's Border Communities", nowadays in discussion, may be constituted in another propitious space for territorial cooperation.

28. Spontaneous cross-border practices are firstly the result of a natural integration and later on, they usually take the shape of formal cooperation agreements and customs, more or less formalised, that border actors assume as a normal consequence of the exercise of a good neighborhood policy. Although a complete register of these practices does not exist in the Southern Cone, some studies have been carried out (unfortunately not updated) in specific areas. These studies show certain dynamism of these initiatives, as for example, in the Argentina-Uruguay and Uruguay-Brazil borders. On the other hand, the Planning and Management Committee of Integrated Municipalities of the "Bajo Río Uruguay" is an example of this type of initiatives with a larger degree of institutionalisation and broader objectives (though with a short duration in time).

29. From the combination of the available partial information on the practices developed with the analysis of the main border problems in border zones, it is inferred that priority topics of the cross-border territorial agenda in the Southern Cone refer basically to "local" or "proximity" topics: economic/productive complemen-

tarities, tourism promotion, rendering of public services, common urban guideline plans, conservation of natural resources, health, etc. Topics which, although they may or should require the participation of other competence levels, they have an impact on local/regional development, such as education, transportation and communications infrastructure (particularly in the Argentinean-Chilean border) or border commerce are also important topics. In contrast to what happens in the other subregion studied, security matters, drug and crime controls have less deliberation (and in some aspects, are practically nonexistent) in bilateral relations and in territorial agendas (with the exemption of the Argentina-Brazil-Paraguay triple border zone)

30. The recent MERCOSUR's decision of creating Structural Funds could contribute, at least in part, to promote territorial cooperation, particularly cross-border cooperation. Although so far, a specific programme of support to territorial cooperation is not considered, its implementation shall be expected to see if it will allow local and regional actors to have access to the funds in order to develop cross-border and transnational initiatives.

Contribution of the European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation to territorial cooperation.

31. In the last years, the spontaneous cooperation dynamics between local/regional governments of the European Union and Latin America, in certain cases based on a historic traditional political, social and cultural link, has appeared strengthened and transformed. Although the classic relation mechanisms are still in force (such as the twinning or city-to-city relations) and the initiatives based on an assistance view are still being developed, the direct cooperation based on multilateral and partnership principles, presents an updated dimension. It is under this modality

where European Union- Latin American decentralised cooperation achieves significance due to: a) the added value of its initiatives, based on the actors' own specificity and b) the contribution of innovative elements for the building of new relations and cooperation models. The URB-AL programme has been a key factor for the encouragement and creation of this type of decentralised cooperation initiatives.

32. The information available seems to indicate that the European-Latin American decentralised cooperation's incidence is more visible in the Latin American interregional and transnational practices than in those of cross-border nature.

33. In the case of interregional practices, the URB-AL Programme even when its objective has been the establishment of lasting relations between European and Latin American territorial communities, has had parallel effects in the sphere of Intra-Latin American relations: it has generated/boosted the territorial cooperation dynamics among Latin American local governments. In the transnational dimension, the incidence of decentralised cooperation becomes evident through existing experiences of support, such as the Mercociudades Network, CRECENEA-CODESUL (through the "Xunta de Galicia" and the European Peripheral and Maritime Regional Conference) or ZICOSUR (through the Interregional Development Network and the South American Integration Project)

34. The foregoing indicates that one of the spheres where specificity and pertinence of European Union-Latin American decentralised cooperation could be extended, is the enhancement of territorial cooperation processes, particularly cross-border ones, where it is still an underdeveloped field. The design of a territorial cooperation "hard core" topics, where those could be displayed should consider four closely related elements: a) the agenda of priority topics of the Latin American actors involved, b) the competence and experience areas in territorial Community programmes of

territorial cooperation of European sub-national governments, c) the necessity of concentrating cooperation in a limited number of topics in accordance with its relevance and economic and social pertinence and d) the respect towards decentralised cooperation specificity (in particular its autonomy with regard to national governments and its back up in its own local/regional government experiences and fields of competences)

35. As from the foregoing, the decentralised cooperation agenda in support of cross-border territorial cooperation in Latin America should include topics such as devising sustainable common territorial development strategies, enhancement of regional and local institution capacities for the conception, following up and evaluation of policies that will develop and implement such strategies, organisation and protection of the territory, management of shared territorial elements and shared environmental risk management, recognition of economic conditions, isolation and differences between the diverse parts of the territory object of the intervention, shared utilisation of economic and social defined infrastructures, economic promotion and the development of certain productive activities in accordance with local potentialities, improvement of transportation and business in the territory under consideration, etc.

36. In brief, it deals with a structured agenda based on two conducting axes: territorial dimension of social and local/regional cohesion policies and local/regional development. An agenda of support to cross-border territorial cooperation in Latin America based on these two axes would allow decentralised cooperation to generate a double impact: to contribute with the regional integration processes in progress and to work on the principal problems faced by border zones. In these areas, the incidence of social cohesion promotion initiatives as from its territorial dimension is particularly important due to the fact that: a) it generally deals with isolated areas, where national policies have little dis-

play or at least do not fully contemplate local realities b) usually regions/localities located on both sides of the border usually have strong interrelations, enabling to work jointly on social cohesion independently from the affinities or tensions between the respective central governments.

Final observations

37. Admitting the dynamism acquired by the decentralised cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and its quality of privileged vector of experience exchange, it seems very appropriate to try to apply its potential enhancement to Latin America's territorial cooperation, taking advantage of European sub-national governments' wide experience in the subject. The institutional, economic, social and political differences make the transfer of methods and mechanisms unfeasible without adapting to the actors and local needs.

38. It is inferred from the analysis that permanent structures of transnational territorial cooperation in Latin American do exist, with a certain institutionalisation level and with thematic orientations basically centered on traditional subjects of sub-national governments, that could be supported from decentralised cooperation, independently that the latter could also boost the creation of new initiatives.

39. On the contrary, in the cross-border dimension of territorial cooperation, the study carried out seems to indicate that in most cases, Latin American initiatives lack permanent structures or have a very weak institutionality. Hence, decentralised cooperation support must previously contemplate the creation of cross-border cooperation structures (or the consolidation of the existing structures).

40. For that purpose it should be considered uncertain that regional governments of all Latin American border zones (particularly in countries with a unitary State model) can play a similar role to that of Europe. Besides, under the concept of “region” notable differences appear, both within Latin America as when compared to the European Union. Hence, mixed formulae that would encourage regional and local governments to participate would probably be more appropriate, based on cross-border territorial associations that could also include civil society actors. Likewise, in certain cases, these associations could provide an intervention niche to the central States involved, though guaranteeing the autonomy levels required by the decentralised cooperation. Central government representatives could be responsible for certain spheres of proceedings that are not of the competence of territorial administrations (security, investments in infrastructures, migration agreements, etc.), while decentralised cooperation would act around the topics of its specific agenda.

41. Participation in programmes conceived under a cross-border (or transnational) basis, could benefit the European local governments. It would provide them with the possibility of participating actively in some social, political and economic integration processes that would go beyond, on account of its supramunicipal and territorial nature, the narrowest framework of city-to-city bilateral relations.

6. Bibliographic references

Achard, Diego (1995). “*La frontera Uruguay-Brasil: un análisis de las instituciones que promueven la Integración fronteriza*”. In CEFIR, *La integración fronteriza y el papel de las regiones en la Unión Europea y en el Cono Sur: Experiencias, opciones y estrategias*. Montevideo: CEFIR, Serie Documentos de Trabajo del CEFIR No. 13.

Acosta Puertas, Jaime (2004). “*La integración y el desarrollo de las regiones de los países de la Unión Europea y América Latina*”. Revista Nueva Sociedad, No. 189. Caracas: Editorial Texto.

Borges, Paula (2004). *General government expenses and revenue in the EU in 2003. Statistics in Focus: Economy and Finance*, No. 41/2004. Luxembourg: Eurostat-European Communities.

CAD (2005). *Aid Extended by Local and State Governments*. CAD.

Carmagnani, Marcello (coord.) (1993). *Federalismos Latino-americanos: Méjico, Brasil y Argentina*. Mexico: FCE.

Carricart, Héctor (1995). “La integración de los municipios de la frontera argentino-uruguaya como primer ejercicio de integración binacional en el MERCOSUR. Experiencias y resistencias. Contextos globales y locales”. In CEFIR, *La integración fronteriza y el papel de las regiones en la Unión Europea y en el Cono Sur: Experiencias, opciones y estrategias*. Montevideo: CEFIR, Serie Documentos de Trabajo del CEFIR No. 13.

Latin American Center for Human Economy (CLAEH) / Latin American Associations of Promotion Organisations (ALOP) / Inter-American Foundation (2002). *La construcción del Desarrollo Local en América Latina. Análisis de experiencias*. Montevideo: CLAEH-ALOP.

CEPAL (2004). *Panorama Social de América Latina 2004*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

CEPAL (2005). “*América Latina: urbanización y evolución de la población urbana*”. *Boletín Demográfico*, No. 75. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

Eurostat (2005). *Europe in figures: Eurostat Yearbook 2005*. Luxembourg: European Communities.

Finot, I (2005). “*Descentralización, transferencias territoriales y desarrollo local*”. *Revista de la CEPAL*, No. 86. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

Gabbe, Jens (coord.) (1999). *Aspectos institucionales de la cooperación transfronteriza*. Association of European regional borders.

Gallichio, Enrique y Alejandra Camejo (2005). *Desarrollo local y descentralización en América Latina. Nuevas alternativas de desarrollo*. Montevideo: DIBA-CLAEH.

Godínez Zúñiga, Víctor y Romero, María del Huerto (eds) (2004). *Tejiendo Lazos Entre Territorios. La cooperación descentralizada local. Unión Europea-América Latina*. Valparaíso: Municipality of Valparaíso-City Council of Barcelona.

Godínez, Víctor (2000). “*La economía de las regiones y el cambio estructural*”. En F Clavijo (comp.). *Reformas económicas en Méjico, 1982-1999*. Mexico: Economic Culture Fund.

Jordán, Ricardo y Simioni, Daniela (comp.) (2003). *Gestión urbana para el desarrollo sostenible en América Latina y el Caribe*. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

Laurelli, Elsa (2002). "Fronteras y Redes Transfronterizas: Una Nueva Organización del Territorio en la Argentina del MERCOSUR". Cuaderno Urbano, No. 3. Argentina, Universidad del Nordeste.

Longaric, Karen (2005). Memoria del proyecto Ciudadanos sin Fronteras. Quito: Instituto Internacional de Integración del Convenio Andrés Bello.

Machinea, José Luis y Martín Hopenhayn (2005). La esquiua equidad en el desarrollo latinoamericano. Una visión estructural, una aproximación multifacética. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL.

Malé, Jean-Pierre (2006). "Especificidades de la cooperación descentralizada pública: actores, contenidos y modelos". Paper presented in the OCD Annual Conference I, Montevideo, March.

Ministry of Production of the Government of Santa Fe Province (2005). Santa Fe es integración. Santa Fe, Argentina.

Peña, Félix (2004). "*Enfoques y propuestas para un MERCOSUR solidario: la cuestión de las asimetrías y las medidas de convergencia estructural*". Paper presented in the Seminar on "Asimetrías y medidas de convergencia en el MERCOSUR", Montevideo, March 26.

Picerno, Alfredo y Pablo Gutiérrez (1997). "*MERCOSUR y la Unión Europea*". Cuadernos del CLAEH, No. 77. Montevideo: CLAEH.

Romero, María del Huerto (2004). "*Poder local y relaciones internacionales en contextos de integración regional. El caso de la Red Mercociudades y la Reunión Especializada de Municipios e Intendencias (Grupo Mercado Común)*". In Tullo Vigevani y otros (org.). A dimensão sub-nacional e as relações internacionais. San Pablo: Fundação Editora de UNESP.

Romero, María del Huerto (2006). “*La cooperación descentralizada local. Aportes para la construcción de un marco de referencia conceptual en el espacio de las relaciones Unión Europea - América Latina*”. In Anuario del Observatorio de la cooperación descentralizada. Montevideo: Consorcio Diputació de Barcelona-City Council of Montevideo.

Rondán Samaniego, Víctor Hugo (1995). “*La experiencia de los Comités de Frontera en el Cono Sur: una perspectiva paraguaya*”. In CEFIR, La integración fronteriza y el papel de las regiones en la Unión Europea y en el Cono Sur: Experiencias, opciones y estrategias. Montevideo: CEFIR, Serie Documentos de Trabajo del CEFIR No. 13.

Sánchez, Ricard (2004). “*La conformación federal del State y su implicación en los procesos de integración*”. In Tullo Vigevani and other (org.). A dimensão sub-nacional e as relações internacionais. San Pablo: Fundación Editora de UNESP.

Spehar, E (2003). *La descentralización y los desafíos democráticos en América Central*. Washington, DC: OEA.

United Nations Development Programme (2002). *Segundo Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano en América Central y Panamá*. San José, Costa Rica: UNDP.

United Nations Development Programme (2004). *La democracia in Latin America. Hacia una democracia de ciudadanas y ciudadanos*. Buenos Aires: Águila-Altea-Taurus-Alfaguara.

United Nations Development Programme (2005). Informe sobre Desarrollo Humano, 2005. *La cooperación internacional ante una encrucijada: Ayuda al desarrollo, comercio y seguridad en un mundo desigual*. Madrid: Ediciones Mundi-Prensa.

Valenciano, Eugenio (1992). Comités de Frontera. Buenos Aires: BID/INTAL.

Valenciano, Eugenio (1995). “La frontera: un nuevo rol frente a la integración. La experiencia en el MERCOSUR”. In CEFIR, La integración fronteriza y el papel de las regiones en la Unión Europea y en el Cono Sur: Experiencias, opciones y estrategias. Montevideo: CEFIR, Serie Documentos de Trabajo del CEFIR No. 13.

Vieira, Edgar y Socorro Ramírez (coords.) (2004). “Desarrollo transfronterizo e integración andina: escenarios para Colombia”. Policy Paper, No. 10. Bogotá: Proyecto “ La inserción Colombia en el sistema internacional cambiante”.

Vigevani, Tullo y otros (org.) (2004). A dimensão sub-nacional e as relações internacionais. San Pablo: Fundação Editora de UNESP.

Printed in ROSGAL

D.L. 339087/07

Design: Diego Tocco