



**Datar**



**COESIONET**

**EUROPEAN COHESION AND TERRITORIES RESEARCH NETWORK**

## **Minutes of the workshop**

**16 May 2011**

### **First workshop**

#### **“Crises and Territorial Cohesion” group**

**9h30 – 13h00 Regional Disparities and Political Extremisms**

To what extent has the crisis changed citizen voting behavior? Can cohesion policies be a tool to limit the rise of extremisms in Europe?

#### **I. The “Surge” of Far Right Parties in Europe: A Sign of the Geography of the Crises?**

Pascal Perrineau – CEVIPOF

##### ***1. The Diversity of Situations***

The rise of national-populism in Europe can be measured in terms of election results. In several countries in Europe – Austria in 2008, Finland in 2011 and Switzerland in 2007 – those results have been impressive. In other countries, national-populist parties have only had limited success (Germany, Spain, Great-Britain, etc.).

Yet the great diversity of national-populist movements must be underscored. The issues at the core of these movements vary considerably from one country to the next and can include the role of the state in the economy, the place given to the centre compared to the periphery, moral rigor vs. moral liberalism, etc. The national-populist movements of Europe therefore vary in terms of the contents of their program and change over time.

##### ***2. Common Features***

Despite these differences, Europe’s national-populist movements share some common features: they promote centralism, have difficulty organizing at the European level, accord a central role to the authority of charismatic leaders and often refer to populist demagoguery. Some issues are also common to most national-populist parties – for example, a xenophobic attitude to immigration. If we consider the



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votes, the results of national-populist parties correlate with the presence of immigrant populations but not in direct proximity. Their discourse includes frequent appeals to law and order. Their economic program is influenced by neo-liberalism even if this is a point of much divergence. They also often employ “anti-system” discourse.

### ***3. What Are the Causes of the Phenomenon?***

- The decline of economic modernity – i.e., the transition to post-industrial society – has changed social groups. The once central working class is today suffering a crisis of identity due to its increasing heterogeneity. This has resulted at a political level in an increase in abstention, on the one hand, and the growth of national populism, on the other. This situation raises an important question for the parties of the left, which now must seek out and identify a new base.
- The opening of a political space for the winning formula, i.e., the alliance between blue-collars and shopkeepers. The vote for national populist parties represents a social protest tied to industrial de-structuring and economic crisis.
- The globalization process is challenging traditional value systems. The tension between libertarian and authoritarian values has changed the relationships between right and left wing parties in France, creating some new political spaces based on authority which have been colonized by the national-populist party.
- There is an increasing split between a population (the upper middle classes and upper classes) that is gaining from an open society and another population (the older, less well-educated members of society) that is losing from it and demanding national reorientation.
- Another social split is the cleavage between city centers and urban peripheries, which has resulted in the rupture of traditional solidarities.
- A crisis of political representation, like the above-mentioned economic and social factors, is also contributing to the rise of national-populist parties.

### ***4. General Discussions***

- Can the party of the Kaczynskis in Poland be considered part of the national-populist movement?
- Can territorial cohesion policies act as countervailing forces to national-populist politics?
- What is the distinction between national populism and regional populism?
- How to account for the fact that radicalization is not general (i.e., does not occur everywhere)?
- Is information available concerning the likely voting behavior of future generations?

## **II. Territories of Radical Nationalism in Bulgaria: A Challenge to Cohesion Policy?**

Nadège Ragaru - CNRS-CERI/Sciences Po

The emergence of nationalisms required that interaction between two phenomena – i.e., the territorialization of ethnicity and spatially-based social inequalities – be examined in order to go beyond the traditional socio-economic explanation of political behavior.

The territorial presence of ATAKA in Bulgaria illustrates the correlation between population diversity in a territory and the territorialization of socio-economic inequality.

When talking about territories we can refer to the distinction between “border, boundary and frontier” discussed below.

### ***1. What is ATAKA?***

- ATAKA frequently uses symbols to represent political space.



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- ATAKA was born in 2005. The conjunction of several factors characterized the particular context in which it emerged: There was a widespread feeling that most political change had taken place in the absence of real alternatives, which therefore opened a space for differentiation. Moreover, Bulgarians have grown tired of the European process being used as the ultimate source of legitimacy for all decisions.
- ATAKA can be considered “an ordinary party” responding to issues that are widely discussed by the population. The question thus becomes why such discussions are susceptible to politicization. Indeed, ATAKA’s discourse is based on several commonplace observations:
  - o The fact that the transition led to theft and the destruction of all previous achievements;
  - o Bulgaria is a small country manipulated by larger countries;
  - o The Roma population is poor and steal and don’t want to be integrated;
  - o ATAKA clearly targets the country’s ethnic Turk population and opposes the integration of Turkey into the EU.

## ***2. What is the socio-demographic profile of ATAKA?***

A 2005 poll of ATAKA voters supplied the following information concerning the supporters of national populist parties:

- They tend to live in Sofia,
- They are relatively young and well-educated,
- They are particularly strong in Burgas in the Eastern part of the country, the city where ATAKA was created.

But they are not present in territories with settled minorities.

In 2009 the profile of these voters has changed: fewer were present in Sofia and its surroundings but the Party was gathering support in the Eastern part of the country and poorer areas. It was still largely absent in territories with minorities. The explanation for ATAKA’s considerable support in Sofia in 2005 is explained by a specific situation linked to some unrest with the Roma population in certain parts of the town that received extensive media attention and allowed ATAKA to mobilize voters. In 2009 there was a generational shift among ATAKA voters, with the party base increasingly dominated by elderly voters.

## ***3. Border, Boundary, Frontier***

To understand what happened with ATAKA in Bulgaria we need to refer to the concepts of border, boundary and frontier.

First the frontier between one’s self and others affects how relations with others are conceived, especially in what concerns Bulgaria’s Roma and Turkish populations. The frontier between the Roma and the Bulgarians used to be very porous since Bulgarians used to work with Roma in agricultural cooperatives. Social promotion was possible. Today, Bulgaria is facing a process of social declassification known as “romization”. This has led to a reinforcement of frontiers between Roma and non-Roma. Indeed, with the transition, Roma left their rural villages for urban ghettos. In the former communist tower blocks, the populations were rather mixed. This is no longer the case following the transition, with only poor people today occupying these tower blocks. Therefore, the Roma population is perceived as a threat to the Bulgarians.

Internal frontier dynamics in the case of the Turkish population are linked to significant changes in the definition of Bulgarian citizenship. Ethnic differences are exacerbated.

As far as the borders are concerned, the vote of the bi-national population is a key challenge in the discourse of ATAKA. Indeed, there is a territory of the vote and a territory of citizenship. How is what defines the outlines of “being a foreigner” to be conceived?



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It is therefore important to have a social cohesion policy with a coherent territorial component that takes the fact of mobility into account. We need to think about the definition of legitimate social inequalities.

#### **4. General Discussion**

- When ATAKA was created, how did it interpret the construction of socio-economic disparities in public discussions?
- Does cohesion policy play a role or is it a matter for debate?
- Does the alliance between blue collar workers and shopkeepers constitute an explanatory factor in examining voting behavior in Bulgaria?
- What is the role of corruption?

## **Second workshop**

### **“Services of General Interest and Cohesion” group**

#### **General Interest Services, Subsidiarity and Cohesion**

For 30 years, European general interest service policy has been based on a liberalisation process. If we emphasize competition, this may lead to polarisation. In these circumstances, the SGIs are at the core of tensions between the obligation to contribute to social, economic and territorial cohesion according to article 14 of the Treaty of Lisbon and the liberalisation process. What are the positions of EESC and CEMR?

#### **I. Raymond Hencks, EESC**

##### **1. EESC and Definition of SGI**

Mr Hencks chairs the permanent group on SGIs in EESC. The EESC is composed of 344 members from the 27 Member States. The notion of the SGI was created in recognition of the fact that the notion of “public services” referred to different realities from one country to the next. Anyhow, public services seem to be more adapted to reflect the reality of what SGIs are or aim at – i.e., to deliver a service to the public that is of high quality, accessible to all and affordable.

##### **2. Contradiction between Economic Efficiency and General Interest**

The argument for liberalization is that most public services are economic services and competition will ensure more accessible and affordable services to all. Although article 106.2 points out the prevailing missions of general interest, the implementation of SGIs is based on criteria of economic efficiency. Therefore there is a distinction between SGI and services of economic general interest. But the definitions and limits between both are really blurred.

Not only is the liberalisation process not able to guarantee more affordable prices (e.g. the increase in electricity prices implemented by EDF in France) but quality is often sacrificed, with the quality of new jobs, for example, diminishing.

##### **3. Positions of the EESC**



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EESC has requested that an evaluation be conducted in accordance with pre-defined criteria, including the participation of consumers, but its demand has gone unanswered. EESC considers SGIs as the main tool for well being and cohesion. Article 106.2 needs to be clarified so that general interest prevails over economic considerations. It is also necessary to avoid the distinction between economic and non-economic services of general interest. Common references and norms need to be defined for all SGIs.

#### **4. General Discussions**

- How can we return to a vision of services of general interest, what is their future with regards to cohesion?
- What is the role of services in a solidarity-based economy and how can progress be made toward gaining recognition for them?
- If we don't have a general approach in terms of the SGIs' legal status, isn't it likely to lead to a liberalization process affecting general interest social services as well?
- What are the relations between the various DGs, especially the DGs for Competition and Cohesion?

## **II. Dr Angelika Poth-Mögele, CEMR**

### **1. CEMR and the Place of Local Public Authorities**

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions gathers together 56 associations of local public authorities from 36 countries within and outside of Europe.

Discussions of cohesion policy with the European Commission are very technical, despite the fact that this issue should be considered at a political level. Member States and their governments have won back considerable power in the European Commission. And clearly the present governments do not support general interest services.

The Treaty of Lisbon for the first time recognized the specific role of local public authorities in the different Member States. This requires that European policies respect their management of the territories. But how is this translated in practice? It is clear that the protocol on subsidiarity and proportionality has contributed to improving the situation. But the territorial impact of new European Commission guidelines is still underestimated.

### **2. EU2020 Strategy, Cohesion Policy and the Single Market Act**

The CEMR agrees with the EU2020 Strategy but specifies that this strategy does not replace cohesion policy. Solidarity can't be replaced by a strategy that emphasizes growth. Our position is that growth is not an aim in itself. The development of the quality of life of the citizens – and therefore local development – is essential. The problem is that the territorial agenda is often treated separately from the single market and competition.

As Monti specifies in his report, the CEMR believes that the Single Market Act is an important tool for cohesion policy but not an aim in itself. The 12 levers proposed by Commissioner Barnier need to be better defined: what is their use? What are their final objectives? They seem to be quite divorced from the reality. The question of coherence with other policies needs to be considered and pursued.

Public services in the context of cohesion play an important role in territorial policy. Where access and affordability are guaranteed, they help keep people in the region.

#### **General Discussions**



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- Doesn't the economic doctrine that seems to prevail in the debate need to be rebalanced?
- The challenge lies in the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity combining both economic and non-economic services.
- At the moment there is a trend to shift from a logic of subsidy to a logic of financial engineering but where is the principle of cohesion in this process?
- The maintenance of non-economic services is essential but at what level and how are new policies tending to greater social coherence to be devised?
- There is a tension between the search for short term return on investment and long term investments.
- Mechanisms need to be simplified.
- The fact that the private sector appropriates all profitable services, leaving deficits to the public authorities and the taxpayers, is absolutely unfair. Universal services might represent a solution.
- Do you aim at supporting the extension of universal services to other sectors?
- How does Germany combine subsidiarity and cohesion? The main German tool is financial adjustment among the Länder.
- What is the best level of action from the point of view of subsidiarity, cohesion and multi-level governance?
- How is multi-level governance to be satisfied, especially given the various temporalities of the various institutional levels?
- What is the position of EESC on reinforcing SGIs through cohesion policy reform?
- Is there a different approach between old and new Member States with regards to the issue of "universal services"?