

The International Relations of Local Authorities

From Institutional Twinning
to the Committee of the Regions:
Fifty Years of European Integration History

Fabio Zucca



P.I.E. Peter Lang



This book examines the innovative and supportive role that the Council of European Municipalities and Regions has played in the process of European integration, focusing on the idea of a federal state centred on municipalities, the basis of Western democracy.

The author's analysis considers the twinning of cities within Europe to be a political action that will lead to a Europe for its citizens. He argues that the global financial crisis could lead to the break-up of the European unification process and that the way to deal with this challenge is to give local authorities greater involvement in decision-making processes.

The book is the result of research in little known and rarely consulted archives and brings significant new information into the academic sphere. This focus on the local level is increasingly relevant, offering new perspectives on current issues within European integration and explaining the dynamics of a process still under way.

Fabio Zucca holds the Jean Monnet Chair in the History of European Integration at the University of Insubria, Varese. He is director of both the Historical Archive and the Interdepartmental Centre of Research and Documentation on Twentieth-Century History at the University of Pavia. He combines his research on the history of European integration with locally based activities in support of the establishment of the United States of Europe. He is currently Mayor of Belgioioso and a member of the national council of AICCRE, the Italian branch of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions. He holds the title of Ufficiale dell'Ordine al merito della Repubblica Italiana in recognition of his academic and administrative achievements.

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TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:
FIFTY YEARS OF EUROPEAN
INTEGRATION HISTORY**



P.I.E. Peter Lang

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Mais le temps passe et l'Europe tarde sur le chemin où elle s'est profondément engagée... Nous ne pouvons nous arrêter quand autour de nous le monde entier est en mouvement.

(Jean Monnet, *Mémoires*)

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Abbreviations

AEBR	Association of European Border Regions
AEG	Archives d'État de la République et Canton de Genève
AER	Assembly of European Regions
ACCE, Strasbourg	Archives centrales du Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg
ACCCE, Paris	Archives of the Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe, Paris
ACCCE, Roissy	Archives of the Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe, Roissy
AFCCE	Association Française du Conseil des Communes d'Europe
AFCCRE	Association Française du Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe
AFCCRE, Orléans	Archives Association Française du Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe, Orléans
AFE	Associazione federalisti europei
AICCE	Associazione italiana per il Consiglio dei comuni d'Europa
AICCCE	Associazione italiana per il Consiglio dei comuni e delle regioni d'Europa
AMFE, Torino	Archives of the Movimento Federalista Europeo, Torino
ANCI	Associazione Nazionale Comuni d'Italia
ASCFI	Archivio storico del Comune di Firenze
AST	Archivio storico della città di Torino
ASUPv	Archivio Storico dell'Università degli Studi di Pavia
AUSE	Associazione universitaria di studi europei
AVCL	Association villes et communes luxembourgeoises
CALRE	Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies
CECC	Communauté européenne de crédit communal

CEM	Council of European Municipalities
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CFFE	Comité français pour la fédération européenne
CIFE	Centre international de formation européenne
CIME	Consiglio Italiano del Movimento Europeo
CLRA	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
CoR	Committee of Regions
CPRM	Conference of European Peripheral Maritime Regions
CRIE	Centro di ricerca sull'integrazione europea, University of Siena
CSF	Centro studi sul federalismo, Turin
DC	Christian Democratic Party
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund
ECLA	European Congress of Local Authorities
ECLP	European Conference of Local Powers
ECM	European Common Market
ECSA	European Community Studies Association
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EGTC	European Group for Territorial Cooperation
EIB	European Investment Bank
EM	European Movement
EPC	European Political Community
EUF	European Union of Federalists
FAE, Geneva	Fondation Archives Européennes, Geneva
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
IEHEI	Institut européen des hautes études internationales
IFHP	International Federation for Housing and Planning
IGM	Integrated Governance Model
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities
MFE	Movimento federalista europeo
MLG	Multi-level Governance

MEP	Member of European Parliament
MSEUE	Mouvement Socialiste pour les États-Unis d'Europe
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PRI	Italian Republican Party
REGLEG	Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power
SFIO	French Socialist Party
SYVICOL	Syndicat intercommunal à vocation multiple des Villes et Communes Luxembourgeoises pour la promotion et la sauvegarde d'intérêts communaux généraux et communs
UEF	Union of European Federalists
UIV	Union internationale des villes
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Preface

Mercedes BRESSO

President of the Committee of the Regions

The development of international relations between regions and local authorities has for years been a constant European policy objective. On this subject, it is sufficient to observe the importance of territorial cooperation in the 2014-2020 draft budget presented by the European Commission at the end of June 2011. From environmental protection to culture, from the mobility and security of citizens to cooperation for development, to research, the fundamental role played by local administrations in implementing the European Union's objectives and commitments on the international stage has become increasingly evident.

It is an extremely dynamic situation, which is at odds with the scepticism of so many players at all levels on the European political stage, and with the demagogic campaigns against the international status of local authorities. Visits to headquarters in Brussels, or participation in international fairs and events, have often been the object of controversy and political clashes, and it is certainly fair and useful to question the manner in which local initiatives and efforts integrate with national foreign policy. However, it is evident that, especially when it becomes weaker, the local authorities' capacity to establish relations at an international level is a vital element for the development of communities and can contribute to connecting them to opportunities and innovative processes beyond their national borders.

In this sense, structural funds have played a decisive role, not only because specific investments for territorial cooperation are established in operational programmes, but above all because they have encouraged regional and local administrations to acquire new organisational and relational skills needed to use the available resources, organising thousands of administrators into European and international networks dedicated to exchanging and sharing good practices in various sectors. In this way, over the past twenty years opportunities for opening local contexts to the European and extra-European scenario have multiplied, and regional and local governments have been able to benefit from new

institutional relations, fuelled in part by shared experiences in fund management.

Nowadays, in order to have an idea of the vibrancy of the international relations established between local authorities, it is sufficient to pay attention to the agendas of European institutions. Subjects such as decentralised cooperation, macro-regions, and the aggregation of territories useful for local development are more frequently addressed, and consequently with ever-increasing interest.

This is not an easy path, but in some contexts it is increasingly evident that the approach used by national governments has not produced the hoped-for results. One should, for example, bear in mind the problems encountered by initiatives for the Mediterranean area, ranging from the promise to create a Free Exchange Area to the launching of the Union for the Mediterranean, which remained inactive for months and months just as North Africa moved towards momentous political and social change.

Nowadays, in order to measure the intensity of relations with this strategic area, in addition to the great questions concerning international politics and the development of economic and productive relations, one must certainly consider exchanges established between regions and cities in crucial sectors such as the protection of the environment, training, the recovery of artistic and landscape heritage, and culture.

Within the framework of European institutional law and current policies (in particular policies concerning cohesion and “Europe 2020”), the regions and the local communities increasingly seem to be a great resource and a great opportunity for the Union and for member states. This new form of European regionalism could open new ways for implementing policies addressed at the creation of public assets at a European level (the environment, sustainable development, human resources, etc.) in effective and legitimate forms. In this perspective of new macro-regional regionalism, a functional approach seems to represent an experimental path that should be followed. This basically means planning and experimenting forms of cooperation between European regions that go beyond the traditional logic of territorial proximity. We therefore find ourselves thinking about and establishing relations addressed at the development of territories, firmly convinced that territorial cohesion is at the basis of future growth for our old and beloved continent.

Following these reflections, Fabio Zucca’s book is a fundamental contribution for the reconstruction of the international relations established by European local authorities, which, starting in the early 20th century, through the devastating experience of two world wars, regained possession of their political capabilities in supranational

relations. The study on twinning, and the historical reconstruction of the origins of the Committee of Regions are precious not only for understanding history but also for creating the future of European citizens.

Presentation

Maurizio DEGL'INNOCENTI

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Fabio Zucca, the author of an excellent essay entitled *Autonomie locali e federazione sopranazionale. La battaglia del Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe per l'unità europea*, with a preface by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, now presents a work on the international relations of local authorities that addresses European integration and includes a wide-ranging report on studies concerning the birth of the "movements" representing local autonomies in and for Europe, the "long march" towards a full legitimisation of local authorities within the European institutions, and the politics of twinning. Twinning, used as a parameter of real international policy implemented by municipalities, is the most original aspect of this book, which is based on archival sources. With only a few exceptions, it is not a subject matter often studied and one difficult to address, due in part to the dispersion of source material and because it is perhaps considered of secondary importance. It is no mistake to consider this delay in research, even in academic studies, as reflecting and supporting a way of considering European integration as achieved by states and government bureaucracies. Even leaving aside the somewhat significant information provided, the essay presented here deserves recognition simply for going against this trend.

It is possible to envisage five stages in this "long march". The first, that of its origins, is set at the beginning of the 20th century, when, faced with the emergence of a mass society, urbanisation and industrialisation, the national state became organised and strengthened. Conversely, the functions of territorial institutions and municipalities developed a more active role, presenting themselves as players in the economic, social and political-institutional field, thereby becoming interlocutors for the state. As central government grew, and with it the peripheral areas, there were those who saw municipalities as the main route for social progress. Political and social citizenry was shaped through local government, whose importance was soon perceived by the potentially mass political

movements of socialist or Catholic origin. Associations of municipalities were formed, at times based on political affinity, and if the English experience is of any value, the associations represent a mutual journey of discovery and cooperation, a fruitful exchange of experiences and ideas; it would be difficult at a later date to find analogies that are as significant. One can thus confidently state that a European administrative conscience was being formed. The prospect of local government remained within the boundaries of the national states, but there was no lack of cosmopolitan initiatives, even those with pacifist characteristics. This was the era during which professional, political and trade-unionist international associations were formed.

The first international organisation of municipalities, formed in Gand in 1913, also dates back to that period. This event was inspired mainly by socialists who, ever since the 1900 Paris International Socialist Congress, have identified it as a decisive moment for political strategies in the management of territorial institutions. The organisation in question was the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), or *Union internationale des villes* (UIV), of which Belgium's Emile Vinck was elected secretary. It is worth noting that participants included a number of names destined to play important roles in municipalist and Europeanist organisations, bearing witness to a long-term commitment that in some cases lasted over half a century. Of these politicians, Zucca emphasises the work of Edgar Milhaud and Alessandro Schiavi, both acute observers of international socialism. Milhaud became a professor of political economics in Geneva and was the founder and editor-in-chief of the *Annales de la Régie directe*, which in 1925 became the *Annales de l'Économie collective*, and after 1974 the *Annales de l'Économie publique sociale et coopérative*. Among his most important contributions one must at least mention *La marche au socialisme*, in which, against the "vieux État-pouvoir", he envisaged "l'État-industriel nouveau", founded "sur les organismes autonomes et souples, et harmonieusement représentatifs de tous les intérêts sociaux en présence"; and, in answer to the critics of "étatisme", he opposed the new socialist formula of "confier la gestion de la propriété nationale aux intéressés eux-mêmes: producteurs et consommateurs associés". Schiavi was instead a public administrator and social-statistical scholar who worked for Milan's *Società Umanitaria* and was close to Filippo Turati, a man of acknowledged competence in the field of public housing. He was to become the AICCE's first president, and as such, in 1953, he supported the creation of an International Institute of Credit for European Municipalities by issuing bonds guaranteed by states and municipalities to ensure a home for everyone following the destruction caused by the war. The war and the consequent changes overshadowed the weak association to the extent that it was only in 1924 that a second

congress was held in Amsterdam to set up its re-founding, which was finalised the following year in Paris. The *Fédération des conseillers communaux socialistes* was to suffer the same destiny.

During the 1930s, faced with the growing limitations of the League of Nations and the changes posed by totalitarianisms, in particular by Nazism, the European union seemed an indefeasible premise for a new international order seen as an alternative to the previous “anarchy” blamed as the primary cause of the war. As a priority, unity was perceived as a way of safeguarding peace. World War II and later the Cold War seemed to confirm this, but the idea merged with that of a convergence of “free people”. At the end of the day, this was the crisis category, whether this refers to diplomatic equilibriums and those between the Great Powers, to a presumed and pre-existing continental “unity”, or whether this is seen from the perspective of the destruction of human beings and assets or of values and civilisations. From a shared aspiration to the creation of a supranational institution, the federal hypothesis seemed to be the most coherent, lasting and stable solution, since it permitted the overcoming of the thorny issue of borders and minorities and the consequent transfer of people. According to socialists and progressive democrats, secular or Christian, this was also an opportunity to confer on Old Europe a more advanced social status. Thus two perspectives were outlined. The first one more liberal, oriented at re-launching on new bases the principle of a supranational organisation equipped with greater powers than the League of Nations, including its own military power and court of justice, projected at a global level from continental Europe and enveloping all the states, whatever their internal regimes. The other was more decidedly oriented at “revolutionising” social and political equilibriums, calling on the leading role of the people through elected institutions. The first relied on the part played by states that would voluntarily give up some of their sovereign power in exchange for the promise of greater reciprocal security, while the second option relied on the development of a political and social citizenry, thanks especially to the impulse provided by the working class. One must immediately specify that the first position consolidating or reorganising the national state while conceding little or nothing to a proactive stance by local institutions at an international level, decidedly prevailed over the second. However, it was precisely at a local level that the most interesting positions emerged in joining together external federalism and internal decentralisation. Zucca reconstructs the fundamental history of this process.

Compulsory references include the initiative of Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, author of the book *Panurope*, who, in October 1923, founded the Pan-European Union in Vienna and from 1924 to