

Teclean, C., and Drăgan, G. (2023). Consultative dimension in the European Union's multilevel governance process: a lever for regulatory and institutional resilience. *Applied Research in Administrative Sciences*, vol. 4, 1/2023, 48-57
DOI: 10.24818/ARAS/2023/4/1.05

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

Cezar TECLEAN

PhD, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

cezar10tc@yahoo.com

Gabriela DRĂGAN

Professor, PhD, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania

gabriela.dragan@rei.ase.ro

Abstract:

This paper explores the environment of European bureaucracy starting from the research question regarding the role and place of consultative institutions (the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions) in the European institutional system. The purpose of our investigation is to explain the nature and functionality of the institutions mentioned in the multilevel governance architecture of the European Union (EU). To achieve the proposed objective, we analyse the condition of advisory institutions as actors/agents of the European structure through the prism of the rationalist current and then we argue, through the grid of social constructivism, that the institutions in question serve, through their consultative attribute, also a role of legitimising supranational legislation with subnational applicability in the EU, against the background of the precariousness of legislative powers at regional and local level. Our research identifies the way in which the consultative institutions of the EU legitimise the community legislative process, a context in which the results obtained show the existence of a significant discordance between the need for legislation at the regional level and the much undersized legislative attribute at this level as a result of the constitutional limitations of the member states. The specified phenomenon feeds an imperfect subsidiarity and a deficient proximity within the EU, for the remedy of which the feasible solution consists in improving the administrative-legal cohesion in the EU through a potential reconsolidation of the Union treaties, which would generate a more homogeneous distribution of the administrative-territorial devolution.

Keywords: advisory institutions, multilevel governance, imperfect subsidiarity, normative legitimacy

JEL Classification: F53, F55, N44.

DOI: 10.24818/ARAS/2023/4/1.05

INTRODUCTION

The management of the European supranational governance, as it is configured by the provisions of the EU Treaties, assigns the consultative dimension a distinct role in the general economy of the community decision-making process (Hönnige & Panke, 2015). Within the various legal-procedural stages (ordinary legislative procedures, consultation procedures, the conclusion of international agreements, quasi-constitutional procedures) the specialised opinion has in the vast majority of situations an advisory character, with the exception of the conformity opinion (approval) procedures found in competence of the European Parliament (Hepburn, 2016). The institution of the opinion in the system of European governance is ensured by different structures from the community institutional system, which, in addition to the consultative attribution, it mainly performs various other executive or legislative attributions. The only actors with an exclusive advisory role in the EU establishment are the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). The functional attribute of these institutions refers to the preparation of resolutions,

impact studies, and the issuance of advisory opinions intended for the adoption of European normative acts aimed at matters of socioeconomic interest for civil society (opinions issued by the EESC) and issues with applicability at the subnational level, case in which notices are issued by the CoR (CoR, 2009, p. 4). Having an advisory character and without veto powers or co-decision rights (Schakel, 2020, p. 768), the opinions issued by the mentioned institutions are binding only from a procedural point of view, without being compliant as content for the legislative decision-makers, which determines a low impact on the final legislative products (Hönnige & Panke, 2013).

In this context, we propose to debate the nature, place, and role of these advisory institutions in the EU institutional architecture, from the perspective of their effective contribution to the composition of the supranational legislative framework that regulates elements pending at subnational levels (regional and local) in the EU. From this point of view, we argue the hypothesis that the European advisory institutions are entities that serve as a role to legitimise supranational legislation for subnational levels in the EU, but also to cover existing constitutional gaps across the EU. The proposed objectives aim to identify and explain the nature of European consultative institutions through the epistemic grid of the English School, as well as to evaluate, through the lens of social constructivism, how these consultative institutions legitimise the European model of multilevel governance.

Our debate covers a less processed area in the literature regarding the explanation in a combined rationalist and constructivist paradigm of the functioning of European consultative institutions, meaning that we promote the concepts of imperfect subsidiarity and normative legitimacy to explain the contribution of consultative structures to the EU's multilevel governance process. The original dimension and practical implications of our research are given by the innovative interpretation it proposes in explaining the place and role of consultative institutions in EU engagement, opening the perspective of fine-tuning options in Community management to improve the multilevel European governance system.

1. EPISTEMIC APPROACHES ON THE ADVISORY ACT OF EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE

Affirmed as an adjunct tool for facilitating subsidiarity and getting closer to the citizens (CoR, 2009, p. 5), the consultative dimension provided by the competent European institutions is the subject of various thematic approaches in the specialised literature. In a Europe organised both intergovernmentally and as a multilevel federation, the institutionalisation of the regional level remains a stake for consolidating the weak ontological and normative foundation of multilevel governance (Keating, 2017, p. 616), but also for supporting the cohesion policy of the EU and the management of interregional competition (Hepburn, 2016, p. 214). Against this background, Tatham & Bauer (2014) consider that adjuvant advisory institutions could be the link between fulfilling the wishes of regional elites in relation to the supranational level of the EU, namely establishing pragmatic interinstitutional relations, maximising the benefits of integration, and strengthening regional identity elements. In their capacity as envoys of socioprofessional groups and local communities, members of the advisory institutions are emerging as the most authorised voices nearby to the supranational authorities in Brussels (van Hecke, Bursens & Beyers, 2016). In this context, Borghetto & Franchino (2010) state the dual nature of these institutions from the perspective of the dual role of their protagonists as actors implementing European regulations at local and regional level, regulations for which they also provided advice to union decision-makers.

Starting from the theoretical apprehensions of Holsinger (2016) and Bull (1977) subsumed under the rationalist paradigm regarding the neo-medieval nature of the EU, we propose to extend the neo-medieval approach to the analysis of the consultative structures of the EU and their contribution to the configuration of the European multilevel governance system as postnational institutionalised form (Ungureanu, 2013, p. 254). We will invoke several investigative variants, some even eccentric or controversial, of which the neomedieval paradigm is here only an argumentative means and not a topic in itself, as it is treated in the theory of International Relations. In an illustrative approach, Rothman (1969, p. 195) shows that "England developed many of the characteristics of a modern nation before the economic and social revolutions of the 18th and 19th", and Bederman (2002, p. 92) considers that under the conditions in which "sovereignty is becoming more fluid, states are increasingly

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A
LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

required to share power and authority with subnational units (such as vassals of old), supranational political entities (likened to a Holy Roman Empire), and powerful nongovernmental forces (analogous to the medieval Roman Catholic Church)".

Following the lines of the previously invoked intellectual models, we support the existence of fundamental continuities that underlie some of the elements of multilevel governance and the functioning of EU advisory institutions. Thus, based on the functional-structural features related to the fragmentation of jurisdictions, integration into larger supranational organisational units, and the emergence of subnational formations (Holsinger, 2016, p. 165), we can find a series of continuities and similarities between today's Committee of the Regions and a series of archaic institutions, such as the Diet of the Hanseatic League or the Territorial Assemblies of the Roman-German Empire. According to a similar reasoning, we can identify the cliché of the European Economic and Social Committee as a contemporary replica of similar old institutions, such as the General and Provincial States or the Assemblies of the Guilds. The neomedieval interpretation of the nature of these consultative structures is part of Rothman's institutional assessments (1969), in the sense that, indeed, the historical comparison provides a double way of modeling in relation to the postmodern EU context: provides both historical precedents for the representative functioning of these institutions and an explanation of their functional limits in the European multilevel governance system.

At the same time, the creation and operation of these European consultative institutions under the argument of being close to citizens should also be interpreted from the perspective of the resilience of the community body. In a world and in a Europe increasingly sensitive to the uncertainties and challenges of contemporaneity, the use of humanistic values as a vector of soft-power seems increasingly feasible (Nielsen, 2013, p. 724). In this sense, the construction of the multilevel binder through the contribution of the consultative institutions represents a perfect lever of soft power useful for lubricating/smoothing the asperities inside the union body, asperities generated by the differentiated geography of administrative and legislative devolution (Niessen, 2022; Hooghe et al., 2016) practiced at the local and regional level throughout Europe (CoR, 2013; Toshkov, 2012). On this topic, Sălăgeanu (2012) identifies a close connection between the efficiency of European integration and the availability of subnational regionalisation, especially in Central-Eastern Europe, where the appetite for exercising regional autonomies is weaker.

In addition, increasing the resilience of the multilevel governance system and making public administration more flexible (Profiroiu & Nastacă, 2021, p. 101) can be improved by the contribution of the know-how brought by the EESC and CoR and the others stakeholders from the public space, including by contributing to the improvement of administrative capacities that allow a better absorption of EU funds (Výrostová & Nyikos, 2023; Încălțărău, Pascariu & Șurubaru, 2020) and reducing the gaps in the eastern states (Pascariu, Drăgan & Stângaciu, 2019). In such a context, the very need to strengthen the authority and the community mechanism (Pekarčíková & Staničková, 2022, p. 133) could benefit from the representative legitimacy offered by the two consultative institutions.

Established with the stated aim of supporting subsidiarity as a basic principle of European multilevel governance, the EESC and the CoR operate in a relatively shady cone in the European institutional landscape due to the nonbinding nature of their recommendations (Piattoni & Schönlau, 2015, p. 87), which has made many academic analyses concerned with assessing the real capacity of these institutions to contribute to the legislative process and to guarantee the principle of subsidiarity in the EU (Nicolosi & Mustert, 2020). But despite their limited legal power (Schakel, 2020), these institutions enjoy great legitimacy derived from the fact that their members come from the local and regional elected representatives who directly represent the citizens (Nicolosi & Mustert, 2020, p. 285). Their legitimacy is even more robust than the legitimacy of other European agencies, which are based not on representativeness, but on technocratic competence and autonomy (Fjortoft & Michailidou, 2021, p. 2).

In the case of consultative institutions, we can therefore speak of an institutional paradox (Guilloud, 2009, p. 582) given by the discrepancy between their high degree of legitimacy and their low degree of legal influence and effective contribution to legislation (Sturm, 1995, p. 110). Practically, the EESC and the CoR are the closest

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

to the communities below, but this closeness does not materialise through a major legal impact, as it is about fulfilling a formal subsidiarity.

2. METHODS AND PARAMETERS FOR ANALYSING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE CONSULTATIVE ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

In order to evaluate the functional performance of the two European consultative institutions, we used the following analysis indicators:

- the share of regional authorities (NUTS 1, 2 and 3) with legislative competences in each EU member country and across the EU at the time of 2020 (Brexit year), in order to be able to carry out a comparative EU-28/ EU-27 assessment (Table 1);
- the share of European legislation approved or resolved by the CoR and the EESC, intended for regional and local communities for the period 2018-2022 (Table 2).

Table 1. Share of regional entities / authorities with legislative power in the European Union (2020)

EU Member States	Local & Regional entities (LAU & NUTS) (No.)	Local entities / authorities (LAU 1 & 2) (No.)	Regional entities / authorities (NUTS 1, 2 & 3)		
			Total (No.)	Regional authorities with legislative power	
				(No.)	(%)
Belgium	639	581	58	5	8.6
Bulgaria	301	265	36	–	–
Czechia	6280	6258	22	–	–
Denmark	115	99	16	–	–
Germany	11241	10787	454	16	3.5
Estonia	84	79	5	–	–
Ireland	177	166	11	–	–
Greece	6201	6133	68	–	–
Spain	8117	8124	62	19	30.6
France	35500	35358	142	–	–
Croatia	579	556	23	–	–
Italy	8037	7904	133	20	15.0
Cyprus	615	615	–	–	–
Latvia	125	119	6	–	–
Lithuania	72	60	12	–	–
Luxembourg	102	102	–	–	–
Hungary	3186	3155	31	–	–
Malta	70	68	2	–	–
the Netherlands	411	355	56	–	–
Austria	2145	2098	47	9	19.1
Poland	2575	2478	97	–	–
Portugal	3435	3400	35	2	5.7
Romania	3228	3181	54	–	–

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

EU Member States	Local & Regional entities (LAU & NUTS) (No.)	Local entities / authorities (LAU 1 & 2) (No.)	Regional entities / authorities (NUTS 1, 2 & 3)		
			Total (No.)	Regional authorities with legislative power	
				(No.)	(%)
Slovenia	226	212	14	–	–
Slovakia	2938	2926	12	–	–
Finland	337	311	26	1	3.8
Sweden	322	290	32	–	–
UK	572	400	172	3	1.7
EU-28	97630	96080	1626	75	4.6
EU-27	97058	95680	1454	72	5.0

(Source: Authors' proceedings based on Eurostat and REGLEG)

Table 2. Opinions issued by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions (CoR) (2018-2022)

	Total normative acts issued by the EU	Total opinions issued	Opinions issued by EESC	Opinions issued by CoR
No.	1617	1118	794	324
%	100.0	69.1	49.1	20.0

(Source: Authors' proceedings based on European Commission, EESC and CoR)

The values of these indicators were collected from the following available sources: Eurostat, for the number of local and regional entities; REGLEG (Conference of European Regions with Legislative Power), for the number of regional authorities with legislative powers; European Commission, for the inventory of normative acts issued by the EU institutions; EESC and CoR, for the number of own opinions and resolutions issued.

According to the indicators used, in 2020 from the over 97,000 territorial-administrative units within the EU (LAU 1 and 2, respectively NUTS 1, 2 and 3) and from the over 1,500 regional entities (NUTS 1, 2 and 3) only 75 regional authorities had autonomous legislative power within the EU-28 and only 72 after Brexit, i.e. only 5% of the total regional echelon in the Union. The regional authorities with their own legislative competences have the highest weights in the states with regional organisation (Spain and Italy), as well as in the federal states (Austria or Belgium), while 20 states do not allow the organisation of regional autonomies by constitution. The low share of autonomous-legislative entities in Germany may seem surprising, the fact being due to the existence of a large number of second-order regional entities within the federal lands, which do not have their own legislative attributes.

At the same time, 69% of the community acquis adopted in the period 2018-2022 was approved/resolved by the EESC or CoR, being applicable to local and regional entities, but the distribution of competences was very uneven between the two consultative institutions. Most of the normative acts legislated in Brussels (49%) concerned the economic and social fields, being preliminarily evaluated by the EESC, and only 20% fell into the CoR's prior approval niche. Moreover, the mentioned situation has not changed significantly in the last decade. Thus, in 2009, almost 70% of all EU legislation was intended for the then 95,000 local and regional authorities, of which 75 were regional assemblies with legislative powers (CoR, 2009, p. 3), a fact that highlights a chronic lack of administrative-legal and constitutional cohesion within the EU.

3. IMPERFECT SUBSIDIARITY, NORMATIVE LEGITIMACY AND CAMOUFLAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES ACROSS THE EUROPEAN UNION

Starting from the previously exposed elements, our results reiterate the existence of a significant gap between the need for legislation/decision at the sub-state level and the much undersized legislative potential at this level, as a result of the limited devolution within the member states generated by the constitutional limitations in the states of the Union, which can be found, according to recent studies, especially in the states of Central and Eastern Europe (Výrostová & Nyikos, 2023; Încălțărău, Pascariu & Șurubaru, 2020). It is striking that among the 72 regional entities with legislative autonomy, none can be found in the states that joined the Union after 2007. In this context, among the functional principles assumed by the European consultative institutions enunciated in the Treaty of Lisbon (the principles of subsidiarity, proximity, partnership, multilevel governance, the principle of local and regional autonomy), at least two principles - subsidiarity and proximity, seem difficult to fulfill due to the lack of legal power of advisory opinions (Hunter, Pantazi & Petit, 2021), and the principle of partnership remains in the sphere of insipid formalism. We can therefore talk about an imperfect subsidiarity in the exercise of which the institutions (CoR and EESC) claimed as catalytic agents of subsidiarity in the *acquis communautaire* are involved. This functioning pattern serves well to camouflage the dysfunctional effects of the intra-union juridical-constitutional alterities and to deliver a minimal resilience and a decent functionality, even if it is about an ambiguous, contorted, and very bureaucratic functionality.

At the same time, against the background of the lack of legal-constitutional cohesion between the EU member states, an institutional and legislative deficit is maintained at the regional level with negative consequences, especially in terms of the absorption and management of European funds (Mendez & Bachtler, 2022; Crescenzi & Giua, 2016, p. 2341), but also of regional economic performance (Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2020, p. 975). However, the formal involvement of the CoR and the EESC in the composition of European legislation with regional relevance, although it does not overcome the deficit of subnational legislation, tries to legitimise the regulations intended for the subnational level adopted at the supranational level, showing off its soft-power capabilities (Nielsen, 2013) in their role as legitimate agents. To explain the phenomenon, we turn to the grid of constructivist interpretation, on the margin of which, the building of these consultative institutions populated with representatives of regional and social branches, responds to the need for normative legitimisation of the legislation developed at the "center" but mainly intended for subnational communities (regional and local). The normative legitimisation was designed to take place through the effect of the contact contagion through which the legitimacy of the consultative institutions, generated by the proximity of the origin of their members, is reflected on the legislative process in which they participate, even if it is a quasisterile participation.

But the normative legitimacy is only an image that seeks to cover the lack of legal-constitutional cohesion across the EU. European advisory institutions play a key role in compensating for the existing institutional and regulatory governance gap at the subnational level in the EU. They illusively "fill" the inhomogeneous subnational level of the European multilevel governance model, camouflaging the existing constitutional divergences within the Union and what are the real causes of functional distortions in the triad of agents - processes - structure at the scale of the Union space. Referring to the functionality of the advisory attribute, Nicolosi and Mustert (2020, p. 298) were arguing that "the *raison d'être* of the CoR was to move beyond symbolic participation in the legislative practice of EU law", but in fact balancing multilevel governance depends on Member States' constitutional preferences and their willingness to shape the division of decision-making powers between the EU, the national level and the substate level (Fromage, 2018, p. 198). Through a virtual assessment of the phenomenology of EU multilevel balances, we can believe that the desirable differentiation of legislative attributes between the European Parliament, national parliaments, and regional assemblies (Abels & Högenauer, 2018, p. 147; Corbett, 2012, p. 250) would resolve hidden differences and eliminate tacit and implicit tensions that hamper multilevel governance mechanisms, in which case the advisory institutions we are talking about.

Such a decentralised and legislatively autonomous approach would induce notable concrete consequences along the lines of debureaucratisation of the regional and local public administration (Mendez & Bachtler, 2022; Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2020), generating a better capacity of the administrative structures regarding

easier access to the European structural funds (Výrostová & Nyikos, 2023; Mendez & Bachtler, 2022). Therefore, a robust devolution can be the real premise for increasing the administrative capacity of regional and local structures/authorities, which would thus become more effective agents for increasing economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU space. But how much autonomisation and devolution would be needed to eliminate the need for decorative advisory institutions? In order to be able to answer such a legitimate question, we use the evaluation proposed by Niessen (2022) with the help of a regional autonomy measurement indicator - *Sub-state Autonomy Scale*, corroborated with the post-functionalist evaluation of the regional authority proposed by Hooghe et al. (2016) through another quantitative tool - *Regional Authority Index*.

Applying Niessen's scale to the EU scale highlights the fact that most NUTS 2 regional units are administrative-territorial units with different degrees of administrative decentralisation, but without legislative autonomy, except for the 72 regions identified by us previously. Many of the EU member states created such regional units only for statistical convenience in economic planning and only a part of them evolve into functional administrations (Hooghe et al., 2016, p. 61), while some newly joined states from the East they created them from the obligation to align with the European standards imposed in the pre-accession stage (Toshkov, 2012, p. 92), without endowing them with the appropriate legal-institutional attributes (Hunter, Pantazi & Petit, 2021, p. 16), such as legal personality and own administrative-executive institutions. Therefore, the lack of real administrative and institutional cohesion in the European design favors the need for the existence of consultative institutions such as the CoR and the EESC, which would bring their legitimising contribution to the creation of supranational legislation and the resilient functioning of multilevel governance.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS AND FUTURE OPENINGS

Multilevel governance is not a simple thing. Nor the functioning of the advisory institutions that support it. It is a hybrid political-managerial experiment in which the advisory component together with the other decision-making and institutional components creates a unique model that is equally non-Westphalian, neo-medievalist, and post-national. In this research we approached two dimensions of the existence and functioning of consultative institutions (EESC and CoR) in the institutional framework of the EU, namely the explanation of their neo-medieval nature and the argumentation in a constructivist key of the building and functioning of these structures. Our evidence suggests that European consultative institutions were designed to fulfill the function of legitimising supranational legislation intended for subnational levels in the EU, as well as the function of concealing existing constitutional divergences within the EU.

The obtained results show that, although they were built to serve as promoters of subsidiarity in the community space, the consultative institutions of the EU only partially fulfill this task despite the legitimacy they enjoy through the effects of proximity. The identified cause derives from the advisory and noncompliant nature of the recommendations they offer to the European establishment and thus do not have the necessary legal force and influence. In such a context, we iterated the concepts of imperfect subsidiarity and proximity with limited utility, associated with an imperfect and deficient multilevel governance in the EU, in which the aforementioned consultative institutions are built as dual-use entities: on the one hand for to fulfill its official consultative role established in the *acquis communautaire*, and on the other hand to play the role of agents of normative legitimation and compensation of the institutional and normative governance deficit existing at the subnational level in the EU.

We have demonstrated that, in fact, the desired normative legitimisation is only an aspirational one that actually aims to cover the legal-constitutional inhomogeneity in the EU, responsible for the institutional and normative deficit of governance at the subnational level. In reality, the constitutional sensitivities of the EU member states are what do not allow the homogenisation of administrative-judicial devolution at the Union level, which, if it were achieved, could institutionalise a balance of power allocation between the supranational, national and subnational levels, with positive consequences on the redistributions within the cohesion policy, conditions in which the current advisory institutions would no longer be necessary.

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A
LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

A feasible and functional solution for the real improvement of the institutional and normative deficit of multilevel governance in the EU could be the improvement of administrative-legal cohesion in the Union through a potential reconsolidation of the Union's treaties, which would generate a more homogeneous distribution of administrative-territorial devolution, on the basis of which regional powers of governance/legislation could approach a common denominator. On these coordinates, the simultaneous investigation of the administrative, constitutional, and economic contexts in the different states and regions of the EU could represent a future interdisciplinary academic cocktail capable of offering integrated solutions for the good management of the European experiment.

REFERENCES

- Abels, G., & Högenauer, A. L. (2018). *Regional Parliaments: Effective Actors in EU Policy-Making?* London & New York: Routledge.
- Bederman, D. J. (2002). *The Spirit of International Law*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Borghetto, E., & Franchino, F. (2010). The Role of Subnational Authorities in the Implementation of EU Directives. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 17(6), 759-780.
- Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. London: Macmillan.
- Corbett, R. (2012). The Evolving Roles of the European Parliament and of National Parliaments. In A. Biondi, P. Eeckhout, & S. Ripley (Eds.), *EU Law after Lisbon* (pp. 249-262). Oxford: OUP.
- CoR (Committee of the Regions). Avize. <https://cor.europa.eu/ro/our-work/Pages/Opinions.aspx>
- CoR (2009). Committee of the Regions' White Paper on Multilevel Governance. Brussels: Committee of the Regions of the European Union.
- CoR (2013, April 12). The opinion of the Committee of the Regions regarding decentralization in the European Union and the role of local and regional autonomy in the development and implementation of EU policies (2013/C 139/08). Brussels: Committee of the Regions of the European Union
- Crescenzi, R., & Giua, M. (2016). The EU Cohesion Policy in context: Does a bottom-up approach work in all regions? *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 48(11), 2340-2357.
- European Commission. EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/browse/directories/legislation.html>
- EESC (European Economic and Social Committee). Opinions. <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/ro/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions>
- Fjærtøft, T. N., & Michailidou, A. (2021). Beyond expertise: the public construction of legitimacy for EU agencies. *Political Research Exchange*, 3(1), 1-26.
- Fromage, D. (2018). Constitutional Preferences and Parliamentary Reform: Explaining National Parliaments' Adaptation to European Integration. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 56(1), 198-199.
- Guilloud, L. (2009). Décentralisation et fédéralisme. Les collectivités locales, facteur de fédération dans l'Union Européenne? Deuxième partie: Les collectivités locales, acteurs clés dans l'Union Européenne: Le Comité des régions, un organe paradoxal de l'Union européenne. *Revue du marché commun et de l'Union Européenne*, 532, 582-586.
- van Hecke, M., Bursens, P., & Beyers, J. (2016). You'll Never Lobby Alone: Explaining the Participation of Subnational Authorities in the European Commission's Open Consultations. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 54(6), 1433-1448.
- Hepburn, E. (2016). Cohesion Policy and Regional Mobilization. In S. Piattoni, & L. Polverari (Eds.), *Handbook on Cohesion Policy in the EU* (pp. 203-216). Cheltenham, UK, & Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

- Holsinger, B. (2016). Neomedievalism and International Relations. In L. D'Arcens (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism* (pp. 165-179). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hönnige, C., & Panke, D. (2013). The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee: how influential are consultative committees in the European Union? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 51(3), 452-471.
- Hönnige, C., & Panke, D. (2015). Is anybody listening? The Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee and their quest for awareness. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 23(4), 624-642.
- Hooghe, L., Marks, G., Schakel, A. H., Niedzwiecki, S., Chapman, C., & Rosenfield, S. (2016). *Measuring regional authority: A postfunctional theory of governance*, Vol. I. Oxford University Press.
- Hunter, A., Pantazi, M., & Petit, P. (2021). *EU regions with legislative powers: Exploring the appetite, capacity and direction for EU policy influencing and delivery*. Brussels: European Policy Centre.
- Încălțărău, C., Pascariu, G. C., & Șurubaru, N. C. (2020). Evaluating the determinants of EU funds absorption across old and new member states – The role of administrative capacity and political governance. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 58(4), 941-961.
- Keating, M. (2017). Europe as a Multilevel Federation. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(4), 615-632.
- Mendez, C., & Bachtler, J. (2022). The quality of government and administrative performance: explaining Cohesion policy compliance, absorption and achievements across EU regions. *Regional Studies*, Ahead of print, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2022.2083593>
- Nicolosi, S. F., & Mustert, L. (2020). The European Committee of the Regions as a watchdog of the principle of subsidiarity. *Maastricht Journal of European and Comparative Law*, 27(3), 284-301.
- Nielsen, K. L. (2013). EU Soft Power and the Capability-Expectations Gap. *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 9(5), 723-739.
- Niessen, C. (2022). Measuring evolving regional autonomy demands and statutes: introducing the Sub-state Autonomy Scale (SAS). *Regional Studies*, 56(9), 1589-1603.
- Pascariu, G. C., Drăgan, G., & Stângaciu, O. A. (2019). Integration and Trade Specialization in Central and Eastern European Countries: Towards A New Core-Periphery Structural Differentiation? *Journal for Economic Forecasting*, XXII(3), 148-169.
- Pekaričková, M., & Staničková, M. (2022). Analysis of the current integration process: from the past to the future of the European Union. *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 13(2), 116-139.
- Piattoni, S., & Schönlau, J. (2015). *Shaping EU Policy from Below: EU Democracy and the Committee of the Regions*. Cheltenham, UK, & Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Profiroiu, A. G., & Nastacă, C. C. (2021). What strengthens resilience in public administration institutions? *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 12(Special Issue), 100-125.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Ketterer, T. (2020). Institutional change and the development of lagging regions in Europe. *Regional Studies*, 54(7), 974-986.
- Rothman, S. (1969). *European Society and Politics*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.
- Sălăgeanu, R. (2012). The Challenge of Regionalization for the Romania Administration: Strengthening vs. Hindrance. *L'Europe en Formation*, 364(2), 181-194.
- Schakel, A. H. (2020). Multilevel governance in a 'Europe with the regions'. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 22(4), 767-775.

CONSULTATIVE DIMENSION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE PROCESS: A
LEVER FOR REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL RESILIENCE

-
- Sturm, R. (1995). Participation and Representation: The Experience of Second Chambers and the Committee of the Regions. In R. Dehousse, & T. Christiansen (Eds.), *What model for the Committee of the Regions?: Past Experiences and Future Perspectives* (pp. 104-132). Florence: European University Institute.
- Tatham, M., & Bauer, M. (2014). Support from below? Supranational institutions, regional élites and governance preferences. *Journal of Public Policy*, 34(2), 237-267.
- Toshkov, D. (2012). Compliance with EU Law in Central and Eastern Europe. The Disaster that Didn't Happen (Yet). *L'Europe en Formation*, 364(2), 91-109.
- Ungureanu, R. S. (2013). European Union's Identities Mission and/or Europeanness in EU's Security Approaches. *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 9(2), 247-255.
- Výrostová, E. & Nyikos, G. (2023). Administrative capacity and EU funds management systems performance: the cases of Hungary and Slovakia. *Regional Studies*, Ahead of print. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2022.2152434>