# EU Cohesion Policy and Sub-National Authorities in the New Member States

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**Abstract:** *This article examines the impact of EU cohesion policy on sub-national authorities in the new member states, focusing on the implementation of cohesion policy in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Lithuania in the 2004–06 and 2007–13 programming periods. While in the initial programming period after accession cohesion policy was implemented in a highly centralized manner, in 2007–13 cohesion policy implementation has been decentralized in the new member states and sub-national actors are playing a greater role. The role of sub-national authorities varies across countries, however, with democratically-elected regional governments in Poland and the Czech Republic asserting the greatest influence over cohesion policy. The constitutional position of sub-national authorities is the main factor explaining this variation, and the key determinant of whether sub-national authorities are able to successfully exploit the opportunities for access to new resources and influence presented by cohesion policy.*

**Keywords:** *Cohesion policy, European Union, new member states, sub-national authorities, programming period 2007–13*

## Introduction

The impact of EU cohesion policy on multilevel governance has been the subject of debate for almost two decades. This debate was launched by the 1988 reform of the structural funds — the main financial instruments of cohesion policy — which doubled the budget for cohesion policy and introduced important new governance principles for the structural funds. The 1988 reform gave cohesion policy a strong regional focus — henceforth, the structural funds would be allocated on a regionalized basis; member states were required to classify territorial units below the national level according to the NUTS system of territorial classification, with meso-level NUTS 2 regions becoming the basic regions eligible for EU assistance.[1] The most important new governing principle introduced by the 1988 reform was 'partnership,' which requires the European Commission and national governments to cooperate with appropriate sub-national authorities (regional and local) in planning and implementing cohesion policy. The partnership principle has been revised in subsequent cohesion policy reforms (1993, 1999, and 2006) to include participation by the social partners and non-governmental and civil society actors; however, despite the addition of this new 'horizontal' dimension, the partnership principle retains its essential 'vertical' or territorial focus.[2]

The debate on cohesion policy and multilevel governance features three main positions. First, there are those who argue that cohesion policy has effectively promoted the growth of multilevel governance in Europe, by strengthening the power and role of sub-national and supra-national actors at the expense of national governments.[3] Advocates of this position are more inclined to argue that cohesion policy plays a key role in promoting the emergence of a multilevel 'Europe of the Regions.' The multilevel governance view is disputed by holders of the second position, who claim that national governments, in their role as 'gatekeepers,' have been able to effectively control and limit the domestic effects of cohesion policy. Moreover, these 'intergovernmentalists' argue that since the 1998 structural funds reform, in subsequent policy reforms national governments have been able to reclaim control of cohesion policy from the Commission, thereby effectively 'renationalizing' cohesion policy.[4] Occupying the third position are those who see the impact of cohesion policy as variable across different member states, with a key differentiating factor being the strength and constitutional position of sub-national authorities; while in federal (i.e. Germany, Belgium) or regionalized (i.e. Spain) systems sub-national authorities have been able to utilize their strong constitutional positions to exploit the opportunities presented by cohesion policy for access to new resources and influence, in more centralized member states constitutionally weak sub-national authorities have been less able to do so. This third position is well represented in the burgeoning literature on 'Europeanization,' which emphasizes the mediating impact of domestic structural and political factors in adaptation to EU pressures and requirements.[5]

A central question of the debate on cohesion policy and multilevel governance, therefore, concerns the impact of cohesion policy on the power and role of sub-national authorities — *vis-a-vis* national governments and within both the national and European contexts.[6] To date, this debate has largely focused on the 'old,' pre-2004 member states, or the EU15. By contrast, this question has received relatively little attention in studies of the new member states that have joined the EU since 2004.[7] A key reason for this scholarly neglect, of course, is that the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) only joined the EU in 2004 (or 2007, in the case of Romania and Bulgaria) and thus have only limited experience with cohesion policy. While these countries received EU structural assistance in the pre-accession period — in the form of PHARE, ISPA, and SAPARD — these programs only loosely adhered to the governance norms of cohesion policy, if at all, and thus provide little opportunity to assess the impact of EU structural policies on the role of sub-national authorities.[8] Nevertheless, we now (in late 2008) have the opportunity to give a preliminary answer to this question. The 2004 entrants have under their belt the experience of implementing cohesion policy in the last three years (2004–06) of the 2000–06 programming period, and they have also each begun to implement cohesion policy in the new, 2007–13 programming period.

Based on this (albeit limited) experience of the CEECs with cohesion policy implementation, this article examines the impact of cohesion policy on the power and role of sub-national authorities in the new member states, focusing on the cases of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Lithuania. Information on these case studies is drawn mainly from the forthcoming comparative analysis of EU cohesion policy after enlargement edited by the authors (Baun and Marek 2008). The article proceeds as follows: In the next section, cohesion policy implementation in the 2004–06 programming period is examined. It is argued that cohesion policy was implemented in a uniformly centralized manner in the new member states in this period, with sub-national authorities given little opportunity to influence the direction and management of cohesion policy. The following section examines the implementation of cohesion policy in the initial years of the 2007–13 programming period. It is argued that, in contrast to 2004–06, there is a notable trend towards the decentralization or regionalization of cohesion policy management in the new member states in the current programming period. Moreover, in two countries with self-governing regions — Poland and the Czech Republic — sub-national authorities have begun to assert a stronger influence and role in the implementation of cohesion policy. Sub-national authorities have not been able to exert much influence over cohesion policy in Hungary and Lithuania, however, even though the former has self-government at the micro-regional (county) level. In the Conclusion, we assess the implications of these findings for the future of political decentralization and the role of sub-national authorities in the new member states.

## The 2004–06 Programming Period

As previously mentioned, a key finding in studies of the EU15 is that the impact of cohesion policy on multilevel governance is variable, with a major determinant being the constitutional position of sub-national authorities. A good place to begin in our analysis of the four new member states, therefore, is with the constitutional basis of sub-national authorities in each country. Also important is the relationship between sub-national authorities and the NUTS 2 administrative units that are the primary focus of the structural funds.

Two of our four cases — Poland and the Czech Republic — have regional self-government. In Poland, a 1998 law created 16 self-governing regions (*województwa*). The new regions were given substantial competencies, including in the field of development policy, but this was not matched by a proportionate share of public finances. Regional autonomy is also undermined by the system of shared administrative authority between a national government-appointed governor (*wojewoda*), and an elected assembly (*sejmik*) and executive board — headed by a marshal (*marszałek*) — that is chosen by the assembly. In the Czech Republic, 1997 legislation created 14 self-governing regions (*kraje*), each with their own elected assemblies and a governing council and governor (*hejtman*) elected by the assembly. The Czech regions have competencies in many policy areas, including regional development. Similar to the *województwa* in Poland, however, the Czech *kraje* have only limited financial resources and remain substantially dependent on national government grants for their funding.

Hungary also has a self-government tier above the local or municipal level, but nonetheless below the (macro-) regional level. The 1990 law on sub-state reform created 19 counties (*megyék*) and one capital city (*föváros*) — Budapest — which since 1994 have been governed by directly-elected assemblies. While the counties have competencies in such areas as healthcare and secondary education, they do not have formal powers in the area of regional development; these are exercised instead at the supra-county level by appointed Regional Development Councils (RDCs, see below). Relatively small Lithuania does not have self-governing units between the national and local government levels. Instead, the country is divided into 10 counties (*apskritys*), and further into 60 municipalities, with the counties administered by governors (*apskrities viršininkas*) appointed by the national government.

Of crucial importance for the ability of sub-national authorities, especially if they are self-governing, to exploit the opportunities afforded by cohesion policy is their relationship to the NUTS 2 administrative regions, which are the basic regions eligible for structural funds assistance. In the best situation are the Polish regions, each of which qualifies as a NUTS 2 region. Thus, there is an exact one-to-one correspondence between the boundaries of self-governing regions and the boundaries of the NUTS 2 regions in Poland. This differs from the situation in the Czech Republic, where the 14 *kraje* are combined into eight NUTS 2 (or 'cohesion') regions. Thus, in some NUTS 2 units two or more *kraje* are forced to cooperate in planning and administering the structural funds, placing them at a potential disadvantage in the competition for EU assistance with more homogeneous cohesion regions that consist of only one *kraj*. Each of the eight cohesion regions has their own Regional Council, consisting of representatives from each of the regional assemblies within a particular NUTS 2 region. The Regional Councils serve as regional Managing Authorities and are responsible for preparing the Regional Operational Programs (ROPs) necessary for receiving structural funds assistance.

A somewhat similar situation exists in Hungary, where seven administrative regions, designated as NUTS 2 regions, were created in 1999 for the purposes of EU cohesion policy. Each of the NUTS 2 regions incorporates several of the self-governing counties. Each also has a state-funded RDC — composed of representatives of the national government, who are in a majority, county and local governments, and civil society groups — which is responsible for managing the ROPs for that region. Thus in Hungary, as in the Czech Republic, the disjuncture between self-governing territorial units and NUTS 2 regions raises questions about, and potentially undermines, the role of sub-national authorities in managing the structural funds. This is not the case in Lithuania, however, where because of its small size the entire country qualifies as a single NUTS 2 region, and self-governing territorial units above the local level do not exist.

Regardless of their territorial configuration and the constitutional position of sub-national authorities, cohesion policy in all of the new member states was implemented in a highly centralized fashion in the initial (2004–06) programming period after accession. Regional interventions funded by the structural funds were directly managed by central governments in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Lithuania. Sub-national authorities, by contrast, played only a secondary role.

In Poland, the government abandoned the pre-accession practice of funding regional development programs developed by the *województwa*. Instead, after discussions with the Commission, it chose to create one large Integrated Regional Operational Program (IROP) managed by the Ministry for Regional Development (MRD). The IROP implementation system also kept regional governments at bay, giving primary responsibility for program implementation to central government representatives in the regions (the *wojewoda*). As a result, although the IROP was implemented to a large extent in the regions, this mostly occurred through the *wojewoda*; the role of regional governments, despite their formal responsibility for regional socioeconomic development, was reduced to not much more than project selection (Gorzelak 2008).

Something similar occurred in the Czech Republic, where the government, also following the advice of the Commission, decided to merge the initially proposed eight ROPs into a single Joint Regional Operational Program (JROP). The central government's Ministry for Regional Development was the primary Managing Authority for the JROP, and the key position of Program Manager was held by a high-ranking MRD official. The Regional Councils for each of the eight cohesion regions sent one representative to the MRD's Managing and Coordination Committee, and they had the right to express their views and make recommendations on any issue connected with implementation of the JROP. Nevertheless, it was clear that primary authority lay with the MRD, with the Regional Councils playing only a subordinate role (Baun and Marek 2008).

In Hungary as well, the Commission encouraged the government to manage cohesion policy at central government level in 2004–06. Regional interventions were implemented through a single Regional Development Operational Program managed by the national government, and regional institutions (the RDCs) were given only a secondary role in structural funds implementation (Horváth 2008). Lithuania also adopted a centralized model for implementing cohesion policy in the first programming period after accession. The bulk of the structural funds were administered through one large national programme, with the Ministry of Finance serving as the Managing Authority. There was no delegation of power to sub-national authorities (county or local level); instead, the structural funds were administered through a system of 10 RDCs — one for each county, with representatives of the county administrations and local authorities — eight intermediate bodies (seven ministries and one government committee) and six government-run implementation agencies (Nakrošis 2008).

Several factors explain this general pattern of centralized implementation. One is the relatively small amount of EU funding provided to the new member states for the three-year period (€22 billion), at least in comparison to what they would receive in 2007–13 (€178 billion, more than 51 per cent of the EU27 total). In the initial period after accession, at least, there was not that much money to spread around. National governments were also anxious to fully utilize available funding in a relatively short amount of time. For 2004–06, the usual 'n+2' automatic de-commitment rule applied to the new member states, meaning they had only two years to utilize EU funding allocated for a given year or else lose it. With huge questions remaining about their institutional and administrative capacity, especially at the sub-national level, the new member states felt pressured to implement the structural funds in the most centralized and direct, and presumably most efficient, manner possible. As our examples have shown, this course of action was strongly supported by the Commission, which in the pre-2004 preparations for cohesion policy advised the candidate states to abandon decentralization and implement the structural funds in a centralized fashion.

As already mentioned, the limited administrative experience and capacity of regional institutions was a major factor supporting the use of a centralized implementation model. In most cases regional institutions had only recently been created, and they generally had limited financial resources for co-financing EU-funded projects. In Poland, for instance, a key consideration in the decision to utilize the IROP rather than separate ROPs for each region was the difficulty of transferring funds among operational programs in the event that a particular region or regions failed to implement their programs, a problem which was anticipated given doubts about regional capacities (Gorzelak and Kozak 2008). In the Czech Republic, the regions complained bitterly about the decision to implement cohesion policy through a centralized JROP, arguing that this would only deny them the opportunity to gain experience with administering the structural funds. Nevertheless, the central government based its decision largely on its doubts about the administrative capacities of the regions and their lack of financial resources to co-finance structural funds projects (Baun and Marek 2008).

In Hungary, the decision to implement cohesion policy in a centralized manner reflected continued uncertainty about the status of the new macro-regions and their relationship to the self-governing counties. The Socialist government that came into power in 2002 had announced a bold reform of public administration, proposing the creation of directly-elected regional governments with competencies in the area of regional development. The proposed reform would eliminate the self-governing status of the counties and transfer their powers to the regions. In the end the proposed reform did not take place, however, among other reasons because the Commission signalled its disapproval, not wanting to waste time dealing with unprepared regions in the implementation of cohesion policy (Horváth 2008). At the time of writing, the impasse over regional reform in Hungary remains. In Lithuania as well, the limited administrative capacities of sub-national authorities were a major reason for the adoption of a centralized implementation system for cohesion policy in 2004–06 (Nakrošis 2008).

## The 2007–13 Programming Period

The experience with cohesion policy implementation in 2004–06 appears to undercut the argument that EU membership, and cohesion policy specifically, is promoting multilevel governance in the new member states. In fact, rather ironically, EU accession seems to have had the opposite effect, strengthening central governments or 'core executives' in new member states at the expense of sub-national authorities and other political actors (i.e. parties and parliaments) (Grabbe 2006). The irony stems from the EU's rhetoric of partnership and subsidiarity, which is contradicted both by the domestic effects of accession and the Commission's own policy advice. In the area of cohesion policy, after initially encouraging the creation of self-governing regions as the institutional basis for cohesion policy, in the latter years of the accession process (after 2000), the Commission switched gears and began promoting more centralized systems of administration and implementation — at least for the initial period after enlargement — motivated by concerns about the administrative capacity of sub-national authorities and the goal of maximizing the efficient utilization of EU funds.[9]

However, after centralized implementation in 2004–06, in most of the new member states cohesion policy in 2007–13 is being implemented in a much more decentralized manner, with sub-national authorities in some cases playing a more direct and important role. In Poland, following the IROP in 2004–06, the decision was made to utilize 16 ROPs in the new programming period, one for each region, with each regional government acting as its own Managing Authority. The certifying function for the ROPs is also delegated to the w*ojewództwo* office by the main Certifying Institution for cohesion policy, the MRD. A regional Monitoring Committee — consisting of representatives of the regional government, municipalities, the central government (relevant ministries) and the socioeconomic partners — ensures proper implementation through regular analysis of implementation reports and other relevant information. The new implementation system also resulted in an adjustment of the system of public finances, giving regional authorities additional resources so they can play a genuine regional development role, rather than being dependent on central government subsidies. Altogether, the 16 ROPs account for 25 per cent of cohesion policy spending in Poland for the seven-year period, the remainder spent for Sectoral Operational Programs for which the MRD is the Managing Authority (Gorzelak and Kozak 2008).

Cohesion policy implementation has been regionalized in the Czech Republic as well. In preparing for 2007–13, the regions were able to convince the national government to abandon the integrated JROP approach, and to instead use separate ROPs for seven of the NUTS 2 regions, along with two thematic Operational Programs for the Prague region. The Regional Councils for the NUTS 2 regions are the Managing Authorities for their own ROPs (or sectoral programs, in the case of Prague), while various government ministries manage the other 15 Operational Programs contained in the Czech Republic's National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) for 2007–13. The eight ROPs will account for more than 18 per cent of cohesion policy spending in the Czech Republic in the current programming period (Baun and Marek 2008).

Hungary also prepared separate ROPs for each of its seven NUTS 2 regions, together accounting for more than 23 per cent of cohesion policy spending in Hungary for 2007–13. The non-elected RDCs have also been given a larger role in cohesion policy implementation and resource allocation in 2007–13. The RDCs remain dominated by central government representatives, however, and the overall Managing Authority for ROPs in Hungary remains with the central government (Horváth 2008).

Because of its small size, with the entire country representing a single NUTS 2 region, Lithuania does not utilize ROPs. Nevertheless, Lithuania is also using a more decentralized management system in 2007–13, utilizing the existing structure of 10 RDCs and local and county administrations. EU-financed projects in the new programming period are being selected and managed on a regionalized basis. However, the Managing Authority for cohesion policy is the Ministry of Finance, and the total volume of financial resources to be channeled through regional structures remains limited (only about 12 per cent of the total), in part because of continued doubts about the administrative capacity of these structures (Narkošis 2008).

An examination of these four cases, therefore, reveals a clear trend in the direction of more regionalized or decentralized implementation of cohesion policy in the new member states after 2006. There are several factors which account for this. One is the renewed emphasis on decentralization and subsidiarity in the 2006 revision of the Council Regulation governing cohesion policy, with the new Regulation stressing that national governments should make greater efforts to 'involve, where appropriate, each of the relevant partners, and particularly the regions,' in all stages of the implementation process.[10] Of course, partnership and the involvement of sub-national actors has been a consistent theme of cohesion policy since 1988, but as we have seen the Commission chose to deemphasize this aspect of cohesion policy in its advice to the new member states as they prepared for implementing the structural funds in the first programming period after accession. In fact, the Commission advised the candidate states to do the opposite, and adopt centralized implementation systems that largely bypassed sub-national authorities in their countries. What is different about 2007–13, therefore, is not so much the wording of the cohesion policy Regulation, but the absence of Commission intervention to promote more centralized implementation.

Another factor supporting the decentralization of cohesion policy implementation is the increased amount of funding available for new member states in the new programming period. Compared to 2004–06, when the eight CEECs were together provided about €7 billion per year in cohesion policy funding, in 2007–13 the EU10 (the 2004 entrants plus Romania and Bulgaria) have been allocated more than €25 billion per year. This represents roughly a doubling of the average annual allocation for Lithuania and Poland, a more than three-fold increase for Hungary, and a four-fold increase for the Czech Republic.[11] As a consequence, there is more money available for use by regional actors in the new programming period. National governments, in other words, can afford to be more generous.

Not only the increased amount of funding, but also the longer period of time which the new member states have to spend allocated funds is a factor promoting the decentralization of cohesion policy implementation. In contrast to 2004–06, for the first four years of the new programming period the new member states have been granted a relaxation of the normal time limit for utilizing EU funds allocated for a given year. In a concession aimed at alleviating the administrative pressures on the new member states, in December 2005 the European Council decided to modify the automatic de-commitment rule for the CEECs, giving them an additional year to use allocated EU funds. This step provides only a temporary respite, with the usual 'n+2' rule applying from (European Council 2005: 22). Nevertheless, it provides a bit more breathing space for national and sub-national authorities to utilize EU funds, and thus also favors the delegation of more management responsibilities to new and relatively untested sub-national authorities.

Also important is the increased experience of regional and sub-national authorities with managing EU funds. The lack of administrative capacity and experience at the sub-national level, as we have seen, was a major reason why the new member states favored, and the Commission encouraged, the adoption of centralized implementation models for 2004–06. Sub-national actors have gained considerable experience managing EU funds in the initial programming period after accession, however, thus becoming more reliable partners for national governments in the implementation of cohesion policy. Evidence of the relative competence of regional authorities in the Czech Republic is provided by the Commission's Katarína Mathernová, Deputy Director-General of DG Regio. Following approval of the Czech Republic's NSRF for 2007–13, Mathernová praised the quality of the Czech ROPs and regional-level administrative capacity, declaring that it was 'one of the reasons why I am happy that the Czech Republic […] has gotten to the point that a significant part of [cohesion policy] money is in the hands of the regions' (Respekt 2008). In Poland, by contrast, experts have fretted that the IROP approach adopted in 2004–06 denied regional governments needed experience with managing the structural funds, experience that they would have benefited from in the new programming period, in which the regions have more responsibility (Gorzelak and Kozak 2008). Also in Hungary and Lithuania, continued doubts about the administrative capacity of sub-national institutions have limited the extent to which cohesion policy implementation has been decentralized (Horváth 2008; Nakrošis 2008). On the whole, however, sub-national authorities have been able to make stronger arguments that they should play a greater role in managing the structural funds in 2007–13, on the basis of their experience with EU-funded programs in the previous period and their improved administrative capacity more generally.

## Conclusion

What can we conclude about the impact of cohesion policy on sub-national authorities in the new member states, and in our four cases more specifically? As discussed above, in the first programming period after accession cohesion policy was implemented in a highly centralized manner in the new member states; national governments were responsible for program planning and management, and sub-national authorities played only a very limited and subordinate role. In 2007–13, however, cohesion policy is being implemented in a more regionalized or decentralized fashion in the new member states that joined in 2004.[12] In each of the four countries examined in this article, sub-national authorities are playing a greater role in managing cohesion policy in the new programming period.

The extent of this role varies considerably among the four countries, however. It is greatest in Poland and the Czech Republic, where democratically-elected regional governments have gained an enhanced role in managing cohesion policy and greater autonomy in using EU funds to address regional priorities. In Poland, the 16 *województwa* have been given a role in managing the structural funds that is commensurate with their formal policy competencies in the field of regional development, as well as greater financial resources to enable them to play this role. Thus, according to some experts, the regional management of ROPs in 2007–13 represents a significant step in the process of state devolution in Poland (Gorzelak and Kozak 2008). In the Czech Republic as well, the utilization of regionally-managed ROPs has given the 14 *kraje* a greater role in implementing the structural funds, although this is limited by the absence of a one-to-one correspondence between self-governing and NUTS 2 cohesion regions as exists in Poland. In Hungary, by contrast, management of the ROPs has only been partially regionalized, and the key regional institutions are non-elected RDCs that are dominated by central government representatives and in which the directly-elected county governments have only a limited voice. Cohesion policy implementation has also been decentralized in Lithuania in 2007–13, although this has occurred largely through the government-controlled system of RDCs, in which elected local governments have only a limited input (Horváth 2008; Nakrošis 2008).

A key conclusion of this study, therefore, is that the constitutional position of sub-national authorities — particularly at the regional or meso level — is a major factor affecting not only the implementation of cohesion policy, but also the impact of cohesion policy on the power and role of sub-national authorities themselves. Self-governing regions in Poland and the Czech Republic, possessing formal policy competencies in the area of regional development, have argued successfully for a greater role in managing the structural funds, thereby exploiting the opportunities presented by cohesion policy for access to more influence and resources. The Polish regions are perhaps in a stronger position in this regard because of the one-to-one correspondence between the 16 *województwa* and NUTS 2 administrative regions, while the relationship between the Czech *kraje* and NUTS 2 regions is in some cases less direct.

In a much weaker position are the counties in Hungary. While county governments are directly elected, they have only limited financial resources and no formal competencies for regional development. Several county governments must also cooperate within each of the seven administrative macro- (NUTS 2) regions created for the purposes of cohesion policy. The main institutional actors at the regional level are non-elected RDCs, dominated by central government appointees and in which the counties have only a limited voice. The weak position of the counties and the absence of self-government at the macro-regional level, therefore, limits the ability of sub-national authorities to push for a greater role in cohesion policy implementation, and ensures that the decentralization of cohesion policy management will only take place in a state-controlled, top-down fashion. Nonetheless, supporters of regional reform have advocated the regionalization of cohesion policy management, seeing this as a potentially strong argument for regional self-government. A somewhat similar situation exists in Lithuania, where the absence of regional self-government has meant that the decentralization of cohesion policy implementation has not significantly strengthened elected sub-national authorities, which exist in any case only at the local level.

Cohesion policy, therefore, appears to have benefited self-governing regions in Poland and the Czech Republic, helping them gain access to greater resources and influence. In these countries, at least, but to some extent in Hungary and Lithuania as well, cohesion policy appears to have contributed to the growth of multilevel governance, at least when it comes to the implementation cohesion policy. It remains to be seen, however, whether the Polish and Czech regions are able to consolidate and maybe even expand their role in regional development policy. This will depend on their performance in managing cohesion policy in 2007–13, and on their ability to assert influence in planning for cohesion policy in the next programming period beginning in 2014. It also remains to be seen whether the regions will be able to extend the use of the partnership principle to other areas of policy and claim for themselves a greater role in government decisionmaking more generally. To the extent that they can, we will be able to talk about the growth of multilevel governance in the new member states more broadly, rather than just within the restricted area of EU cohesion policy.

# Notes

[1] The acronym derives from the French 'Nomenclature des unites territoriales statistiques', or Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units. The units range from NUTS 1, the largest (agglomerations of NUTS 2 regions) to NUTS 5, the smallest (towns and villages).

[2] For discussion of the partnership principle and its relation to vertical (Type 1) and horizontal (Type 2) multilevel governance, see Bache, Ian (2008) *Europeanization and Multilevel Governance: Cohesion Policy in the European Union and Britain*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield. pp. 23–8. On Types 1 and 2 multilevel governance, see Marks, Gary and Lisbet Hooghe (2004) 'Contrasting Visions of Multi-level Governance', in Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders (eds) *Multi-level Governance*, pp. 15–30. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[3] See, for instance, Marks, Gary (1992) 'Structural Policy in the European Community' in Alberta M. Sbragia (eds) *Euro-Politics: Institutions and Policymaking in the 'New' European Community*, pp. 191–224. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.; Marks, Gary (1993) 'Structural Policy and Multilevel Governance in the EC', in Alan W Carfuny and Glenda Rosenthal (eds) *The State of European Community*, *Vol 2: The Maastricht Debates and Beyond.*, pp. 391–411. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Jones, B. J. and Michael Keating (1995) *The European Union and the Regions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Marks, Gary et al. (1996) 'European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric vs. Multi-level Governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 34, 3: 341–78; Hooghe, Liesbet and Gary Marks (2001) *Multi-Level Governance and European Integration*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield; and Bachtler, John and Carlos Mendez (2007) 'Who Governs EU Cohesion Policy? Deconstructing the Reforms of the Structural Funds', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 45, 3: 535–564.

[4] Pollack Mark A. (1995) 'Regional Actors in an Intergovernmental Play: The Making and Implementation of EC Structural Policy', in Carolyn Rhodes and Sonia Mazey (eds) *The State of the European Union, Vol. 3: Building a European Polity?* pp. 361–390. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner; Bache, Ian (1998) *The Politics of European Union Regional Policy: Multi-LevelGovernance or Flexible Gatekeeping?* Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press; Peterson, John and Elizabeth Bomberg (1999) *Decision-Making in the European Union*. London: St. Martin's; Allen, David (2000) 'Cohesion and the Structural Funds: Transfers and Trade-Offs', in Helen Wallace and William Wallace (eds) *Policy-Making in the European Union,* pp. 243–266. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Allen, David (2008) 'Cohesion Policy Pre- and Post-Enlargement', in Michael Baun and Dan Marek (eds) *EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement*, Basingstoke: Palgrave; and Blom-Hansen, Jens (2005) 'Principals, Agents and the Implementation of EU Cohesion Policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 12, 4: 624–648.

[5] Jeffery, Charlie (1997) *The Regional Dimension of the European Union: Towards a Third Level in Europe?* London: Frank Cass; Benz, Arthur and Burkhard Eberlein (1999) 'The Europeanization of Regional Policies: Patterns of Multi-level Governance', *Journal of European Public Policy,* 6, 2: 329–348; Börzel, Tanja (1999) 'Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation and Europeanization in Germany and Spain', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37, 4: 573–596; and Börzel, Tanja (2001) 'Europeanization and Territorial Institutional Change: Toward Cooperative Regionalism?', in Maria Green Cowles et al. (eds) *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*, pp. 137–158 Cornell: Cornell University Press. On the study of cohesion policy and multilevel governance in the Europeanization literature more generally, see Bache, Ian (2007) 'Cohesion Policy' in Paolo Graziano and Martin Vink (eds) *Europeanization: New Research Agendas*, pp. 239–252. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

[6] A second, related, question concerns the ability of the Commission to retain and increase its control over cohesion policy, and to use the opportunities cohesion policy presents to expand its institutional power and resources in relation to national governments. However, this article focuses on the first question.

[7] Although see Scherpereel, John A. (2007) 'Sub-National Authorities in the EU's Post-Socialist States: Joining the Multi-Level Polity?' *European Integration*, 29, 1: 23–46; and Baun, Michael and Dan Marek (2008) *EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

[8] According to some experts, the failure of the pre-accession assistance programs to emulate cohesion policy governance norms also meant that these programs gave the candidate states little real preparation for administering the structural funds after EU membership. See, for instance, Bailey, David and Lisa DePropris (2004) 'A Bridge too Phare? EU Pre-Accession Aid and Capacity Building in the Candidate Countries', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 42, 1: 77–98.

[9] Brusis, Martin (2001) 'Between EU Eligibility Requirements, Competitive Politics and National Traditions: Recreating Regions in the Accession Countries of Central and Eastern Europe', Paper presented at the *Bi-Annual Conference of the European Union Studies Association*, Madison, WI, 30 May–2 June 2001; Hughes, Jim et al. (2004) *Europeanization and Regionalization in the EU's Enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe: The Myth of Conditionality*. Basingstoke: Palgrave; Baun, Michael – Dan Marek (2006) 'Regional Policy and Decentralization in the Czech Republic', *Regional and Federal Studies*, 16, 4: 409–28.

[10] 'Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006, laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999', *Official Journal of the European Union*, p. 39.

[11] Calculated from European Commission, Inforegio, 2006. *Comparative Factsheets for 2000–2006 and 2007–2013 Programming Periods*.Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/info_en.htm (Accessed 8 October 2008).

[12] This is not the case in Romania and Bulgaria, however, where the centralized implementation of cohesion policy resembles the pattern found in the eight CEECs in 2004–06. For the case of Romania, see Benedek, Jozsef and Reka Horváth (2008) 'Romania', in Michael Baun and Dan Marek (eds) *EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

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