

Regional Diplomacy: The European Union and its Outermost Regions

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Abstract

Instead of offering the end result of an already completed research, this presentation represents, instead, a road map of work already developed, as well as of work in progress, waiting completion.

Starting with the exploration of the concept of *Nissology*, coined by Australian Professor Grant McCall, in the mid 1990's, the presentation opens by tracing the emancipation of European islands, from the condition of objects obtained by their respective states for the service and gratification of their respective interests, to the condition of agents and autonomous subjects in their own right.

A second moment is dedicated to the exploration of the roles that the European Union has historically reserved to its islands and to the reaction to European integration adopted by of the islands of Europe enjoying a status of political autonomy, ie that constitute autonomous subjects in themselves and had, therefore, the possibility of choice. In this context, particular attention is drawn, on the one hand, to the first enlargement, and the option of the British and Danish islands to remain outside the Union, and, on the other hand, to the accession of Portugal and Spain and, in it, the option of the respective autonomous islands for full integration in view of the new European willingness to recognize their geographic and socio-economical specificities, requiring equality differentiated policies.

A third moment centers on the emergence of an European movement, particularly under the impulse of the then President of the Autonomous Government of the Azores, João Bosco Mota Amaral, bent on the recognition of an insular specificity and the reservation of a place for the islands at that the level of the European Union itself, first within the context of the Council of Europe, at the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities, and, afterwards, at the level of the European Union itself.

A fourth moment traces the consolidation of those efforts in the adoption of the well-known POSEI programs: DOSEIDOM, for the French Outermost Regions POSEICAN for the Spanish archipelago of the Canary Islands, and POSEIMA, for the Portuguese Autonomous Archipelagoes of Madeira and the Azores.

A fifth and final moment centers on the achievement on the part of autonomous regions of the right to accede to international relations, firstly indirectly, afterwards directly, to inter-regional cooperation and to European affairs. As a case study, particular attention is dedicated

to the diplomatic work developed by these insular regions themselves, involving each other, their respective national authorities and the European institutions, the Commission and the Parliament, culminating, first in the introduction in the Maastricht Treaty of a specific reference to the Outermost Regions of the EU, and secondly, in the full transposition of these provisions, from the annexes to the very body of the European Treaties, in Amsterdam, a reality that was duly safeguarded in the Lisbon Treaty.

A concluding section explores the meaning and relevance of the recognition of the Outermost Regions of the EU, underlining the importance of their effective cooperation, at all levels.

Bibliographical Note:

For the exploration of the themes presented, cf. the following texts and the bibliography identified there.

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