

European Integration and its local implementation

There is a growing necessity of mutual awareness between the European and the local (or regional) government levels, to the detriment of the national level; however in relatively small EU Member States this development goes slower. This is due to the fact that more than 80% of EU legislation are implemented on local (or regional) level. It is also evident out from the Council of Regions in the EU. The same alienation took and takes place when regions want to split off from their Member States (Czech and Slovak Republic, Scotland from UK, Catalonia from Spain, Flanders from Belgium). - When implementing EU policies, the local administration in the EU has an important role in securing economic welfare for the population, but not all instruments are known or used: In most of the agglomerations there is working now an officer for European affairs, the state aid "de minimis" is not very often used, public-private partnerships (which have to be dealt with cautiously!) are not often used although the European regional banks have reserved lots of money for this, and the local administrations know hardly to cooperate in European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) or together with privates in European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG). Europe is a real challenge for every local administration, where the useful can be connected to soft values like European Integration awareness, intellectual curiosity (how do they live, what problems, languages ...). This included in the Euro zone also the introduction of the common currency - and will have to be done also in EU Member States since 2004 who will introduce it yet.