

Editorial

Faire de l'Europe un ensemble fondé sur la paix, la compréhension mutuelle entre les peuples, un vivre ensemble exemplaire, une solidarité effective, une manière, à l'époque de la mondialisation, de partager les souverainetés nationales et donc une référence vivante pour les architectes d'une gouvernance mondiale.

Jacques Delors (2011)

Jacques Delors's words are more topical now than ever in Europe. Note that in this context, economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity between Member States have been among the founding principles of the European project since the Single Act.

Therefore, Title XVIII of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which deals with economic, social and territorial cohesion, has five articles (Art. 174 to 178) addressing this policy, aimed primarily at the harmonious development of the whole of the European Union.

As we already know, “regional policy aims to reduce the economic, social and territorial disparities between EU regions by supporting job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improved quality of life and sustainable development” (Summaries of EU Legislation, 2014).

In this context, Nuno Severiano Teixeira, in his paper *Política Regional* (2010), highlights the following: “[Economic, social and territorial cohesion] is a horizontal-type of policy, which allows territories facing more difficulties to overcome their impairments better. The European Union acts to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions or islands, including rural areas which do not enjoy the same economic, social and geographic conditions - so that they may compete on an equal economic footing”.

Furthermore, the regional policy of the European Union is its second largest budget item. For example, between 2014 and 2020, the European Union will invest 325 billion Euro in areas that promote economic growth, like combating climate change, energy dependence and social exclusion, and promoting and creating employment. According to the European Commission, the Regional Policy provides the necessary investment framework for ensuring that the goals of the Europe 2020

strategy are met, in view of achieving inclusive, sustainable and intelligent growth in the EU by 2020. In this context it is worth mentioning that the Regional Policy is conducted on the basis of three main funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF). This is ample reason for publishing an issue of the journal *Debater a Europa* about *The European Union's Regional Policies*.

This issue of *Debater a Europa* includes texts, thoughts and questions by thirteen national and foreign experts from several areas of knowledge (History, Law, Political Science, Geography, International Relations) addressing economic, social, territorial and cultural issues. Therefore the trans-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary, multi-continental, multi-national and multi-institutional trait that we have also wished for *Debater a Europa* has been granted.

Credit is due to the Authors, for their knowledge and invaluable and generous collaboration in this issue, which has ensured, I am certain, the crossing of outlooks, views and fruitful dialogue with the reader.

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