# REGIONS IN FRANCE AND EUROPE: SOME HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS ON AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF BELONGING

## **Thomas K. Schippers**

## ABSTRACT

This short paper presents some aspects of regionalisation in France in the light of different ideological contexts since the 1789 revolution and especially the permanent struggle between centralism and '*décentralisation*'. This historic perspective evokes the changing socio-political attitudes in France in regard to regions and their cultural diversity. In a second part, the author proposes some reflections about the conceptual use of the idea of region in Europe today in the light of its use during the French nation-building process. The paper concludes by suggesting that the region as an intermediary spatial category always appears to the anthropologist as a necessarily ambivalent category of belonging between wider inclusive and smaller included identities.

KEY WORDS: regions, France, Europe, historical considerations, centralism, "decentralization".

#### ANOTACIJA

Straipsnyje aptariami atskiri istoriniai Prancūzijos regioninės politikos raidos aspektai. Visa tai siekiama atskleisti atsižvelgiant į nuo pat 1789 m. revoliucijos laikų tebesitęsiančius įvairius ideologinių šio proceso sampratų kontekstus, ypač – nuolatinę centralizmo ir "*decentralizacijos*" pozicijų konfrontaciją. Ši istorinė retrospektyva leidžia atkurti ir bandyti suvokti sudėtingas ir nepakankamai stabilias to meto Prancūzijos sociopolitinio gyvenimo nuostatas, kurių pagrindu vienaip ar kitaip buvo formuojama ilgametė šios šalies istorinių, etninių bei kultūrinių regionų sampratos koncepcija. Antroje straipsnio dalyje autorius originaliai interpretuoja šiuolaikinės Europos regionų formavimosi sampratos metmenis Prancūzijos tautos vystymosi kontekste. Išvadose apibendrinami autoriaus teiginiai, kur terminas *regionas* apibūdinamas kaip tarpinė erdvės kategorija, antropologų neišvengiamai suvokiama dvilype savo esme ir skirtingai suvokiama iš platesnės ir joje esančios siauresnės apimties identiteto pozicijų. PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: regionai, Prancūzija, Europa, istorinės aplinkybės, centralizmas, "*decen*-

tralizacija".

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This short contribution will present some aspects of the history and present day uses of the concept of 'region' in France. The guiding idea here about region and regionality is that this French example may have some paradigmatic interest for anthropologists and ethnologists studying regional belongings and identities in the present-day processes of (socio-cultural) 'Europeanisation' of EU member states.

The Latin term *regio* originally designated an imaginary line drawn in the night sky by Roman *augures* (priests) in order to delimitate and group certain stars into named constellations. These *regiones* in the sky were thought to influence life on earth and allowed these priests to formulate their prophesies and forecast future events. The term *regio* was also used to designate the fourteen parts of the city of Rome and later of the different parts of the empire. This brief linguistic glimpse backwards allows to point at a first characteristic always associated with the idea of region: it is an *intermediary spatial category* which allows both the clustering and uniting of smaller special enti-

ties within a bigger whole. So once delimited and labelled, regions most often only exist as divides that both unite and differentiate.

In France it is generally thought that one of the starting points of its present day 22 regions was the French Revolution and the subsequent political, territorial and administrative re-organisation of the country. The former Kingdom of France which had been composed of a multitude of feudal and clerical entities grouped in '*provinces*', (arch)dioceses or even in '*nations*' (like Brittany or Burgundy), became firstly divided into more or less homogeneous '*départements*'<sup>1</sup>. This territorial reformatting, known as '*la départementalisation*', was ontologically as new as its enclosing entity named '*la République française*'. This political and administrative innovation became – along with the United States of America (founded between 1776-1787) and the lesser known Batavian Republic (1787/1795-1806) – the new institutional model of the so-called modern 'Nation-State'. One aspect of interest here is the fact that these modern nation-states established a direct, democratic relationship with each of their inhabitants (named '*Citoyens*'/Citizens) and in theory abolished all forms of intermediary categories of collective belonging like religious or 'ethnic' groups (called '*nations*' or 'peoples' during the former feudal period).

The process of *départementalisation* for the first time confronted people with territorialised forms of social belonging (instead of feudal and next-to-religious ones). A rich ensemble of historic source materials, archives and correspondence about the often not unproblematic implementation 'in the field' of the re-territorialisation and toponomic re-labelling as been studied by historians and also offers anthropologists and ethnologists insights into local perceptions of belonging and identity in various parts of the country<sup>2</sup>. Of course, one of the explicit dimensions of this *départementalisation* was the eradication of the immense diversity – and related toponymies – of the feudal, fiscal and religious territorial entities of the abolished kingdom in order to establish socio-political 'sameness' (*Égalité et Fraternité*) in all parts of the country.

During the first years after the 1789 *Révolution*, various forms of local and regional 'otherness' were not really perceived as problematic as long as they remained within the new political, legal and administrative framework. During this first period of the new *République* a Britton – speaking a Celtic language – was not bothered or blamed for being a Britton, but rather for being *only* a Britton (and not also a (French) *Citoyen*)<sup>3</sup>. For example it was decided in 1790 by the *Constituante* (the first assembly of the Revolutionaries) in Paris to translate all important laws and decrees into the main spoken languages of the country in order to assure an optimal diffusion and communication of the new regime among its inhabitants. Quite paradoxically, this translation and transcription process was not only an opportunity for sometimes important spelling reforms of the various languages concerned (Britton, Basque, Corsican, Alsatian German, etc.), but it also contributed to the regionalisation of what where formerly considered 'national' languages. This (historic) ambivalence<sup>4</sup> between (cultural) recognition and hierarchical (socio-political) submission in regard to regional specificities is quite interesting in comparison to the present-day forms of political and administrative 'management' of diversities and democratic principles in Europe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Originally 83, nowadays 95 in metropolitan France, and 6 overseas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See: DUFOUR, A. & SCHIPPERS, Th. K. Jeux de difference, une approche méthodologique à l'épreuve de deux terrains varois. *Le Monde alpin et rhodanien*, 1993, p. 169–187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> In retrospect one can observe here many similarities with for example the administrative and territorial re-organisation of the Soviet Union in the 1920, but also at present with the processes of integration in the European Union.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See: TABBONI, S. Il n'y a pas de difference sans inégalité. In: Wieworka M. & Ohana J. (eds.). La différence culturelle, une reformulation des débats. Paris, 2001, p. 82–84.

But in 1794 a radical change occurred when *la Convention* (first Executive Council, 1792-1795), confronted by a critical socio-political situation, decided that it would become a necessity *"to destroy the various languages and dialects and to universalise French as the only acceptable language of the* République". In the meantime various local revolts and counter-revolutionary movements had appeared of which the most well known was headed by priests and noblemen of the former province of Vendée and who were named, after the nickname of their leader, the *Chouans*. In this troubled post-revolutionary period of civil wars, local languages and dialects spoken in various parts of the country became assimilated – by the revolutionary elites in Paris – with the enemies of the new State either from within (like the Brittons) or from outside (like the Germanic dialect speaking Alsatians).

A consequence of this historic episode during which the new political and territorial organisation of the State was both imposed from Paris and contested in various parts of the country has been the long-lasting idea among the French political and intellectual elites that local and regional cultural differences are not only the evidence of (social-political) backwardness, but also inimical to the founding ideology of the new Republic (originally sloganned as: *'Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, ou la mort'* (Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood or death)<sup>5</sup>. From this moment until almost present-day France, using or advocating the use of regional (formerly 'national') languages became politically suspicious and socially devaluing, at least among the lay, republican elites. So since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century constant debates have opposed those (known as *Jacobins*) advocating a centralised homogeneity of the Republican institutions and the uniformity of its territorial entities and those (labelled as *Girondins*) who prefer a more de-centralised, federal type of state where local institutions have competency to elaborate specific regional policies<sup>6</sup>.

In this political context and even after the end of the First Republic, the First Empire, the *Res-tauration* of a monarchy, the Second Republic, the Second Empire and the Third Republic, the 19<sup>th</sup> century has been marked by a continuous process of making "peasants into Frenchmen"<sup>7</sup>. Modern nation building in France may be considered as both ideological and political globalisation and a form of modern ethno-genesis<sup>8</sup>. But, as in other European countries, this period of 'nationalisation of cultures' as Scandinavian ethnologists called it in the 1980s<sup>9</sup>, has also in France given rise to various local and regional elite movements collecting, 'inventing'<sup>10</sup> and so codifying regional, mainly rural, folk cultures, traditions and customs. These cultural, often quite romantic, forms of regional activism have been accepted by the central national authorities and administration as long as they did not crystallise into any political claims or, worse, demands for (more) autonomy.

A second important date in regard to the conceptualisation of regions in France is the year 1870 when the Prussians militarily defeated Napoleon the Third's Second Empire and annexed the French territories of Alsace and Lotharingen to the German Empire. Paradoxically, these geopolitical events, perceived as a *national* trauma, 'reminded' the Paris-based elites of the persistent

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> See: OZOUF, M. Liberté, égalité, fraternité. In: Nora P. (ed.). *Lieux de Mémoire*, Vol. 3: *Les France. De l'archive à l'emblème*, Paris, 1997, p. 4353–4389.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> This second conception is perpetuated in the European Union as the 'principle of subsidiarity'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Title of the well-known book by the American historian Eugen Weber. See: WEBER, E. Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1880–1914. Stanford University Press, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> See: SCHIPPERS, Th. K. Ethnogénèse. In: Bonte P. & Izard M. (eds.). *Dictionnaire de l'anthropologie et de l'ethnologie*, Paris, 2000, p. 787–789.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See: LÖFGREN, O. The Nationalisation of Culture. *Ethnologia Europaea*, 1989, Vol. 19, p. 5–23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> In the sense given to this term by E. Hobsbawn and T. Ranger in their often quoted book (see: HOBSBAWM E. & RANGER T. (eds.). *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, 1993.).

existence of *regional* entities other that the departments created *ex nihilo* after the 1789 revolution. Since part of the military disaster was attributed to linguistic incomprehension among soldiers from various parts of France, the Third Republic started to establish (in 1873) mandatory military service organised in so-called 'military regions'<sup>11</sup> in order to prepare *la Revanche*<sup>12</sup>. It seems far from a coincidence that the very term 'régionalisme' appeared in 1874 for the first time in French and that a Fédération régionaliste de France is created in 1900<sup>13</sup>. One of the characteristics of the Third Republic (1870-1940) that succeeded the dictatorial period of the Second Empire was to be a state dominated by provincial elites advocating an 'organic solidarity' between local levels and the Parisian centre and promoting regional specificities (culinary, economic, touristic and sometimes even linguistic) as the foundation stones of a (re-established) République. This was summarised as "les petites patries dans la Grande (Patrie)" (small fatherlands within the great one). Here political regionalism also became a movement to counter the rural exodus in a period of rapid modernisation of communications, transport and industrialisation that attracted more and more countrymen towards the growing urban centres. It is in this context that the negative image of the regions became counterbalanced by a more positive one of family origins, authenticity and even purity. For example local gastronomy, specific cheeses and wine territories received officially controlled and valorised brands and labels (AOC: appellation d'origine contrôlée).

So at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one can observe if not the coincidence, at least the coexistence of several forms of 'regional thinking' in France:

- The one of cultural and folklore-related activists who wish to counterbalance the ongoing national modernisation and globalisation by collecting, formatting and even inventing 'regional cultures'. An example here is the *Félibrige* movement headed by the Provençal poet and writer Frederic Mistral (1830-1914)<sup>14</sup>.
- The one of academics and scholars (geographers, linguists, etc.) doing research in an areal, spatial perspective and who produce thematic maps and atlases of the interior diversities of the country<sup>15</sup>. Here the well-known geographer Paul Vidal de La Blache (1845-1918) made the 'geographic region' into a key concept of his school of both physical and human geography; the 'regional monograph' becomes the standard format of academic geographic studies during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in France and is used in classrooms.
- The one, more diffuse and popular, that arises in the conscience of the thousands of rural emigrants that settle most often in specific urban neighbourhoods welcomed by parents and friends from the same region. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Paris<sup>16</sup> becomes an informal patchwork of regionally identified inhabitants, shops and restaurants, often settled in the vicinity of the railway stations that connect them with their regions of origin.
- The one of economic and political elites, helped sometimes by fiction writers and poets, who start to use regional references and emblems in order to defend local productions against globalisation and to promote their regions as commercial brands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> See: ROYNETTE, O. "Bon pour le service", l'expérience de la caserne en France à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Paris, 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Which will finally occur as World War I between 1914 and 1915.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> See: BROMBERGER, C. & MEYER, M. Cultures régionales en débat. *Ethnologie française*, 2003, Vol. 33, No. 3, p. 357.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Who will be awarded in 1904 the fourth Nobel Price in literature (shared with the Spaniard José de Echegaray)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> See: SCHIPPERS Th. K. La cartographie, serpent de mer de l'ethnologie européenne. *Ethnologie Française*, 2004, Vol. 34, No. 4, p. 627–638.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> And other metropolitan areas like Marseille or Lyon.

- The one, more paradoxical, learned in the classrooms of the mandatory, lay 'primary education for all' established by the Third Republic. Although this education was explicitly meant to teach 'the values of the Republic' as well as the French language<sup>17</sup> to all pupils, it was also a strong promoter of 'regional thinking', since another part of the programme<sup>18</sup> asked the teachers<sup>19</sup> to study the specificities of their '*petites patries*' (small homelands, i.e. regions). The pedagogic fictional story *Le tour de France par deux enfants* (1877)<sup>20</sup> narrates a tour by two children of all the French regions and presents not only historic, linguistic and cultural specificities, but also the newly emerging the industrial regions like for example *le Nord*, around the coal-mines and textile factories of the Northern metropolitan areas of Lille-Toucoing-Roubaix and Lens-Arras<sup>21</sup>.
- Finally, the already mentioned 'military regions' contribute, at least among the male population, to a consolidation of 'regional awareness' in the dramatic context of the frontlines during the four years of World War I. Here the heavy losses of regional regiments were bitterly experienced in all the parts of the country. Here the recovery of the Alsace and Lotharingen regions at the end of the war became also emblematic of regional diversity as some of the German administrative specificities are maintained here<sup>22</sup>.

Of course one can trace other examples or situations that have contributed to the rise of regional thinking in France. For example in the aftermath of World War I, 21 'economic regions' were created and managed by newly established Chambers of Commerce, shortly followed by 19 'tourist regions' outlined by the federation of *Syndicats d'Initiative* (tourist boards). Between 1939 and 1945, the collaborationist regime of Marshal Philippe Pétain<sup>23</sup> largely celebrated the regional folklore of the '*petites patries*' (small homelands), while the country was – at first partly – occupied by Nazi Germany. After the World War II, this dark episode, once again, made 'regional thinking' politically quite suspect in the minds of the post-war political and intellectual elites at least until the end of the 1960s.

From the 1970s on – in the so-called 'post May 1968' era – new forms of regional thinking appeared, especially among the younger generations who rejected the values of modern capitalist consumerism as well as the extreme political and administrative centralism established by President Charles de Gaulle in 1958. While this – often leftist – youth regionalism focussed mainly on the revitalisation of regional languages, folk traditions and rural life, in some regions like Corsica and the French part of Basque country, more violent actions – mainly night bombings of public buildings – were undertaken in a context of claims for regional autonomy and even independence. Although these were, initially, only small minorities, regionalist/terrorist activism gathered wider

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The use of regional languages and dialects was strictly forbidden inside the school compounds and generally severely punished.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Elaborated (until the present day) by the Ministry of National Education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century the educational system has also been regionally organised in *Académies*, which groups several *Départements* and form (actually 26) specific (educational) regions within which primary school teachers are recruited and teach.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> This originally pedagogic book written by Augustine Fouillée under the pseudonym of G. Bruno (in honour of Giordano Bruno), rapidly became very popular and had sold 6 million copies by 1900; it was used in schools up till the 1950s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> At present the European Union uses similar methods in to teach better European awareness among schoolchildren.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> The famous 'separation of State and Church' established (after long political battles) in 1905, was not implemented here and clergymen remained civil servants.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> During this period the Republic was replaced by the collaborative *État Français*, (French State), vassal of Hitler's Third Reich.

support and after the 1981 election of President Mitterand a vast programme of *décentralisation* is inaugurated with a progressive transfer of (some) decision-making and fiscal responsibilities from Paris toward the 22 regional councils of metropolitan France. Nowadays, 30 years later, the administrative regions have become an everyday reality, while political and cultural regionalism considerably varies from on region to another. Only in a few border regions (like Corsica or French Catalonia or French Basque country) the local languages are spoken in everyday life, while the cultural traditions of others have gained great popularity beyond the regional boundaries like the so-called Celtic festivals of Brittany. Nevertheless concrete cooperation of neighbouring regions belonging to different states – like the well-known InterReg programmes of the EU – still encounter often more bureaucratic obstacles in France than across the national borders.

To conclude this short contribution, what could anthropologists and ethnologists learn from this 'French case' in regard to the concepts of region and regionality in Europe? What could be the possible parallels between the history of the French 'nation-building' process since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and present-day 'Europe-building'? As Mirabeau (a French revolutionary, 1742-1791) put it at the end of the 18th century: Comme si ce n'était pas par l'assemblée nationale que les Français, jusqu'alors agrégation inconstituée de peuples désunis, sont véritablement devenus une nation ('As if it has not been because of the national assembly that the French, until then an unconstituted aggregation of disunited peoples, have really become a nation<sup>24</sup>'. Discourse on April 19, 1790 at the Assemblé). A very similar observation could be made about Europe since World War II. Also here we find the quarrels between those advocating the continuity of sovereign states (like the Jacobins) and those (like the *Girondins*) in favour of a more federal Europe of regions and peoples. The linguistic issue is often a topic of hot debates between pragmatic/economic arguments and respect for national and regional prides and diversities. The original EU ideology, based on economic convergence and more social equality, has since the 1990s been challenged by economic liberalism and increasing inequalities between countries, regions and individuals. As in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the French central elites despised the backwardness of the provinces, the present-day historical core countries of the EU are accused of arrogance and the exploitation of the newer member states. In Paris, and in some other capitals, the traditional elites are still very reluctant to recognise any 'Europe of regions' or 'Europe of peoples', when these lobbies start to challenge national sovereignty or borders in the political arenas of Bruxelles or Strasbourg. As a heritage of the French revolution, political elites are often quite hostile toward any spontaneous ethno-linguistic nationalism or regionalism. Europe and France are both socio-political and historic constructs without any 'natural' borders or limits. The Europeanisation of the members states of the Union seems to imply the similar passage of a national status into a regional one in quite the same ways as Burgundy or Brittany have become regional parts of the Republic.

As an anthropologist or an ethnologist, one encounters ideas of region, regionality or regionalism in the field either as an *emic* category used by the people studied or as a more *etic*, analytic concept uniting similarities within wider encompassing spatial entities. The French history of the perception of the region during the past two centuries as a 'folk category' may offer an interesting insight into how both elites and common people deal with its 'intermediary nature' in terms of belongings and identities. While many categories of belonging are generally quite exclusive, regional ones always appear as necessarily ambivalent between wider inclusive and smaller included identities. It might be the ambivalence of this fractal 'clustering' of regions that always makes them the topic of passionate debates between their defendants and their detractors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> He probably still refers to the ancient sense of 'nation' (Latin *nacio*: birth), which usually designated ethno-linguistic groups or 'peoples'.

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# REGIONAI PRANCŪZIJOJE IR EUROPOJE: KELETAS ISTORINIŲ PASTABŲ APIE *TARPINĖS ERDVĖS* IDENTITETĄ

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariami atskiri istoriniai Prancūzijos regioninės politikos raidos aspektai. Visa tai siekiama atskleisti atsižvelgiant į nuo pat 1789 m. revoliucijos laikų tebesitęsiančius įvairius ideologinių šio proceso sampratų kontekstus, ypač – nuolatinę centralizmo ir *"decentralizacijos"* pozicijų konfrontaciją. Ši istorinė retrospektyva leidžia atkurti ir bandyti suvokti sudėtingas ir nepakankamai stabilias to meto Prancūzijos sociopolitinio gyvenimo nuostatas, kurių pagrindu vienaip ar kitaip buvo formuojama ilgametė šios šalies istorinių, etninių bei kultūrinių regionų sampratos koncepcija. Antroje straipsnio dalyje autorius interpretuoja šiuolaikinės Europos regionų formavimosi sampratos metmenis Prancūzijos tautos vystymosi kontekste.

Išvadose apibendrinami autoriaus teiginiai, kur terminas *regionas* apibūdinamas kaip tarpinė erdvės kategorija, antropologų neišvengiamai suvokiama dvilype savo esme ir skirtingai suvokiama iš platesnės ir joje esančios siauresnės apimties identiteto pozicijų. Straipsnyje retoriškai klausiama: ko šių laikų antropologai ir etnologai gali pasimokyti iš gana sudėtingos Prancūzijos regionų formavimo (ir formavimosi) istorijos? Kokias paraleles galime išvysti lygindami ilgametį ir nevienalytį prancūzų tautos formavimosi procesą, prasidėjusį dar XVIII a. pabaigoje, su dar gana gležnomis šiuolaikinės vieningos Europos kūrimo idėjomis? Grįžtama ir į sudėtingus ir neapibrėžtus Europos regioninės sanklodos laikus pirmaisiais dešimtmečiais po Antrojo pasaulinio karo pabaigos, kai buvo aštriai diskutuojama atskirų tautiniu pagrindu sudarytų valstybių išsaugojimo ar federacinio pobūdžio šalių ir regionų sandraugų kūrimo strategijos klausimais. Lingvistiniai argumentai šiose diskusijose tada buvo labiau akcentuojami negu pragmatinio ir ekonominio pobūdžio vienų ar kitų tautų vystymosi perspektyvos. Reikalavimai gerbti tautinio identiteto įvairovės pripažinimo siekius ir savarankiškos regioninės nepriklausomybės veiksnius tuo metu buvo ypač aktyviai deklaruojami įvairiuose karo nualintuose XX a. vidurio Europos kraštuose.

Šių laikų Europos Sąjungos ideologinės nuostatos, pagrįstos ekonominės konvergencijos ir socialinio lygiateisiškumo idėjomis nuo pat 1990-ųjų metų, yra vis labiau veikiamos ekonominio liberalizmo apraiškų ir atskirų šalių, regionų bei įvairaus mastelio vietinių verslo organizacijų plėtros netolygumų realijų. XXI a. pradžioje ryškėja arogantiškos ekonomiškai labiau išsivysčiusių ES valstybių nuostatos ekonominiais svertais vis labiau spausti ir vis aktyviau eksploatuoti nepakankamai konkurencingas sandraugos šalių naujokių rinkas. Lygiai taip pat elgėsi ir XIX a. Prancūzijos ekonominis elitas atskirų mažiau išsivysčiusių šalies provincijų atžvilgiu. Ir šiuo metu, jau įžengus į XXI amžių, tiek Paryžiuje, tiek ir kitų "stipriųjų" ES valstybių sostinėse ryškėja nepasitenkinimas "regionų Europos" ar "tautų Europos" idėjomis. Šios regioninio suvereniteto nuostatos Strasbūro ir Briuselio politinėse arenose vis dažniau nukišamos užmarštin. Istorinės Prancūzų revoliucijos idėjų kontekste šiuolaikinis ES politinis elitas vis labiau neigiamai vertina tokias savo laiku natūraliai susiformavusias idėjas kaip etnolingvistinis nacionalizmas ar regionalizmas.