

THE EVOLUTION OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES: TURKEY CASE

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ABSTRACT: Regional imbalance is an important socioeconomic problem which can be seen in many countries. The development agency tool which is implemented by many developed or developing countries in order to eliminate the regional imbalances is an important actor in especially implementation of regional plans and policies. In this study, especially the development of Regional Development Agency, which became an important implementation of development strategies in regions especially since early 2000s is evaluated.

Keywords: Regional Development, Regional Development Agencies, Regional Development Agencies in Turkey

JEL Codes: F00, O10, O18.

Introduction

For either previous or existing economy theoreticians, the most important economical source of economic development is undoubtedly the industrialization. In many countries, industrialization shows non-homogenous distribution. Within this context; industrialization activities or some other socio-cultural and economic factors have led to some disequilibriums between regions inter- and intra-countries, and also led to discussions about how to eliminate those disequilibriums.

The regional development paradigm takes place in focus point of those discussions. The regional development is the unity of policies aiming to eliminate or at least to minimize the existing regional disequilibriums no matter why they exist. Clarifying the concepts of region and development before talking about those policies is very important for regional development.

The globalization and regionalization movements (development of regional unions) in recent years, transition to Post-Fordist production, post-modernism, increasing value of information, and changes in economic, social, technologic and politic areas made the traditional concept of region more arguable. According to traditional approach, the region is a “unit where the borders are determined, which is constituted through spatial unity of collaterally located local units, and which is under control of government and is closed to outside of country”. According to globalist approach, the region is a “unit which is determined through relationship network and is constituted by locals without any spatial continuity requirement, which is directly open to international relationship and where the borders are variable”. Under the lights of those explanations; the region can be described as a governing unit which is smaller than country and larger than city, where the managerial borders may national management unit’s borders but can go beyond them in terms of interaction, which can be managed with decentralization method, and which has democratic and participative government and budget (Armstrong and Taylor, 2000: 1-2; DPT, 2000: 7-8).

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And the term of “development” is referred to improvement and growth of economy of a country between certain periods, and also the economic environment where there are improvements in life standards of people, the quality of produced goods and the production systems. Within this context; the term “development” represents the co-existence of all qualitative and quantitative positive improvements occurring in a country. While situations such as distribution of income, demographic structure and social welfare are taken into account as qualitative, the size of gross national product is taken into account as quantitative (Sevinç, 2011: 40).

The differences in regional development levels are the important problem of Turkey. Especially the difference between regional development of Eastern and Western requires the policies to eliminate or minimize those differences. But despite of these requirements, the regional development policies in Turkey have changed in a period which is not a long time period. Especially because of its candidate status in EU, the regional development policies have become more organized through regional development agencies which are among obligations of EU.

Although Turkish economy has made great process in structural transformation and in integration into international markets, the differences between developmental statuses of regions still exist. The long-term economic performance of Turkey couldn't create the expected positive effect on elimination of inter-regional development differences. Besides income, there are also disequilibriums between regions in issues such as population structure, physical and social infrastructure, human resources, educational status, access to health services, environmental quality, employment, and the role of women. Although some policies have been established in order to eliminate the inter-regional differences and some instruments have been used in this purpose, the targeted goals couldn't be reached and the inter-regional differences have been kept existing (DPT, 2003: 126; Sevinç, 2011: 37).

In this study, the Turkey dimension of regional development agencies providing a new and modern approach to regional development problem was discussed. The terms such as region, development and regional development were described with this purpose. Also by giving information about regional development agencies, the improvements in regional developmental agencies around the world were investigated, and their position in Turkey was handled in focus point.

Regional Development Policies

In many countries, the centralist governments have led regional policies to be managed by one hand. So accepting the centralist structure in country as important has led to implementation of regional development policies as a part of general economy policies. But in gradually globalizing world, the regional development policies are not accepted as a part of general economy policies but subsidiaries of general economy policies or as independent from them. So the those independently region-based policies have started to take place in economic plans and programs of many countries by becoming more popular because either they are easier and more rational or they provide more successful results.

Basically the regional development policies are the policies which are established in order to improve economic activities among region and to support socio-economic development of region by providing employment growth, and which are in harmony with general economy policies (Boekema et al, 2000: 73).

Within this context, the regional development approach is based on minimizing the developmental differences and income differences between regions. In this way, the development efforts established in regional base and leading to national-level development help politicians providing more rational and accurate results (Sevinç, 2011: 40).

Regional Development Agencies in Turkey and in World

The production system and policies have been affected by globalization efforts, and they have accelerated the approaches accepting the region as focus point of economy and economic development (Akiş, 2011: 245). The implementation of regional development agencies aims many goals such as regional development, empowering the local market, strengthening the regional governance. Because of this characteristic of those agencies, EU necessitates this important socio-economic structure in all member and candidate countries.

The first developmental agencies were named “economic development agencies” and they were based on regionalism and financed by local or centralist authorities. They were aiming the internal economic development (Halkier, 2006: 3).

The implementation of regional development agencies became a necessity because of global world, important governance examples and regional policies. So, these agencies became more important in terms of functionality, and their most important aim is to provide socio-economic development in regional base (Işık et al., 2010: 120). In another description of regional development agencies, they were described as regional decision makers established in order to minimize economical differences between regions, to strengthen the competitive powers of regions, to coordinate the regional development plans and policies, and to provide the strategies for regional development efforts (Blackman and Ormston, 2005: 378).

The traditional top-down regional planning and development approach was ended by regional development agencies, a newer approach where the local shareholders have word in bottom-up and contemporary approach was adopted. Also the implementation of growth and development policies based on internal dynamics became easier through regional development agencies.

The regional development agencies were established in 1930's in order to improve the economic structures and social opportunities of regions by determining the managerial borders as independent from central government. The first example of these agencies was established in USA in year 1933 (Apan, 2004: 48).

Especially in EU countries and USA, the regional development agencies still exist in many developed countries in order to provide further development. Different countries have met with regional development agencies in different decades. The countries, which have established agencies in 1950s, are Austria, Belgium, France and Ireland; those in 1960s are Germany, England, Italy and Holland; those in 1980s are Greece, Spain, Finland and Denmark. Due to necessitation of EU; Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden and Ukraine have met with regional development agencies in 1990s (Koçberber, 2006: 38-39).

In Table no. 1, there are legal statuses and personnel situations of Regional Development Agencies in different countries are given;

As seen in table no.1, the regional development agencies have been established as limited company bonded by local authority in England, while they have been established as nonprofit organizations in USA, France, Poland and Bulgaria, as limited public companies in Germany, Italy, Ireland and Holland.

On the other hand, the agencies established in Middle America and old Eastern Bloc countries with supports of ILO, UNDP, UNOPS and Cooperazione Italiana have organized in order to improve participation, to support disadvantaged parts of societies, and to provide the sustainability in fiscal, social and institutional areas. The actions of agencies in those companies are for improving the strategic planning, employment, and cooperation capacities (Çakmak, 2006: 137).

Table no. 1

Legal Statuses and Personnel Situations of Regional Development Agencies in Different Countries

Country	Legal Status	Personnel (Person)		
		5-10	10-25	>25
England	Limited Company Bonded by Local Authorities		x	x
USA	Non-Profit Associations/Organization			
Belgium	Inter-Municipality Agency or Public Institutions having Unique Legal Entity		x	x
France	Non-Profit Associations/Organization or Mixed Economy Company		x	x
Germany	Limited Company of Public Institution	x	x	x
Spain	Special Government Institution	x		x
Italy	Limited Public Company			
Ireland	Limited Public Company			x
Holland	Limited Public Company			x
Greece	Limited Public Company or Municipality Company	x	x	
Poland	Incorporated Company or Non-Profit Association			x
Bulgaria	Non-Profit Associations/Organization	x		

Source: Çakmak, 2006: 136.

In Turkey, many policies and different instruments were used in order to eliminate the regional difference, to accelerate the regional development, and to provide the balance in regions' structures. The basic tool in elimination of regional imbalances and in providing the economic development is regional development plans. Some of the tools used for this purpose are investment subsidies, priority regions for development, institutional social responsibility, organized industry zones and rural development projects (Tutar and Demiral, 2007: 71).

Through the period of membership in European Union, Turkey quitted implementing traditional regional development programs based on subsidiary. This approach is adapted by EU to all member and candidate countries in order to bring the private sector and regional competition into the forefront (Hasanoğlu and Aliyev, 2006: 81).

Turkey met with regional development agencies in 1999 for first time. The European Union Commission has prepared an Accession Partnership Document where the establishment of regional development agencies is taken into account as regulations to be adopted in mid-term, then the legal process was started in order to accomplish the goal (Hasanoğlu and Aliyev, 2006: 81).

The first step into establishment of RDAs taken into account in Accession Partnership Document which was accepted at April 4th, 2003 as one of 22 short-term goals was taken in 2002, and Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) was performed in accordance with European Union standards. 3 levels of statistical region units were determined as a result of this classification. This effort was made for transforming the data of Turkey into standards used in EU (Eren and Cidecigiller, 2011: 391)



Figure no. 1. - City basis distribution of Regional Development Agencies in Turkey

Table no. 2.

The Regional Development Agencies According To Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

NUTS 2 REGIONS	DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES	NUTS 2 REGIONS	DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES
TR1: İstanbul		TR7: Middle Anatolia	
TR10: İstanbul	İSTKA	TR71: Aksaray, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, Niğde, Nevşehir	Ahika
TR2: Western Marmara		TR72: Kayseri, Sivas, Yozgat	Oran
TR21: Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ	TRAKYAKA	TR8: Western Black Sea	
TR22: Balıkesir, Çanakkale	GMKA	TR81: Bartın, Karabük, Zonguldak	Bakka
TR3: Aegean		TR82: Çankırı, Kastamonu, Sinop	Kuzka
TR31: İzmir	İZKA	TR83: Amasya, Çorum, Samsun, Tokat	Oka
TR32: Aydın, Denizli, Muğla	GEKA	TR9: Eastern Black Sea	
TR33: Afyonkarahisar, Kütahya, Manisa, Uşak	ZAFERKA	TR90: Artvin, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Ordu, Rize, Trabzon	Doka
TR4: Eastern Marmara		TRA: North-eastern Anatolia	
TR41: Bilecik, Bursa, Eskişehir	BEBKA	TRA1: Bayburt, Erzincan, Erzurum	Kudaka
TR42: Bolu, Düzce, Kocaeli, Sakarya, Yalova	MARKA	TRA2: Ağrı, Ardahan, Iğdır, Kars	Serka
TR5: Western Anatolia		TRB: Middle-eastern Anatolia	
TR51: Ankara	ANKARAKA	TRB1: Bingöl, Elazığ, Malatya, Tunceli	Fka
TR52: Karaman, Konya	MEVKA	TRB2: Bitlis, Hakkâri, Muş, Van	Daka
TR6: Mediterranean		TRC: South-eastern Anatolia	
TR61: Antalya, Burdur, Isparta	BAKA	TRC1: Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Kilis	İka
TR62: Adana, Mersin	ÇKA	TRC2: Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa	Karacadağka
TR63: Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Osmaniye	DOĞAKA	TRC3: Batman, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt	Dika

Source: www.kalkınma.gov.tr

Although the first efforts about Regional Development Agencies being very new in Turkey are made in 1990s, the agencies entered into our legal system with The Law about Establishment, Coordination and Tasks of Development Agencies with Nr5449 (01/25/2006).

The Regional Development Agencies which were established with basic aim of developing the region, where they were established, and eliminating the development difference with other regions are established with those aims in accordance with the Law about Establishment, Coordination and Tasks of Development Agencies with Nr5449;

- To improve the cooperation between public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations,
- To provide the efficient usage of resources in appropriate location,
- To accelerate the regional development in harmony with national development plans and programs by activating the local potential,
- To ensure the sustainability, and
- To minimize the inter- and intra-regional development differences.

The first development agencies established in Turkey were Çukurova Development Agency and İzmir Development Agency which were established with Cabinet Decision with Nr 2006/10550 (Eren and Cidecigiller, 2011: 397).

After completing the infrastructural regulations required for institutional structure, Çukurova Development Agency went into action at 01.06.2007 and İzmir Development Agency went into action at 01.13.2007. But they had to stop their activity because there was a case in Constitutional Court about the Law about Establishment, Coordination and Tasks of Development Agencies with Nr5449. After the court's decision to the benefit of agencies, İzmir and Çukurova Development Agencies continued their actions, and it was started to establish new development agencies (Eren and Cidecigiller, 2011: 399).

The legal status of RDAs in Turkey was clarified with establishment law with Nr 5449. In 3rd article of the law, there is a provision stating that agencies have legal entity and are subject to private law provisions in all of their action which are not regulated in this law. So, it was clearly stated that agencies have legal entity, but it wasn't stated whether their legal entity is based on public or private law (Eren and Cidecigiller, 2011: 402).

The development agencies in Turkey consists of 4 basic organs; Development Council, Board of Management, Office of General Secretary, and Investment Support Offices.

According to 8th article of Law Nr 5499; in harmony with the aim of regional development, the Development Council is established in order to improve the cooperation between public institutions and organization, private sector, non-governmental organizations, universities and local authorities, and to direct the agency.

In 9th article of Law Nr 5499, the responsibilities of development council is stated as follows:

- To elect the representatives of private sector and/or non-governmental organizations to have a seat in board of management in regions consisting of only 1 city, and their substitutes with number of 2 folds of the number of full members.
- To discuss, evaluate the annual activity report and internal audience reports of agency, and to propose the offers to board.
- To provide advices to board of management about the region's problems and solution proposals, representation, potential and priorities of region.
- To report the meeting decisions to Secretariat of the State Planning Organization, and to publish the final declaration about the meeting.

According to 10th article of the Law Nr 5499; in regions consisting of only 1 city, the Board of Management consist of governor, metropolitan municipality mayor, the president of provincial

assembly, the president of the chamber of industry, the president of the chamber of commerce, and 3 representative chosen by development council from private sector and/or non-governmental organizations. In regions consisting of cities more than one, this council consists of governors, metropolitan mayors (the mayors of central district when there is no metropolitan), presidents of provincial assemblies, the presidents of chambers of commerce and industry (1 person from each of cities). But if there are separate commerce and industry chambers in cities in regions consisting of multi cities, the representative is chosen by board of management of Turkish Union of Chambers and Exchange Commodities.

In 11th article of the Law Nr 5449; the duties and authorities of board of management is stated as follows;

- To approve the annual activity plan, and to submit it for the approval of Secretariat of the State Planning Organization,
- To confirm the agency budget and to send it to Secretariat of the State Planning Organization, to revise the budget in year according to requirements,
- To confirm the annual financial report and actual budget results,
- To make decisions about purchasing and leasing the estate and assets, and the service purchases,
- To send the semiannual report and annual activity report to Secretariat of the State Planning Organization,
- To confirm the proposals offered by General Secretariat about supporting the programs, projects and activities, and the supports for individuals and companies,
- To accept banquets and grants in the name of agency,
- To make decisions about charging and discharging personnel,
- To confirm the working units determined by general secretary and the work division between these units,
- To elect the general secretary and to submit for the approval of Secretariat of the State Planning Organization.

General secretariat is the executive organ of agency. The highest level chief in general secretariat and investment support offices is general secretary. General Secretary is directly accountable to board of management.

As stated in 14th article of the Law Nr 5449, the duties and authorities of general secretary are as follows:

- To implement the decisions of board of management, to prepare the annual work program and budget and to submit the for approval of board of management,
- To collect the agency income, to perform expenditures in harmony with budget and board decisions,
- To make decisions about renting, selling and buying the services and movable estates, except vehicles.
- To contribute on project creation and implementation capacities of individuals, companies and organizations in region,
- To offer proposals to board of management for providing financial support by evaluating the projects and offers of public sector, non-governmental organizations and local authorities,
- To observe, evaluate, audit and report the supported projects and activities,
- To establish cooperation with domestic and foreign agencies and institutions for regional development, and to develop joint projects,
- To provide technical support for planning efforts of local authorities,
- In the name of general secretariat of agency, to participate in national and international meetings and to establish international contacts.

In 15th article of the Law Nr 5449; it was stated that Investment Support Offices consists of max 5 specialists (1 coordinator) in region cities with decision of board of management. If the total number of specialists working in investment support offices is not enough to satisfy the needs of region and city, the number of personnel can be increased with the decision of board of management and the confirm of Secretariat of the State Planning Organization.

In 16th article of the Law Nr 5449, the duties and authorities of investment support offices are stated as follows:

- In the name of board of management, too follow and to coordinate the confirmation and certification processes of investors in public sector within the borders of duties and authorities of public sector institutions and organizations, and other governmental duties and transactions within the time limit stated in related regulation,

- To observe the investments, to inform and guide the investor about the application conditions and required documents,

- To conduct preliminary examination about the applications, to inform the governorate and general secretariat about the conducted duties and transactions.

Also the main incomes and expenses of development agencies are stated in 19th article of the Law Nr 5449 as follows;

Incomes:

- The share which is determined by Higher Planning Council for each od agencies according to population, development level and performance criteria from the transfer subventions to be allocated with rate of 0.5% from general budget tax collection in previous year after subtracting the shares to be allocated to tax returns, local authorities and funds,

- The resources to be received from EU and other international funds,

- Activity revenues,

- The 1% share from previous year's actual budget incomes of industry and commerce chambers in region,

- The grants and banquets from national and international institutions and organizations,

- Incomes from previous year.

Expenditures:

- Plan, program and project expenditures,

- Project and activity supporting expenditures,

- Research and Development expenditures,

- Advertising and training expenditures,

- Expenditures of movable and immovable goods and services,

- Management and personnel expenditures,

- Other operation expenditures.

The Factors Affecting the Success of Regional Development Agencies in Turkey

According to European Association of Development Agencies (EURADA); Regional Development Agencies re organizational structures determining the general and sectorial problems, using the methods and opportunities for solving those problems, and promoting different projects (EURADA, 1999: 16). This description shows that RDAs are under effects of some parameters, although they have really dynamic structures. Although those parameters vary depending on characteristics of countries and regions, according to European Association of Development Agencies, some of elements must be provided for sustainable success of RDAs in their regions. Those elements are stated as follows (EURADA, 1999: 17).

- Enough population,

- Entrepreneur and/or enterprise potential,

- Qualified labor force,

- Consensus on local/regional development strategy,
- Structures of sectors in field to be developed.

Besides factors mentioned above, some other factors determining the success of RDAs can be stated. One of them is financial issues. The existence of resources determines the efficiency of RDAs in planning, managing and implementation stages. As another factor, legality and authority come to the forefront. This factor is related with RDAs legal representativeness of their regions and their capability to obtain support of business world. In order RDAs to be successful, they need to be supported bottom-up in local base and top-down by central governments. Also the duties RDAs undertake affect the efficiency of RDAs. Agencies should conduct studies about sectors constituting basement of regional economy. Regional consistency, adopting the common aims of region by RDAs, and obtaining the support of community are very necessary (Hasanoğlu and Aliyev, 2006: 95).

In Turkey, the intersection set of cities economic and demographic characteristic was used while determining the RDAs' region borders and cities in region. To a certain extent, the factors mentioned above were considered (www.abgs.gov.tr). For example; the agencies not having appropriate amount of financial resource during establishment period really need absolute support of central government. It is tried to solve this problem in Turkey by allocating the 0.5% of general budget revenues and 1% of incomes of provincial administrations, municipalities, and chambers of commerce and industry (Eryılmaz and Tuncer, 2013: 181).

The most important factor affecting the efficiencies of RDAs in Turkey is to adopt the decentralization tradition. RDAs now require more comprehensive and more unique (in local level) actions rather than centralist governing, development of physical environment and allocation of public investments. New local development approach gives a chance to skills of legal authorities. The establishment and implementation of development strategies in harmony with local conditions of local authorities encourage the cooperation between them and other shareholders (Çakmak, 2006: 197).

So, it is necessary to save them from hard and slow mechanism of central system and to establish a structure where private sector and non-governmental organizations can be more effective (Eren and Cidecigiller, 2011: 408). Also although there are control, observation and evaluation mechanisms, the authorities given to RDAs about decision making process in development allow agencies to be more effective in resource allocation, establishing the partnerships, creating the projects and providing the coordination (Çakmak, 2006: 199).

The Possible Contributions of Regional Development Agencies on Turkish Economy

RDAs determine their aims and targets in harmony with socio-economic analyses conducted in their region. Also they set their strategies in parallel with conditions of regions. That's why; unique projects and implementations have been developed in harmony with dynamics and potential of the region. Agencies annually report their annual activities in their annual reports, they also share those reports with public (Taşlıyan and Korkmaz, 2012, s.371).

The contributions of agencies on Turkish economy are provided through direct actions, technical support, investment support, and directed support programs (www.kalkinma.gov.tr/bolgesel.Portal).

The main aim of direct operational support is to provide some convenience about emergency actions in making profit from development and region's competitive power, and in elimination of risks and threats. Also in order to accelerate the project support process, they provide some directly and unrequited supports to beneficiaries in their research, planning and feasibility studies. Local authorities, universities, other public organizations and institutions, professional organizations with public institution status, associations and cooperatives can apply for those supports.

The main aim of technical activities is to support the improvement and training the human resources of institutions and organizations in order to increase the technical capacities of institutions and organizations without providing any financial support.

About the investment support activities; the investment support offices (ISO) in cities of region aim to conduct researches about investment opportunities, and to prepare feasibility reports and data documents. With this purpose, they conduct some activities such as providing advisory, participation in domestic, foreign and international exposition, organizing the investment tours, and providing the information about investment opportunities in region.

In guided project support, the agencies aim to empower the competitive force of region, to accelerate the development of region, to improve business environment and the capacity of entrepreneurship and innovation. With this purpose, those agencies support the big budget investments such as business development centers, technoparks, technology development facilities, expositions open to access of all companies, trade centers, expo centers, and laboratories.

Besides those direct activities of development agencies, there are also some other contributions of agencies on Turkish economy as follows (www.dpt.gov.tr):

- By establishing an interaction between local actors and dynamics, regional development agencies activate the potential resources, and contribute on local/regional development efforts.
- Regional development agencies increase local capacity to create and implement plans, programs and projects.
- The activities conducted by regional development agencies will not be limited in local and regional development. Their final aim is to make regions, which have been subsidized by central government and had development difficulties, to be able to stand on their own feet.
- The regional development agencies may play role in practice the regional grade projects in the most appropriate size, at most appropriate location, with enough finance under the most appropriate conditions.
- While transferring the global-level development to local level on one hand, regional development agencies will also carry the local potential, superiorities and originalities and assets to global level on the other hand.
- While the support of regional development agencies to planning activities of local authorities contributes on plans' spatial, regional and sectorial entity, it will also close the technic gap in local level.
- The regional development agencies play important role in conveying the critical regional information to center and in providing the sustainability of data transfer. It will especially smooth monitoring the programs and project implementations being conducted.

Results

Nowadays when the global competitiveness is very important, the competitiveness of countries in international arena depends on especially their capacity of high-technology production and their development level. The countries' desire to have high development rate requires minimizing the development differences between regions. Within this context, various policy implementations have arisen in order to minimize or eliminate the regional development differences. One of the most important policy implementations is regional development agency implementation. Through regional development agencies, the countries aim to manage development more organizedly, and to conduct the development by taking the local dynamic and local potentials into account.

Within this context, the regional development agencies, which have been established in early 2000s as an extension of EU-based policies and an important policy tool for minimizing the inter-regional imbalances in Turkey, started to be established in all regions of Turkey. Observation and evaluation of plan and policy implementations, one of the main functions of development

agencies, are very important for central government in establishing the database infrastructure required in process of determining the future development policies.

The regional development agencies playing active role in every phase of planning and implementation stages became irrecoverable actors in elimination of inter-regional imbalances in Turkish economy. Regional development agencies have obtained more rational structure because the unique potentials of regions have been determined and policies appropriate to those characteristics have been implemented especially under favor of regional development agencies.

Despite of those very important advantages of them, the continuity of some bureaucratic activities in agencies led to restriction of agencies freedom; it shows that the agencies couldn't escape from some bureaucratic awkwardness.

As a result; the planning and managing activities of regional development agencies in Turkey should be empowered especially in agency basis because they should conduct their regional development efforts as a policy aiming the improve life standards of citizens by eliminating the inter-regional imbalances rather than conducting them as an obligation in EU harmonization process.

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