Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the processes surrounding regionalisation in Romania in the post-communist period. Romania is a national unitary state, created in the 19th century, when the Romanian elites from the historical regions of Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania deliberately transferred their prerogatives to the centre at the expense of the autonomy of other forms of territorial organisation: cities, towns, provinces, and regions. In the post-communist period, the importance of these historical regions diminished and Romania’s outcome of territorial reforms is rather an administrative and statistical regionalisation. For some observers, the emergence of regional authorities in Romania can be seen as a part of a broader process, involving the emergence of a form of multi-level European governance, which is driven by the need to adapt government structures to meet the EU’s membership criteria and, more specifically, to manage pre-accession and structural funds. A more nuanced view, however, is that the trajectory of reform has also been influenced by a variety of domestic actors and institutions, including state structures, partisan organisations and representatives of civil society, each with very different motives and interests. The paper aims to clarify the contribution of the EU and domestic interests in shaping the recent territorial reforms.