

One of the characteristics of international relations in the 21st century is the growing position of subnational entities. As a result of changes in the global economy and the intensive urbanisation processes, local actors – particularly metropolises – are becoming places of capital, knowledge, and highly qualified workforce concentration. Following the growing economic potential of cities and regions, their political ambitions are growing.

Cities and regions establish relationships on the international scene, pursuing their interests in areas such as, e.g., health care, ecology, science, and business. Local governments compete for the influx of investments and labour force both on a national scale and on the global stage. These interests are pursued both through competition and cooperation with foreign partners. We focus here on the institution of partner cities and regions, through which cross-border agreements between local governments open new areas of cooperation. Most EU cities (with over 50,000 citizens) have twinning agreements with other cities. A similar situation refers to regions. The most significant number of these relations exists within the EU, while partnerships with Chinese and American cities and regions are in second place *ex aequo* in terms of popularity.

The international cooperation of local or regional authorities (so called paradiplomacy) develops much faster than the academic analysis of this phenomenon. In our previous pioneer research, we managed to identify the scale of cooperation between European and Chinese local authorities. However, there is still a scientific gap regarding the transatlantic relations of cities and regions and their impact on EU-US relations. Our project aims to remove these "blank spots".

In our research, we will look for answers regarding the characteristics of cooperation of European cities and regions with their American counterparts. Responses will be compared with our earlier research on subnational relations with China, allowing us to identify the parallels and disparities in the subnational relations of Europe with two major foreign partners.

The project implementation will be divided into three phases. First, we will survey all cities in the European Union (with over 50,000 inhabitants) and regions (at the NUTS2 level). Additionally, we will search through the websites of the cities and regions to find information about collaboration with US partners. We will map the subnational relation with American partners based on the data obtained. In the second stage, we will conduct surveys in the US cities identified in phase one as cooperating with the European subnational units. Then we will perform case study analyses. In the third stage, qualitative research will be conducted using direct interviews with officials responsible for transatlantic relations in Washington and Brussels.

Our research is pioneering because, so far, no one has dealt with cooperation between European and American cities and regions. The material outcome of our project will be one book and three papers. We believe the analysis of the transatlantic relations at the subnational level will contribute to reflection and practical conclusions on the significance of the paradiplomatic activities of cities and regions in the 21st century.