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on Agencification
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Conceptualisation of EU Agencies

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What is an EU agency?

In political terms, an EU agency is an organisational solution that is semi-autonomous from the EU institutions and which has been established to perform specific tasks and functions.

In legal terms, an EU agency is a body under EU public law, established by secondary EU legislation and endowed with its own separate legal personality.

What is agencification?

Agencification refers to a process of the creation and empowerment of semi-autonomous bodies that conduct public functions. In the European Union administration, agencification results from the functional need to develop a regulatory capacity of the European institutions, particularly the European Commission, yet without directly increasing the regulatory power of the Commission.

Find more information about Conceptualisation of Agencies in [TARN Oslo workshop](#).

In their TARN working paper, *Agencification of the European Union Administration: Connecting the Dots*, Morten Egeberg and Jarle Trondal take stock of the existing literature on EU agencies and suggest a future research agenda in this area. They review studies (mostly from a political science and public administration perspective) on EU agencies' organization, tasks, proliferation and location in the political-administrative space. Whether the advent of EU agencies tends to underpin a basically intergovernmental, transnational or supranational order is a major topic with potentially huge consequences for the distribution of power across levels of government, for the degree of policy uniformity and pooling of administrative resources across countries, for the role of genuinely European perspectives in the policy process, and for accountability relations. They discuss three conceptual images which highlight overlapping, supplementary, co-existing and enduring governance dynamics within and among EU agencies. Moreover, these images are likely to co-exist, but the mix may change over time and across agencies.

Although the literature is divided on various topics, Morten Egeberg and Jarle Trondal observe the contours of a more direct multilevel administration, meaning that EU agencies not only constitute nodes within transnational agency networks, but in addition, in governance terms, relate more closely to the European Commission than to any other institution or actor.

Read the working paper by Morten Egenberg and Jarle Trondal [here](#).