

MEMO

To: ECTP-CEU

From: Jan Vogelij

RE: NTCCP

The working level meeting of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points of the Council of the EU was held under Maltese EU Presidency in St Julian, Malta 02/03/2017

Special attention was given to EU policy making for the European territories with geographical specificities. The Maltese EU Presidency aims at dynamizing the Europe post 2020 process with regard to spatial development.

The representative of the European Commission recommended reading and relating to the White paper about the future of the EU (The Juncker document)

1. ESPON director Raugze presented the working paper *Revealing territorial potentials and shaping new policies in specific types of territories in Europe (Islands, mountains, sparsely populated and coastal regions)* in order to yield comments for improvement. The study report will be the subject of the ESPON conference in May 2017.

Most important messages are that socio-economic conditions of those areas are very diverse, that geo-graphic specificities are extremely important, that GDP can be low as well as high; employment rates also vary according to the large variety of development in “areas with geographic specificities”.

Conclusions are:

- Emphasize opportunities to be considered in the context;
- The single level NUTS 3 is not relevant;
- Qualitative considerations and stakeholder dialogues are most important;
- No specific general policy is justified.

Some common trends are: Out migration of youngsters, attractiveness for tourist industries and increased housing prices; specialization on primary resources; rich bio-diversity and vulnerability for climate change; high costs of connections for transport and digital as well.

In general: functional features are relevant, typologies do not apply.

Comments:

DG Regio: The report provides probable useful lessons for future policies.

ECTP-CEU: First, this study complies with and confirms the experiences of spatial planners on the ground: although diversity is qualified as a main asset of European territories, policies indifferently refer to the generalized averages of categories. Place-based approaches of spatial planning capitalize on local endogenous characteristics, which' specificities are in top-down policies often negatively qualified as “handicaps”. Secondly, the economic indicator of GDP relates hardly to the local quality of life, which in several “handicapped areas” with low GDP and low accessibility can be qualified high. The OECD Human Development Indicator may be a better indicator than mere application of GDP. Do not under estimate the magnitude of the informal economy. Thirdly, the use of typologies is comfortable for academic analysis and top-down policy implementation, but does not or insufficiently reflect the reality on the ground.

Every ESPON study concludes in different typologies of about ten types, according to the specific perspective of the study. But sound spatial development considers all local/regional characteristics in the place specific complex combination. That allows for fostering and capitalizing on the diversity of specificities of European territories. Every place is specific.

If local populations would feel that their specific situation is recognized and respected, they would value European policies more positively.

Malta: Emphasizes importance of specific policy for islands, mountains, etc.

CoR: Organizes meetings for those areas.

France: Spatial development should be integrated development, taking account of all characteristics.

Austria: Indeed tailor made approaches instead of categorical, quality of life is most important, go deeper than NUTS 3.

Ireland: One size-fits-all does not work.

Italy, Portugal, Norway: Inner areas may have similar “handicaps”, why only islands, coastal and mountain areas?

Poland: This ESPON report should go to all DGs, place-based approaches using quality of life are essential for innovation too.

Germany: Territorial specificities are not a negative aspect. (Sylt is “badly connected” but very prosperous). So, really place-based planning should use quality of life indicators.

Finland: Wonderful report; better agree on strength of regions instead of handicaps.

2. Smart Villages Concept, the *Cork 2.0 Declaration A better Life in Rural Areas*.

DG Regio: Rural development is an important part of territorial development. DG Agro prepares the new agricultural policy; public consultation will start soon.

Robert Hodosi (DG Agri) presented the study: Rural areas are lagging behind because of accessibility and connectivity. The Cork declaration includes a vision for rural areas and the smart villages concept.

Comments, generalized: Concerns are, how to connect this to integrated development and is this a proposal for a new category of territories?

3. ESPON: *Territorial Reference Framework for Europe 2050*, Raugze.

Building on the Luxembourg decision envisioning a long-term development vision, Espon prepares studies under the heading “what kind of territorial Europe do we want?” That is in line with the CoR, wanting a vision for Europe, and could support discussions about the recent White Paper of the European Commission. The limited impact of the *Territorial Agenda 2020* is reason for including the territorial dimension in the long-term strategy for Europe 2050 and aiming at a comprehensive vision.

Therefore a broad participatory approach will be organized with key stakeholders for preparing discussions in NTCCP, starting now. The Territorial Futures study projects are meant to feed the discussions and aim to be part of the White Paper.

Espon asks for countries assuming ownership of this project.

Comments.

ECTP-CEU: This action reminds me to the *ESDP*, adopted in 1999 and still having a large influence; almost all ESDP objectives are generally accepted. A

comprehensive vision is indeed needed for creating clarity among the fragmented EU policies. A participatory approach with stakeholders, not only from official institutions, but also from the private parties will fuel discussions about Europe's future with relevant information. Relating this work to the White Paper will probably support the leadership of the Commission.

DG Regio: The Commission, being counterpart of ESPON since February, finds this initiative very valuable, because it will be broad and deep and more targeted. It is important to involve stakeholders from the start on. It helps preparing next programming period.

4. Cross-border Obstacles

Luxembourg reported progress about preparing a toolbox for addressing obstacles in cross-border cooperation, while respecting existing responsible authorities.

Dg Regio will publish a communication about this cross-border issue.

France supports the Luxembourg work and Germany asks who will be the addressees for the toolbox.

(I think it will be relevant for the ECTP-CEU planning practitioners)

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