



17th December 2008

TERRITORIAL AGENDA - FIRST ACTION PROGRAMME

ACTION 2.4

Prepare and promote contributions of the Ministers to the debate on the most relevant EU key dossiers from the point of view of sustainable spatial development and territorial cohesion

Document adopted

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPATIAL PLANNING AND THE
COHESION POLICY**

meeting in Marseille on 26th November 2008

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA, MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SPATIAL PLANNING COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO CONSIDER A NUMBER OF KEY DOSSIERS.

IN ORDER TO REACH OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS ON EACH OF THE DOSSIERS, THE FRENCH PRESIDENCY RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE METHODOLOGY FOR ADDRESSING THESE DOSSIERS, NOTABLY REGARDING THE COORDINATION TO BE SET UP WITH THE VARIOUS POLITICAL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED, AT EUROPEAN LEVEL AND WITHIN EACH MEMBER STATE.

P R É S I D E N C E F R A N Ç A I S E

U N I O N E U R O P É E N N E ★

METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ANALYSIS OF SECTOR-BASED POLICIES AND MAJOR STRATEGIES

I - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION IN THE KEY DOSSIERS

The Territorial Agenda adopted at the informal meeting between Ministers responsible for Urban Development and Spatial Planning held in Leipzig on 24/25 May 2007 set out the major goals and orientations defining a policy framework for cooperation between Member States and the Commission with a view to boosting territorial cohesion. At the informal meeting between Ministers held in the Azores on 23 and 24 November 2007, a first Action Programme was adopted for implementing this agenda.

The Ministers responsible for spatial planning and cohesion policy wished to pursue the approach begun in Leipzig and the Azores, aimed at practical application of the decisions taken, especially by expanding on the conditions for enacting action line 2 of the 1st Action Programme "influencing EU key dossiers and giving a territorial/urban dimension to sector-based policies".

Four of the nine key dossiers identified in the Territorial Agenda as especially significant for their contribution to territorial cohesion and for the links to be established with cohesion policy were the subject of careful examination during the French Presidency in the second half of 2008:

- Rural development;
- European sustainable development strategy, in its dimension applied to climate change and adapting territories;
- The Lisbon strategy;
- Transport policy post 2010 and revision of TEN-T Policy (action led by Germany)

Preparatory work on the three actions led by France has shown that the implementation of the Territorial Agenda's orientations in terms of involvement in the major strategies and sector-based policies requires five conditions to be met:

- 1. Taking into account the territorial impact of major strategies and sector-based policies (key dossiers) right from their inception.**

Experience shows that the European Union's sector-based policies often have effects which can run counter to the cohesion goal. Rather than attempting to compensate for the adverse effects of these policies, after the event, it appears far preferable to take into account likely territorial impacts from their inception and negotiation, on the basis of the new Community goal of territorial cohesion.

- 2. Improving complementarity and coordination between these major strategies and sector-based policies and cohesion policy.**

Cohesion policy is designed to form part of major Community policy objectives, through the Structural Funds, and to achieve improved synergy and complementarity between sector-based policies within the framework of territorial strategies. It is also necessary to make sure that there is proper complementarity between the chief goals of the major strategies and sector-based policies and the Structural Funds programming documents and that implementation is well coordinated.

- 3. Gaining more in-depth knowledge of the territorial effects of the major strategies and sector-based policies, by undertaking appropriate studies and research and by monitoring and assessing the decisions taken in territorial terms, with suitable indicators.**

Very often, assessment of the actual implementation of the principles and goals set out in points 1 and 2 above is hampered by a lack of precise knowledge on territorial issues, as well as the difficulty of characterising and delineating relevant territories and measuring the effects of the policies undertaken with suitable indicators: how to define priority rural territories; which territories are the most vulnerable to climate change; how can innovation culture be applied to the various territories? Methodologies for the ex-ante evaluation of the territorial impact of any new policy or of major revisions to existing policies should be developed on the basis of existing impact assessment studies.

- 4. Organizing coordination on territorial cohesion questions at European and national level.**

The coordination of Community policies and financial instruments requires discussions to be organized in the proper fora, for example between the relevant Ministers and with the Commission, in order to ensure that territorial cohesion is taken into account in the definition of Community policies and in Member States' implementation of them.

- 5. Supporting and prioritizing territorial approaches and projects among all the sector-based policies and major strategies with a major territorial impact.**

On the local level, it is preferable to ensure that these sector-related targets are integrated into cross-sector territorial strategies at the relevant territorial levels. Implementing such territorial approaches requires definition of appropriate governance structures, involving all the decision-makers and local players concerned on account of the geographic dimension or the themes involved, while taking into account existing structures and having due regard to the principle of subsidiarity.

Proposals adopted by Ministers

The Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Cohesion Policy consider that proper inclusion of territorial aspects in major strategies, cohesion policy and sector-based policies should be encouraged in order to achieve the objectives of territorial cohesion.

From an examination of the first three key dossiers (Rural development policy, Lisbon Strategy and Sustainable Development Strategy, in the sense of adaptation to climate change), the Ministers agree upon the following methodological approach to achieve the objectives of territorial cohesion:

- Promote consideration of the territorial impact of sector-based policies and major strategies at the design stage,
- Improve coordination between these policies and strategies and cohesion policy,
- Increase knowledge of the territorial effects of sector-based policies and major strategies,
- Improve coordination at European and national level on territorial cohesion issues
- Support and prioritize territorial approaches and projects on the proper scale which are consistent in terms of theme, geography or function.

More generally, they wish to see work on action 2.4 continued on this basis, applying it to the other key dossiers (major policies and strategies) identified by the Territorial Agenda, namely transport policy, maritime policy, research policy, neighbourhood policy and the 7th EU Environmental Action Programme.

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II - DEBATE ON HOW TO PROCEED

The work under way on the three key dossiers led by the French Presidency (rural development policy, Lisbon Strategy, Sustainable Development Strategy) - for which an interim report is annexed hereto - as well as by Germany (transport policy) should be continued in order that Spatial Planning Ministers can issue operational recommendations on these key dossiers of the Territorial Agenda.

It is proposed to entrust the lead partner States with responsibility for carrying on their work in order to report back at a forthcoming informal ministerial meeting.

Proposal adopted by Ministers

Ministers for Spatial Planning and Ministers for Cohesion Policy ask the two lead partner States (Germany and France) to continue running work, each for its own dossier, on the 4 key dossiers they have undertaken in order to present proposals for recommendations at a forthcoming informal meeting of Ministers for spatial planning.