



FIRST ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

(Agreed on the 23rd November 2007, at Ponta Delgada, Azores)

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POLITICAL COMMITMENT

We, the Ministers of the European Union responsible for spatial planning and development, gathered in the Session on Territorial Cohesion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Territorial Cohesion and Regional Policy, held in Ponta Delgada, Azores, on the 23rd and 24th November 2007, under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council, hereby agree on the First Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union.

With this agreement we commit ourselves, within our means and competences, to implement the aims and priorities set by the Territorial Agenda at European, national, regional and local levels, encouraging a structured but flexible process of cooperation between ourselves as well as with the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Investment Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the other stakeholders and the Neighbouring States. By doing this we also contribute to reinforce the complementarities between the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities and the Territorial Agenda of the European Union.

The First Action Programme is a further step in the process that, building on the ESDP and the CEMAT experience, was initiated in Rotterdam in 2004 and led to the adoption of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union in Leipzig in May 2007, under the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union. By agreeing on the First Action Programme we affirm our commitment to continuing this cooperation and to make it a structured process.

The First Action Programme is designed to be implemented in the period 2007-2011, both in the context of the current informal cooperation on territorial cohesion between the Member States and the European Union institutions and with respect for the framework established by the Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (Treaty of Lisbon), that recognizes territorial cohesion as the third dimension of Cohesion Policy.

The First Action Programme is lead by five guiding principles: (i) solidarity between regions and territories, (ii) multi-level governance, (iii) integration of policies, (iv) cooperation on territorial matters and (v) subsidiarity. These guiding principles are meant to inspire political action and to orientate the individual and shared implementation of the Territorial Agenda.



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Implementing the Territorial Agenda in our own areas of competence

In the First Action Programme we define actions aimed to promote the integration of the territorial priorities of the Territorial Agenda in national, regional and local spatial development policies, to foster better coordination between territorial and urban policies, to enhance European territorial diversity and to assess how the Territorial Agenda is being taken into consideration during the implementation of the National Strategic Reference Frameworks and the Operational Programmes, as well as in the National Reform Programmes for pursuing the Lisbon Strategy.

Influencing EU key dossiers

In the First Action Programme we commit ourselves to participate and contribute actively to the debate on key European development issues, ensuring that the territorial dimension is adequately taken into consideration when assessing current policies and designing the future policies of the European Union. To this end, we will address relevant EU key- dossiers that will arise until 2011, namely the challenge presented by climate change, the Lisbon Agenda, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the EU Rural Development Policy, the Transport Policy and the Cohesion Policy, bearing in mind the up-coming EU budget review. We will promote their dissemination and discussion in the appropriate *fora* with the relevant institutions and stakeholders at European and Member State level.

Giving a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies

In the First Action Programme we commit ourselves, within our means and competences, to cooperate with sectoral policy-makers and competent institutions, both at European and Member State level, to promote adequate consideration of the territorial and urban dimensions in the design and implementation of sectoral policies.

Strengthening multi-level territorial governance in the EU

In the First Action Programme we reaffirm our belief that multi-level governance is a fundamental tool for a balanced spatial development of the European Union and offer ourselves to convene with selected stakeholders and local and regional authorities the implementation of the Territorial Agenda priorities within their own action programmes and activities and will work, within our means and competences, for the development of transparent decision-making processes on territorially relevant policies involving public and private stakeholders and non-governmental organisations in our own countries.



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Implementing a communication and awareness-raising strategy on territorial cohesion

We will develop and implement a communication and awareness-raising strategy, both at European level and in our own countries, in order to bring forward the role of territorial cohesion for the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe. We wish to contribute in a relevant way to the necessary debate on the future of our continent and to promote the emergence of a shared vision of its territory.

Understanding the territorial state, perspectives, trends and impacts

In the First Action Programme we recognise the need for information and knowledge on the territorial state, perspectives, trends and impacts of territorial policies in the European Union and the Member States and the contribution of applied research and targeted studies in providing this basis for our action. We acknowledge the important contribution that the ESPON Programme can make to provide the information needed for this process and we state our wish to use its options to promote thematic targeted analysis on behalf of national policy making, thus supporting a stronger European dimension in national strategies, and to closely follow and consider the outcomes of the Working Group on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Matters of the Committee of the Coordination of Funds, set up by the European Commission.

Coordinating and monitoring the First Action Programme implementation

The First Action Programme is a further step in the process that, building on the ESDP and We commit ourselves, within our means and competences, to gathering and providing the resources and the organisation needed to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the First Action Programme, relying on the acting Presidencies to lead the effort and mobilise the Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Investment Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the other stakeholders and the Neighbouring States, to engage in our common goals of territorial cohesion, competitiveness and sustainability of the European continent.



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1. CONTEXT

The Territorial Agenda of the European Union

The Ministers of the European Union responsible for spatial planning and development, on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development and Territorial Cohesion, held under the German EU Presidency in Leipzig on 24 / 25 May 2007, agreed on the Territorial Agenda of the European Union (TA) and entrusted Portugal with the task of preparing the First Action Programme (AP1) for its implementation.

This agreement culminates a process of cooperation between the Ministers aimed at establishing a common policy framework for addressing territorial matters within the European Union. In June 2006, a dialogue with the major stakeholders was started, giving the TA a broad basis of consensus.

The TA takes on and relates in different ways to several other relevant EU policy documents.

The Leipzig Charter for Sustainable Development of the European Cities

The Leipzig Charter builds on a process of cooperation aimed at strengthening urban development in the European context. With the Leipzig Charter the Ministers agreed on common principles and strategies for an integrated approach to urban development policy and on the need for action in socially and economically deprived urban areas as well as in cities as a whole. The complementarities between the Leipzig Charter and of the Territorial Agenda are addressed in First Action Programme.

The Lisbon Strategy

The Lisbon Strategy aims at improving the competitiveness of the European economy in parallel with a clear commitment to the European social model and to the management of environmental pressures and conflicts. The Lisbon Strategy emphasises the objectives of growth and jobs, setting out a large number of measures and goals in a wide range of different areas.

While to date territorial cohesion is not explicitly considered within the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, its evaluation stresses the relevance of the territorial approach and the role of the regional and local administrative levels in achieving the Lisbon's objectives



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and goals. A multi-level and coordinated approach between the European, national and regional/local levels, in line with the subsidiarity principle, is seen as a key factor of success for territorial governance, an issue that is central and cross-cutting in the implementation of the Territorial Agenda.

The Gothenburg Strategy

The Gothenburg Strategy defines a number of key environmental objectives and target dates, both political and legislative. Major priorities include climate change, sustainable transport, public health and natural resources management. These areas are most relevant to the territorial challenges and priorities set in the Territorial Agenda.

The Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013

The main priorities of the Community Strategic Guidelines seek to closely align EU cohesion policies with the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy. They stress the relevance of territorial cohesion and territorial cooperation, concerning in particular accessibility, the contribution of urban areas to growth and employment, the need for economic diversification of rural areas and the role of interregional, trans-national and cross-border cooperation.

The Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development 2007-2013

The Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development consider that rural development policies must complement other policies, such as cohesion and employment policies, while also playing an important role in the sustainable development of rural areas and in the achievement of a more balanced territorial model within the European Union.

Cohesion policy and the cities

The Commission communication to the Council and the Parliament "*Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the region*" (COM (2006) 385, 13.07.06) stresses that cities concentrate both needs and opportunities. While attracting investments and jobs and supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy, cities face important problems in the context of the evolution of the global economy: unemployment, migration, social exclusion, increasing disparities within cities. New forms of territorial governance are required to foster a better integrated approach and a flexible cooperation between different territorial levels.



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Contributions from the Fourth report on economic and social cohesion

The Fourth report on economic and social cohesion (2007) stresses the positive contribution of the cohesion policy towards a steady convergence overall. Nevertheless, disparities among countries and regions still remain important as a result of two main factors: (i) the enlargement of the European Union and (ii) the general trend towards growth concentration on the most dynamics areas of the different Member States.

Concerning social cohesion, the Fourth Report points out that progress to date falls far short of the global objectives set in the Lisbon Strategy for employment rates and educational levels.

Concerning territorial cohesion, the Fourth Report emphasises a more balanced distribution of GDP, slightly less concentrated in the traditional core regions, and the emergence of new growth centres in other and more peripheral parts of the European Union territory. Imbalanced situations within the regions and trends towards suburbanisation and outward migration from rural areas remain important in large parts of the European Union territory. Better coordination of different policy agendas and tools and new forms of territorial governance are seen as essential to improving territorial cohesion as well as the construction of a sustainable model of development in light of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies.

The Treaty of Lisbon

A Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community was adopted in Lisbon on the 18th October and is to be signed on the 13th December 2007. When the Treaty will enter in force will depend on the conclusion of the ratification process by the Member States.

The new Treaty includes territorial cohesion as the third dimension of cohesion policy. Territorial cohesion will be a shared competence between the European Union and the Member States.



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2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TERRITORIAL AGENDA

Five guiding principles are adopted to inspire political action at all responsible levels and to orientate the individual and shared implementation of the Territorial Agenda, in order to contribute to a Europe which is culturally, socially, environmentally and economically sustainable:

1. Solidarity between regions and territories
2. Multi-level governance
3. Integration of policies
4. Cooperation on territorial matters
5. Subsidiarity.

Solidarity between regions and territories is in line with § 3 and § 8 of the Territorial Agenda. The adoption of this principle reinforces solidarity between States and regions and expresses the commitment to apply a cohesive and integrated approach adapted to territorial diversity when influencing or deciding on the priorities and funding of territorial and urban development policies at European Union, national, regional and local levels.

Multi-level governance is in line with § 5 and § 17 of the Territorial Agenda. The adoption of this principle expresses the commitment to structure proper channels of communication, participation and cooperation in order to make the territorial assessment, planning and management a fully democratic, transparent and efficient process.

Integration of policies is in line with § 10, § 11, § 23 and § 27 of the Territorial Agenda. The adoption of this principle expresses the acknowledgement of the specific responsibilities of sectoral policy-makers and the will to cooperate with and influence them in order to ensure a stronger territorial and urban focus when conceiving and delivering the thematic policies. The goal is to better fine-tune specific thematic actions, to facilitate their coordination and to reduce undesired externalities.

Cooperation on territorial matters is in line with § 35 of the Territorial Agenda. The adoption of this principle recognises the importance to develop and support interregional, transnational and cross-border cooperation initiatives, aimed to actively promote territorial integration. Territorial cooperation must consider the territorial and urban dimensions of economic and social development and include the EU neighbouring countries, namely in the context of EU Programmes for European Territorial Cooperation



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(Objective 3).

Subsidiarity is in line with § 30 and § 33 of the Territorial Agenda. The adoption of this principle states that the full and efficient achievement of the aims of the Territorial Agenda can best be pursued according to the institutional arrangements within each Member State, through a strong involvement of national, regional and local powers and stakeholders and a dialogue with the European Commission and the other European institutions.



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3. PURPOSE, TIME-FRAME AND SCOPE OF THE ACTION PROGRAMME

The main purpose of the First Action Programme (AP1) is to provide a framework to facilitate the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, giving the Ministers, the European institutions and all other concerned stakeholders a structured but flexible platform to promote the debate and influence decisions on European development issues, ensuring that the territorial dimension is adequately taken into consideration when assessing current policies and designing the future policies of the European Union and bearing in mind the up-coming EU budget review.

A further ambition of First Action Programme is to provide the Ministers with a structure for formulating common territorial initiatives and recommendations, building further on the ESDP and the CEMAT's Guiding Principles and focusing on the territorial priorities and challenges set by the Territorial Agenda, to be made operational with the aim of influence policymaking both at European Union and Member States levels.

First Action Programme relates the territorial priorities, challenges and actions stated in the Territorial Agenda to targeted actions whose implementation is linked to specific institutional actors and stakeholders in a mid-term timeframe (2007-2011).

The blue-print of First Action Programme takes in consideration the review of the Territorial Agenda in the first half of 2011 (TA, § 45).

It also takes in consideration the calendar for debate and decision on relevant EU key-dossiers, following the Ministers' decision to focus their joint activities "*on facilitating the EU-wide debate on EU key-dossiers from a territorial point of view*" (TA, § 41).

A group of EU key-dossiers receives particular attention in First Action Programme, based on their relevance in terms of territorial impact and calendar for discussion and decision:

- The debate on the Lisbon process post-2010;
- The 2010 midterm review of Cohesion Policy and the debate on the Cohesion Policy post-2013;
- The Transport Policy post-2010;
- The 2010 midterm review of the EU Rural Development Policy;
- The 2011 redevelopment of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS).

Other European Union dossiers also mentioned in the Territorial Agenda will be followed within the framework of First Action Programme, leading to specific actions, if necessary:



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- The “Blue Book” on An Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union;
- The 7th Environmental Action Programme of the European Union;
- The Research and Innovation Policy;
- The Neighbourhood Policy.

Other European Union dossiers not mentioned in the Territorial Agenda are also important to its implementation, namely strand 1 of the Common Agricultural Policy, the Cultural Policy and the Employment and Social Affairs Policy. These will be considered in First Action Programme, leading to specific actions, if necessary.

The territorial impacts of climate change justify its inclusion in First Action Programme to highlight the importance of adopting a territorially-based approach and of making use of sustainable spatial development policy tools to define and implement cost-effective mitigation and adaptation measures.

First Action Programme addresses the need to support the implementation of the Territorial Agenda with adequate, sound and timely information and knowledge on the territorial state, processes and trends regarding the use of territorial resources and territorial cohesion in the European Union.

First Action Programme is primarily focused on territorial issues. But it recognises that integrated urban development and territorial cohesion policies each make complementary contributions to implementing the aims of sustainable development. Integration of the spatial and urban development policies also arises from the need to create and implement new forms of urban-rural partnerships, along with new forms of multi-level territorial governance.

First Action Programme addresses the implementation of the Territorial Agenda in the areas of competence of the Ministers at European Union and Member States levels, namely to achieve the goal of integrating the political priorities of the Territorial Agenda as well as the territorial aspects of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 in national, regional and local development policies.

First Action Programme recognises the need both to ensure that the territorial and urban dimensions are adequately taken into consideration when the European institutions are assessing current policies and designing new ones and to promote better territorially-based sectoral policies.



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4. LINES OF ACTION AND ACTIONS

To fulfil the aforementioned purposes within a 2007-2011 timeframe, First Action Programme is structured along five lines of action (LA):

- LA1 To implement the Territorial Agenda in the areas of competence of the Ministers at European Union and Member States level;
- LA2 To influence EU key-dossiers and to give a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies;
- LA3 To strengthen multi-level territorial governance at European Union and Member States level;
- LA4 To compare and assess the territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the European Union and Member States from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development;
- LA5 To coordinate and monitor the First Action Programme implementation, assess and review the Territorial Agenda and the First Action Programme and to develop a communication and awareness-raising strategy on territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development.

LA1 (*to implement the Territorial Agenda in the areas of competence of the Ministers at European Union and Member States level*) directly addresses the territorial priorities, stated in Part III of the Territorial Agenda:

- (i) polycentric development and innovation through networking of city regions and cities;
- (ii) new forms of partnerships and territorial governance, namely between urban and rural areas;
- (iii) regional clusters of competition and innovation;
- (iv) trans-european networks strengthening and extension;
- (v) trans-european risk management including the impacts of climate change;
- (vi) strengthening of ecological structures and cultural resources as potential for development.

Besides directly involving the Ministers, this line of action is meant to inspire other concerned institutions and stakeholders to join in this effort.

LA2 (*to influence EU key-dossiers and to give a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies*), embodies the actions stated in Part IV of the Territorial Agenda. Furthermore,



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it addresses the concerns stated in § 3 and § 10 of the Territorial Agenda and the increasing territorial influence of Community policies by taking a strategic integrated spatial development approach. From the point of view of territorial cohesion and bearing in mind the up-coming EU budget review (2008-2009), the main EU key-dossiers are the Lisbon Agenda, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, the Common Agricultural Policy (Rural Development Policy and the CAP health-check of 2008), the Transport Policy, the important issue of climate change and, obviously, the Cohesion Policy.

LA3 (to strengthen multi-level territorial governance at European Union and Member States level), follows on the views stated in § 4 and § 5 of the Territorial Agenda and realizes the will to contribute to an intensive and flexible cooperative process, both horizontal and vertical, involving the public and private actors and stakeholders of territorial development, in the wake of the successful stakeholders dialogue initiated in 2006.

LA4 (to compare and assess the territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the European Union and Member States from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development), responds to the need for sound information, knowledge and evidence on territorial dynamics seen from an European perspective and promotes cooperation with relevant existing organisations and institutions in this field in order to make this information and knowledge widely available.

LA5 (to coordinate and monitor First Action Programme implementation, assess and review the Territorial Agenda and First Action Programme and to develop a communication and awareness-raising strategy on territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development) responds to the need to allocate resources and endorse responsibilities in order to assist the successive presidencies in the implementation of First Action Programme, allowing for the necessary adaptations without losing overall coherence. This line of action also directly addresses the need to stimulate public and private stakeholders of territorial development to engage in a broad debate over the territorial cohesion of the European Union, as stated in § 44 of the Territorial Agenda.

Within each line of action, the following actions are selected to implement the Territorial Agenda in the period 2007-2011:



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<p>LA 1 To implement the TA in the areas of competence of the Ministers at EU and MS level</p>	<p><u>Act 1.1</u> Prepare and promote policy options to foster coordination between spatial and urban development in the light of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, at EU and MS level</p> <p><u>Act 1.2</u> Report on the integration of the territorial priorities and challenges of the TA in spatial development policies, programmes and plans at MS and cross-border and transnational level</p> <p><u>Act 1.3</u> Assess how the territorial priorities and challenges of the TA are being taken in consideration in the implementation of the NSRF and the Operational Programmes</p>
<p>LA 2 To influence EU key-dossiers and to give a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies</p>	<p><u>Act 2.1</u> Cooperate with the EC to use the activities of the TCUM thematic working groups to analyse key-dossiers, policies and legislation at MS and EU level, in the light of the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter</p> <p><u>Act 2.2</u> Scope the territorial impacts of selected sectoral policies together with sectoral policy-makers and jointly analyse the introduction of territorial impact assessment in the policy process</p> <p><u>Act 2.3</u> Analyse key-dossiers, policies and legislation from the point of view of the regions with specific territorial constraints</p> <p><u>Act 2.4</u> 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</p>
<p>LA 3 To strengthen multi-level territorial governance at EU and MS level</p>	<p><u>Act 3.1</u> Design and implement a strategy to promote transparent decision-making processes in the administration and with public and private stakeholders as well as non-governmental organisations on territorial policies at EU and MS level</p> <p><u>Act 3.2</u> Convene with selected stakeholders on their commitment to implement TA territorial priorities in their own action programmes and initiatives</p>
<p>LA 4 To compare and assess the territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the EU and MS from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development</p>	<p><u>Act 4.1</u> Use, within its institutional framework and on the basis of its management arrangements, the ESPON 2013 Programme to develop a robust platform of knowledge on territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the EU and MS from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development</p> <p><u>Act 4.2</u> Use, within its institutional framework and on the basis of its management arrangements, the ESPON 2013 Programme and the other European international territorial and urban networks and <i>fora</i> including the OECD Territorial Development Policy Committee to support monitoring and assessment of territorial development and cohesion from 2008 onwards</p> <p><u>Act 4.3</u> Update the Territorial State and Perspectives of the EU (TSP) before the TA mid-term review in 2011</p>



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<p>LA 5 To coordinate and monitor AP1 implementation, assess and review the TA and AP1 and to develop a communication and awareness-raising strategy on territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development</p>	<p><u>Act 5.1</u> Coordinate, monitor and assess the implementation of AP1</p> <p><u>Act 5.2</u> Design and implement a communication and awareness-raising strategy on territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development</p> <p><u>Act 5.3</u> Evaluate and review the TA in 2011</p>
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The implementation of these actions should contribute namely to:

- Better coordination between the spatial policies of the Member States by introducing a European dimension and defining and implementing common priorities;
- Improved coherence between European Union policies and the spatial development policies within the Member States by influencing European Union policies from a territorial cohesion point of view;
- Better understanding of the spatial system and territorial trends at European Union level;
- Improved vertical and horizontal coordination and participation of private and public sectors towards a more responsive territorial governance.

The aforementioned actions are detailed in a separate Annex that is part of this Action Programme.



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5. IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for action implementation

Most actions in First Action Programme have both a political and a technical dimension. Some actions are predominantly political and some are predominantly technical.

The political dimension will be implemented:

- (a) by the presidency Minister;
- (b) jointly by the Ministers (§ 38 to 46 of the TA);
- (c) by the European institutions (§ 29 to 31);
- (d) in close cooperation between the European Commission and European Union Member States (§ 32 to 35);
- (e) by the Ministers acting within their own areas of competence (§ 36 and 37);
- (f) by the Ministers in dialogue with the stakeholders (§ 42 and 44).

The technical dimension will be provided by the network of territorial cohesion contact points (NTCP) and implemented:

- (a) by the acting presidency;
- (b) by the Member States together or in organised sub-groups by selected themes or areas of interest;
- (c) by the European Union institutions, on their own or in cooperation with the acting presidency and/or Member States;
- (d) by the other stakeholders, on their own or in cooperation with the acting presidency and/or Member States.

The technical dimension is necessary to:

- Provide direct support to specific political actions;
- Provide general technical support to the Ministers in the implementation of the Territorial Agenda;
- Coordinate and monitoring the implementation of First Action Programme.

Coordinating the political and technical dimensions is a prime responsibility of those in charge of implementing each specific action and a subsidiary responsibility of the presidency.

Responsibility for implementation of the actions is stated in the respective templates (see Annex).



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The action templates are tools to support the coordination, implementation and assessment of First Action Programme. Their content is to be seen as indicative and subject to regular updating and adjustment by each presidency in charge of implementing First Action Programme, in dialogue with those responsible for action implementation.

Besides the general templates that describe and support the implementation of the actions stated in Chapter 4, templates may also be prepared to describe and support specific sub-actions within actions.

Preparation of a new template shall always be preceded by an agreement between the presidency and those to be responsible for the implementation of that specific action or sub-action. Stimulating the Member States and the stakeholders to take responsibility for or participate in action implementation is a task for each presidency.

Coordinating the implementation of First Action Programme

The Ministers of the European Union responsible for spatial planning and development share the *political responsibility for the implementation of First Action Programme*. For this, they will act together, at the Informal Ministerial Meetings and by other means, and cooperate with the European Union institutions and the other stakeholders.

The *operational responsibility for coordinating the implementation of First Action Programme* belongs to each presidency. Besides the task of coordinating the implementation process as a whole, each acting presidency may also take responsibility for some of the programmed actions.

Coordinating the implementation of First Action Programme is a most relevant and necessary task that has a high priority when deciding on each presidency programme. It will require both political and technical action from the presidency.

Coordinating the implementation of First Action Programme will involve a close relationship between the presidency and:

- The Member States entrusted with the responsibility for carrying out specific actions, sub-actions or tasks within actions;
- The European Union institutions and the other stakeholders, either acting in the framework of formal agreements reached with the Ministers or acting on their own initiative within the reference frame of the Territorial Agenda.



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Governing the implementation of First Action Programme

Implementing First Action Programme must be a dynamic process. In order to adapt to a changing political, economic and social environment, First Action Programme must be flexible and able to accommodate new actions, set new goals for existing actions and establish new commitments along the process of its implementation.

This requires a governance system for the implementation of First Action Programme.

First Action Programme governance system is based on 3 levels:

- The presidency, acting with the support of the troika, has the executive role and the responsibility to coordinate, stimulate and manage the on-going implementation process. It also has the responsibility to prepare *progress reports on the implementation of First Action Programme* to be presented to the Informal Ministerial Meetings (see also monitoring and assessing);
- The Ministers acting together, at the Informal Ministerial Meetings, have the responsibility to evaluate progress and agree on new actions and/or changes in the lines of action;
- The European Union institutions and the stakeholders acting within the framework of the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, in political dialogue with the Ministers.

By entrusting each presidency with the role of coordinating, stimulating and managing the process and preparing progress reports on the implementation of First Action Programme, the Ministers ensure that the operational responsibility is clearly defined and the implementation effort is evenly distributed.

The support of the troika gives the presidency a broader basis to exercise its operational responsibilities and allows for a more consistent programming of First Action Programme implementation.

By giving *the* Ministers gathered at the Informal Ministerial Meeting the responsibility to evaluate progress and decide on relevant aspects of First Action Programme implementation and up-dating, the political joint control of the process is ensured, as it must.

By reserving to European Union institutions and the stakeholders a place in the governance system, the political dialogue at European Union level that has given the Territorial Agenda the wide base of support reached in Leipzig, will be consolidated.



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Governing and coordinating the implementation of First Action Programme under the Treaty of Lisbon

According to the Treaty of Lisbon, the current system of rotating presidencies will be replaced by a new system to be decided upon by the Council of the European Union. In the 3. Declaration on Article 9c(9) of the Treaty on European Union it is foreseen a system of team presidencies where the Presidency of the Council shall be held by pre-established groups of three Member States for a period of 18 months. Each member of the group shall in turn chair for a six-month period all configurations of the Council, with the exception of the Foreign Affairs configuration

The first level of the aforementioned First Action Programme governance system, which relies on the acting presidency and the troika system, must be adjusted when the Treaty of Lisbon enters in force. The acting presidency shall then be replaced by the Member State that, during each 6-month period, has the responsibility for cohesion policy. The troika will thus be replaced by the team presidency of Member States in charge during that 18-month period.

These adjustments shall be made to match with the moment the Treaty of Lisbon enters in force.

As territorial cohesion becomes a shared competence between the European Union and the Member States under the new Treaty of Lisbon, coordination and cooperation with the Commission, the European Parliament and the other European institutions will then be increased, thereby providing the basis for new Community initiatives deepening the implementation process of the Territorial Agenda.

Resources for the implementation of First Action Programme

Implementation of First Action Programme requires new ways of committing resources to the Territorial Agenda process. Assessing the resource needs, allocation and provision for the Territorial Agenda implementation effort is addressed within Action 5.1.

Each acting presidency will bring its own political and technical resources to the implementation of First Action Programme:

- The Minister in charge during each acting presidency will carry out specific political contacts at different levels and with different actors;



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- The national expert staff that supports the Minister during each acting presidency will ensure the resources to carry out the technical actions needed to keep the process going, including the coordination of the network of territorial related contact points.

The Member States and the stakeholders leading and/or participating in the actions will also bring their own political and technical resources to the implementation of First Action Programme.

Communication

The Internet address created on behalf of the Territorial Agenda process to support the stakeholders dialogue (www.territorial-agenda.eu) will become a central information node and a permanent technological platform to support information and communication among all concerned with the Territorial Agenda process, including the regional and local authorities and the public in general.

The network of territorial cohesion contact points (NTCCP), created under the Portuguese Presidency following the decision taken by the Ministers in Leipzig, including the Member States, the candidate and guest countries, the European Union institutions and the other stakeholders, is the back-bone structure for communication and coordination among all directly concerned by the Territorial Agenda and First Action Programme implementation.

Monitoring and assessing the implementation of First Action Programme

Progress made in the implementation of First Action Programme will be monitored and assessed in two ways. Firstly, the progress made in accomplishing the actions and lines of action will be monitored. Secondly, the effects of these actions and their relationship to the general trends in European territorial development should also be monitored. This last activity will be supported by results of work carried out by ESPON (notably through the development of indicators).

Monitoring and assessing progress made in the implementation of First Action Programme is subject of a specific action within LA5 and will lay the basis for the Ministers' decisions, namely regarding the need for new actions or changes in the current actions and lines of action.

With this purpose, *joint progress reports on the implementation of First Action Programme* will be prepared by the then acting presidency, with the support of the troika



First Action Programme for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union
and in cooperation with the Member States, European Union institutions and the other
stakeholders, to be presented to each Informal Ministerial Meeting.