



# **Evaluation Report**

## **of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union**

Background document for the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and  
Territorial Development  
on 19th May 2011 Gödöllő, Hungary

Prepared by the  
Hungarian Ministry of National Development and  
the Spatial Planning and Evaluation Directorate of VÁTI Hungarian Nonprofit Ltd.,  
With the contribution of NORDREGIO,  
Based on the Report of the Swedish Presidency and answers of Member States and Candidate  
Countries, as well the experts of the Drafting Team and Working Group



# 1. The process of evaluation and review of the Territorial Agenda

The Territorial Agenda (TA, TA2007), agreed at the informal ministerial meeting under the German Presidency in May 2007 asked the Hungarian EU Presidency to evaluate and review it<sup>1</sup>. The First Action Programme (AP1) agreed under the Portuguese Presidency defined action 5.3 accordingly<sup>2</sup>. **Hungary** has taken the responsibility of action 5.3 to evaluate and review the TA and the closely related action 4.3 to update the Territorial State and Perspectives of the EU (TSP2007)<sup>3</sup>

For the two actions **Hungary set up a joint Working Group** with the participation of **partners** from Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the ESPON Programme and DG REGIO. The Working Group proposed the possible framework of the update of the TSP and the revision of the TA that was confirmed by the DG meeting in Prague, May 2009.

Some members of the Working Group delegated experts to the **TA-TSP Drafting Team**, which started its joint work – after a preparatory phase – with a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2009. The Drafting Team includes experts from Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Spain, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Hungary. The Drafting Team carried out the necessary researches, collected data, and prepared the first proposals of the documents.

On behalf of the TSP-TA working group which supervised the whole process, Hungary regularly reported to the NTCCP and also to the DGs about the state of the process.

## Forums and events of TSP-TA review process



<sup>1</sup> 'We ask the coming Hungarian EU Presidency to evaluate and review the Territorial Agenda in the first half of 2011'.

<sup>2</sup> Act. 5.3. Evaluate and review the Territorial Agenda in 2011.

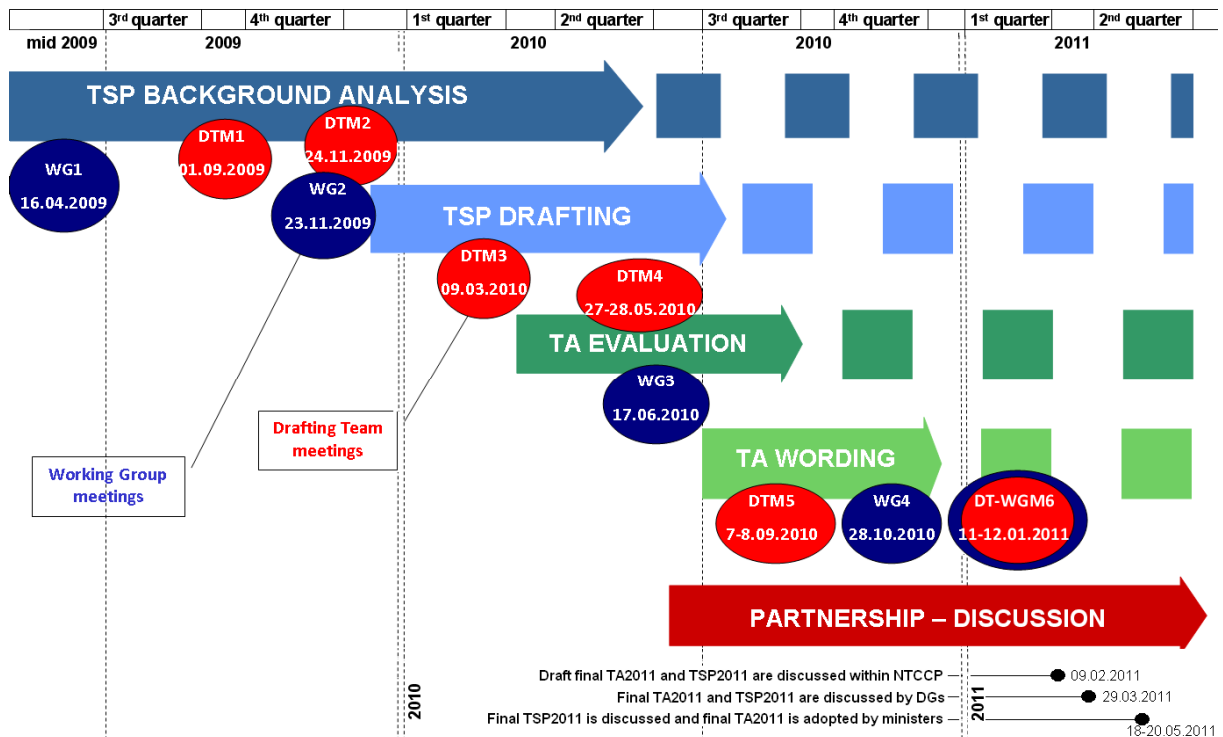
<sup>3</sup> Act. 4.3. Update the Territorial State and Perspectives of the EU (TSP) before the TA mid-term review in 2011

### Steps taken and results

According to the scope confirmed on the DG meeting in Prague, May 2009, the **basis for the revision of the TA was the assessment of the state in the update of the TSP**. A year later, in Seville, May 2010, DGs confirmed that experience with the implementation of the TA2007 both at national and EU level also needs to be taken into account.

As a result, the **TA evaluation process** had two main parts. The first is the **evaluation of coherence and relevance** of the TA2007 based on the results of the TSP update and identification of recent policy developments and changing policy framework related to territorial development. The second part summarises the experience with the **implementation of Territorial Agenda** on both member state and EU levels. This module includes a member state questionnaire survey, a review of implementation actions of Chapter IV of the TA and is built on the report prepared by the Swedish Presidency about the realisation of First Action Programme of the TA2007.

### **Steps and Milestones of the TSP-TA revision coordinated by the Hungarian Presidency**



### Partnership consultation on the update of the TSP and review of the TA

The **partnership discussion** was a crucial part of the revision of the process. Members of the Drafting Team and Working Group participated on several relevant conferences and meetings to introduce the ideas of the updated TSP and the process of TA review to secure a comprehensive list of comments, remarks, and completions from professional actors as well as the main relevant stakeholders beyond the NTCCP and DG meetings.

The first step of the partnership was the participation in the **Annual international conference of the Regional Studies Association in 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010** where a separate TSP-TA session was held, with the presentations of the Drafting Team. This conference was followed by several other events which are shown in the table below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Type</b>
24-26.05. 2010.	Pécs, HU	<b>Annual international conference of the Regional Studies Association</b>	<i>Researchers, experts, academics</i>	TSP, TA	Professional
9-10.06. 2010	Alcala, ES	<b>ESPON Open Seminar</b>	<i>Researchers, stakeholders</i>	TA, TSP	Professional
22-23. 09. 2010.	Belgrade, RS	<b>Spa-ce.net annual conference</b>	<i>Experts, academics</i>	TA	Professional
23-26. 09. 2010.	Craiova, RO	<b>Cross-Border cooperation in lower basin of the Danube conference</b>	<i>Researchers</i>	TSP, TA	Professional
28-29.09. 2010	Darmstadt, DE	<b>EURA Conference</b>	<i>Experts</i>	TA	Professional
28-29.09. 2010	Namur, BE	<b>First TA Annual Conference</b>	<i>EU Sector policies</i>	TA	Political
8.10.2010.	Brussels, BE	<b>Global challenges in polycentric regions – what role for strategic spatial planning?</b>	<i>Experts, planners, academics</i>	TSP, TA	Professional
13.10.2010	Namur, BE	<b>NTCCP meeting</b>	<i>NTCCPs</i>	TSP, TA	Political
16.11.2010	Brussels, BE	<b>Key Expert Consultation on the TA</b>	<i>Selected experts</i>	TSP, TA	Professional
17-18.11.2010	Liège, BE	<b>ESPON Internal Seminar</b>	<i>Researchers, stakeholders</i>	TSP, TA	Professional
7-8.02.2011	Warszawa, PL	<b>VASAB Annual conference</b>	<i>Local, regional stakeholders</i>	TSP, TA	Stakeholder

## 2. Evaluation of the challenges and priorities

### 2.1. Relevance of the Territorial Agenda in the light of recent territorial development trends

One of the main reasons of the TSP 2007 update was the fact that some major trends have had significant influence on the territorial state and perspectives of the EU. These trends are considered as significant processes with serious impacts on the continent's territory and the future development of its Member States and regions.

The **financial and economic crisis** from 2008 **with its complex challenges** might induce important changes in territorial structures through market forces. The impacts on various regions differ from each other (the most vulnerable areas are those with high global embeddedness, export- or technology oriented economy, high concentration of capital intensive industries or given braches like tourism or construction) as well as the time of the recovery- e.g. persistent unemployment could cause long-term structural reproductions of problems.

The **increased impacts of globalisation** focus on the role of the EU in the global economy. Balance between the two main directions of economic development (on one hand development of local markets based on unique endowments and on the other hand concentration on leading economic branches such as knowledge and innovation intensive industries and integration into the world economy) is important. One way may bring external resources to the development of regions, while the other might strengthen the sustainability of development.

After 7 and 4 years passed since the last enlargements of the EU now we have better look upon the **impacts of the accession of the new Member States**. Substantial changes have occurred in the interrelations of regions in new member states as well as old member states and between them. The territorial integration of new MSs and their regions brought some new challenges into the focus. Growing interdependences of territories and the issues of cross border and broader neighbourhood and the need of highly integrative approach at different levels are highlighted in the updated TSP. The enlarged EU territory also faces more complex phenomena in demographic and social sense.

Further topics that received less significant emphasis in TSP 2007 have come into the fore. Among these could be mentioned the **complementary nature of urban centres and their hinterland**; the recognition of endowments, needs and potentials of **different types of rural territories**, the increasing territorial disparities and **slowed down catch up processes**. Some new challenges and problems have also emerged since 2007. Among others **challenges connecting to segregation of Roma population or problems of internal peripheries** could be mentioned.

Nevertheless, analyses confirmed that **most of the territorial challenges defined in TSP 2007 and TA 2007 still exist**.

## 2.2. External coherence in a changing policy context

### Recent policy developments set the framework for the revision of the Territorial Agenda of the European Union

Recent policy developments and the changing policy framework needed to be reflected during the review of TA.

The *Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion: 'Turning territorial diversity into strength'* and the following discussions on the European understanding of territorial cohesion contributed as well to a more complex view on territorial policies in Europe. It defined that *"territorial cohesion is about ensuring the harmonious development of all [...] places and about making sure that their citizens are able to make the most of inherent features of these territories. As such, it is a means of transforming diversity into an asset that contributes to sustainable development of the entire EU."*

The *Treaty of Lisbon* which entered into force in December 2009 defines that the Union "shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, solidarity among Member States." (Art. 3 TEU) The European Union shall aim at reducing disparities between development levels of its regions and especially the backwardness of least favoured regions. Particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps. (Art. 174 TFEU)

In the implementation there is a **shared competence** between the Member States and the European Union in the field of economic, social and territorial cohesion. (Art. 5c TFEU) The Union and the Member States may legislate and adopt legally binding acts in this field. Member States shall exercise their competence to the extent the Union does not exercise it. This gives a stronger base for joint action in pursuing territorial cohesion, however the subsidiarity principle has to be respected and the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States at central, regional or local level, but can be better achieved on European level. (Art 5 TEU) Policies of the Union have to pursue the goal of territorial cohesion, and Member States shall conduct and coordinate their economic policies to attain territorial cohesion. (Art 175 TFEU)

The *Europe 2020 Strategy (A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth)* sets out a new vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century and is determining the framework for all EU policies. This new joint strategy of EU-27 envisages how the EU can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. **Territorial cohesion plays in this effort an important role.** As the development opportunities of the diverse regions are different in all dimensions of the defined targets, the success of the Europe 2020 Strategy can be achieved if territoriality of the strategy is respected.

Although the Europe 2020 Strategy does not include any section specifically dedicated to territorial development or cohesion, it has a few (rather randomly placed) references to territorial issues and it definitively will have considerable implications for European territorial development.

The relationship between the revised **Territorial Agenda (TA2020)** and the **Europe 2020 Strategy has to be mutual**: territorial policy shall contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 goals and the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy shall contribute to territorial cohesion, as reaffirmed by the Council. National economic policies will be strongly coordinated to ensure the proper implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European and national achievements of the

goals will be coordinated and monitored by the Commission. It has to be ensured that the territorial dimension is sufficiently reflected in the implementation and monitoring process in the future.

The Director Generals responsible for territorial development policy in the European Union at their meeting in Seville 10th May 2010, held under the Spanish EU Presidency underlined the importance of inter-linkages between the Territorial Agenda and the Europe 2020 Strategy by adopting a **joint contribution** entitled "*Territory matters to make Europe 2020 a success*". The main conclusion of this joint statement is that Europe 2020 and the Territorial Agenda should cross-fertilise.

The **Renewed EU Sustainable Development Strategy** (2006) is an important policy framework document covering a wide range of thematic objectives (e.g. environmental protection, social equity and cohesion, economic prosperity and international issues). Like in the case of Europe 2020 the EU SDS does not include any section specifically dedicated to territorial issues, but some direct territorial aspects are explicitly mentioned. The EU SDS being as holistic as it is, will significantly shape territorial development of Europe and had to be taken into account during the revision of the TA.

European wide discussions are contributing to the reform process of Cohesion Policy. The outcome of this debate on the future of Cohesion Policy post 2013 will be significantly shaping the territorial development of the European Union. The territorial dimension in general and territorial cohesion issues in particular are getting more and more emphasis within the **Cohesion Policy** of the European Union, at least in the ongoing reform process and discussions, and predictably in the new system of Cohesion Policy post 2013.

One of the most important recent analyses is the so called **Barca Report**, with the title "*An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy. A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations.*" This report emphasises the need for a **place-based approach** in a reformed cohesion policy, and highlights some key aspects and factors for the reform: multi-level governance, concentration of priorities and resources, accountability, orientating grants to results, etc.

Around some aspects of the Cohesion Policy European-wide consensus appears to take form. First of all the wide-ranging application of the "place-based" development approach is to be expected, and implicating geographically tailored interventions in functional territorial units. Another important emerging consensus is that territorial orientation of sector policies and the cross-sectoral approach are key tools for strengthening territorial cohesion.

In parallel with the adoption of the TA, the **Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities** was also approved at the Informal Ministerial Meeting in Leipzig. The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities complements the concern of the Territorial Agenda as it raises **integrated urban development** policy as a task for a European dimension. Therefore, both integrated urban development policy and territorial cohesion policy each makes complementary contributions to implementing the aims of sustainable development. As a follow up of the Leipzig Charter, the commitment of the ministers has to be taken into account in the revision of the TA to ensure the highest level of coordination between spatial and urban policy matters.

The ministers responsible for urban development made progress towards the implementation of the goals in the Leipzig Charter and adopted the **Toledo declaration** in June 2010, which highlights the importance of the integrated approach in urban regeneration and development. There is a need to strengthen the urban dimension in Cohesion Policy and to establish greater coordination between

the territorial and urban issue agendas, to ensure that the two policies cross-influence each other and can support the implementation of the objectives in a mutual way.

The **changing policy context** within the EU is offering a **new political momentum** for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, and in general for strengthening territorial cohesion. In relation to the European Commission's new role, there is a need for establishing a **common view** and the **combination of forces**, while the commitment of the Member States towards territorial cohesion remains to be a key factor for success.

### 2.3. Territorial Agenda assessment survey among experts

According to a comprehensive survey conducted during summer 2010 among the experts of the TSP-TA Drafting Team and Working Group<sup>4</sup> a preliminary assessment of the Territorial Agenda 2007 was formulated. The experts had the opportunity to express their views based on their professional and personal experience and background analytical work on the main topics of the TA, such as future tasks for strengthening territorial cohesion, new territorial challenges and priorities as well as regarding the implementation of the TA.

First of all the experts were asked to assess future tasks to contribute to territorial cohesion in the light of the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Lisbon Treaty. Several suggestions were made to reach a "smarter more inclusive and greener economy" for this territorial development has to be anchored in territorial specific potentials/resources. The economic crisis of Europe constitutes a new socio-economic context for territorial cohesion and the place-based approach is a newly emerging concept in territorial development and policy-making. In the experts opinion more emphasis should be put on **mechanisms** and conditions to achieve territorial cohesion. The importance of regional/sub-national level, **territorial governance**, **territorial aspects of globalisation** and **macro-regions** were also underlined in the context of territorial cohesion.

Due to the experts' ranking, the revised TA might play the most serious role in contributing to the goals of Cohesion policy, European social model, to enhancing solidarity and equal opportunities in all regions. Sustainable urban development and global competitiveness of all regions were also highly ranked.

According to the survey and following discussions at a Drafting Team meeting, the experts have agreed that in the revised TA **clear messages** should be formulated **towards sectoral policies** and the role of territorial coordination should be strengthened.

In the second part of the questionnaire experts were asked to revise the territorial challenges addressed in TA2007 and to assign possible new challenges in the revised TA. Due to the ranking of the challenges of TA2007, **challenges of climate change** and **demographic change** were still mentioned as the most relevant ones. Since 2007 however numerous new challenges have appeared. Most experts have mentioned the **effects of global economic and financial crisis** on Europe but other challenges as the **vulnerable local pillars of economy and community**, issues of **public and private partnership** and increase of the "innovation capacity" were also highlighted.

The experts have agreed that urban development should be included in the revised TA to the current extent, and not more. This means that reference shall be made to the Leipzig Charter, but the TA

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<sup>4</sup> 13 experts from 10 EU Member States (Belgium, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, Hungary, Spain, Cyprus, Norway, United Kingdom).

2020 shall concentrate on territorial issues (which incorporates transnational and macro-regions, cross-border areas, polycentric metropolitan regions, functional urban areas, and other urban or rural territories, but shall not elaborate on intra-urban problems – this latter is left to Leipzig Charter and its following document, the Toledo Declaration).

Regarding territorial priorities, the following statement can be made: each of the six priorities<sup>5</sup> has proved to be relevant by the answers of the experts. However their content shall be slightly/partly modified, and need to be more territorial, more explicit and more focused in the revised TA. Further 12 priorities were also mentioned in the answers of experts, such as priorities related to shrinking regions, local development and multi-level governance.

Experts shared the common opinion that all the addressees of the revised TA should be clarified. According to the respondents the implementation of the TA could be more effective by focusing on a **limited number of selected priorities** with more political and financial support. TA 2007 has hardly influenced many important EU documents such as the discussion on territorial cohesion, but the revised TA will be approved in a rather different policy context and this provide also **new opportunities** to influence some EU policies (such as the Cohesion Policy post 2013). Experts have also highlighted the need to stress on monitoring mechanisms, on developing a range of territorial statistical data, and regular reporting activities.

### 3. Experiences with the implementation of TA

#### 3.1. Implementation of the First Action Programme

The Swedish EU Presidency during the second half of 2009 worked on a follow up and assessment of the First Action Programme implementing the EU Territorial Agenda. Through document studies, interviews with various stakeholders and an expert workshop, this bases overall conclusions and proposals for further work were developed and were discussed at the NTCCP meeting in Stockholm (20 October 2009). The report “The EU Territorial Agenda & its Action Programme: How to reinforce the performance” prepared by the Swedish Presidency summarises the findings on what has been achieved by the Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and from there to develop proposals for possible future steps. The report is not only giving a lot of concrete suggestions on how to proceed with the First Action Programme, but furthermore on how to develop the whole process around the Territorial Agenda in a more efficient way.

The report emphasis that the Action Programme, builds on a long success story and that a **significant amount of activity** is currently **ongoing** under the Action Programme. The policy context is changing as the EU Commission is broadening and enlarging its role through the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy, with EU competence now provided for in the Lisbon Treaty. As such then intergovernmental co-operation needs to define its position on the question of co-operation with the EU Commission. A combining of forces here may offer the best opportunity to move the territorial dimension debate forward.

The need to **maintain dialogue with other sectors** to strengthen the territorial dimension in various policy fields remains a core issue in respect of the Territorial Agenda. Greater emphasis on actual

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<sup>5</sup> Polycentric Development, Networking Partnership and Territorial Governance, Regional Clusters of Competition and Innovation, Trans-European Networks, Trans-European Risk Management, Ecological Structures and Cultural Resources

dialogue with the non-believers is needed. For this task there is a need to reference the advances made during the last twenty years that should be used to convince remaining sceptics of both the importance and practicality of pressing on with the Territorial Agenda. This relates to both the European and the national levels.

Particular emphasis should be placed on those sectors which are closely related. EU Cohesion Policy should, moreover, receive special attention as the debate on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and its territorial dimension has started and provides a good opening for further dialogue.

Thus, the potential usefulness of Territorial Impact Assessments has been discussed though it may now be time to focus discussion more specifically on actual territorial impacts and do so in relation to the relevant policy processes in various sectors.

It is increasingly important to demonstrate the benefits and added value of the territorial dimension and the Territorial Agenda work. Defining the relationship between the Territorial Agenda and that of **macro regional strategies** like that in the Baltic Sea could also prove to be useful elements in this context. Furthermore, the exchange of experience on exact implementation measures in the Member States could help to stimulate the application of the Territorial Agenda not only at EU level but also in the Member States.

The recommendations of the Swedish Presidency highlighted the need for **strengthening coordination** and putting greater emphasis on **delivery mechanisms** and **governance aspects** during the implementation of the TA. At the same time it calls for **more visibility** and **awareness raising**, and also for **better communication** (of the aims and approach as well as of the achieved results and good examples) towards the wider public including all stakeholders (directly involved or indirectly affected by the TA). A **permanent strategic dialogue** on EU, national and sub-national level cross-cutting all sectors is inevitable for a successful territorialisation of EU policy making. Regarding the TA revision it is argued that a more **focused approach** is needed, while the **main target groups** have to be clearly addressed.

### 3.2. Review of implementation actions of different institutions<sup>6</sup>

Nordregio, as part of the Drafting Team, has been commissioned to provide an evaluation of the implementation of the TA2007 by reviewing and analysing the current state of actions in Chapter IV of the document which needed to be implemented by European institutions and the Member States.

Based on the relevant literature, policy documents, study reports and telephone interviews with key actors, Nordregio produced an overview of the implementation experiences and drew the following concluding remarks.

At the European Institutional level, the policy emphasis is placed on the equality of opportunities and on removing barriers that prevent people or places from fulfilling their potentials. Barca report is very enlightening in this regard. It implies the abandonment of “one size fits all” policy. In formulating or designing policies, we have to be cautious of how this policy may affect not only different social groups but also different places. This constitutes the core of the territorial cohesion policy and it is well documented through cohesion reports by which the regions are encouraged to develop their own local potential to bring their development strategies to the European context. This would then contribute to the overall objective of territorial cohesion.

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<sup>6</sup> Evaluation carried out by NORDREGIO

While cohesion reports have always been evaluated as the implication of future policies on territorial development, the influence of the cohesion reports depends very much on the tacit knowledge and thus on Member States' available statistical data. If Member States are developing their statistical databases, the Commission can have better European level comparisons for reports which could provide a more robust reference point for regions. This is one of the points that should be considered at Member State level.

On the other hand, a number of policy challenges are happening across the national and administrative boundaries in the Member States. This constitutes a critical issue in terms of territorial policy and generates new questions; what kind of institutional structure we need for this policy and does it fit the purpose? Does the boundary of the institutions fit the actual challenge itself? This is where a role is seen for the European Commission as well as the Member States to manage the territorial policy at that cross-cutting level in the light of subsidiarity. In order to progress with the implementation of the TA, not only DG Regio but all the DGs in the Commission should consider this as a task for their units.

This could also be reflected in the adoption of the terminology in the EU policy documents. The terminology used in the one of the flagship documents of the EU, Europe 2020, reflects that the emphasis is very much on growth policy. The question is whether this means that territorial cohesion is slipping down the EU priorities or is it just a matter of terminology and vocabulary and the spirit of the territorial cohesion is still on the pin of the Europe 2020 Agenda. There are ambitious targets to make Europe into an 'Innovation Union' by the end of the decade however the emphasis is clearly placed on growth. Neither the role of Europe's local and regional authorities in delivering the targets nor the subsidiarity are emphasised which brings into mind that the visibility of the territorial dimension of EU policies should be more emphasised.

The networks such as TCUM and NTCCP have been used as a **bridge to facilitate the dialogue** between the Member States and the Commission which underpins the role of territorial cohesion in the policy coordination between different administrative levels. However, there are certain bureaucratic handicaps in approaches for influencing policy makers where certain governmental units or ministries do not engage proactively in distribution of the information and recommendations developed through informal meetings. There is a lack of dialogue between the ministries within the Member States regarding the implementation of the programme. Hence, this communicational gap is problematic for DG Regio which in turn damages the efficiency of the TA as well. An important experience from the implementation of the action programme of the TA states that the programme should be more focused as there are numerous actions which are laborious to follow up after their finalisation. Additionally, the progress reports of the countries and the actions in their responsibilities do not really reflect concrete results as the ambitions are quite dispersed between the analysis and implementation.

Another important point is considered as the **normative dimension** of the implementation of the territorial cohesion. The questions raised on the measurability of its implementation and the need for a consistent set of development of indicators to carry out territorial impacts assessment and operationalise territorial cohesion in the Member States are considered as crucial. The DG Regio does not have a budget to support the activities of the Member States in maintaining the informal cooperation between the ministries. Drawing upon the main notion behind the macro-regional strategies; if Member States and Ministers regard the implementation of the TA as a key task, then

they should dedicate the necessary resources or make efficient use of existing resources through good governance. Thus, Member States are seen as the responsible actors in terms of legal and funding frameworks of territorial development. It is about reallocation of funds where more focused approach is placed on a continuous dialogue and concrete delivery mechanisms which would then justify the contribution of Cohesion policy and bring to light why place matters.

### **3.3. Implementation of the Territorial Agenda in Member States: evaluation survey**

This evaluation is based on the assessment questionnaire of the TA answered by Member States<sup>7</sup>. The questionnaire examines the national contributions for the implementation of the TA priorities and also on the contribution to the territorial cohesion in the light of recent changes and challenges in 2007-2009.

The questionnaire also focuses on the future territorial challenges, and other relevant issues related to a revised future TA. In order to support a common understanding of territorial cohesion in the EU, the questionnaire collects information about the member states' contribution to territorial cohesion.

According to the results **“the state of the art in territorial thinking in Europe” is really diverse and progressive. The territory related issues have become even more important in the last three years** since the TA 2007 was adopted. On one hand, all the formerly identified territorial challenges and priorities (in TA 2007) **remained highly significant** issues for the governmental bodies. On the other hand, some **new territorial challenges** and priorities can be detected and formed. Therefore, moving towards the idea of the territorial cohesion, making common territorial policies and **common territorial thinking are agreed to become a crucial recent and future tasks of the Community**. This underlines the significance of the TA revision.

Overall conclusions on the efforts done so far and on the future policy challenges:

- The emerging significance of territoriality is not related only to high political declarations. **True engagement and progress can be experienced also in the practice of different sectoral and regional development initiations** of the member states.
- Nevertheless, **most of the practices of TA implementation are ‘soft’ kind actions, being only in an initial and experimental phase** (e.g. conceptualization, researches, co-ordination intentions, and drafting methodologies). It is a future challenge to implement systemised territorially concerned mainstream mechanism with more significant effects on public decisions or public resources.
- **The territorial context is considered as a significant political issue**, but there are only few definitions on where and how to act in the ‘territory’. There to be a common European frame for definitions of ‘territory’ (e.g. levels, dimensions, structures).

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<sup>7</sup> **Contributing Member States:** Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom

- **The European social, economical and environmental challenges are to be translated into the territorial context** beyond their general messages (e.g. what do the challenges of energy, renewable energy, and climate change mean for the cities or for different regions).
- There are old and new territorial challenges with emerging importance. Therefore, **some new policy issues are considered as territorially relevant** (energy, policies of local governments) besides the 'traditionally territory-related' sector policies (environment, transport, tourism). Nevertheless, the territorial focus is missing from some other policies that might be also relevant in the context of the new challenges (e.g. in case of the territorial related challenges of ageing, immigration or financial crises the policies on health, education, and finance might be important, still it hardly mentioned as a relevant policy).
- The **sector policies are considered to have a great potential to improve territorial structures**, but in many cases they are not integrated spatially. Their spatial considerations are to be strengthened.
- By analysing the ideas on the future, it appears that not only the resources (and the allocation of the resources) but also development **methods and territorial knowledge shall have a significant role in the further implementation** of the Territorial Agenda.
- According to the ideas on the institutional contribution to TA, the role of the **EU institutions and EU cohesion policy** are considered to be highly important. The EU institutions have already contributed to the implementation of the TA through different documents on territorial cohesion, the ESPON Programme etc. According to the respondents the most important institutions of the future – among many other different stakeholders – could be the **European Commission, the Member States of the EU, the European Parliament, TCUM, NTCCP, and the Eurostat**.
- The key methods for implementing TA in the future could be: integrated territorial planning, territorial coordination of sector policies and horizontal realisation of territorial priorities. The researches on spatial processes, structures and interventions, and the territorial impact assessment studies contribute to the synchronisation of the different sector policies and programmes. The territorial coordination and monitoring activities are also significant in order to identify and consider the specific characteristics of the territories.
- According to the answers, policies on transportation, energy, natural resources, environment policy, and the policy actions of local municipalities have contributed to the TA to the highest degree among all the sector policies.
- Member States mentioned some possible good practices on supporting the achievement of TA objectives as well as mechanisms for adapting the interventions to local conditions in planning and implementing or in other public activities. Most of the good practices are related to territorial development policy making processes (legislation, guidelines, and policy principles) and territorial development and spatial planning documents (concepts, strategies, plans, and programmes).

## 4. Experiences for a reviewed Territorial Agenda

- This is the right moment to influence policy developments:
  - Future Cohesion Policy
  - Implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- Main challenges are the same; however we have to reflect to changed circumstances, especially in the light of the economic crisis and enlargement
- Priorities have to be more exact, reflecting to the changed challenges and policy context
- Much of the success lies in implementation:
  - Treaty of Lisbon gives an opportunity for better implementation with shared competence
  - Cohesion Policy has a key role
  - Coordination of sector policies can contribute to a successful implementation
  - Feedback on the implementation, regular monitoring is essential
  - Better communication towards the wider public including all stakeholders is necessary
  - More focused approach is needed, while the main target groups have to be clearly addressed