



RESEARCH IN SPATIAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ENLARGED EUROPE

The European Union is undergoing far-reaching changes in the context of the globalization, integration and enlargement processes with consequences for spatial development. These processes consider not only transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe, but are inherent features of the spatial development in all European countries.

Reflection of new needs in the spatial development is included in the European Spatial Development Perspective. Sustainability of the spatial development, more balanced polycentric settlement system, harmonization of ecological, social and economic dimension of spatial development, new quality of urban spaces and of urban-rural relationship, parity of access to services and knowledge, as well as development and prudent management of natural and cultural heritage, cooperative, cross bordering and transnational planning are important challenges not only for the spatial development policy but in many aspects even for the spatial research and science. Spatial planning practice requires qualified advice from the science, research and development.

Spatial development can be understood as the complex processes that gives spatial expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society and at the same time as a scientific discipline of interdisciplinary comprehensive nature identifying, describing and explaining the principles, processes, actors and determinants of spatial development, defining the possibility for interventions into the self-development processes, creating the base for spatial planning policy, developing the methods, instruments and techniques of the interventions in spatial development. Very important role of the spatial sciences in this context is to generate an outline framework for regional and urban planning as a tool for preventing shortsighted, one-purpose oriented, uncoordinated development activity. As an interdisciplinary task, spatial research is obliged to tackle with the totality of those sectoral activities in research and development with exert any significant impact on spatial structure and to seek to produce forward-looking and integrative in many cases transnational solution.

Access to knowledge and its intelligent use is becoming a critical determinant of innovative potential and economic success. As the urban and regional development creates the spatial frames of social and economic processes, the optimization of the spatial structures represents one of the basic conditions for successful economic development and competitiveness. In this context forth-coming spatial research and science became to be important condition for sustainable spatial development of European knowledge based society and the investments in this field of research is highly efficient.

Presented results as well as research programs of European spatial research and planning institutes demonstrate high quality and development potential of spatial sciences in Europe, which can be activated by the purposive support from the European Commission.

The fact, that the number of issues relevant to the research in the field of spatial development is infinite in the combination with transnational character of the spatial development processes, determined the need for transnational exchanges of views and discussion of the latest scientific findings on spatial development. Integration of the research and planning institutes into the networks in the frame of common European research space creates the platform for the international exchange, coordination and collaboration and in this way to the higher efficiency of the spatial research in Europe.

In this respect the networking activities of the Network of Spatial Planning and Research Institutes in Central and Eastern Europe coordinated by the SPECTRA Centre of Excellence, established at the Faculty of Architecture of the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava, and IOeR Dresden, fulfils the function of intermediating the flows of innovation in the field of spatial development in the CEE countries.

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