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EU TOWARDS THE NEW QUALITY OF THE "TERRITORIAL COHESION" .

Independently from the process of constitution ratification, the present spatial development policy in the EU countries became, in addition to the economic and social cohesion, to be predominated by the new concept - concept of territorial cohesion. As the term territorial cohesion has been introduced firstly in the political sphere, it evoked a lot of discussions about what is the substance of this term and what kind of concept does it represent, why was the addition of a territorial dimension necessary and what is its added value for the development policies, and other questions.

The introduction of the concept of territorial cohesion highlights the need to take into account, the diversity of the European continent in order to achieve the rich and complex meaning of cohesion as each territory has assets and faces constraints that the development policies have to take into account to be efficient. In this context, there is the need for a broader view of cohesion, encompassing all dimensions of spatial development and the horizontal interactions. In this sense, the major challenge is to improve vertical coordination between different decision making and policy levels and horizontal coordination of sectoral and development policies with territorial impacts. Another important challenge is to improve the integration of the European territories by reinforcing the bi- and multilateral cooperation and networking among them.

For planners, this notion has been connected more or less the content of the ESDP, but to elaborate the concept and translate it into European policies is the task intensively employing the politicians, practitioners and academicians since the term "territorial cohesion" appeared in the proposal of new Treaty. EU informal ministerial meetings on territorial cohesion in Rotterdam (2004) as the first milestone and Informal Meeting of Ministers for Regional Policy and Territorial Cohesion in Luxemburg (2005) on the contribution of the territorial dimension to the Lisbon-Gothenburg strategy defined the political direction to the European discussion on this topic.

- The Luxemburg meeting stressed the importance of stimulating a broad EU dialogue on territorial cohesion with EU institutions, across disciplines and with local and regional actors with the aim of achieving a common understanding on the key European and transnational territorial challenges and promoting a coherent approaches to the development of the EU territory. In this context the ARL established European working group "Territorial cohesion" with the aim to stimulate interdisciplinary and transnational discussion on the concept of territorial cohesion from different, not only political point of view, of course reflecting

the political reality of the current EU development, competencies of the European Commission, EU enlargement and Treaty ratification problems. The aim of the activities of the EAG ARL reflected in this paper has been to contribute to the critical reflection and sharpening the profile of the territorial cohesion concept within the current discussion on the framework for European spatial development

THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TERRITORIAL COHESION

The concept of territorial cohesion has two faces - it can be characterized as a theoretical and as a political concept. In both cases the concept of territorial cohesion should be understood as the expression of new quality of European territorial systems, achieving of which is the aim of the territorially relevant policies across all levels and sectoral activities.

The supper-position of both concepts should be determined by the reflection of current state of art of the European territorial systems, political reality in the European Union and scientific knowledge concerning the optimal sustainable functioning of European territorial systems. Preferring one of the above mentioned determinants can not only mean lower efficiency and chances to achieve success in form of more balanced dynamic and sustainable development of the European Union, but it can even lead to the deformations deriving additional imbalances and lost of sustainability.

The principles of the territorial cohesion concept, presented by the policy so far, follow more the reality of policy acceptability, responsibilities, and implementation modes, respectively the information and knowledge structure of ESPON outputs and less the core of the territorial cohesion as a quality - its territorially determined complexity. This can cause the reduction of the range of stakeholders addressed by the policy concept and lost of wide active support necessary for the successful implementation of the territorial cohesion concept. The need of selective addressing different stakeholders must not be mistaking with uncertainty of the policy concept interpretation, which can allow individual "self-positioning" of each stakeholder in the frame of the TC-concept, but in the same time derive the stakeholders' expectations having only less common with territorial cohesion.

The new quality of European territorial systems as the added value should refer to the synergy of the quality of territorial structures (expressed predominantly by territorial capital, optimal territorial organization and equal living conditions), quality of processes (flows, exchanges, co-operations, healthy competition, etc.) and quality of territorial subjects (stakeholders, institutions and their networks). The reference frame for the definition of the required synergic quality is the optimization of spatial/territorial condition for the development of knowledge based society in the European Union. The development of knowledge based economy as referred in the Lisbon strategy is one, but not the only one pillar of the necessary development strategy towards this new societal quality in which the spatial/territorial dimension plays determining role. The reduction of the reference frame of the territorial cohesion concept to the territorial aspects of Lisbon Strategy would be in this context contra-productive and will derive the contradictions of TC policy, based on such reduced understanding of the TC concept, to the other comprehensive goals, defined in the Treaty and culminate existing contradictions of the TC policy with particular goals of the sectoral policies of the EU.

In contrast to the social cohesion (strongly directed to the individual level of persons or households and the avoidance or diminishing of poverty and unemployment of individuals) and in contrast to the economic cohesion (oriented towards the intermediate level of institutions, such as enterprises, unions and institutional settings like tax systems) territorial cohesion should refer more clearly to the territorial, predominantly regional aggregate and territorial context of social and economic cohesion.

Reflections concerning the state of the art in the Rotterdam process

- The baseline for the discussion about territorial cohesion has been created by the proposal of the Treaty establishing a constitution for EU, which states in the first lines that the Union "have had to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among member states" (Art.1-3). There are economic, social and territorial cohesion defined among the competencies shared between the Union and the member states in the Art. 1-14 of the Treaty, alongside with the internal market, social policy, agriculture, environment, transport, energy, security and justice. The economic, social and territorial cohesion are also the title in Part III, where in the Art. III-220 is defined the task of the EU to "develop and pursue its activities leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion. In particular, the Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favoured regions"

The third Cohesion Report, published in March 2004 tried to cast light on the TC as the added value in the EU policy: "The concept of territorial cohesion extends beyond the notion of economic and social cohesion. In policy terms, the objective is to help achieve a more balanced development by reducing existing disparities, preventing territorial imbalances and by making both sectoral policies which have a spatial impact and regional policy more coherent. The concern is also to improve territorial integration and encourage cooperation and networking between regions.

Enlargement represents a specific challenge for territorial cohesion since it is redrawing the European map and it is adding further diversified territories (in terms of both development levels and capital endowments). Moreover, the economic convergence achieved by the new Member States has exacerbated internal asymmetries between the main urban centres, mostly the capital cities, and the remaining areas.

The Galway Conference on territorial cohesion (25-27 May 2004) saw territorial cohesion as a policy objective aiming "to contribute to the harmonious and balanced development of the Union by reducing economic and social disparities, by preventing territorial imbalances from emerging and by making sectoral policies that have a spatial impact more coherent with regional policy. Territorial cohesion also aims to improve territorial integration and encourage co-operation between regions."

EU informal meeting of the ministers of the EU Member States in charge of territorial cohesion and urban policy in November 2004 in Rotterdam started the process of the articulation of political and professional content of the concept of territorial cohesion by formulating officially the need to integrate the territorial dimension into EU policies with the aim of achieving a coherent approach to the development of the EU territory on the basis of the concept of territorial cohesion. The requirement towards consideration both sectoral and spatial components in future EU Cohesion Policy ensuring the integrated approach and coherence between national policies priorities and those for transnational and interregional cooperation have been underlined. In the same time the principles for the further work on the concept of territorial cohesion - namely:

- integration, building on the ESDP, cooperation aimed at the integration of territorial dimension into EU policies, taking account of regions diversity and challenges of multi-level and multi-sectoral governance
- no new procedures or rules,
- using existing possibilities, including EU expert committees, impact assessments, existing council structures and working groups
- subsidiarity and
- facilitating development, focused on facilitating the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategy and supporting efficiency in achieving cohesion have been defined.

New impulses for this process, known as the "Rotterdam process" have been given by the EU informal ministerial meeting on territorial cohesion held in May 2005 in Luxemburg formulating the key considerations for future work:

- Interlink and requirement of added value to the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategy
- Activation of the potential of the concept of TC for coordination across the sectors and policies as nearly all of them include a territorial dimension
- Coordination of the development of the EU territory without creating new procedures

Based on the official political documents reflecting the Rotterdam Process accelerated by the Luxemburg meeting following points in addition to the above mentioned principles and consideration could be stressed:

- the importance of territorial cohesion, both in strengthening competitiveness and reducing disparities within the cohesion framework
- aim at supporting the Lisbon ambitions by "better exploiting Europe's diverse potentials", as the diverse, unique potentials of EU regions, the territorial and cultural diversity have not been sufficiently taken into account in the Lisbon Strategy
- the concept of territorial cohesion should add to the concept of economic and social cohesion by translating the fundamental EU goal of balanced and sustainable development into a territorial setting
- the concept of the TC should integrate both - multi-sectoral and multi-level concept
- The principles, which should be taken into account should be:
 - polycentric development and urban-rural partnership,
 - strengthening regional innovation capacities and parity of access,
 - risk prevention,
 - the use of development assets in nature and culture,
 - partnerships and integrated regional approaches

The themes refer to the trans-European structuring elements for the EU territory and their connection to secondary networks like transport and infrastructure, ecological structures, cultural resources etc. Important step in the Rotterdam process is the preparation of the document "The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union", (final version expected in 2007). This document should assess and orient the European spatial development towards a stronger European cohesion in the light of the Lisbon and Gothenburg ambitions. For the elaboration of this document following principles have been set:

- The document should be based on all relevant sources
- The document should include inputs to policy prepared by the member states as results of bilateral or multilateral ws or meeting on territorial cohesion
- It should offer EU institutions, member states, regions and other stakeholders a better common insight into the territorial state and development perspectives of the EU and provide a clear and comprehensive information base and future spatial orientations to address key challenges and opportunities
- It should formulate a clear policy scope and priorities for strengthening territorial cohesion in the light of the Lisbon aims and address disparities as well as specific territorial conditions in the member states and their regions.

The Germany was asked to facilitate the discussion and adoption of the synthesis report based on the inputs prepared with reference to the priorities defined in the scoping document.

CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORIAL COHESION REPORT /STATE OF THE ART.

The tension between new development impulses, arising after the EU enlargement, and negative effects of the forthcoming globalisation, crisis of the natural resources reserves, decline of the competitiveness of the European economic space, appearance of new development poles in the world and increased danger of terrorism are only some of the factors catalysing an intensive EU-discussion on the new environment for the development of knowledge based information society in Europe. The framework for this discussion on the TC concept has been determined by the reality of political practice and planning practice more than by the new scientific knowledge about the territorial/spatial aspects of the knowledge based society development.

The framework (of political practice and real spatial development) for the Luxemburg/Rotterdam processes can be characterised by following determining features:

Historical model of integration in the EU ("integration sui generis") with the lack of consensus, or even discussion, about the final quality targeted by the integration process (2), which is closely connected to the questions concerning the quality of spatial/territorial structure of the EU.

- Reality of the ratification procedure of the Constitution adopted by the Council and the negotiation of legal and financial framework for 2007-2013 show the lack of ability to undertake principal changes in the EU

- Reality of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy shows the problems of the sharing the negotiated priorities among the EU Member states.
- In almost every EU Member state, there is a different sharing of areas of competence as regards regional policy, structural funds, territorial development and territorial planning
- The absence of decisions harmonising the regulations on structural funds and financial prospects with the goals of Lisbon strategy has obviously not simplified already difficult situation.
- Increasing territorial impact of EU policies on the Member States and their regions are often in the contradiction with the orientation of the spatial development following the principles of the development of knowledge based society.
- Increasing territorial impact of EU policies on the Member States and their regions strengthen in the new member space by the lack of complementary national policies and financial sources for their implementation
- Inconsistencies between EU policies reducing the effectiveness and leading to sub-optimal allocation of EU resources
- Increasing territorial impact of EU policies on the Member States and their regions are often in the contradiction with the orientation of the spatial development following the principles of the ESPD and territorial cohesion concept.
- Territorial challenges resulting from the increasing dynamism of spatially relevant processes requiring a coherent approach to the development of the EU territory taking accounts of its diversity
- The E.S.D.P declared as an "opened" document with the continual development based on the reflection of the development of the EU (enlargement, proceeding integration) is "closed" and "it is not enough simply to acknowledge that territorial cooperation can reinforce cohesion"
- Territorial imbalances in the enlarged Union are substantial and quite varied in nature. There will be greater differences between the periphery and the centre in terms of population, wealth, access to the GIS, transport, energy, telecommunications and the information society, research and capacity for innovation.
- As regards the configuration of urban systems, the contrast between the central area of the pentagon and the urban areas on the periphery is striking. A large number of the large metropolitan centres (MEGAs) in the central area play an important role at European and/or international level and contribute to the competitiveness of the pentagon as an area for global integration. Competitive EGAs exist in the periphery but they are isolated from their hinterland and not

integrated into urban systems. 13 The problem of the lack of territorial cohesion concerns different levels of territorial units. For example, at the urban level the quality of education, research and services are higher in the cities of the centre, but they also suffer from environmental problems and criminality. These problems, linked to those of social exclusion and unemployment, are concentrated within specific urban neighbourhoods. At the supraregional level some areas of the Union have specific problems. These include the mountain areas, islands and the most remote regions, most of which are also islands or mountainous and which are handicapped by being far from the Union's institutional decision-making centres and markets.

- The problem of market access and integration into their economic surroundings is clearly more pressing in the ultra-peripheral regions, where the unemployment rate can reach up to a third of the active population and the GDP/cap is in some cases less than 50% of the Community average.
- A central aim of the EU, as set out in the Treaty (Article 2) is 'to promote economic and social progress which is balanced and sustainable ... through (among other things) the strengthening of economic and social cohesion'. The cohesion instruments, the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, cover about one third of the EU budget and have a major impact on the competitiveness of regions and contribute significantly to improving the living conditions of their citizens, but the sustainability of the achieved competitiveness and living standards are not everywhere sustainable.
- Demographic challenges facing the recently enlarged EU territory
- The territorial dimension of cohesion was partially taken into account in the reformed Structural Funds proposed for the period 2007-2013. In July 2004, the Commission proposed in a legal and financial framework for a reinforced cohesion policy with a budget of EUR 366.1 billion focussing on three objectives: convergence; regional competitiveness and employment; and European territorial cooperation of which the first will receive most of the funds. The reality of the discussion on the proposal of the Commission for Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion for 2007-13 and National Strategic Reference Frameworks on EU cohesion policy and EU rural development policy has shown the lack of ability to join common goals of the EU.

CRITICAL REVIEW ON TC CONCEPT

At first glance the concept of TC policy seems not to represent any fundamental new approach. Rather it can be

understood as an expression of the imperative to establish system linkages between different dimensions of cohesion in the territorial and socio-cultural system of the EU. It is to be questioned whether the implementation of the concept itself will entail any new impulses, positive effects, contradictions or disparities. The concept of the territorial cohesion has been positioned by the politics as the tool supporting the achievement of the EU objectives and current development goals. The reference base for the assessment of the TC concept has to be in this context the set of main strategic development goals of the European Union and the super-ordinate objectives of the EU.

- Super-ordinate objectives of the EU as reference basis

Based on the Treaty there can be defined four main super-ordinate objectives as the reference basis for the assessment of the territorial cohesion concept as follows: 1 Equity

- Competitiveness
- Sustainability
- Good Governance

LISBON STRATEGY AS REFERENCE BASIS

The main strategic goals for the current phase of the EU development are defined in the Lisbon Strategy defined in the document "Employment, economic reforms and social cohesion - towards a Europe based on innovation and knowledge" (2000) and, based on the mid-term review on the implementation of Lisbon Strategy, précised in the documents prepared for the Gothenburg EU council meeting "Partnership for Growth and Jobs" (2005), supported by the "Union Action Programme" and "National Action Programmes".

Based on the critical assessment of the implementation process of the Lisbon Strategy, European Commission proposed a new start for the Lisbon Strategy, focusing our efforts around two principal tasks - delivering stronger, lasting growth and creating more and better jobs. Meeting the Europe's growth and jobs challenge is the key to unlocking the resources needed to meet our wider economic, social and environmental ambitions; meeting those wider goals will anchor the success of our reforms. There were three fields of priorities set:

A more attractive place to invest and work

- Extend and deepen the internal market
 - Improve European and national regulation
 - Ensuring open and competitive markets inside and outside Europe
 - Expand and improve European Infrastructure
- Knowledge and innovation for growth

- Increase and improve investment in Research and Development
- Facilitate innovation, the uptake of ICT and the sustainable use of resources
- Contribute to a strong European industrial base
- Creating more and better jobs
- Attract more people into employment and modernise social protection systems
- Improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of labour markets
- Investing more in human capital through better education and skills

Based on critical review structured in the logic of SWOT Analysis regarding potentials and limits of TC (Level of reference and valuation criteria are always the Lisbon-Strategy and the objectives of the EU) we can speak about following strenghts, weeknesses and potentials:

Strenghts

The concept of TC has ambitions to translate the fundamental goals of balanced and sustainable development into territorial settings. (integration, building on the ESDP, cooperation aimed at the integration of territorial dimension into EU policies, taking account of regions diversity and challenges of multi-level and multi-sectoral governance) In the ESDP the EU states have also identified methods for dealing with this territorial complexity. The first principle is that of horizontal cooperation (between policies and between public and private players) at each level ; for example, nobody in Europe doubts that public regulation is necessary at the local level through spatial planning; a second principle, less obvious, is that of vertical cooperation between levels. In application of the principle of subsidiarity, the management of a given territory is the concern of a political entity, and that entity alone. However, the free movement of persons, goods and capital, and the interdependence of levels, which are accelerating with globalisation, mean that no territorial level can deal on its own with all the issues related to space, and that spatial regulation is becoming a problem shared between several levels. The aim of territorial cohesion presupposes the establishment of cooperation in both horizontal terms (between policies) and vertical terms (between actors/stakeholders at different geographical/administrative levels). It should become a general concern, integrating the territorial dimension into the design and implementation of Community and national policies.

- 1. The introduction of the concept of TC shows, that the European countries share a view in which territories (states, regions, cities) are factors of production (place of identity, of collective purpose) and of solidarity, which is the basis for the existence of different political levels and

territorially differentiated policies; in this sense, the notion of territorial cohesion combines coherence (territorial integration) and solidarity (territorial equity).

- 2 The introduction of the concept of TC is accompanied by the analytical work and definition of the tasks for monitoring the spatial development and providing the "insight into the territorial state of the Union and a common information base to address key challenges and opportunities"
- 3 The introduction of the concept of TC is accompanied by the proposals for European Territorial Cooperation (facilitating development, focused on facilitating the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategy and supporting efficiency in achieving cohesion) stressing the need for flexible strategic approach incorporating different facets of territorial cooperation.
- 4 The introduction of the TC concept is problem oriented and tries to avoid the introduction of additional bureaucratic procedures and administrative load (no new procedures or rules, using existing possibilities, including EU expert committees, impact assessments, existing council structures and working groups)
- 5 The concept of the TC has high level of acceptance by all member states respecting the political reality in the EU - strong position of territorial sovereignty and current distribution of the competences

Weaknesses

- 6 The TC concept as it has been presented so far is characterised by high level of vagueness. Still there is no really clear idea or, better to say, a common understanding what TC might or should mean. Controversies, about the legal and political meaning of the terms territorial cohesion and those concerning the effects and side effects to be expected, are existing.
- 7 The concept of TC as it has been presented so far does not fulfil the ambition to translate fundamental goals of balanced and sustainable development into territorial settings. The term territorial sometimes is connected with the term a) cohesion - as in the Treaty - sometimes with b) coherence or coordination (in the sense of compatible, non-contradictory sector policies with regard to their respective intended and unintended impacts), or c) with the term co-operation as one out of three new objectives of the Structural and Cohesion Funds
- 8 Experience from the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy showing the problems of the sharing the negotiated priorities among the EU

Member states does not favour the chance of the TC concept with out strong realisation instruments.

- 9 Territorial cohesion concept merely extends existing policies, but with a sharper focus on development opportunities to encourage co-operation and networking and with more attention to strengths of areas and better targeting of policy instruments
- 10 The territory in the concept of TC as it has been presented so far seems to create only a reference structure for measuring the economic or social indicators or balancing the inputs and outputs. Even the integration of the co-operation in addition to the "cohesion", "coherence" and "co-ordination" in the quality of "territorial cohesion" do not create the potential for arising of new quality, as the added value of the implementation of the territorial cohesion as a new objective in the policy practice.
- 11 The concept of TC, as it is characterised in the official documents (see above), completely uncover one main contradiction of the EU policy with regard to spatial development: On one hand, the ambition of the EU to intervene towards spatial development optimization supported by a set of very strong tools (cohesion funds, structural funds and others), partially through sectoral policies (transport, ICT, social infrastructure, environment, agriculture, regional development, etc.) is evident. On the other hand, the official assertion of the EC of having no responsibility for spatial development is repeatedly expressed in several statements revealed, for instance, in formulations on the so-called Open Method of Co-ordination as a main instrument of the implementation of TC. This method is still under discussion concerning the method's governing capacity and its capacity of harmonization.
- 12 The concept of TC as it has been presented so far brings no adequate solution in the cases where the opportunities or the problems are transnational and need the intervention from the upper level, that is, in the language of economists, where the discrepancy between the administrative frontiers of the states and the economic and social reality generates "externalities" which can justify an intervention by the higher level: European networks (TEN); cross-border cooperation, when the persistence of linguistic, legal or cultural barriers hampers the growth of cross-border conurbations; transnational cooperation implementing networks of cities or development corridors, the sustainable development of transnational sea and river basins or mountain ranges.

- 13 The concept of TC as it has been presented so far does not declare the ability to support the activation of the unique development potentials of the EU regions.
- 14 TC policy, as it is officially presented up to now, does not yet convince to be able to fulfil the expectations of lowering existing disparities between the regions or contradictions in the EU policies of spatial/territorial relevance as the attempts using the instruments of the current EU policies were in their effects limited and the concept of TC does not re-assess and not expand the spectrum of relevant instruments. Of course, any classification of disparities or contradictions depends on their respective interpretation and contexts.
- 15 It is not clear how the concept of TC want to contribute to the definition of the specific position of the regions in the European territory and to the placement of appropriate spatial development strategies in a transnational and European development context.
- 16 It is not clear how, with which mechanism, the concept of TC have to contribute to the grater coherence between EU policies which have a territorial impact.
- 17 It is not clear how the concept of TC will contribute to the taking better into account of Europe great territorial and cultural diversity as and EU potential.
- 18 It is not clear how the concept can ensure the taking into account the importance of proportioning sustainable economic growth on the basis of territorial cohesion.

Potentials

- 1 Territorial cohesion as the theoretical concept incorporates the concern for co-ordination of the comprehensive integrated approach and concern for actively pursuing balanced development throughout the territory concerned like in the regional economic approach. (see Faludi, 2004). This can be transferred into the political concept.
- 2 It is meant to be a key for better horizontal co-ordination between spatially relevant policies and actions and for better vertical co-operation between the various tiers of government. In the framework of the ESPD, the EU and Member States and the candidate countries Bulgaria and Romania as well as Norway and Switzerland finance for example the ESPON programme to "further exchanges of experience and good practice, in particular through networking actions" and to support policy development.
- 3 The concept of TC can potentially contribute to the sustainable and balanced development.

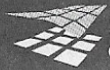
Territorial cohesion, meaning the balanced distribution of human activities across the Union, is complementary to economic and social cohesion. Hence it translates the goal of sustainable and balanced development assigned to the Union (Article 2 of the Treaty) into territorial terms.

- 4 Territorial cohesion concept can support the fulfilling of the principles of equality as it includes fair access for citizens and economic operators to Services of General Economic Interest (SGEI), irrespective of the territory to which they belong (Article 16 of the Treaty).
- 5 The concept of TC can offer the ability to support the activation of the unique development potentials of the EU regions
- 6 The concept of TC can contribute to the definition of the position of the regions in the European territory and to the placement of the spatial development strategies in a trans-national and European development context
- 7 The concept of TC can contribute to the grater coherence between EU policies which have a territorial impact
- 8 The concept of TC can contribute to the taking better into account of Europes great territorial and cultural diversity as and EU potential.
- 9 The concept of TC can contribute to the increased competitiveness of the EU as the territorial imbalances constitute factors of competitiveness.
- 10 The concept of TC can lead, to the better consideration of sectoral and spatial compotents in the future EU Cohesion Policy, integrating approach, coherence between national policy priorities and those for transnational and interregional cooperation
- 11 The concept of TC can contribute to the enshuring of the taking into account the importance of propoting sustainable economic growth on the basis of territorial cohesion.

Furhter expectations

1) Expectations linked to the cohesion policy differ among various groups involved into this discussions. The expectations of specialists - practitioners and scientists in the field of spatial planning - are critical in reaction to official political statements. On one hand, (optimistic) potential effects of the implementation of a sophisticated territorial cohesion policy exist, on the other hand, realistic (or pessimistic?) estimations of the effects based on current information about the TC policy features from the decision making sphere is under discussion.

2) The officially expressed expectations by the politicians can be formulated as follows:



- strengthening competitiveness and reducing disparities
- improving the factors of competitiveness to promote territorial cohesion
- facilitation of structural changes throughout Europe
- enabling the regions to respond more effectively to the opportunities generated by the world's largest single market.
- differentiation between territorial imbalances representing factors of competitiveness and territorial imbalances representing handicaps (The distribution of population and wealth and the geographical handicaps affecting certain areas are conducive to territorial. The cohesion report analyses the territorial imbalances, which, at the same time, could constitute factors of competitiveness, and which could correct the imbalances considered afore).
- safeguarding the equality of EU inhabitants concerning the equal access and efficiency of services ("Art. 16 acknowledges that services of general interest (SGI) should promote in particular social and territorial cohesion, in order to provide equal access to SGI to all citizens wherever they happen to live or work in the Union")
- new approach in the policy of disparity reducing based on a new understanding of different kinds of disparities ("The introduction of a territorial dimension of cohesion highlights the need to take into account, the diversity of the European continent in order to achieve the rich and complex meaning of cohesion. Each territory has assets and faces constraints that development policies must assess and integrate to be efficient")
- integration of different spatial/territorial dimensions of cohesion ("There is thus the need for a broader view of cohesion, encompassing many dimensions of territorial development, and the associated interactions. In this sense, one major challenge is to improve the coordination of sectoral and development policies with territorial impacts.")
- better integration of European territories by reinforcing the cooperation and networking among them

3) In this context the researchers and policy makers should revise some of the traditional indicators used for regional policy like GDP, unemployment, which may not necessarily capture the spatial disparities that are associated with regional/territorial imbalances, such as demography and population density, accessibility, urban-rural structures and relationships, and access to basic services, innovation capacity, environmental risks. For the successful implementation of the TC policy an effective instrument of trans-national co-operation has to be developed. Strategic projects and the assignment of national and regional development plans/schemes, active participation of national, regional planning bodies seems necessary. "The territorial impacts of EU policies in areas such as transport, energy or environment should be addressed. These policies should form part of a coherent whole...there is a need to avoid a logic which is too sector-specific...decisions taken at regional and local levels should be coherent with a broader set of principles that would underpin more sustainable and balanced territorial development with the Union" (CEC, 2001a, p.13). This is the challenge of the TC as a new concept for the politicians, planners and other professionals as well as for science and development sphere.

