



RESEARCH AND SPATIAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN ENLARGED EUROPE

Enlargement of the European Union by 10 new member states creates new conditions for spatial development of the European Union that follow not only from substantial enlargement of its territory and increase in the number of its citizens but also from the changes in the economic, social and legislative areas. These changes do not just impact the territory of the new member states but also the entire spatial development of the European Union.

Research in spatial development and planning must reflect these changes and create the professional base for formulating efficient policy on spatial development in new conditions.

Spatial planning practice is being faced to a lot of increasingly demanding topics and effects of:

- Common problems that are being solved in different EU countries
- Problems the solution of which has international character
- Problems, that are of regional and in the same time cross-border nature

Sustainable development, demographic development, migration of population, territorial cohesion and other problematic fields are strongly related to spatial aspects and features and their solution in political practice also requires the inputs from the systematic spatial research at the European level.

Creation of appropriate scientific background for the policy of spatial development calls for the existence and support to the development of adequate research and development infrastructure and human potential. With regards to the global character of the present spatial development spatial planning practice in the EU and its system relations, it is inevitable to create the platform for the integrated research in the common European space.

There is a need for transnational exchange of knowledge and know how on matters of spatial planning and development. Such coordination and collaboration leads to the higher efficiency of the spatial research and practice at European level.

In the future spatial research has to get the possibility to systematically develop the cooperation and the institutional network in Europe following the challenges having spatial consequences for all states and countries in Europe and therefore they need strategies and solutions with transnational view.

It is impossible to have the platform for integrated knowledge base and integrated research in Europe without considerable support from the side of the European Commission. That is why participants of the international conference "Research in spatial development and planning in the Enlarged EU" held in Bratislava in June 24th - 25th, 2004 declared the need of inclusion of this topic into the EU scientific programmes. Furthermore, the conference has resulted in the thematic and regional networking.

And, also, the papers presented in this issue of ALFA SPECTRA journal reflect the need for research in the way of both formal and informal links under the framework of research and academic institutions in the enlarged Europe.

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