

The ESPON Programme

Report no. 1 to The Nordic Council of Minister,
NERP

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The aim of Nordic Regional Policy Co-operation

is to promote balanced regional development in the Nordic countries, both internally and across national borders. This objective is realised through co-operation between national authorities, and locally initiated co-operation between regions.

Nordic co-operation

Nordic co-operation, one of the oldest and most wide-ranging regional partnerships in the world, involves Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland. Co-operation reinforces the sense of Nordic community while respecting national differences and similarities, makes it possible to uphold Nordic interests in the world at large and promotes positive relations between neighbouring peoples.

Co-operation was formalised in 1952 when *the Nordic Council* was set up as a forum for parliamentarians and governments. The Helsinki Treaty of 1962 has formed the framework for Nordic partnership ever since. The *Nordic Council of Ministers* was set up in 1971 as the formal forum for co-operation between the governments of the Nordic states and the political leadership of the autonomous territories, i.e. the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.

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Preamble

Introduction

In spring 2003 NERP decided to formulate a project aiming at sending a project expert to the Coordination Unit (CU) of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network, (ESPON).

The project carries 2 objectives. First and foremost to assist the CU in administer the ESPON programme 2006 and secondly every sixth month to report back to NERP by delivering summery information on new knowledge concerning European Spatial Development, scientifically and politically on matters of a special Nordic interest.

The envisaged output will be 4 reports giving an impression of scientific and political development, which presently for the first time in a cohesive way is taking place not only within the present EU 15 but also in accession countries soon becoming new members of EU in May 2004.

Background

In the late 1980ties the EU ministers responsible of “spatial development and planning” (the term was yet not invented) began talks concerning the territorial impacts of EU’s Structural Funds. Viewed from a common European perspective they found conclusively the individually supported projects poorly coordinated and often having negative side effects. In early 1994 they decided to produce a common perspective, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which later was adopted in Potsdam 1999.

Ever since 1990 (stressed for the first time in the Presidential Conclusion of the Informal Council of Turin, October 1990) the European inconsistency of knowledge on spatial matters has been acknowledged. Common data were lacking or not comparable. Consequently the concept of a research programme aiming at producing new knowledge was adopted. A scientific “test” programme was carried out in 1998-2000 and a Common Initiative Programme (CIP) under Interreg III was adopted in May 2001 by the Committee of Spatial Development (CSD) and forwarded to the Commission, which approved it in June 2002

Since then things have been moving fast. The secretariat was sat up in January 2002 and by October 2002 the first 9 Transnational Project Groups (TPG) could deliver their first Interim Reports (IR). Less than one year later, in august 2003 16 TPGs delivered respectively 2nd and 3rd. IR.

Since August 2003 5 new projects have been launched, of which one has already started. The Expression of Interests from TPGs concerning the 4 other projects have been assessed recently and the Monitoring Committee will at its coming meeting in 12-13 May 2004 decide upon which TPGs to invite to present proposals for carrying out the projects. As such TPGs are assessed twice. First assessment concerns the TPG itself and its scientific qualifications. Second assessment of the short listed TPGs concerns the actual way in which they intent to carry out the research project.

The 3rd. Cohesion Report

The 16 projects, which delivered 2nd and 3rd. IR in August 2003 totalled more than 3000 pages and 380 maps covering “ESPON-space” (EU-25 plus Norway and Schwitz). The projects had been selected carefully due to the underlying political agenda and all projects should deliver scientific results ready to be use for the preparation of the Commission’s 3rd. Cohesion Report (3rd. CR). The result today is that a selected content of the reports have had a significant impact on the 3rd. CR. Compared to previous CRs an improvement of spatial knowledge of the enlarged European territory is evident.

The Commission published the 3rd. CR in late February this year and NMR/NERP is recommended to take specific note of it, in particular the text dealing with territorial cohesion. The text and maps reflect that new concrete scientific spatial knowledge from the ESPON programme has had a basic impact on the content of the CR report, which like previous reports at the end of the day form the political basis for allocation mechanisms for the next period of structural funding.

To examine the 3rd. CR in relation to this report was however not possible, as it was published to late in relation to the deadline of this report.

The objective of these NMR reports is as mentioned to contribute to the development of new knowledge with relevance for the Nordic countries.

The Nordic Area is facing a new challenge in relation to the enlargement of EU. A co-operation between present EU and non-EU countries specifically around the Baltic Sea has been going on for the last 10 years. However the enlargement by 1st. of May 2004 and the entrance of the Baltic States and Poland constitutes a new spatial dimension, which determines the need for a closer political cooperation and for research and new knowledge in the field of spatial development.

Research and knowledge in the Nordic Area in relation to an EU-wide perspective concerning spatial development are more or less in the same position as other EU countries. Although some research capacity of a European scope within the field of regional (economic) and cohesion policy is established, the same can not be said in the field of spatial development. There is consequently a need for new knowledge on subjects related to the coherence between the Nordic Area and EU as a whole as basis for strategic policy development.

As it has been decided that the actual contents of these reports should be no more than 10 pages it is obvious that the very condense content of these NMR reports in no way can satisfied those being interested in leaning more about the vast amount of new knowledge on European spatial planning and development being produced within the framework of the ESPON 2006 programme.

For those I will kindly refer to the ESPON website; www.espon.lu

Disclaimer

The text of this summery report does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee. The sole responsibility of this summery and the highlighted policy recommendations (in italic) lie with the author.

Danish summary

Introduktion

I 1999 blev ESDP vedtaget. Siden starten af 90'erne har der været et klart behov for ny viden om europæiske spatiale forhold (eksisterende viden var usammenhængende, usammenlignelig og data mangelfuld). ESPON blev foreslået første gang i 1994.

I 2001 vedtog medlemslandene et Fælles Initiativ Program for et Interreg projekt; "European Spatial Planning Observation Network, (ESPON 2006), som godkendtes af Kommissionen et år senere. ESPON programmets opgave er via transnationale forsknings team at producere ny viden om europæiske spatiale forhold. Alle EU lande og EU Kommissionen samt de nye medlemslande plus Schwitz og Norge deltager i programmet.

I juni 2003 besluttede NMR / NERP at udsende en projekt ekspert i 2 år til at assistere ESPON sekretariatet i Luxembourg.

Som projekt ekspert skal jeg hver 6. måned kortfattet orientere om videnskabelige og politiske fremskridt. Mine rapporter vil være baseret på de videnskabelige midtvejs- og endelige rapporter. Denne halvårs rapport er den første af 4 rapporter.

For de, som har en dybere interesse i dette emne, vil jeg venligst henvise til ESPON's hjemmeside, www.espon.lu

Udspil til Kommissionens 3. Samhørigheds rapport.

I august 2003 afleverede 16 ESPON projekter deres midtvejs rapporter. Ny videnskabelig viden præsenteret i disse rapporter har haft en registrerbar indflydelse på indholdet i EU Kommissionens 3. samhørigheds rapport (februar 2004), som således for første gang inddrager ny spatial viden, baseret på ESPON projekter, som grundlag for allokering af Strukturfondens midler.

ESPON Projekt 3.1

Dette projekt har som hovedopgave at koordinere den viden som produceres af de enkelte forsknings projekter, både vertikal og horisontal (figur 1 og 2) med henblik på at levere integrerede resultater (indikator systemer/data, territoriale typologier, spatiale værktøjer som f. Eks TIA, etc.

Denne første rapport til NMR/NERP-EU er baseret på ESPON projekts 3.1 tredje midtvejs rapport.

Foreløbige anbefalinger vedr. en integreret politisk ramme.

EU udvidelse og igangværende makro-trends er en udfordring for den territoriale samhørighed indenfor Unionen (globalisering, stigende inter-regional konkurrence, stigende befolknings alders gennemsnit, m.m.).

Som hovedkonklusion kan det siges at såvel den horisontale integration af politikker som den vertikale integration via styrings processer er grundlæggende for opnåelse af territoriell samhørighed og polycentrisk udvikling og grundlæggende for dette er at tydeliggøre det i de nødvendige politikkers og implementerings instrumenters kontekst.

EU's politik tilgang

Manglen på tværsektoriell koordination og integration er en hæmsko for udvikling af territoriale integrerede politikker. Der er behov for e.g. en inter-institutionel koordinerings komite, introduktion af "spatial effekt skemaer" eller obligatorisk "territoriell effekt vurdering/analyse" (TIA) af sektor politikker.

I tilfælde med begrænsede ressourcer kunne Struktur fonden anvendes til at fremme europæiske spatiale udviklings formål og koncepter på mindre direkte måder som f.eks. til politik udvikling, studier og vidensudvikling. Dette forudsætter oprettelse af en "tænke-tank".

For at kunne implementere de spatiale politiske mål er det vigtigt at opnå forståelse og engagement på alle politiske ledelses niveauer, EU, nationalt, regionalt og lokalt.

Fokus på EU's struktur politikker. (Struktur Fonden, SF)

Det nuværende system resulterer ofte i for små støtteberettigede områder, som er uegnede til at støtte et bredere spatialt perspektiv, som omfatter nærliggende by- og landområder. SF bør fokusere mere på territorial- og sektorkoordination.

Det europæiske territorium er karakteriseret af stor spatial mangfoldighed og EU bør i større udstrækning understøtte denne mangfoldighed gennem "skræddersyede" spatiale politikker.

For at realisere territoriell balance er grænseoverskridende samarbejde af stor betydning, især imellem EU15 og de 10 ansøgerlande (AC), som pr. 1. maj 2004 bliver medlem af EU. SF bør særligt støtte transnationale funktionelle regioner gennem samarbejdsprojekter, barriere reduktion og forbedring af transport infrastrukturen.

Spatialisering af EU sektor politikker

Næsten alle EU politikker har en direkte/indirekte spatial indflydelse.

ITC synes potentielt at få større indflydelse på den økonomisk spatiale struktur end transport politikker og en større symmetri imellem offentlige myndigheder og ITC leverandører kan derfor anbefales. Udbredelse af bredbånd og ITC baseret på markeds betingelser vil ikke resultere i lige adgang til ITC.

Transport netværk er en forudsætning for regional udvikling, men den regionale/lokale effekt kan være både positiv og negativ. For perifere regioner og ansøgerlande kan bedre tilgængelighed medvirke til markant fremgang, men også til tilbagegang p.g.a. forøget adgang til stærkere konkurrence. Et territorielt baseret perspektiv for transport sektoren, hvor hele EU's territorium ses under et og hvor transport forbedringer indgår som et blandt flere elementer i en pakkedløsning, er nødvendigt. Særlig opmærksomhed må rettes mod tilgængelighed og bæredygtighed, samt harmonisering af markeds betingelser.

Naturområder er under stort pres i EU og frakmentering er et alvorligt problem. Natura 2000 bør udvides kraftigt (f.eks. ved udlæk af nye arealer og spredningskorridorer)

Det historiske fokus på CAP (produktions forbedring og sikring af et stabilt fødevarer marked) er baggrund for modsætningen imellem Søjle 1 (markeds pris støtte) og økonomisk samhørighed. Fokus bør rettes mod Søjle 2 (rural udvikling) og bæredygtigt landbrug, mens pris støtten bør reduceres markant (mere end forudset i CAP's midtvejs oversigt), til fordel for rural udviklings politik.

Polycentrisk udvikling på EU niveau

Polycentrisk udvikling er grundlæggende for udvikling af territorial samhørighed og er især rettet imod udvikling udenfor "Pentagon". SF støtte bør rettes imod skabelsen af stærke byvækst poler udenfor "Pentagon" og koordineret med SAPARD/CAP kan det medvirke til balanceret by-land udvikling.

Nye Mål 2 programmer bør fremme specialisering af større polycentriske regioner. Særlig opmærksomhed bør rettes mod dels gamle industri regioner dels potentielle transnationale vækstregioner i AC. En differentieret tilgang på tværs af "EU25" kan anbefales.

SF bør støtte dannelsen af transnationale funktionelle regioner gennem en fokusering på fælles udviklings strategier omfattende mange byer og transnationale transport forbindelser.

Højere uddannelse og R/D (Research/Development) er en forudsætning for den viden, der kan medvirke til dannelsen af et højere vækst niveau og dermed EU's økonomiske konkurrence dygtighed. Udvikling af velfungerende regionale innovations systemer med henblik på at styrke videns produktiviteten bør derfor støttes.

Investeringer i "human capital" og uddannelse er vigtige elementer til styrkelse af både territorial samhørighed og polycentrisk udvikling. Der er behov for politikker til sikring af ligeværdige levebetingelser.

Som modvægt til "Pentagon" bør nye offentlige EU institutioner placeres i nye dynamiske funktionelle byvækstområder, bl.a. i AC lande.

TEN (Trans Europæiske netværk) er vigtig for EU's byregioner, men bæredygtighed, robusthed og effektivitet bør øges, gennem bl.a. relokalisering af transport strømme og modalskift fra vej til jernbane/vandvej.

Polycentrisk udvikling på nationalt og regionalt niveau

På nationalt niveau er udfordringen at sikre general tilgængelighed for alle regioner til service for at stimulere konkurrencedygtigheden og for at fremme territorial samhørighed.

Regionale vækstpoler kan styrkes gennem funktionel specialisering indenfor det nationale bysystem. Decentralisering af nationale institutioner og service og forbedring af tilgængelighed er eksempler på handlinger, der kan medvirke hertil.

Generelt bør EU politikker, som behandler by emner, vende nuværende indsats imod forbindelser imellem byer fremfor blot at forbedre den enkelte by og dermed støtte strategisk samarbejde imellem nabobyer med henblik på dannelsen af fælles polycentriske regioner.

ESPON Project no 3.1

This first report is based upon the ESPON project no. 3.1, which has as a main objective to be the co-ordinating and cross-thematic project of the ESPON programme 2006. This means that it has to evaluate the results of the other studies towards integrated results such as indicator systems and data, typologies of territories, spatial development scenarios and conclusions for the territorial development.

From territorial objectives and analyses to policy recommendations

ESDP is built on the acknowledgement that the achievement of fundamental EU goals requires to take into account the territorial dimension and that this new way of thinking starts from an integrated view, illustrated by the “Triangle of sustainability” with the 3 dimensions; economy, society and environment. (figure no. 1)

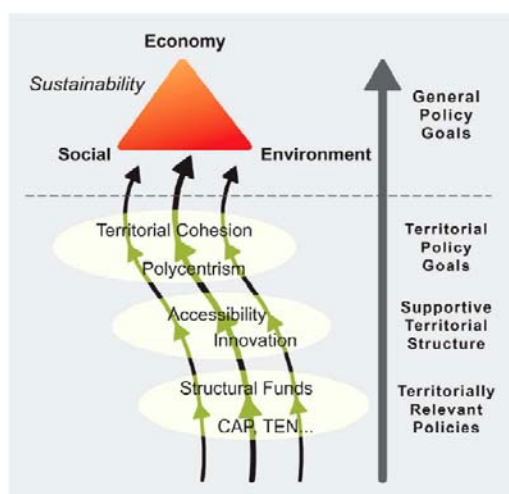


Figure no. 1. Source: ESPON project 3.1,



Figure no. 2. Source: ESPON project 3.1,

The ESPON programme is expected to complement and implement ESDP, complement it by studying trends and impacts of policies and implement it by showing efficient ways to achieve aims and options.

ESPON focus on aspects relevant for the actual issues at stake, such as enlargement and its implications for EU policies and insists on two concepts; territorial cohesion and Polycentrism. Both are linked and complementary when reflecting on a concrete territorial approach, aiming at recommendations.

Not all Community policies with possible territorial implications are currently considered by ESPON, e.g. social policies or competition policy although the last is considered in ESDP.

The sector policies/fields which are considered by ESPON are browsed from the point of view of polycentrism on one hand, territorial cohesion on the other. In this way the

individual themes are horizontally integrated, considering the potential relationship, and vertical integrated, considering the individual themes at different scales and potential relationships between them. (figure no.2).

Tentative recommendations for an integrated policy framework

A major ESPON aim is to propose ways to develop territorial considerations and increase their consistency in the practise of Community policies (not to modify treaties, but to better integrate the territorial dimension)

The policy recommendations to be presented in the following are based on the work of various projects. Most of the projects have at least 6 months or more to finish their work and the presented recommendations are therefore of a tentative character.

A spatial approach to fostering growth and improving cohesion

Enlargement and on-going macro-trends are challenging the territorial cohesion within the Union. Overall effects of EU policies are small compared to those of socio-economic and technological macro trends, like globalisation, increasing competition between regions, ageing populations, shifting labour force participation, increase in labour productivity, high-migration flows and multiculturalism. The challenge is to identify measures to strengthen territorial cohesion throughout EU.

Three main conclusions based on the ESPON work so far can be drawn.

Strengthen of sector co-ordination.

Parallel to the Community sector model, a strong structuring of territories can be observed. However, the horizontal co-ordination between Community Institutions is relatively low with no aims at creating spatial coherence between all Community policies.

Horizontal policy integration is basic to achieving territorial cohesion and polycentric development.

Governance approach to EU policies.

Effective implementation of EU policy depends on the explicit co-operation of various national and sub-national government bodies and on their willingness to set their own priorities and develop their own agenda in accordance with EU priorities. EU needs to act as facilitator.

Vertical integration through governance processes is basic to achieving territorial coherence and polycentric development.

Polycentric development.

Generally polycentric development concerns Functional Urban Areas (FUA), their functional specialisation, the links and interaction between them and the morphological urban system. Main emphasis is on regions beyond the so-called Pentagon. A polycentric structure can contribute to the competitiveness of Europe as well as to cohesion between different territories. In Nordic context capitals, second- and third largest cities are characterised as FUAs.

Basic to achieving territorial cohesion and polycentric development is to make it more explicit in the context of the necessary policies and implementation instruments.

EU policy approach

As spatial policy-making is moving towards co-ordination of sector policies at each geographical level and thereby increasing the political complexity, EU needs to be the platform for formulation of policy aims and implementation instruments as well as a facilitator. Therefore interdisciplinary frameworks, governance and capacity need to be addressed.

Develop interdisciplinary policy framework.

The ESDP and ESPON territorial approach illustrates the high degree of sector orientation and the need to consider conflicts of goals/aims between various policies as well as the demand for a more integrated policy framework.

The lack of integration between different EU structural and sectoral policies can act as a barrier to the development of territorially integrated policies at the national and local levels. To exemplify references can be made to the following.

The conflicts of interests between rural and urban policies are a key obstacle to the development of integrated spatial initiatives. Transport has been used as an agent for structural and spatial development policy without regard to its other consequences like negative effects on territorial cohesion and environment. Another example is the demand for an integrated rural development policy, which should be tailored more appropriately to the diversity of territorial needs across rural Europe.

The findings of various ESPON reports suggest that a permanent institutionalized solution to the overcoming of cross-sectoral conflicts on spatial matters is needed. It could be an inter-institutional co-ordination committee responsible for the spatial coherence of Community policies, or the introduction of a spatial impact sheet or it could be obligatory territorial impact assessment / analysis of sector policies.

Facilitate incentive-based governance and further research.

In cases of limited funding the Structural Funds could be used to promote the goals and concepts of European spatial development policies in less direct ways such as by agenda setting policy discourses, funding studies, evaluations and promotion of new thinking. With regard to policy-cooperation a much more incentive-based approach is required creating a partnership between EU and the member states. Secondly the policy agenda can be influenced through knowledge production. It has been argued that the anticipation of territorial impacts requires constant observations by experts.

This calls for the setting up of a network with good knowledge of the operation of Community policies and which can react quickly on request,-- ESPON II ?

Set frameworks and build national, regional and local capacity.

For the implementation of the spatial policy aims, it is important to achieve understanding and commitment at all levels of governance. Actors at the EU, national or regional

levels must set a coherent framework within which local development initiatives best can add value to European spatial development aims.

Co-ordination should be secured at the highest levels where mainstream policies effectively can be integrated at the local level by local development agencies and so that vertical integration can be achieved between local, regional and national policies.

This relates in particular to rural policies that are expected to be more effective if the role of intangible factors such as governance, innovation, social capital and knowledge assets are acknowledged. Also in the field of transportation policy there are suggestions regarding the establishment of a comprehensive transport policy.

Focus of EU Structural Policies

At European level, EU Structural Policy is an important mean for directly targeting territorial cohesion and polycentric development. These development aims must be made explicit in the regulatory framework. Furthermore delimitation of eligible areas, programme tailoring and support of border regions need to be discussed.

Delimit appropriate eligible areas.

The current mechanisms often result in rather small eligible areas, which are unable to support a wider spatial perspective that includes neighboring urban and rural areas or to facilitate polycentric development. Funds should be allocated in a competitive way with no constraints other than that of maximizing the added value of the investment. An assessment of the urban system may facilitate a spatially sensitive delimitation as well as identifying most profitable activity.

These requests for more place-based policies, suggests for Structural Funds (SF) to focus more on territorial and sector co-ordination.

Tailor-made policies more appropriately to the diversity of territorial needs.

The European territory is characterized by a high degree of spatial diversity. The 2nd. CR (and the 3rd. CR as well) emphasized urban areas, rural areas, border regions and special geographical features like mountains, coastal and maritime areas and islands.

The tentative results of the various ESPON projects illustrate that European policies need to tailor spatial policies more appropriately to the diversity of the territorial needs within these typologies.

Support border regions through EU integration and cohesion policy.

The economic, social and political interaction between border regions and other regions, especially between EU-15 and AC-10 (the Accession Countries), plays a crucial role in realizing territorial balance within the enlarged EU territory. Phare and Interreg programmes have to be reviewed taking into account their contribution to territorial cohesion, territorial balance and trans-national polycentric development. EU integration and cohesion policies can be considered as catalysts, reducing barriers to factor mobility, which can also be crucial for increasing the speed of convergence among the cross-

border regions. The Interreg Baltic Sea Region and the Baltic Council co-operation should have experiences to contribute to such a revision.

Structural policies should further assist the establishment of trans-national functional regions by targeting measures of inter-regional co-operation, dismantling barriers between regions on both sides of borders and combining the networks of transport infrastructure on either side of the border.

Spatialisation of EU sector policies

Almost all European policies have direct or indirect spatial implications and awareness needs to be raised as regards these effects and their contribution to territorial cohesion and polycentric development. This however does also apply at national and regional level.

Stimulate regional actors for eEurope and symmetry of knowledge on ICT (Information and Communication Technologies).

A stronger potentiality seems to be for ITC than for transportations policies to influence the spatial structure of the economy. Broadband is important for better access to knowledge and information, however broadband structure development is marked orientated and leaves peripheral regions behind. The public sector as a major actor can play a significant role in stimulating the eSociety.

It is therefore recommended to establish a greater symmetry between public authorities and telecommunication providers and EU should participate in this process.

Improve transportation networks, especially in Accession Countries (AC).

A broadly accepted view is that transport network is a precondition for regional development but not sufficient to turn negative trends. Positive spin-off effects are largest in cases where existing transport flows can gain from improved infrastructure. For peripheral regions / AC-remote regions a gain in accessibility may bring significant progress to economic agents but it may as well result in decline due to new or better access to stronger competition. It is important to ensure a multitude of activities in different sectors in order to get regional benefits of transport projects / improvements.

In a Nordic context and on basis of a potential accessibility index by air, 2001 (EU27 = 100) the index is in general between 40-100 with few regions at lowest index 0-40 and only Capitals and second largest cities at index 100-120. Copenhagen and Scania is at index 120-140.

The potential accessibility index by rail 2001 (EU27=100) shows Scandinavia as peripheral as Northern part of Scotland, Ireland, Portugal, major part of Spain, Mediterranean islands and Greece with an index of 0-40. Only Scania and Denmark apart from the Northern part of Jylland have an index of 40-80.

With minor differences the same picture apply to potential accessibility by road, 2001 (EU27=100), both for the other EU countries mention above as for Norway, Sweden and Finland, which all have index 0-40 and Scania and Denmark have index 40-80.

A territorial based perspective on transport infrastructure, where transport structures for the whole European territory is seen in connection to each other, is therefore necessary. Emphasis needs to be put on the conflicts of interests between accessibility and sustainability. The harmonisation of marked conditions for the transport sector is needed.

Implement Natura 2000 also in AC.

Natural areas are under huge pressure in large parts of Europe and fragmentation of important larger structures is a serious problem, which needs to be addressed at all geography levels.

Natura 2000 should be strongly enhanced and other Europe-wide networks should be identified.

Focus on sustainable rural development and reduce marked price support.

The contradiction between the distribution of Pillar 1 support and economic cohesion objectives can be attributed to the historic focus of CAP (Community Agricultural Policy) on improving productivity and ensuring stable food markets.

Now priority should be on pillar 2, while reducing Market Price Support far more than envisaged in CAP midterm review. Rural Development Regulation should focus more on sustainable rural development.

Polycentric development at the European level

Polycentric development is the main concept translating the aim of territorial cohesion. At European scale the main issue is to stimulate development of regions beyond the Pentagon into becoming global integration zones. A more polycentric structure can contribute to European competitiveness and territorial cohesion. Targeted EU / SF assistance, transnational functional regions, specialized networks / urban areas, institutional settings and transportation links are all important elements for achieving a polycentric structure.

Strengthen urban growth poles outside the Pentagon.

There are several large urban regions having potential for becoming global integrations zones. Strongest candidates are however close to the Pentagon. Funds must be targeted towards counterbalancing tendencies of further concentration. The distribution of EU funding between regions is therefore important.

Structural funds measures should focus on the creation of strong urban growth poles outside the Pentagon and done in close relation to rural development (SAPARD / CAP) can support the objectives of polycentric development and balanced urban-rural development.

Further away from the Pentagon metropolitan regions should consider strategic alliances and cooperation as a way of improving a global competitiveness together.

In a Nordic context only Copenhagen and Stockholm are characterized as “European Engines” like Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Barcelona and Madrid, whereas Oslo, Helsinki and

Gothenburg are characterized as Strong MEGA (MEtropolitan Growth Area) like e.g. Athena and Belfast. Potential MEGA are Århus, Malmø and Bergen, like e.g. Edinburgh, Prague and Lissabon.

Tailor measures for different types of urban areas.

New objective 2 programme measures should go beyond issues like urban decay and reconstruction and support actions promoting specialization of larger polycentric regions. Many AC countries have large-scale industries in need for restructuring.

EU / SF should pay special attention to the bottlenecks of the old industrial regions and concentrate public funding on overcoming existing challenges.

Growth potential are particularly identified in central trans-national regions of AC. Capital cities dominate the economic geography here, but their integration function is often insufficient.

Difference in the performance of urban areas in EU-15 and AC suggests that a common approach across the whole of EU-25 will not be appropriate.

Promote the process of trans-national functional regions.

Structural policies need to encourage the process of trans-national functional regions by targeting measures of interregional co-operation, to dismantle barriers between regions and to combine networks of transport services and infrastructure (creation of trans-national regions, global integration zones (GIZ) or support regions facing joint challenges). A potential GIZ counterbalancing the Pentagon is e.g. the central European triangle comprising of old industrial regions, capitals and urban agglomerations (Warsaw, Krakow, Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Prague, Bratislava, Vienna, Budapest).

In a Nordic context it could be recommended to consider in which ways a further strengthening of the existing cooperation between the Nordic capitals and / or the cities represented by the term “The Baltic palette” could develop into a GIZ and as such contribute to a Nordic counterbalancing of the central European Pentagon.

Focus on actions should be on joint development strategies covering several cities or trans-national transportation corridors / links.

Support transnational networks of areas facing similar challenges.

Polycentric development is about the interaction between different urban nodes. Trans-national networks can be strengthened by supporting common transnational actions e.g. under the framework of Interreg. In the report “An agenda for a growing Europe” it is suggested that concentration of funds to regions lagging behind will make a substantial part of urban structures in EU-25 eligible for SF support.

SF measures should focus on the creation of strong urban growth poles outside the Pentagon.

Boost investment in knowledge where appropriate.

It is argued that more investment in higher education and Research & Development (R&D) is needed in order to obtain the level of knowledge required to reach a higher

growth level, which thereby may contribute to improving the competitiveness of the European economy. Clear disparities exist between regions across the European territory in terms of their capacity to undertake R&D and innovation.

It is recommended to develop substantial actions supporting the development of well-functioning regional innovation systems, with the objective of increasing the flow of knowledge generated through international networks throughout a region, however building on and strengthening existing regional potentials.

Invest in human capital & in education – towards equal living conditions.

Investment in human capital and education are important means in the strengthening of both territorial cohesion and polycentric development. With reference to on-going demographic trends and migrations trends, policies for more equal living conditions are thus much sought for.

Large parts of the Nordic Countries have experienced population decrease from 1996 to 1999. Sweden has experienced both negative migratory balance and negative natural balance, apart from Stockholm region, Gothenburg region and Scania, which have experienced population increase like Southeast Norway, South Finland and Denmark.

The reduction of regional and national differences in income and education is considered an effective means for stimulating symmetrical migration flows even within different age groups and social categories. All fields of EU policies are thus addressed by this recommendation.

Stimulate growth and innovation potentials – institutional settings.

In order to counterbalance the economic dominance of the Pentagon and support viable and dynamic functional urban areas more attention needs to be paid to innovation and strategies of knowledge creation, in particular within accession countries.

The establishment of new public (European) institutions should be used for promoting the specialization and growth of urban centers outside the Pentagon.

Increase sustainability, robustness and efficiency of transportation webs.

Trans-European networks (TEN) are important for the functions of city regions at the European level. A new agenda and more funding is needed for the creation of a new infrastructure network adapted to modern needs in term of efficiency, sustainability and cohesion. Relocation of transport streams and modal shifts from road to rail / waterways should be used to reduce pressure on overloaded transport corridors.

In Nordic context only Gothenburg had a turn over of 50 mill. T. in 2000 and Copenhagen and Helsinki had a turn over of 10 mill. T. However a potential exist in relation to the harbors in East Germany, Polen and the Baltic States, which also had a turn over of 10 mill. T.

Greater prominence of maritime transport in TENs and stepping up funding to increase rail capacity needs to be considered. Basic maritime transport infrastructure already exists although improvements are needed and can be made within a relative short period of time, whereas upgrading of the rail service is a longer-term solution.

Polycentric development at national and regional level

At national level the challenges are to make higher-order services available for all parts of the countries in order to stimulate economic competitiveness and to promote territorial cohesion. The urban system has an important role as it organizes important parts of economic life. Policies should focus at division of labour between various national nodes and the balance between the economically strongest regions and the rest of the urban structure. At regional level the challenge is to enhance regional strengths in order to stimulate welfare and economic development.

Support regional growth poles by strengthening specialization.

The creation of strong urban growth poles in small and medium sized cities in peripheral areas is needed particular in strongly mono-centric organised countries. For boosting second tier urban areas (provincial cities) to counterbalance first tier urban areas, special emphasis needs to be put on the functional specialization within the national urban system. In AC countries restructuring / diversification of the economic structure of peripheral rural areas are important.

Seen from a European level the number of MEGAs indicates a rather mono-centric urban system in the Nordic countries. However just looking at the number of transnational/ national FUAs (Norway = 4, Sweden = 12, Finland = 8 and Denmark = 2) plus an even larger number of regional/local FUAs, a potential is present for counterbalancing the mono-centricity.

Decentralisation of government services, creation of national institutions, and improvement of accessibility are examples on actions supporting a counterbalancing of the urban system.

Encourage regional partnerships and the co-operation of neighbouring cities.

In general, EU policies dealing with urban issues should turn current efforts towards the development of linkages between cities rather than the mere development of cities when ever optional. Neighbouring cities can co-operate strategically to explore potentials for forming common polycentric regions with joint strategies and visions.

Issues regarding the morphology and functions of urban areas, as part of SWOT analyses or as a horizontal topic, should be considered included in SF regulations for Obj.1 / 2 programmes. Guidelines for the understanding of polycentricity will be necessary.

Questions for further debate

On the background of the presented draft policy recommendations, what can NMR /NERP do in order to contribute to a balanced polycentric development – on a European level as well as at a Nordic level?

To which extent is vertical and horizontal policy integration implemented nationally in Nordic countries and what can be done to increase the integration as basis for territorial cohesion and polycentric development in the Nordic area?

Are there special / potential Nordic MEGA's or FUA's, which attracts attention or should be given special attention? E.g. the Nordic capitals and / or “the Baltic palette”? It is recommended to focus on actions like joint development strategies. Could this be an option for capitals and cities mentioned above, And if such strategies already exist are results then sufficient and if not, then in which way should there be improved?

Are there special potential co-operation relations, which can contribute to the creation of Global Integration Zones (GIZ) in the Nordic area?

Which implications in a Nordic context will an inter-institutional co-ordination committee, spatial impact sheets or Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) have? Politically as well as administratively?

It is suggested that SF focus more on territorial and sector coordination. What kind of SF guidelines should be suggested to the Commission to fulfil this objective?

It is also suggested, that SF should focus on the creation of strong urban poles outside the Pentagon. What kind of guidelines should SF contain to fulfil such an objective in a Nordic context?

It is suggested that SF assists the establishment of trans-national functional regions, especially between EU15 and AC10. Considering the experience Scandinavia has with Baltic cooperation, then are there specific actions, measures or guidelines, which should be suggested to the Commission?

Concerning eEurope it is suggested that EU should participate in establishing greater symmetry between public authorities and telecommunication providers (e.g. with regard to broadband development). How can EU participate?

On basis of a European approach, is a territorially based perspective on transport infrastructure in the Nordic countries in contrast to the present infrastructure and if so, then what can be done to adjust?

More emphasis is suggested to be placed on Rural Development Regulation (RDR). What can Nordic Countries do to support a coordination of RDR and SF?

When talking about polycentric development at national and regional level, are the only options in a Nordic context just decentralisation of government services, creation of national institutions and/or improvement of accessibility?