

EUROPEAN POLICIES WITH IMPACT ON TERRITORIAL PLANNING

Abstract

The European goal to have a smart, sustainable, and inclusive economy supposes, among others, to reduce regional disparities. The European policies that have impact on territorial planning are the ones regarding competition, trans-European networks of transportation and telecommunication, agriculture and rural development, environmental protection and tourism. In order to highlight how the proposed actions contributed to the fulfilment of EU goals in regional development we examined the impact of policies on territorial planning using case studies from Romania. The analysis indicated that there is an influence, but the changes that occurred did not transform always in functional relations from administrative point of view.

Keywords: regional development, territorial planning, European policies, Romania

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POLITICI EUROPENE CU IMPACT ASUPRA ORGANIZĂRII SPAȚIULUI

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Rezumat

Obiectivul european al dezvoltării unei economii inteligente, sustenabile și inclusive, presupune, între altele, o diminuare a disparităților regionale. Politicile europene care au impact asupra organizării spațiului sunt cele privind concurența, rețelele transeuropene de transport și telecomunicații, agricultură și dezvoltare rurală, protecția mediului și turism. Pentru a evidenția modul în care acțiunile propuse au contribuit la îndeplinirea obiectivelor UE în domeniul dezvoltării regionale am examinat impactul acestor politici asupra organizării spațiului folosind o serie de studii de caz din România. Analiza a evidențiat că există o influență, dar schimbările produse nu s-au transformat întotdeauna în relații funcționale din punct de vedere administrativ.

Cuvinte cheie: dezvoltare regională, organizarea spațiului, politici europene, România



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1. INTRODUCTION

The geographic territory of Europe comprises an area of around 10 million square kilometers, situating this continent at the end of the hierarchy compared with the other continents. Nonetheless, Europe concentrates a variety of cultures that impacted on development all over the world. The current economic framework although allowed European states to value their historic capital, was also very advantageous for emerging regions that leaped in economic growth and now challenge European producers within the global market's framework.

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic construct that is not entirely overlapped with the geographic area, but holds most of it. Currently EU embodies states with different characteristics although with common interests in certain areas. The overarching goal of this construct is to reduce the differences in such a way that each state maximizes its development potential and their interaction boosts synergetic processes enabling the sustainable growth of EU's competitiveness in a global context. The main means of achieving this goal is economic growth facilitated by the economies of scale enabled within the common market. Thus, the three fundamental goals of the European policy are:

- Economic and social cohesion;
- Conservation and management of natural resources and of the cultural heritage;
- More balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

The differences among states arise from various aspects, including territorial planning. Each state has its own approach in this area, approach that impacts on the effectiveness of some European policies. It could be inferred that, on their turn, European policies will also have an impact on territorial planning, impact that should enable the achievement of these policies' goals.

Territorial planning itself is an issue with relevance for entire union and since the early phases it was outlined the European Spatial Development Program that is aiming to achieve a balanced and sustainable development of the European territory. This policy is considered the framework for sector policies of the EU and of the Member States that have impacts on territorial planning.

Territorial planning is a practice with a long tradition that stem back in times with a very different social, economic, political and cultural background (Cândea et al., 2006). In modern times, this practice was conceptualized and developed by scientific approach that resulted in some major changes, but with a patchy implementation across European states. These changes were more related with shifts of the political regime, while the dynamic of the economy was less influential until recently.

Territorial planning has long ranging effects and its change occur gradually or not at all unless an authority based regime is enforced. It is more likely that other changes needed in the pursuit of European goals will be brought to life by adapting policy measures to the opportunities and restrains of each Member State's territorial planning model. This raises the question of how the territorial impact could be enhanced in order to boost the effectiveness of European policies in various sectors. By examining some of these policies and their territorial impact we are aiming to highlight relevant aspects for the improvement of policy making.

2. TYPOLOGY OF EUROPEAN MODELS OF TERRITORIAL PLANNING

Territorial processes are determined by the interaction between investors and population who balances job and residential areas. In the current economic setting of the EU the logic of the free market leads to urban expansion that threatens the functionality of natural systems with a potential harmful impact on long term wellbeing. Therefore territorial planning is an issue of public interest that justifies public intervention and is recognized as such by the Member States.

Territorial planning is also considered an issue of European relevance and great effort was invested in developing a model that allows the start of a process of convergence. This effort was commenced by an assessment of the existing models that concerned common elements and their advantages and restrains against the goals of the European policies. Further, building on the results of this assessment it was developed a typology of European territorial planning models in order to substantiate institutional changes that might be necessary.

Despite the small size of the European territory, compared with other continents, and shifting national boundaries, national territorial planning evolved independently resulting in a variety of approaches. For their analysis there were proposed not less than four typologies developed using the following criteria: family of nations (Newman and Thornley, 1996); traditions of territorial planning (Faludi, 2004); macro-regional perspective; and hyper-cube of territorial planning based on four dimensions.

The typology based on family of nations comprises four models – British, Napoleonic, German, and Scandinavian, distributed as it is presented in figure 1.

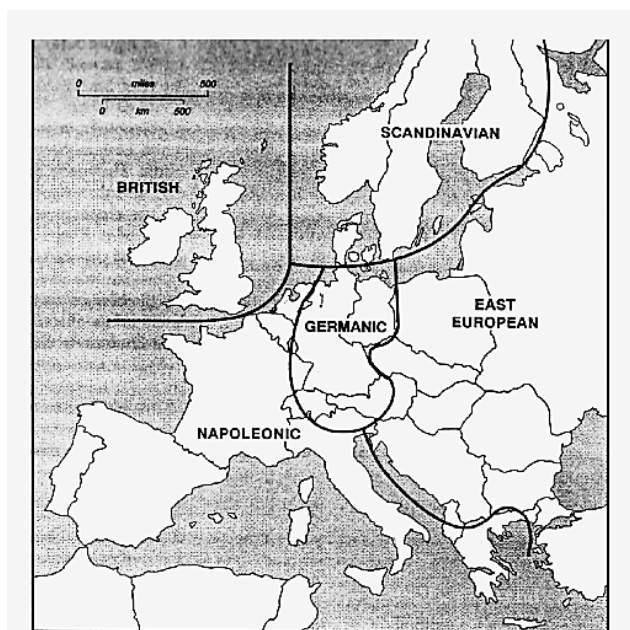


FIGURE 1 - TERRITORIAL PLANNING MODELS BASED ON FAMILIES OF NATIONS
 Source: Newman and Thornley, 1996

In the British model each request is assessed separately; local decisions are evaluated by a central control against national guidelines. There is a competitive tension between local authorities and claims, although in case of large projects the plans are negotiated considering their overall benefits. Planning, development, and control are tasks of different departments.

Within the Napoleonic model territorial planning tend to be aligned to a national code and to have hierarchy, with the possibility to express the development policy on its superior level.

The German model outstands by its rigorous regulation of territorial planning with a regional pattern of I supported by regulations, plans, guidelines, and agreements. There are significant differences among regions, although the national context is very strong.

The Scandinavian model is the most decentralized, since the national component consisting only in the establishment of responsibilities and involvement in planning. Local planning supposes negotiations between authorities and claimers.

The tradition based typology outlines four categories too, namely: regional; comprehensive-integrative; land-use based; and urbanism based (figure 2).

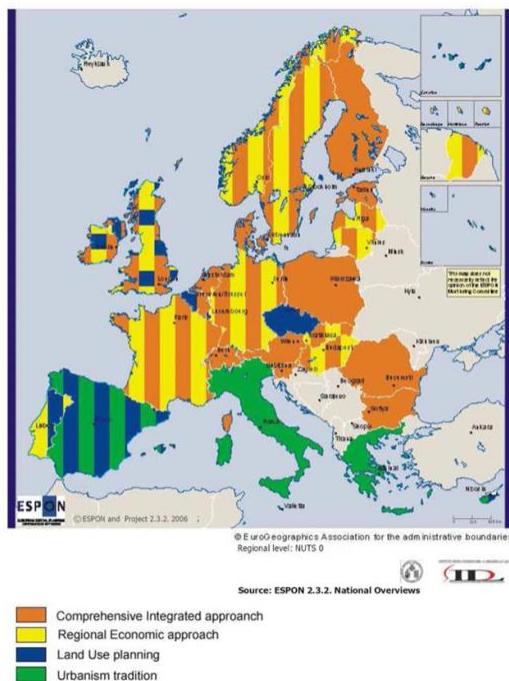


FIGURE 2 - TERRITORIAL PLANNING MODELS BASED ON TRADITIONS
Source: ESPON 3.2, 2007

The typology based on macro-regional perspective was outlined by the changes occurred under the influence of globalization being facilitated by more intense communication regarding territorial planning.

The models outlined by this criterion are the followings:

- North-western perspective: the model combines the patterns of German, French, and Dutch models, having a great influence on the entire European approach of territorial planning (Rivolin and Faludi, 2005);
- British/Irish perspective: focus on the linkage between territorial planning and land use planning;
- Northern perspective: territorial planning is developed at local level, with very few elements established at national level;
- Mediterranean perspective: is featured by complex and gradual changes being deployed as urban regeneration and local development.

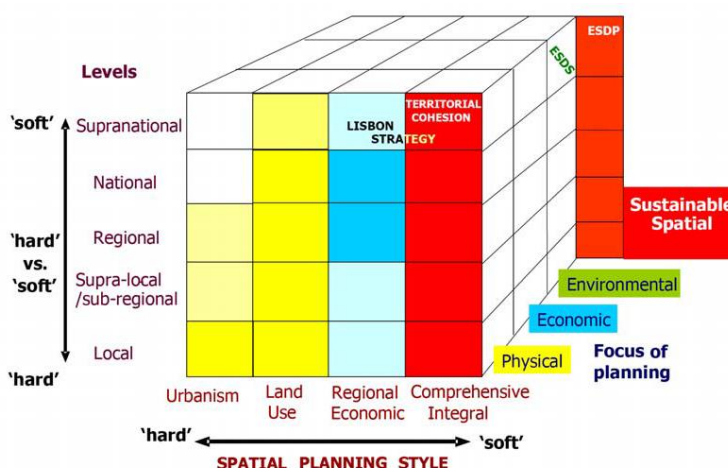


FIGURE 3 - THE FOUR DIMENSION HYPER-CUBE OF TERRITORIAL PLANNING
 Source: ESPON 3.1, 2005

The typology of the hyper-cube, takes in account four dimensions: level of approach; style of territorial planning (the styles are corresponding with the models identified based on traditions); role of planning; and sustainability (figure 3). There are outlined five models of territorial planning (Schön, 2005): regional-administrative; regional decentralization; regionalization by existing local authorities; regional autonomy; and regional federalization.

3. EU'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND TERRITORIAL PLANNING

EU gained the reputation of pioneering in the field of environmental protection. This is endorsed by important action in policy making, but also by a highly performing industry that produces clean technology equipment. The aspects of the environmental policy that have impact on territorial planning are: water protection; waste management; biodiversity preservation; and climate change.

Water protection supposes a number of investments in systems of distribution of tap water and collection of waste waters. These investments should be managed by local authorities being designed to serve communities. The same is true for waste management system (deposits, recycling facilities) that could be efficient only if they are optimized by taking in account the territorial distribution of communities and the amount of waste they generate. In this process it is necessary to be in accordance with the administrative units, since contract with waste management operators are made by their local authorities.

Another environmental policy issue that has a great relevance for territorial planning is biodiversity preservation. Its most common action is to designate protected areas that aim to protect habitats and species. Although this activity is controlled by local environmental agencies, the boundaries of protected

areas are not always respecting the administrative limits. Further, protected areas are to be managed by their own administration and the goals should be correlated with spatial development goals.

The nature conservation goals that should be considered in territorial planning are:

- Monitoring, assessment, and improvement of species and habitats conservation status of community importance;
- Efficient management of protected areas, including Natura 2000 sites.

For instance, in Romania, where nature's conservation status is one of the highest across Europe, there are around 500 Natura 2000 sites, along with tens of nationally designated protected areas (figure 4). Altogether they represent around one quarter of the country's territory, an area of 6 million hectares.

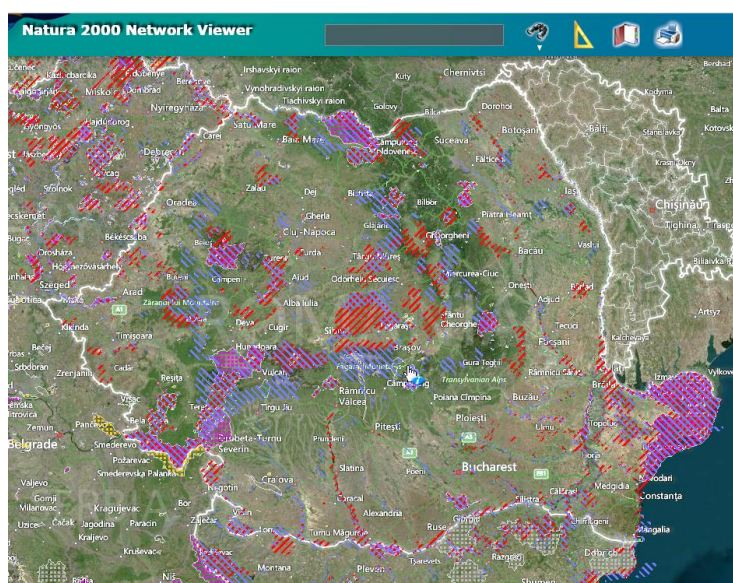


FIGURE 4 - PROTECTED AREAS IN ROMANIA
Source: Natura 2000 Network Viewer

A little proportion of them have established an administration based on a contract. Each protected area is composed by territories belonging to more local authorities. Most of these communities are envisaging the development of their infrastructure and this could have impact on the status of the protected areas. Further, local communities territorial plans should take in account the goals of the protected area that have included territories from their land.

Climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management suppose:

- Non-structural measures to mitigate the risks generated by climate change, such as floods, droughts, completed with infrastructure projects such as river arrangements and dams;

- Investments for reducing coastal erosion;
- Improving response capacity in situation of emergence by developing professional services, including volunteers too.

Reducing the emission of greenhouse gases in all sectors involves promotion of the use of renewable energy sources. Wind and solar energy are the most important forms to be developed, but the power plant for this energy sources are using large areas and this type of use could hinder the possibilities for other uses. This aspect should be carefully considered especially in the case of solar power, since the presence of photovoltaic panels. The largest solar projects cover areas of hundreds of hectares, each unit of power being produced in 1-3 hectares of land. The most intensive use of land in photovoltaic projects is recorded in EU's largest project of this type – Ferme solaire de Cestas. Figure 5 presents the situation of production capacity (in megawatts) and compared with the area covered by the largest solar projects in Europe. Excepting the project mentioned above, the rest of the projects are located in Spain.

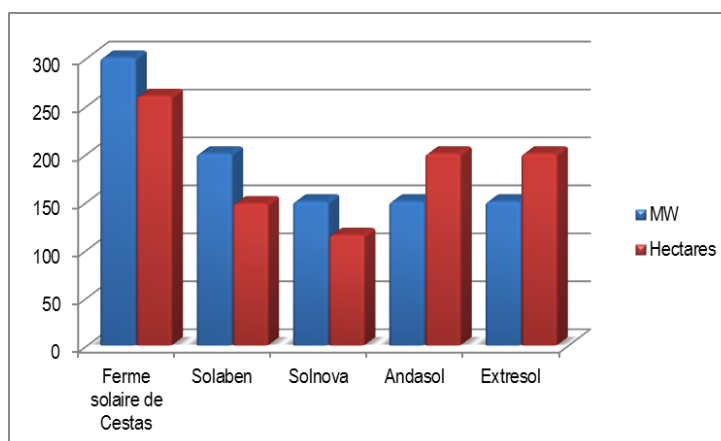


FIGURE 5 - THE LARGEST SOLAR PROJECTS IN EU
 Source: Solar Power Europe data

Further, production of biofuel raw materials like corn, rapeseed oil withdraws land from food crops. It is also important to take in account the fact that most of the so called energy crops are very intensive users of minerals from soil and high yields will necessitate to apply intensive technologies that use large amounts of fertilizers and pesticides with the potential to create harmful effects on the fertility of soils and to diffuse as pollution through surface and ground water. At EU level it is estimated that 1.0-1.5 million hectares could be considered for energy crops.

CONCLUSIONS

Europe's territory although is amongst the smallest one compared with other continents, could be characterized as being varied from at least two points of view: natural organization and social organization.

Natural organization resulted in the presence of all forms of relief in balanced proportions supporting a range of ecosystems representing eleven bio-geographical regions. Although diverse, the natural organization does not create major restriction for arrangements that allow the use of resources and development of settlements.

Social organization of the space resulted also in a variety of concepts and principles that were grouped in families, traditions and other criteria. The process of European integration seeks to find a concept that could be applied all other the Member States, although such issues raise very sensitive aspects that influence administration on all levels. That is why current European policies consider the territorial planning as it is, but place their goals considering the processes that are of relevance at that scale. Thus, the implementation of these policies reveals the changed needed in territorial planning or at least the aspect that should be considered more carefully in order to achieve the goals.

A closer look was given for the case of environmental policies' impact on territorial planning. It revealed that almost all aspects of environmental protection are depending on territorial planning from data collection to renewable energy valuation. A special focus should be on nature preservation since the accomplishment of conservation goals necessitates the collaboration among communities belonging to different administrative units that should coordinate their development projects involving impact on the biodiversity.

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