

KEYNOTE SPEECH
SECRETARY GENERAL JIRI BURIANEK:
ESPON HIGH-LEVEL WORKSHOP ON
"EUROPEAN POLICY ORIENTATIONS ON TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT"

20 FEBRUARY 2017

BRUSSELS

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Ms Raugze,

It is my great pleasure to be here with you today to discuss the strategic orientation of ESPON for the year 2018.

In particular I am happy to see in this set up colleagues from the European Parliament, several DGs of the European Commission, Eurostat, the European Investment Bank, associations from cities and regions as well as representatives of the national level. This is truly a perfect gathering of the key stakeholders to identify the current and upcoming policy processes that could be supported by the research and outreach activities of ESPON.

As you are aware, the European Committee of the Regions is (CoR) is a consultative body. As such it has to be able to anticipate the key political ideas and crucial policy processes in order to be on time with contributing with the regional and urban angle to the political debate. In this respect, ESPON has been always of invaluable help for our

members in providing the territorial evidence for the preparation of CoR opinions and the work of our networks and platforms.

On behalf of the administration, and also on behalf of our members, I would like to stress that the CoR would like to continue the strategic co-operation with ESPON in order to be able to keep on relying on the territorial evidence provided by ESPON.

In 2018 and the years to come the formulation and roll-out of **Cohesion Policy beyond 2020** is one of the key issues for European cities and regions. Cohesion Policy is one of the most visible EU policies at local and regional level, demonstrating the benefits of Europe to its citizens and cities and regions are also the primary beneficiaries of EU cohesion policy. It is not surprising that this topic features also very prominently in the background paper circulated by ESPON for this workshop.

The CoR is about to position itself on this crucial matter with the elaboration of its **own-initiative opinion on the future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020**, in order to channel the concerns of European cities and regions into the interinstitutional debate on the future Cohesion Policy, which is currently gaining momentum. However, the debate will surely not end with the adoption of the CoR's opinion in May this year.

Regions and cities will closely follow the developments and the CoR is as much expected as committed to react on the policy options to be presented by the Commission later this year. In this regards, ESPON's upcoming Territorial Reference Framework is expected to shape the debate on the territorial orientation of Cohesion Policy by feeding in with the elaboration of long term development of the European territory.

The CoR welcomes very much ESPON's initiative reflected in the background paper to put the formulation of **EU Territorial Agenda post 2020** as a key policy process for 2018. The CoR has already asked in its **opinion on the Territorial Vision 2050: What future?** More than 15 years after the European Spatial Development Perspective adopted in Potsdam in 1999 the European Union needs a new territorial vision and the CoR calls for a broad Europe-wide consultation on the future territorial vision of the European Union building on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and reiterated its call for a White Paper on Territorial Cohesion. In this respect, according to this CoR Opinion the territorial should:

- Translate the concept of territorial cohesion as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty into operational policy guidelines;
- Go beyond a merely spatial development perspective;
- Address the key territorial challenges of the European Union;
- Give direction to all EU policies with a territorial dimension and is linked and consistent with cohesion policy and its measures co-financed by the ESIF;
- Provide orientation for all EU policies with a territorial dimension;
- Be linked with the future long term economic, environmental and social objectives of European policies; and
- Be based on the principle of subsidiarity and multi-level governance.

With regard to the **Urban Agenda for the EU**, which was agreed at the Informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Matters last year in May in Amsterdam, the CoR will implement its follow-up strategy on the Agenda. CoR members are involved in the thematic partnerships and the

CoR also cooperates closely with the European Parliament, in order to mainstream the Urban Agenda throughout European Parliament texts, as well as with other Institutions, particularly the European Commission, as regards the implementation of the new Integrated Investment Instruments. Moreover, the CoR will continue to highlight the importance of ensuring that the Urban Agenda is consistent with the EU's Better Regulation Agenda.

As a matter of fact, from the CoR's point of view, measuring the territorial impact of the proposals of the Commission is a powerful tool to feed into the EU policy making and an inevitable prerequisite of the implementation of the Better Regulation Agenda. The CoR sees itself also as best placed player in the Institutional arena to promote the use of the existing tools for territorial impact assessment and stimulate the further development of the methodologies.

To summarise, from our Committee point of view we should built on setting a number of **joint targets to be reached in 2018** and the years to come which could entail the following elements:

- Joint seminars and conferences as already done in the past;
- Joint reports on matters of mutual interest;
- Joint ventures such as the Territorial Impact Assessment (shortly: TIA) and the close co-operation in the inter-service group on Territorial Impact Assessment of DG REGIO;
- Joint Training courses (for instance on Territorial Impact Assessment) or as part of the Massive Open Online Courses.

Over the last years we have seen the TIA Quick Scan tool developed considerably. Having in mind the CoR's experience with the Quick Scan

tool, the CoR would like to see improvements of the tool on five key points:

- Increase number of permanent indicators and types of regions for a more reliable and focused TIA with a stronger focus on the governance indicators;
- Create a guidebook on how to import additional indicators into the tool;
- Establish the links between indicators;
- Research the possibilities for the presentation of the progression over time;
- Research the possibility to implement the multi-vector system (sustainable-short term, exogenous – endogenous and multiplier – substitution effects) similar to the one from Target TIA methodology.

In addition, we propose to develop an ex-post TIA methodology. The Quick Scan methodology is limited to ex-ante assessments and as the CoR is also assessing legislation that is already implemented, it would be interesting to see a TIA methodology proposed for this type of assessment. TIA ex-post methodology or approach could examine different combinations of modules such as the targeted consultations and case studies.

Finally, let me say that, as the data on the urban level is limited or not available, we would also like to see a new approach or a methodology developed to help us assessing the effects of the EU legislation on different types of cities. This could be done **through peer-groups**,

expert group meeting, or other new methodologies that could be developed by ESPON.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and discussing with you your specific ideas on the current and upcoming the policy processes to be supported by ESPON.

Thank you all for your attention!