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The EU Territorial Agenda & its Action Programme: How to reinforce the performance

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Content

Preface by the Swedish EU Presidency	3
Summary and conclusions.....	4
1 Putting things into context.....	7
2 Reflections on possible ways forward	10
2.1 Relation to the EU Commission	11
2.2 Cross-sectoral dialogue	13
2.3 Be concrete!.....	15
2.4 Capitalisation: Play up your successes.....	17
2.5 The co-ordination of actions and their link to the Agenda	19
2.6 The larger picture & new challenges.....	21
3 Policy conclusions.....	24

Annex 1 – List of interviewees

Annex 2 – Recommendations made by the actions of the Action Programme

Preface by the Swedish EU Presidency

The Swedish EU Presidency has during the second half of 2009 worked with the following three priorities in the area of Territorial Cohesion related matters:

- A follow up and assessment of the First Action Programme implementing the EU Territorial Agenda.
- The Baltic Sea Strategy as a test case for a macro regional development approach based on the principles of Territorial Cohesion.
- Learning and knowledge development on how to make best use of every regions territorial potential.

This report summarises the findings according the first of these three priorities, with the aim to give new momentum to the Territorial Agenda work. The report is not only giving a lot of concrete suggestions on how to proceed with the First Action Programme, but furthermore on how to develop the whole process around the Territorial Agenda in a more efficient way.

The Swedish EU Presidency will in its Presidency Conclusions come up with some clear proposals stemming from this assessment report and the dialogue around it. The conclusions will in beforehand be discussed with the coming three EU Presidencies of Spain, Belgium and Hungary. The question on necessary steps on how to proceed will then be particularly addressed.

Summary and conclusions

The territorial dimension of policy making has been a European level issue for at least twenty years though the process has in the main been driven by intergovernmental co-operation between the Member States. After a period of considerable success however the intergovernmental co-operation model has now reached a point where a period of reflection, leading to either reorientation or reinforcement may be order.

Following the so-called 'Rotterdam Process' the Territorial Agenda was adopted at the informal ministerial meeting in Leipzig in May 2007. During the Portuguese Presidency in the second half of 2007, this was followed by an agreement over the Action Programme. Two years into this programme, territorial cohesion is now visibly gaining ground as an EU Policy field and within the context of intergovernmental co-operation the Member States have decided to renew the Territorial Agenda during the Hungarian Presidency in 2011.

This is then an opportune moment for reflection on what has been achieved by the Action Programme thus far and whether a reorientation and/or reinforcement of the work is either necessary or likely to be useful. Therefore Sweco has been commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communication to study the activities under the Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU and from there to develop proposals for possible future steps.

Through document studies, interviews with various stakeholders and an expert workshop (of European level experts) in the first month of the Swedish EU Presidency, Sweco has produced an overview of both the degree to which actions under the Action Programme have progressed and the nature of the actions themselves. On this basis overall conclusions and proposals for further work were developed. These have been commented by various NTCCP members and were discussed at the NTCCP meeting in Stockholm (20 October 2009). We would like to thank all those who have shared their views and contributed to the discussions. These contributions have been vital for the development of the present report.

The general impression is that the Action Programme builds on a long success story and that a significant amount of activity is currently ongoing under the Action Programme. It remains necessary however to re-create the initial momentum and to focus on the actual use of the work carried out. In order to do so, the question "What do we want to do with the Territorial

Agenda?" needs once more to be clearly answered and this answer needs to be supported by all the Member States.

The policy context is changing as the EU Commission is broadening and enlarging its role through the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy, with EU competence now provided for in the Lisbon Treaty. As such then intergovernmental co-operation needs to define its position on the question of co-operation with the EU Commission. A combining of forces here may offer the best opportunity to move the territorial dimension debate forward.

The need to maintain dialogue with other sectors to strengthen the territorial dimension in various policy fields remains a core issue in respect of the Territorial Agenda. Throughout the Action Programme a considerable number of recommendations on this point have been developed. Notwithstanding this, however, actual dialogue has not really taken off. Greater emphasis on actual dialogue with the non-believers is needed here. For this task reference to the advances made the last twenty years should be used to convince remaining sceptics of both the importance and practicality of pressing on with the Territorial Agenda. This relates to both the European and the national levels. Particular emphasis should be placed on those sectors which are closely related. EU Cohesion Policy should, moreover, receive special attention as the debate on the future of EU Cohesion Policy and its territorial dimension has started and provides a good opening for further dialogue. Thus far, the potential usefulness of Territorial Impact Assessments have been discussed though it may now be time to focus discussion more specifically on actual territorial impacts and do so in relation to the relevant policy processes in various sectors.

It is increasingly important to demonstrate the benefits and added value of the territorial dimension and the Territorial Agenda work. Therefore, greater emphasis should be placed on delivery mechanisms and governance aspects and rather less on further discussions of further deepened insights on territorial developments. Defining the relationship between the Territorial Agenda and that of macro regional strategies like that in the Baltic Sea could also prove to be useful elements in this context. Furthermore, the exchange of experience on concrete implementation measures in the Member States could help to stimulate the application of the Territorial Agenda not only at EU level but also in the Member States.

As noted previously, much is currently going on with regard to the application of the Territorial Agenda and the various actions of the Action Programme. Little of this is known outside the circle of those directly involved. As such, communication of the aims, results and achievements of this process needs to

be improved at both European and the Member States levels. The use of communication opportunities at events held by various related stakeholders thus needs to be used more vigorously.

In addition, strengthening the co-ordination of the Action Programme remains a priority. To achieve the ambitious aims of the Action Programme without additional budgetary or legal resources, a better focusing of activities and a more clearly targeted approach in respect of the main addressees is required. Responsibility for driving the Action Programme currently resides with the EU Presidencies it may however be necessary to consider the introduction of support mechanisms which strengthen the management of the Programme and promote continuity over a longer period of time. Furthermore, a synthesis of the main results, key messages and achievements of the single actions would undoubtedly support the development of a more coherent view on the Action Programme.

Last but not least the Action Programme needs to strengthen its responsiveness to developments in related policy fields and to new themes emerging from political agendas across Europe. Targeted efforts with regard to the future of EU Cohesion Policy, the relationship between the Territorial Agenda and both economic recovery and climate change may thus be timely here.

For all of the areas mentioned the report provides more detailed analysis and proposals. Overall, intergovernmental co-operation on the Territorial Agenda is driven by a network with access to significant expertise and links to various decision making processes. Surely this network has reason enough to be self-confident and would be well advised to act that way. Furthermore, given the framework conditions of the Action Programme a more focused approach may deliver better results than an overly ambitious one. Most importantly, greater emphasis needs to be placed on delivery mechanisms. What is needed is action and in particular a greater level of interaction with the relevant decision makers rather than additional knowledge production and further prolonged discussion among friends.

1 Putting things into context

For an understanding of the nature of actions and the progress made in the implementation of the Action Programme it is important to view it in its proper context, namely, the work of the Action Programme is building on two decades of success in strengthening the territorial dimension in policy making.

In 1989 the French EU Presidency invited the national ministers responsible for spatial planning to an informal meeting in Nantes. At this meeting Jacques Delors, then President of the European Commission, invited delegates to formulate a vision for the European territory. During the last two decades that followed both the work of the Member States and the EU Commission have made significant progress in placing the territorial dimension firmly on the Agenda. The latest results of joint efforts are the Rotterdam process leading to the Territorial Agenda and subsequently to its Action Programme, the inclusion of territorial cohesion in the Lisbon Treaty and the emerging debate about the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy, including the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion.

At present, future developments in this field depend in the main on two aspects (a) the future of EU Cohesion Policy, and (b) the impetus of the ongoing intergovernmental work on the Territorial Agenda.

Given this broader context, it appears that the Action Programme is part of some sort of “Interim Package”. Continuing the processes begun in Rotterdam and maintaining movement in the territorial policy debate at the European level remain the essential driving forces here.

The detailed interpretation, however, differs depending on the actor and the policy focus. In principle, we can distinguish between four possible frameworks:

- **Member States’ Positioning.** Following the ESDP process and the way that document had been elaborated, the Member States wanted to show with the Territorial Agenda that intergovernmental co-operation remains the way forward in terms of European territorial policy. This means that the Commission should retain only limited competences highlighting the view that intergovernmental approaches are more appropriate for many of the aspects of the work involved. The fact that a substantial part of the implementation work has to be carried out by and within the Member States and furthermore, that the Member States can also use this approach to try to guide the Commission Services on a number of points

are additional arguments in favour of this interpretation. Following this line of thought, the main purpose would be to show the Member States' power of action to actually move the dossier substantially forward.

- **In Anticipation of an EU Competence.** With the delay of the EU competence in relation to territorial cohesion, and also the delay of the EU Green Paper on the subject, there was a strong need to 'keep the boat floating'. Intergovernmental processes were simply easier to launch than those relating to the Commission Services. Accordingly, the main purpose of the Action Programme would be to bridge the gap until Territorial Cohesion has been established as an EU Competence, i.e. the new Treaty has been adopted and the Commission has settled into its new role in the field. Considering the larger context, the intergovernmental work started in Rotterdam contributes also to shaping the EU Competence.
- **Domestic Opportunities.** Various discussions point to the fact that the Territorial Agenda as well as the Action Programme are to a large extent shaped by domestic positioning processes in individual Member States. This may result in the downplaying of the 'European' view. At the same time however a lot of the work already undertaken highlights the reality that the Member States have to do their homework on the territorial dimension of various sector policies etc. Thus, the main purpose of the Action Programme here would be to become more visible in domestic processes working towards the creation of a more prominent position for territorial thinking in policy making more generally.
- **There Can Never Be Enough Evidence.** The elaboration of the ESDP set in motion the processes that would eventually lead to the creation of ESPON which was tasked with providing evidence for European territorial policies. During the drafting of the Territorial Agenda, ESPON material has been constantly at hand and has thus been used extensively. ESPON could not however provide answers to all questions raised. Therefore, the purpose of the Action Programme would also be to collect additional evidence and to further strengthen ESPON.

Taken together we can thus see a triangulation of ambitions behind the Action Programme (a) Member State Positioning processes at domestic and European level (b) bridging the gap until DG Regio can step in as a powerful actor, and (c) providing additional evidence for better policy making.

Looking at things in greater detail, four more concrete aims of the Action Programme are outlined in the Interim Report on the Action Programme during the Slovenian Presidency (29 April 2008):

1. To implement the Territorial Agenda in the area of competence of the Ministers at EU and Member State level;
2. To influence key EU dossiers and to give a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies;
3. To strengthen multi-level territorial governance at the EU and Member State level incl. regional and local stakeholders;
4. To compare and assess the territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the EU and Member States from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable development.

These are high flying ambitions all of which are to be fulfilled without any budgetary provision or even earmarking within existing budgets. Indeed, neither in the Member States nor at the Commission level has budgetary provision been made to implement the Territorial Agenda or to seriously empower the corresponding Action Programme. In some Member States budgetary provisions have been made for working with the Territorial Agenda and its Action Programme in the Member State. Thus ESPON appears to be the only financed EU-wide “activity” which is thematically related to the Territorial Agenda, and on which the various actors involved in the processes can exercise some influence.

This context of mixed ambitions and budgetary limitations thus needs to be seriously considered when discussing what has happened thus far and what is possible and/or realistic in terms future steps forward.

2 Reflections on possible ways forward

The work on the Action Programme builds on two decades of promoting the territorial dimension in policy making. Over this period a network of senior officials with great expertise and bonds to other European and national policy processes has emerged, e.g. formalised as the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP). This network – and in particular its members’ expertise and influence in other decision making processes – is the main reason for the success story thus far. In an environment without designated budgetary resources or formal instruments designed to increase the territorial dimension in policy making, the energy, good arguments and persuasive power of this network have been decisive.

Currently however it seems that the processes related to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda have lost some of their momentum. To go from talking of implementation to actually doing it is a complex process which has spread insecurity among the people concerned.

- Territorial cohesion is now established as an issue for the EU Commission and thus some of the issues covered by the Territorial Agenda are finding new (additional) “owners”. With the formalisation of territorial cohesion as an EU competence, responsibility at the Member State level can partly shift to other ministries or departments – particularly once the Lisbon Treaty is finally adopted.
- Current developments in respect of the emerging new global economy and in the vagaries of political priorities contrive to shift the attention of day to day policy making away from the topics of the Territorial Agenda. For instance with the global recession, territorial policies are easily sidelined if they cannot directly relate to the latest developments.
- There seems to be a shift in the personnel dealing with the Territorial Agenda, from people driven by the content to people focusing on the proper administration of the related processes. Thus the network described above is itself changing.
- It is no longer clear whether all Member States are still fully committed to the Territorial Agenda and its processes. This weakens the process, in particular when it concerns an EU Presidency. The declining commitment could e.g. be observed by the missing follow-up on the points agreed upon at the informal ministerial meeting under the French Presidency and during

the meeting organised by the Czech Presidency. To maintain political momentum, maybe the Troika needs to play a stronger role.

In conclusion, there is a considerable risk that the Territorial Agenda processes will wither. At the same time, this is also an opportune moment to reflect on the situation and reorient it. Overall, it will be necessary to re-establish political momentum, e.g. by improving the timing and links to other major policy debates, and to ensure that all Member States stay on board.

The following six aspects have been identified as key areas in that work.

2.1 Relation to the EU Commission

For a long time the territorial dimension in policy making has been pushed by intergovernmental co-operation between the EU Member States. They have also asked the Commission to approach the field of territorial cohesion. During the past decades the Commission has launched various activities in the field. With the Lisbon Treaty, territorial cohesion has become part of the Commission's competences, which implies a change in the arsenal of available instruments.

In general there are various – partly divergent – views on the relationship between the intergovernmental work carried out in the field and that of the Commission, particularly in respect of the evolution of these different processes and their preferred developments.

The questions in respect of the territorial dimension are not solely pursued through intergovernmental co-operation and the Commission. There is a wide range of stakeholders at various geographical levels which are important players in the work with territorial cohesion.

Differing foci: The Commission as a significant player in this field does not replace intergovernmental co-operation on territorial issues. Indeed, the approach taken in the Territorial Agenda is broader than territorial cohesion as it is currently framed by the Commission. The stress put on horizontal (cross-sector) co-operation in the Territorial Agenda is but one example for this. At the same time however the work being undertaken on the Baltic Sea Strategy indicates that the Commission is now placing greater focus on horizontal co-ordination.

Different processes: Furthermore, clear differences remain in the approaches adopted by the Commission and in the process of

intergovernmental co-operation. The intergovernmental co-operation process is for example better positioned to (a) take action in the Member States, (b) influence various policy processes within the Member States, (c) facilitate learning among the Member States, (d) make use of the Open Method of Co-ordination, and (e) formulate demands in respect of the Commission and so boost not only DG Regio but also the other DGs and the co-ordination among them. The Commission on the other hand may have a better opportunity to (a) use its apparatus to strengthen common views, (b) influence more directly both EU and national policies, and (c) boost intergovernmental co-operation.

Relay race: Last but not least, both the Commission's and the intergovernmental processes are fragile. Ensuring that both remain up and running offers the possibility that one or other will always be in a position to carry forward the baton if the other is experiencing difficulty. As such then ensuring that both processes are alive is a form of risk management to ensure that the notion of territorial awareness continues to exert influence.

Clear link: It is clearly the case that effective linkage and good team work between the intergovernmental and the Commission processes are necessary. This is particularly so in terms of influencing other policies and in respect of communication with the outside world, both sides can benefit from each other in this respect.

➡ To further the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, it is necessary to establish a common view on the relationship between the intergovernmental and the Commission process in the field. This concerns both the areas in which the Commission process can be of 'added value' to the intergovernmental work and the unique potential of intergovernmental co-operation. In a first step, a position paper shared by all members of the NTCCP could be elaborated.

➡ Forces could be combined to encourage a broad strategic debate. A first step might be the promoting of joint events between the Commission and Member States on the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy (including the results of the hearing on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion) and the Territorial Agenda (including the achievements of the Action Programme). Furthermore, relevant Commission activities could also be used to present the progress of the Territorial Agenda and its Action Programme.

2.2 Cross-sectoral dialogue

One of the major features of the Territorial Agenda is the cross-sectoral dialogue which is necessary to accommodate the territorial dimension of policy making. This applies to all levels of administration and policy making. Various initiatives have been undertaken in this respect at both the EU and national level. Experience of action 2.4 (ministerial contributions to key dossiers) moreover illustrates the challenges faced in making progress at the political level. At the same time there are some policy fields which are more easily approached than others.

Permanent strategic dialogue: First of all there is need for creating a permanent strategic dialogue at working level between the ministries in charge of territorial policies and those in charge of various sector policies. This may also include the organisation of cross-sector high-level meetings as it was launched by the French Presidency in 2000 with Transport Ministries and as was stated in 2001 under the Belgian Presidency.

Territorial & urban: The Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter on urban issues have been elaborated in (close) co-operation with each other, with the meetings at which they were adopted being held back-to-back. This enabled the strengthening of the dialogue between urban and territorial policies at the European level. As both fields are closely related and have some issues in common further emphasis on co-operation between them may be a relatively easy step to take.

Territorial & regional: The relationship between territorial policies and the Structural Funds is another obvious cross-sectoral link which becomes even stronger through the debate on territorial cohesion within European regional policies. Initial steps have already been taken in this regard within the context of action 2.4. It may be worthwhile then to allocate a higher priority within the implementation of the Territorial Agenda to this work. The work of action 1.3 focusing on the National Strategic Reference Frameworks may also be of interest with regard to influencing the guidelines for these types of documents in respect of future Cohesion Policy. Increasing the emphasis on influencing regional policy is of particular importance here as the debate on the next round of the Structural Funds is now being launched with a more territorial approach being supported e.g. by the report which Fabrizio Barca prepared on request of Danuat Hübner (at that time Commissioner for Regional Policy) in April 2009: "An Agenda for a Reformed Cohesion Policy". As territories across the EU are rather different and have different potentials and challenges, the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy deserves particular attention.

National level: It has to be acknowledged that various Member States have undertaken a number of initiatives in respect of cross-sectoral dialogue at the national level. In some Member States even the various questionnaires related to the single actions under the Action Programme have facilitated dialogue between different sectors. An understanding of what is actually going on at the national level is, however, mainly anecdotal in nature, as no clear and authoritative reporting currently takes place. A reporting on national activities in the field of cross-sectoral dialogue (including an exchange of experiences), established as part of the NTCCP meetings could however help to provide a preliminary picture of the actual progress made. In the long-run, this may also stimulate the deepening of cross-sectoral dialogues in the Member States.

Timing: Establishing links to events and developments in other policy sectors facilitates the desired dialogue. Highlighting the territorial dimension and the potential 'added value' of territorial views in relation to current policy developments in other sectors and approaching them with a view to including short inputs at their events could be one way of encouraging dialogue here. Thus the timing of when to approach other sectors is crucial. Initial steps in this direction have already been taken e.g. by presenting an input to the hearing on the Green Paper *Adapting to Climate Change in Europe* (action 2.4).

Confidence: Over the last two decades a wide range of good arguments and a valuable expert network have been built up. Based on this, other stakeholders and sectors can be approached with a high level of self-confidence. Indeed, often it is not more evidence that is needed but rather more self-confidence in the own position. In this context, the Commission could perhaps take on an inspirational role, e.g. with reference to the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Territorial impacts: In addition to broadening the debate on the territorial dimension to include policies which are already closely related, other policy sectors must also be considered. Transport, agricultural and energy policies have clear territorial implications and thus also need to be approached. This requires targeted efforts, political timing, self-confidence and good arguments for which the assessment of territorial impacts could serve as a useful point of departure.

Non-governmental stakeholders: The cross-sector dialogue should not only concern the formal governmental system but should also involve non-governmental stakeholders. Good progress has already been made here in terms of signing agreements with selected stakeholders under action 3.2.

Collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders could however be further developed both at the EU and national levels.

➤ To further the implementation of the Territorial Agenda and strengthen the cross-sectoral approach it may be good to start with those aspects closest at hand. More emphasis on the co-ordination and timing of policy events and meetings during a Presidency, e.g. with the urban and regional policy sectors, could be a useful starting point here.

➤ Clear emphasis should be given to influencing future Cohesion Policy both at the European and national level. If possible, concerted action in respect of the highest decision making level within DG Regio may prove to be a useful strategy here. Furthermore, at European level it may be sensible to extend the 'campaign' beyond DG Regio.

➤ As for other EU policy sectors, the identification of key arguments and the timing of strategic dialogues remain fundamentally important. Primary priority should be given to the identification of events and policy developments at which the importance and 'added value' of the territorial dimension can be presented. This could then be catalogued in a timetable showing when to address which policy sector.

➤ Another step which could already be taken is that relating to the need for a better level of exchange between the Member States on what they actually do at the national level to strengthen cross-sectoral dialogue. This may also include a short description of the efforts undertaken in each Member State which can then be publicised on the website.

2.3 Be concrete!

Concrete results which are usable and which illustrate the benefits of the work undertaken in respect of the Action Programme are demanded. This is so because many papers on the subject have the tendency to remain at such a level of generality that often breeds familiarity and the feeling that nothing new is really happening. The reasons for this are many. In some cases not enough information on concrete examples or proposals is released. In addition, the need to encompass the entire European Union with its diversity of territorial development dynamics and governance structures etc., implies that a rather high level of abstraction is seen as necessary. Last but not least, the constant challenge remains to strike an acceptable balance between concreteness and (political) acceptance.

Exchange of experiences: Instead of general recommendations on how things could be done, concrete examples might be useful here. Showing clearly what has been done, what the effects have been and what lessons can be learned may be more useful. This could address national policies but should also cover concrete examples on the ground.

Benchmarking each other: Instead of just reading and listening, it may be helpful to actually consider a framework where colleagues from other countries step in and have a closer look at how things work in other countries. A very simple form of mutual review could thus help facilitate the learning process, or even facilitate benchmarking. The emphasis here has however to be on a hands-on-approach rather than simply involving external experts to conduct comparative reviews.

Macro regions: To some degree the demand to retain a European view makes it difficult to be very specific. Here the formation of “coalitions” on e.g. macro regions to elaborate a topic in greater detail and with a clear link to future implementation could be a way to facilitate this. Clearly the idea of macro regions does not necessarily work for all parts of Europe and needs to be built on territorial functionalities. Working with macro regions could however prove to be a suitable element for the Action Programme and could help facilitate links with other policy developments.

Territorial impact appraisals: The territorial effects of various sector policies, at any geographical level, remain a key issue. The illustration of concrete examples and actual experience of how to approach this in policy making terms could contribute to the raising of awareness. Based on targeted recommendations for various types of territorial impact appraisals can be discussed.

Collection of good arguments and the use of case studies: In order to be better prepared for various types of dialogues a collection of good arguments and in particular of good case studies illustrating the ‘added value’ of the territorial dimension to other policy sectors could prove to be a useful tool.

Governance: While a lot of the work within the Action Programme seems to focus on factual information, it appears that implementation is much more an issue of governance processes. Thus it may be worthwhile to put more emphasis on governance processes rather than continuing in the quest to expand the body of factual territorial knowledge.

➤ To further the implementation of the Territorial Agenda much of the work already undertaken needs to be made more concrete with a larger focus placed on the governance dimension. The provision of good examples of governance solutions and platforms for the ‘hands-on’ exchange of experiences, for example, on how to succeed in the creation of cross-sector dialogues, would be beneficial here. The delivery mechanism could potentially be a topic for a targeted event under the forthcoming presidencies.

➤ In order that the continuing debate on the usefulness of macro regions more fully emphasises the territorial dimension, a closer link between the work on the Territorial Agenda and the work on the Baltic Sea Strategy and possible other future macro regional strategies could be important. An initial step here could be to present work related to the Territorial Agenda at Baltic Sea Strategy events etc. Furthermore, some actions under the Action Programme may benefit from focussing the debate on selected macro regions in order to become more specific.

2.4 Capitalisation: Play up your successes

While a significant amount of communication occurs between those working with the Territorial Agenda, it seems that little of this is communicated outwards. In order to spread the word more effectively better capitalisation is needed. Communicating what has already been achieved may provide a useful first step here. The already established website could fulfil this role though it currently requires more content on the single actions and thus could be improved over time.

Results at the EU level: The results of single actions, such as finalised reports, inputs to consultation processes, documents approved at ministerial meetings are not presented to the outside world. Nor has it been widely reported that the processes around the Territorial Agenda constituted an important initiative in respect of the development of the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. Although the Green Paper itself and presentations by DG Regio officials make reference to the Territorial Agenda, the Member States do not capitalise on this.

Domestic achievements: At the Member State level we can witness several ongoing processes designed to better apply the ideas of the Territorial Agenda. These are often not widely circulated and often not even ‘advertised’ in relation to the work of the Territorial Agenda. The website could then perhaps retain a one page summary per country with a description of the current state of play at the national level. This would help to show that a

number of things are currently going on in the various Member States. For those Member States where little has been done, this could serve as source of inspiration on what can be done thus facilitating a reinvigoration of priorities.

Communication opportunities: To better spread the word and to more effectively reach out beyond the 'circle of friends', more emphasis should be placed on identifying suitable *fora* for presenting the work of the Territorial Agenda and its Action Programme. Such *fora* could for example be the events of various stakeholders where presentations about the territorial dimension may be of interest, as well as dissemination materials and the preferred media outlets of other stakeholders. European, national and regional *fora* are relevant in this context. The collaboration with other stakeholders, e.g. NGOs, can be of particular relevance for an improved outward communication.

Communications package: To assist members of the network to spread the work and present it at various events the development of a standard communications package would be useful. This should for example contain a standard *power point* presentation where one or two additional slides can be adjusted to meet the demands of the varying contexts within which it will be presented and a "one-pager" on the importance of the territorial dimension and our achievements thus far. The above-mentioned collection of concrete examples illustrating where inclusion of the territorial dimension has provided a clear benefit could also be part of such a communications package.

➤ To further the implementation of the Territorial Agenda a more comprehensive communication of the efforts undertaken, and the recommendations and achievements produced is needed. The website could be used to illustrate what has already been achieved at the European level while also offering further insights into what is currently going on within the various Member States. In addition to the website other means are needed to promote the results of and ideas emanating from the Territorial Agenda.

➤ Speaking opportunities should be identified at both the national and EU levels. Presentations should be made at events held by organisations with an interest in discussing the territorial dimension. The same can be done with regard to the media (journals etc.) of relevant organisations, where short articles about the Territorial Agenda and its Action Programme can be placed.

➤ The development of a standard *power point* presentation and a one-page-leaflet on the aims of the Territorial Agenda and selected results of the Action Programme may be useful in supporting the network members in their attempts to spread the message. These communications documents should also be made publicly available on the website.

2.5 The co-ordination of actions and their link to the Agenda

The Action Programme for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda is comprehensive and ambitious. Indeed, it is clear that no one has a complete overview on the state of play in the various actions while the papers and reports already produced amount to a volume which, however worthy, is unlikely to be widely read. Furthermore, a number of papers or actions go into such a level of detail on the topic concerned that the link to the overall aim of the Territorial Agenda becomes rather weak. The co-ordination of actions and outputs is a particular challenge for the EU Presidencies with whom the responsibility for the overall co-ordination lies.

Co-ordination of actions: Overall more co-ordination of the single actions is needed. This should go beyond regular updates of the state of play in respect of the various actions. Indeed, a template for the reporting and more emphasis on links between actions might be useful. At minimum this could be used as the structure for a one page summary of every action highlighting the key messages and the actions undertaken to “implement” them.

Number of actions: The sheer number of actions implies that many actors feel that they have lost a general overview of the subject and thus cannot easily summon up the energy to re-engage. A reduction in the number of actions might ease the situation. This is, for example, possible through the merger of related actions or the timing of actions in different sequences. A strategic discussion on the number of actions may thus prove useful.

Definition of outputs: The outputs or results of the various actions differ both as regards format and quality. They range from the preparation of statements for ministerial meetings, to stakeholder events, study reports or discussion papers. Often the concrete output to which an action is working towards appears to be rather vague. To be effective every action should be able to define its output in a few words.

Definition of addressees: Recommendations are the most frequent type of conclusions deriving from the single actions. The addressees are to be found at European, national, regional and local level and in different sectors. In most cases the addressees are not even aware of the recommendations made. Therefore, it is recommended that the actions better define the addressees of their recommendations and also undertake measures to communicate the recommendations to them more effectively. As various actions address the same target groups some form of concerted action will be required.

Contribution to TA: All actions in the Action Programme contribute to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda. However, often it seems that the actions concentrate on further elaborating the issue at hand and thus often forget to make the all important link to the Territorial Agenda. One ends up, in this situation, not being able “to see the wood for the trees”. More emphasis ought then to be given to linking the detailed pictures elaborated in the single actions back to the overall aims of the Territorial Agenda.

Added value: Every action needs to contribute to the added value of the Action Programme and the Territorial Agenda. Thus a clear picture needs to be drawn of the benefits deriving from a particular action and for whom.

Synthesis: Ultimately, the key messages and results of the single actions need to be brought together in some form of synthesis document which can be communicated to the wider world and which can also be used to feed into future policy processes, such as a possible up-date of the Territorial Agenda.

Driving support: To achieve and communicate more effective outcomes from the Action Programme requires the input and stronger working together of all members of the TA Group. This would need to be supported through a more coordinated approach which embraces the longer time period of the Action Programme and could “join up” relevant outcomes from different actions. The EU Presidency, troika and the Commission are best placed to achieve this. The first step might be for them to lead a discussion to establish better co-ordination mechanisms.

➡ To further the implementation of the Territorial Agenda, it will be necessary to establish better co-ordination of the single actions and ensure that each has clearly defined outputs, communicates to the appropriate addressees, and has a clear link to the Territorial Agenda.

➡ In the long run even a simple synthesis of the results might prove to be a valuable input to further policy development.

➡ A discussion may also be useful on the number of actions and the timing of their deliveries. In an environment constrained by limited resources, it might more effective to focus the efforts undertaken and avoid being over ambitious.

➡ To strengthen co-ordination, leadership and continuity over time, it may be worthwhile discussing the possibility of providing explicit “management” support to the Presidencies and the *troika*, e.g. through a strategic sub-committee.

2.6 The larger picture & new challenges

Most of the points made above focus on the concrete steps which can be taken within the coming months. Their adoption may also help in preparing the groundwork for a new ministerial meeting and a successful continuation of the efforts made under the Hungarian presidency. The time until the Hungarian presidency needs to be used to reinforce the performance to ensure that the Hungarian presidency will be able to deliver what is anticipated.

Since the adoption of the Territorial Agenda Action Programme only one information ministerial meeting on these issues has been organised. In order to improve the implementation progress of the Territorial Agenda it is recommended to organise political level discussions on a more regular basis. This requires, however, that there are politically relevant questions to discuss.

The larger picture – opportunities for interaction:

Selected policy features in the field of regional policy

- EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and the related processes
- 5th Periodical Report on Cohesion
- Barca Report and the related debate
- Debate on the future of Cohesion Policy
- EU Budget review

The complementarity of Commission and intergovernmental processes related to the territorial dimension of policies.

Selected themes to relate to:

- Lisbon Strategy post 2010
- Economic recovery
- Climate change
- EU transport policy

Reinvigorating the political momentum implies that there is also a need for a new informal ministerial meeting at a later date to be determined. Such a meeting needs to have something politically relevant to decide on, something new to deal with and should be forward looking with the adoption of a more long-time perspective.

This could constitute an important next step towards the creation of a new or revised Territorial Agenda or a clear territorial vision for Europe.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to ensure that all Member States stay on board in the months and years to come and that there is a shared vision on why this work is being carried out.

Future work clearly needs to strengthen the level of responsiveness to developments in the related policies and to new themes emerging from the various national political agendas across Europe.

As the processes related to the Territorial Agenda are driven by a patchwork of drivers, the actual responsibility to keep things on track, to enthuse colleagues in all countries, and to ensure success, ultimately, lies with the EU Presidencies.

Proposal for a to-do-list

Re-orientation

- **Dialogue:** Future work needs to focus more on policy processes and delivery mechanisms and strengthen the dialogue with stakeholders who do not understand or believe in the aims of the Territorial Agenda.
- **Addressees:** Every action needs to identify the addressees of its messages and ensure that these messages are discussed with them.
- **Concentrate:** Focus on key policy areas and challenges to ensure powerful actions, e.g. future of EU cohesion policy, the Lisbon Strategy and EU transport policy.
- **Political momentum:** Re-establish political momentum preferably by linking territorial perspectives to current politically relevant challenges or processes.

Simple tasks

- **Presentation:** Preparation of a general slideshow on the aims of the Territorial Agenda and the achievements so far, to be used as standard presentation.
- **One-pager:** Preparation of one page of well communicating text on the aims of the Territorial Agenda and the progress made, to be disseminated at various occasions.
- **National one-pagers:** Preparation of a short text for each country on the work related to the application of the Territorial Agenda.
- **Speaking opportunities:** Identification of speaking opportunities at national and European events.
- **Reporting template:** Preparation of a strict template for short summaries of each action highlighting the main messages and links to the aims of the Territorial Agenda.
- **Website:** Update the website with reports on the progress made within the single Actions and in the Member States, plus general information material (cf. above).

Strategic tasks

- **Governance event:** Prepare an event on how to effectively use governance processes to promote the aims of the Territorial Agenda at European level and in the Member States. In general, annual events targeting a wider audience might help the outward communication.
- **Co-ordination:** Prepare mechanisms to improve the co-ordination of the Action Programme, i.e. strengthen continuity and reduce the burden on single Presidencies.
- **Number of actions:** Launch a debate in the NTCCP about the possibility for stronger focus, incl. clustering of actions and timing of actions in sequences.
- **EU Commission:** Discuss a shared vision of the NTCCP on how to combine forces with the EU Commission's work on Territorial Cohesion.
- **EU Cohesion Policy:** Develop a shared vision on how to best influence EU Cohesion Policy and the current debate about its future.
- **Watchdog(s):** Identify key persons and mechanisms to continuously watch out for opportunities to (a) influence other policies and (b) advocate the importance of territorial dimension on various contexts. And, use these opportunities.
- **Future:** Focus the work in the future of the Territorial Agenda on the policy aims and political necessities, in addition to improving and updating the evidence base.

Technical tasks

- **Impact assessments:** Collect or conduct simple territorial impact assessments which communicate well and illustrate the benefit of considering the territorial dimension or the costs of non-co-ordination.
- **Synthesis report:** Develop a short and punchy synthesis report presenting – in an integrated manner – the main findings, results and recommendations of the various actions carried out under the Action Programme.

Responsibilities

- **Division of labour:** Agree on a clear division of labour on who is taking over the responsibilities for what and on mechanisms to follow-up on this.
- **Presidencies:** The main responsibility for the co-ordination is with the EU Presidencies. Consider approaches how they can be supported, e.g. with a stronger focus on the Troika.

3 Policy conclusions

The findings for this study have been presented and discussed at the NTCCP meeting in Stockholm on the 20th of October 2009. The discussions centred mainly on three points which also are highlighted in the Swedish Presidency conclusions:

- **Renewed political momentum.** There is a general agreement that it would be beneficial to re-establish the political momentum. The timing and link to current politically relevant developments are crucial for doing so successfully. Possible points of departure might be the territorial approaches for influencing the debate about the Lisbon Agenda post 2010, the shaping of the territorial cohesion under the new Lisbon Treaty, and sustainable development and climate. The NTCCP will be the driving factor for this. Furthermore, already scheduled Director General meetings will be used to progress in form and content.
- **Strengthened leadership and coordination.** There is a general agreement that leadership and coordination need to be improved. The Swedish Presidency proposed to enlarge the current principle of the troika with NTCCP representatives from the Commission and additional future EU Presidencies. This approach corresponds also to the new model of EU Presidencies laid down in the Lisbon Treaty. It is important that – within this enlarged troika – there is a clear division of responsibilities with continuity over time. Furthermore, close contact between the enlarged troika and the rest of the NTCCP need to be ensured. The exact name and composition of such a leadership and coordination team will be proposed by the Swedish Presidency.
- **Annual communication event.** To increase awareness with regard to the Territorial Agenda work and Territorial Cohesion the organisation of an annual event for a wider public has been discussed. There have been some concerns as regards the resources demanded for the organisation of such events and the risk to just address the usual suspects. Therefore, efforts will be undertaken to more frequently present the Territorial Agenda work at events of other stakeholders, going beyond the usual partners. Furthermore it will be investigated whether a Territorial Agenda event can be organised in conjunction with the EU Open Days or if the forthcoming EU Presidencies can consider whether a Territorial Agenda event targeting a larger public fits into their programmes.

In addition some of the other points mentioned in the report have been picked up and may inspire the work of the forthcoming EU Presidencies. Overall, the debate in the NTCCP regained momentum and hopefully new strength for future actions reaching out beyond the usual partners.

Annex 1 – List of interviewees

Informal discussions with the following persons contributed to the development of the report (this includes also the participants of the expert workshop held on the 15th of July 2009 in Brussels):

Arina Andreičika, Latvia (interview)
Roland Arbter, Austria (interview)
Tanja, Bogataj, Slovenia (workshop)
Marijn De Bruijn, Belgium (Flanders) (interview & workshop)
Barbara Crome, Germany (workshop)
Zsuzsanna Drahos, Hungary (interview & workshop)
Olga M. Escayola Calvo, Spain (interview & workshop)
Thiemo W. Eser, Luxembourg (interview & workshop)
Andreas Faludi (scientific expert), the Netherlands (interview)
Maria José Festas, Portugal (interview & workshop)
Jan Fluxa, Czech Republic (workshop)
Odd Godal, Norway (workshop)
Silvia Jost, Switzerland (workshop)
Peter Jung, Germany (workshop)
Mette Kragh, Denmark (interview)
Janja Kreitmayer McKenzie, Slovenia (interview)
Sverker Lindblad, Sweden (various discussions & workshop)
Magdalena Lotocka, Poland (interview & workshop)
Didier Michal, France (interview & workshop)
Christabel Myers, United Kingdom (interview & workshop)
Zoran Nerandzic, Czech Republic (workshop)
Gabor Novotny, European Commission (workshop)
Anna Olofsson, Sweden (various discussions & workshop)
Rea Orfanou, Greece (workshop)
Rossella Rusca, Italy (interview & workshop)
Patrick Salez, European Commission (interview & workshop)
Aija Timofejeva, Latvia (workshop)
Anke Willemstein, the Netherlands (interview)
Jacek Zaucha (scientific expert), Poland (interview)