

**COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**  
**– DIRECTORATE E –**  
**Horizontal Policies and Networks**



**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ASSESSMENT ON TERRITORIAL IMPACTS**

**Submitted by Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)**

**Michael Schneider** is the rapporteur for the CoR own initiative opinion on *Assessment on territorial impacts*. This opinion will discuss the European Commission's Staff Working Document on **Assessing territorial impacts: operational guidance on how to assess regional and local impacts within the Commission Impact Assessment system, SWD(2013) 3 final**. This questionnaire identifies important issues for the Committee of the Regions and is designed to assist in the drafting of the own initiative opinion on the assessment of territorial impacts.

Please complete and submit by **20 March 2013**. If you are member of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network you can upload the completed questionnaire directly onto the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network website (<http://subsidiarity.cor.europa.eu> – remember to log in). Alternatively and in case you are not member of the Network, you can send it by email to [subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu](mailto:subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu).

<b>Name of Authority:</b>	Parliament of Extremadura
<b>Contact person:</b>	
<b>Contact details (phone, email):</b>	
<b>Member of</b>	SMN Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform Other

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## QUESTIONS

1. The Staff Working Document states that: *"the guidance provided here also responds to a request from the Member States, expressed in the debate following the 2008 Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and under the Polish EU Presidency in 2011 as part of the Territorial Agenda process"*.

**a) Do you consider that the document published by the European Commission meets the expectations and the ideas expressed in the political debate raised after the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion in 2008? Do you believe there is a need for greater follow-up to this debate on territorial cohesion and if yes, could you give some concrete examples?**

Territorial cohesion is vital for achieving the objectives of EU cohesion policy, strengthening both economic and social cohesion. It is therefore appropriate that the future reform of EU regional policy should take on board the conclusions of the debate on the Green Paper.

2. In order to better coordinate the territorial impact of sectoral EU policies, there needs to be a better understanding and measurement of those impacts. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion already focused on this point, stating that "improving territorial cohesion implies better coordination between sectoral and territorial policies and improved coherence between territorial interventions".

**b) Do you believe that the European Commission's proposal can be an effective instrument able to improve coordination between EU sectoral policies having territorial impacts? In your view what else should/could be done?**

The Green Paper does not take sufficient account of the commitments made in the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, which give territorial cohesion a strategic and operational aspect, particularly as regards polycentric development and the new partnership between urban and rural areas. We believe that these objectives should underpin the debate on territorial cohesion.

3. The Staff Working Document provides operational and methodological guidance on how to answer a range of questions regarding the potential territorial impact of a given proposal. Nevertheless, it underlines that assessing territorial impacts is not mandatory, and states that it is just a tool that can be helpful to enhance the policy coherence of some policy proposals.

**c) Do you consider that territorial impact assessments should be made compulsory for those sectoral policies having a territorial impact? If yes, in your opinion for which sectoral policies should the assessment of territorial impacts be made mandatory?**

The success of the public debate is directly tied to the maximum possible involvement of the various interested parties and of civil society. Coordination of all EU sectoral policies that have a significant territorial impact is essential for the development of territorial cohesion and for strengthening economic and social cohesion. However, the Green Paper merely lists these policies without proposing ways of improving synergies between them or of gauging the practical impact of these policies, necessary though they are.

4. The Staff Working Document states that a territorial impact assessment should be carried out when the proposal explicitly focuses on specific territories or when the proposal risks of having a large asymmetric territorial impact (outlier impact). It also highlights different methods that can be used to assess territorial impacts. In particular, it mentions qualitative and quantitative analysis. These tools and methodologies should be used by the different Directorates-General at the European Commission when preparing territorial impact assessments for proposals they are responsible for.

**d) Do you consider the data, methodology and tools proposed for supporting territorial impact assessments (such as ESPON ARTS<sup>1</sup> or QUICKScan) are sufficient to measure the potential territorial impacts a given proposal could have in your region? Would you propose any other type of tools/methodology?**

**e) Do you believe the complexity of territorial impact assessments require them to be carried out by a single specialised entity (one-stop shop) or do you prefer the idea of a decentralised system as proposed in the Staff Working Document?**

The development of territorial cohesion should be based on principles of concentration, connection and cooperation.

To coordinate the territorial impact of EU sectoral policies more effectively, there needs to be a better understanding and measurement of their respective impacts. An assessment of the territorial impact of these policies should therefore be undertaken, applying the current impact assessment mechanisms (such as strategic environmental assessment) to the territorial aspects; practical ways must also be found for creating synergy between territorial and sectoral policies. The contribution of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies to territorial cohesion should also be assessed.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu\\_Projects/Menu\\_AppliedResearch/arts.html](http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/arts.html).

5. Multilevel Governance and partnerships are key factors in the implementation of territorial cohesion, focussing on strengthening a place-based approach. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for the assessment of specific territorial impacts and recalls the potential role<sup>2</sup> of the CoR in assisting the European Commission in the process of Impact Assessment as well as to be associated to some of the EC's initiatives towards improvements in the capacity building of regional and local authorities<sup>3</sup>.

**f) What should the specific measures providing for the involvement of local and regional authorities be in these exercises?**

**g) What role do you see for the Committee of the Regions in this context?**

The competent national, regional and local authorities should promptly disseminate the relevant information, so that the public becomes aware of the importance of the new concept.

Territorial cohesion is a specific concept which should give tangible added value to economic and social cohesion and respond to the growing challenges facing the EU's regions. Territorial cohesion should slot into the current framework without causing sectoral fragmentation of EU cohesion policy.

6. The Committee of the Regions has already asked for territorial cohesion to be strengthened in relation to the EU2020 Strategy. One possibility for this could be not to confine the assessment of territorial impacts to legislative proposals and to extend them to other documents, such as key planning documents, such as the Annual Growth Survey.

**h) Do you think there should be a territorial dimension of the EU2020 policy cycle?**

**i) Do you consider the Annual Growth Survey (as a key planning document for the launch of the annual EU2020 policy cycle) should contain a territorial impact assessment?**

**j) In your opinion, should Territorial Impact Assessments also be carried out at Member State level?**

Regarding possible development scenarios for the EU up to 2020, concrete data are provided to support the political debate on the architecture for national and EU policies, with a view to creating instruments geared to tackling new challenges with a strong local or regional impact, such as demographic trends, urbanisation, migration and climate change, and establishing optimum conditions to provide a good quality of life for our citizens.

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<sup>2</sup> See section 5.5 of the EC's Staff Working Document: "Under the Protocol on Cooperation between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions (2012) the Commission services may ask for support from the Committee in preparing its assessment.

<sup>3</sup> CdR 353/2010, CoR Opinion on Smart Regulation.

To define and understand territorial cohesion, common definitions are needed of such concepts as "territory", "rural area" and "mountain area".

In short, territorial impact assessments with a view to better coordination of the territorial impact of EU sectoral policies require a better assessment and understanding of their respective impacts. In other words, territorial cohesion should not be limited to the impacts of EU regional policy on EU territory, but should also focus on the territorial dimension of other EU sectoral policies with a significant territorial impact, stressing the importance of improving synergies between the various EU policies in order to coordinate and maximise their territorial impact on the ground.