

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.

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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?

The document published by the European Commission meets the expectations expressed in the political debate after the publication of the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion in 2008.

Carrying out a territorial impact assessment seems to be fully justified. In this connection, there should be an obligation to carry out such assessments in relation to policies conducted at regional level (voivodeships).

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 European Commission proposal may be an effective instrument if there is a positive response from Member States.

The methods contained in the working document on "assessing territorial impacts" offer an innovative approach to the issue of territorial impact in the form of its "measurement". However, the document does not answer the question of which policy produces, or should produce which territorial impact. We propose seeking to define the coefficient with which force a given policy has an impact. Regions, as specific territories, are often subject to influences greater than those of a single sectoral policy. In order to coordinate their action, research should encompass both the impact assessment of individual policies and the joint/accumulated impact of all policies in a given territory.

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?

Consideration should be given to making territorial impact assessments compulsory for those sectoral policies having an impact on local and regional authorities in the following areas, among others:

- Agricultural policy
- Transport policy
- Environment policy
- Innovation policy

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 ARTS¹ 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?

¹ http://www.espon.eu/main/Menu_Projects/Menu_AppliedResearch/arts.html

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?

d) The methodology and tools proposed for supporting territorial impact assessments should be regarded as provisional methods which could be broadened in the course of such a measurement. The proposed methods could provide the basis for a tool which would be supplemented in time. Consideration should also be given to preparing a methodology guide, containing an extended catalogue of methods and tools.

e) Given the scope of data and the level of the process, the most beneficial option would be to entrust the territorial impact assessment to a single specialised entity. Still to be decided is whether this will be an existing entity within the EU or an external body.

Identifying specific relevant regions and their specific circumstances is usually easier to carry out at a lower level than centrally. However, given how complicated the assessment process is, this should be carried out by a centralised body.

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 role² 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 authorities³.

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?

f) Consideration should be given to organising regular meetings etc., for example in the form of conferences, information exchange forums.

g) The Committee of the Regions should coordinate measures and provide a link to the European Commission, acting as a bridge.

² 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.

³ CdR 353/2010, CoR Opinion on Smart Regulation

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?**

h), i) Consideration could be given to the territorial dimension of the EU2020 policy cycle. However, an annual assessment seems to be difficult to carry out, if only because of the painstaking process of collecting a large quantity of data. A sensible solution could be to carry out the assessments every 3-5 years.

j) If there is a need arising from earlier research/opinions, then Member States should become involved.