

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.

Name of Authority:	Ministry of Infrastructure and Spatial Planning, Spatial Planning Directorate
Contact person:	Blanka Bartol
Contact details (phone, email):	+386-1-478-70-54, blanka.bartol@gov.si
Member of	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?

The Staff Working Document means a step forward to addressing the territorial impacts of various EU policies and to the awareness that they can have different impacts depending on characteristics of areas (so called "asymmetric"); important is also the notion that not addressing properly possible territorial impacts can, in turn influence effectiveness of the policy in question;

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 proposal aimed at outlining possible tools and responses to identified possible impacts. The territorial impact assessment can provide information about possible impacts in different areas and could point out other policy intervention needed but can not be seen as (major) instrument for policy

coordination.

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 main purpose of introducing territorial impact assessment (or other type of assessments) is to improve planning processes and to increase better informed decision making. The main added value would be to include TIA because it can really help increasing effectiveness of policies and not prescribe its use.

We have some bad experiences with compulsory assessments (like SEA), because they tend to turn out to be used only because they are demanded and do not necessary improve planning process.

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?

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?

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

We had the chance to test ESPON ARTS approach during our (stakeholders') project ESPON TIA. It seemed to be useful instrument for the Commission to have a quick overview what could be possible territorial impacts before publishing certain directive. The weakest point was seen at that time the typology used as an input for studying possible asymmetric territorial impacts. The typology seemed not to be good enough to have, although only quick and rough, fair overview of possible territorial impacts.

There are some necessary phases for territorial impact assessment to be followed. They have been showed and tested in the ESPON TIA project (policy demand project of the ESPON programme).

The important part of territorial impact assessment seem to be cross-sectoral and cross-level dialogue to capture local knowledge which is also important for territorial impacts recognition.

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?

As stipulated already in the previous question, interactions between levels and sectors in case of assessing territorial impacts are important at least for two reasons: for capturing local knowledge, which could be important to assess the dimensions of territorial impacts of policies and to understand what kind of traps may evolve for example in case of transposition of directive.

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?

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

- 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?**

Territorial dimension can not be seen in a EU2020S. That is a pity, since the implementation of EU2020 can have a very strong territorial influence. The lack of territorial dimension in the EU2020S also means not paying the attention if achieving the objectives is feasible or not, even though MS have different targets. Some studies already pointed out that MS would not be able to achieve the specifically set targets. Although other instruments supposed to cover territorial differentiated targets (Cohesion policy for example), with the absence of long term policy (EU2020 is just middle term), there is too much of uncertainty what will be achieved at the end.

Annual Growth Survey is (to my knowledge) an annual replicant of EU2020S. It lack territorial dimension and could be adopted also for the “Moon”. It does not indicate any territorial potential which would help achieving targets.

TIA for EU policies should be carried at EU level but with collaboration with MS.