

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).

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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 put forward by the Commission does in some respects meet the expectations and the ideas expressed in the political debate raised after the publication of the Green Paper in 2008 on Territorial Cohesion.

One outstanding issue that has not been addressed is the adoption of a coherent single definition of territorial cohesion – it is incredible that the debate on the Green Paper did not yield a consensus on a working definition. It is not too late to rectify this. As a minimum, the Committee of the Regions should call for this in its response.

A further issue that must be addressed is to confront Member States in respect of their obligations under Article 175 of the TFEU. Have there been any attempts made to establish how Member States are fulfilling their treaty obligations in respect of economic, social and territorial cohesion?

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 details on "how to assess territorial impacts" is very poor in section 5 of the document. It is difficult to see how any Commission Official could carry out a valid and thorough territorial impact assessment on the basis of the draft guidance, as it stands.

The provision of sample TIAs or Case Studies would provide a much more effective guidance tool to Commission staff.

One area of concern to Ireland and a large number of 'peripheral' Member States is that the allocation of funding under the EIT initiative by DG RESEARCH has been concentrated on winning regions only with limited opportunity for weaker regions to participate. We look forward to seeing the results of the TIA assessment on this specific programme area and the CoR should call for this policy area to be assessed as a matter of priority.

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 draft guidance document makes it clear that a territorial impact assessment should be carried out in all cases where the policy involves territorial targeting and/or where differential spatial impacts are expected.

The uneven distribution of some research funding (e.g. EIT referred to above) would imply that it should mandatorily be subjected to a TIA.

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?**

d) I am not sufficiently aware of the capacity of the ESPON ARTS or QUICKScan tools, to answer this question. Certainly, social accounting matrices (SAMs) could be used to assess impacts, we have had some experience in our region of using a SAM impact assessment tool.

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?**

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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)

<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

f) It would be difficult to envisage how local and regional authorities across Europe could be actively involved in EU-wide TIAs being conducted by the Commission Services on each policy proposal. It may be possible to have some targeted consultation, as envisaged in the document.

g) The Committee of the Regions should perform an oversight /supervisory / quality assurance role in respect of the performance of TIAs by the Commission Services

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) Yes – some Member States, including Ireland, have no territorial dimension in their National Reform programmes. This should be addressed

i) I'm not sure what it would mean to subject the Annual Growth Survey to a TIA?

j) Yes – otherwise the treaty obligation with regard to territorial cohesion is meaningless