

**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?**

a) The Commission working document brings a methodological perspective to assessment of the territorial impact of policies and European regulations before they come into force. However, this methodological document is more neutral, politically-speaking, than the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and fails to clearly identify territorial cohesion as one of the priority European policies.

Therefore, whilst partially addressing the issues raised by the Green Paper and ensuing open debate, the document drafted by the Commission does not address assessment of the *a posteriori* impact of policies (evaluation of cohesion policy, for example). Furthermore, the document concludes by identifying five possible measures that are designed to reduce asymmetric territorial impact but not explicitly geared towards improving territorial cohesion.

It is important to continue monitoring territorial cohesion, especially with regard to cross-border territories and cross-border cooperation. Given that the main objective of this strand of cohesion policy is to improve territorial cohesion within the EU, there is a need to measure the territorial impact that this has on cross-border territories. However, this has yet to be done at European level and local examples are few and far between.

It is crucial to assess the territorial impact of cross-border cooperation in order to highlight the successes of this policy, to ensure that its strategic direction and implementation are attuned to local needs and, finally, to justify support from the European funds. For "cross-border regions", which are explicitly referred to in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, territorial cohesion is above all about cross-border integration (single market, cross-border social cohesion), by stepping up flows of all kinds (jobs, economic development, etc.).

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?**

b) There are several analytical models for territorial impact cited in the Commission proposal that appear to be effective when observing the interaction between the effects of various sectoral policies. The most interesting of these is RHOMOLO, which can be used for measuring the impact of cohesion policy.

However, along with all the other models proposed in the Commission document, it is insufficient, still being relatively sector-based and as yet not able to measure certain interactions between policies.

In addition, some forms of territorial impact may slip through the net due to the scale of these models. There is a need to design models that can operate on a smaller scale, and particularly within functional or specific territories such as border territories. For this reason, the observation of and provision of data on cross-border phenomena (regarding flows, for example), and particularly of fine scale data that is compatible across a number of States, is crucial.

There are various local and regional examples of cross-border statistical observation, carried out over the last few years on the initiative of governance structures, occasionally with promising results. All too often, however, the technical obstacles encountered remain insurmountable, owing to the absence of permanent cross-border coordination between regional and national institutes of statistics and support from the competent authorities. What is needed, therefore, is an approach whereby States coordinate monitoring, as a means of developing cross-border territories, together with support from the European Commission (DG REGIO, Eurostat, ESPON programme), as recommended by the First European seminar on observation of cross-border territories, which took place on 10 December 2012 in Nancy.

<http://seminaire-observation-transfrontaliere.mot.fnau.org/>

<http://www.espaces->

[transfrontaliers.org/docdivers/CP\\_Resultats\\_seminaire\\_observation\\_nancy\\_10\\_12\\_2012.pdf](http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/docdivers/CP_Resultats_seminaire_observation_nancy_10_12_2012.pdf)

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?**

c) Territorial impact assessments, or rather the territorial aspect of impact assessments, should be made mandatory for those sectoral policies that have a territorial impact, for example, policies relating to transport, economic development, energy and environmental protection.

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) It is necessary to maintain a balance between qualitative and quantitative data in a territorial impact assessment and especially important not to neglect the latter (consultations, written contributions, focus groups, etc.).

e) As far as European policies are concerned, DG REGIO should lead territorial impact assessments or the territorial aspect of impact assessments, whilst one of its units should collate all data originating from the other DGs or external sources, in order to establish a common vision and methodology for impact assessments. The right forum for this is the "Urban development and territorial cohesion" interservice group. It should meet regularly, particularly to discuss specific territories, such as cross-border regions, in conjunction with the representative stakeholders (CECICN, MOT, ARFE, TEIN, etc.), as appropriate.

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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?**

f) It should be mandatory for territorial impact assessments to include a phase during which local and regional authorities have the right to express their views with regard to the impact of policies on their territories.

g) One of the roles of the Committee of the Regions is to feed back the views of local and regional authorities and to defend them at European institution level. As regards territorial impact, the CoR could do more to structure its work by focussing on specific issues or territories (such as cross-border regions) and developing its partnership with the representative stakeholders (CECICN, MOT, ARFE, TEIN, etc.).

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) The Europe 2020 strategy should include a more detailed and explicit territorial dimension, since every one of its three pillars has a strong territorial impact.

i) The Annual Growth Survey should include a territorial impact assessment, since the growth assessment should be accompanied by a territorial development assessment, in order to measure real progress made within the territories. Cross-border regions deserve special attention here, as they are key emblems of the single market and European integration.

j) Territorial Impact Assessments should also be carried out at national level, as is already the case in a number of States (QuickScan in the Netherlands, interministerial coordination by DATAR in France, etc.), and

<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.

consolidated at EU level where appropriate. Carrying out these assessments at national level would make it possible to pinpoint the subtler aspects of territorial impact with more detailed data, establish a culture of measuring territorial impact, facilitate statistical coordination (particularly for cross-border territories) and make players at all levels aware of the importance of coordinating sectoral policies owing to their territorial impact. This cooperation between States, underpinned by the support and encouragement of the Commission, could lead to an "open method of coordination" type of approach.

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