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Tampere Action Programme – Action 2.1.3

**ESDP policy orientations in national spatial planning**

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**Analysis of the answers to the questionnaire**

Based on the original report made by

**CREAT – UCL**  
July 2002

(Covenant between the Minister of Spatial Planning,  
Urbanism and Environment of the Walloon region and the  
spatial planning research centre CREAT (UCL))

reviewed by the DAU (Walloon Region - Belgium) – June 2004  
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## I. Introduction

In February 2001, the Belgian delegation distributed a questionnaire to the CSD delegations, in the framework of the action 2.1.3 of the Tampere Action Programme. Context, objectives and approach of the questionnaire were explained in an accompanying note, from which is taken the following extract:

“At the Ministerial Meeting in Tampere in October 1999, Belgium agreed to take the responsibility to write a synthetic report on the way the policy orientations of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) are taken into account in national spatial planning.

That report is part of action 2.1.3 of the ESDP Action Programme agreed in Tampere, one among the twelve retained to "apply the first ESDP". This action fits in the first strand of actions ("*Promoting a spatial dimension in Community and national policies*"), which is presented as the priority strand on which the success of other strands of actions will depend. Other actions in this strand concern Structural Funds mainstream programmes, Interreg III and ESDP demonstration projects, spatial impacts of Community policies, territorial impact assessment, and urban policy application and co-operation.

The Tampere action programme indicates that although Belgium has the responsibility to write the report, all Member States are "leading partners" for the concerned action. This is consistent with the aim of the action programme to enhance co-operation on territorial matters. Some Member States are indeed already engaged in an assessment of the integration of the ESDP in their own policies. This means that the preparation of the report should not only involve all delegations of the CSD, but also take their initiatives into account.

### ***Proposed approach***

It is obvious from the start that such a vast and complex topic cannot be exhausted in the frame of the action to be concluded in 2001. Moreover, the action fits in a context of other initiatives around the same topic, not only those of the Member States, but also the orientations for the research themes for the ESPON. Hence it is conceived as a step in a broader process that involves actors at different levels and that will probably go on after 2001.

A choice has been made to focus on the specific potentiality offered by the action to apply a same approach to the situation in all Member States, even if this does not allow to go into much detail. The results of such an action can provide a starting point for more in-depth researches as well as a common reference allowing the Member States to better identify their specificities regarding the issue.

Another feature of the action is that it fits in a programme whose aim is to apply the ESDP, and that it must thus try to contribute to its efficient and fruitful application in the Member States. Among the available ways, one is to explore how conditions for its application could be improved, notably by removing possible barriers; another is to identify some guidelines for a potential future adaptation of the document itself. Those two axes are not mutually exclusive, on the contrary, and both are explored in the questionnaire. The results of the enquiry rely inevitably on current or recent experience, keeping in mind that research based on longer term evidence could be carried on later on.

The action does definitely not consist in an evaluation of how the Member States apply the ESDP, but in a search for answers to the problems they might encounter in this process. Therefore, it seems important to base it on the needs and aspirations of the relevant actors of each Member State. In this view, the most relevant evidence is the opinion of these actors, based on their actual experience. Specificity of the national points of view must be taken into account as a part of the material. The

diversity of systems and political situations encountered in the Member States is a matter of fact that will always be kept in mind.

The choice has thus been made to ask each Member State to indicate its opinion on the way the ESDP message is integrated into its policies, on the problems this raises and the opportunities it can provide, and on actions that could be taken in order to improve the situation if needed. This is done in the form of a questionnaire of the "opinion poll" type.

In order to ensure a sound relevance of the report, all questions are based on actual experience with the ESDP, be it in a negative way (that means cases where the ESDP could not be taken into account for some reason). In this view, examples would be very useful.”

13 Member States returned answers to the questionnaire, i.e. all except Ireland and Luxembourg. Both multiple choice and open questions were duly completed, providing highly valuable information and many suggestions have been made.

A draft report compiling the answers was prepared by a university research centre, in the view that it would serve as a basis for further analysis and discussion in the CSD. Suppression of the CSD on the eve of the Belgian presidency has cut the foreseen process short.

Three years after, it can be said that many issues discussed in the report are still and will probably remain relevant for some time, with the new challenges faced by the Union and its Member States. That is why, even if available material is to be considered as partial – and now probably partly outdated -, it may nevertheless be relevant and interesting for the ongoing discussion topics.

The report has thus been reviewed by the Walloon spatial planning administration, which has produced on this basis the present document in order to present it to the SUD WG. It details the integration of the ESDP in the policies of the Member States and the possible actions as suggested by the Member States, following the structure of the questionnaire: awareness, use, contents, instruments of the ESDP and ESDP process.

The original answers from Member States are presented in annexes, in their original language and with their accompanying letter if any. Other annexes include amongst others a series of cartographic representations of answers to the multiple choice questions and a list of examples of ESDP application in the Member States.

## II. General information

### ▪ Preliminary remarks

Denmark, some German Länder and the Brussels Capital-region in Belgium comment that only less than two years have passed by since the adoption of the Potsdam version of the ESDP in May 1999, which makes it difficult to assess its integration. France rather states that several initiatives applying the ESDP are still in the making and have not yet yielded perceptible results. Indeed, policy documents, legislation, etc. in spatial planning or other fields are far from being updated every year and there could have been no opportunity yet for some entities to integrate formally the ESDP. And, when the ESDP has been 'integrated' into an instrument, it is still very recent and a large part of the potential effects cannot be already apparent.

However, it was clearly stated in the accompanying note to the questionnaire that "For all blocks except block D ("*Contents of the policy options*"), the ESDP is considered in a broad sense, not limited to the Potsdam document. It includes all work done on the topic since the start of the process which might have influenced the conceptions of spatial planning and development in the Member States."

Several Member States report having integrated some elements of the ESDP or of the ESDP process in their national planning even before the approval of the Potsdam version:

- Austria was inspired by the ESDP process when preparing its national document "Austria within the framework of spatial development policy in Europe (1996)" which has served as a national basis for all the Austrian contributions to the ESDP process – and which is covering nearly all the political options of the ESDP;
- Denmark had dealt with the ESDP in its last three National Spatial Planning Reports (1992, 1997 and 2000);
- Finland had applied many of the ESDP guidelines;
- Germany had applied the Leipzig principles into its Spatial Planning Act (Raumordnungsgesetzes, 01.01.1998).

It is possible that other Member States have as well integrated the ESDP, basing themselves on works realised earlier than May 1999. Therefore, the initiative to analyse the integration of the ESDP roughly two years after that the Potsdam version was adopted makes sense. Besides, we also notice from the answers that several Member States had themselves already conducted investigations on the application of the ESDP at the national level or were currently doing it when answering the questionnaire (Sweden).

### ▪ Authorities and organs consulted

Each Member State has organised (or not) a consultation in a different way and the reading of the answers should keep this fact in mind. There is a great variety of situations throughout the countries of the EU and the differences in political systems, spatial planning systems, consultation culture, available interlocutors, etc. are wide. Some countries extended the consultation to regional and/or sectoral administration and organs while others relied upon the knowledge of a national body. In some countries political actors contributed to the answer while they were absent of the consultation in other countries. Annex 1 shows who were the consulted actors.

▪ **General comments on the answers**

Many countries explain here their specific context or other background information to their answers. Some of them make reference to their national (or regional) strategic planning document that takes the ESDP into account (Austria, Denmark). Both Denmark and Germany think it is “too early to evaluate the ESDP”. Denmark thinks however that the questionnaire “gives rise to the idea of conducting a similar and nationally more targeted investigation”.

There are two warnings on the way the application of the ESDP is estimated. France recalls that frequent references to the ESDP are not in itself an evidence of the application of the ESDP. United Kingdom writes as well that, at least in its case, other influences work alongside the ESDP to help achieve the same goals, as for instance the governmental policy of integrated approaches to sustainable development, urban inclusion, transport and environment policies.

Regarding the citizens and media, France emphasises the need to convert the ESDP message into concrete actions that the public at large can then appreciate.

Sweden considers that there is a risk that spatial planning and spatial development on one side and urban development on the other side will be regarded as separate activities. Sweden insists that they be brought together.

It appears from the Greek answer that the ESDP is not yet translated in Greek, therefore preventing it from reaching a wider audience, even inside the public administration of spatial planning.

Portugal presents its answer as a first version, of provisional character, that should be validated after a meeting where the meaning of some questions (and answers) could be clarified. Unfortunately, circumstances of that moment did not allow to organise such meeting. Portuguese answers have nonetheless been integrated in the analysis for the points to which clear answers have been provided.

### III. Awareness of the ESDP

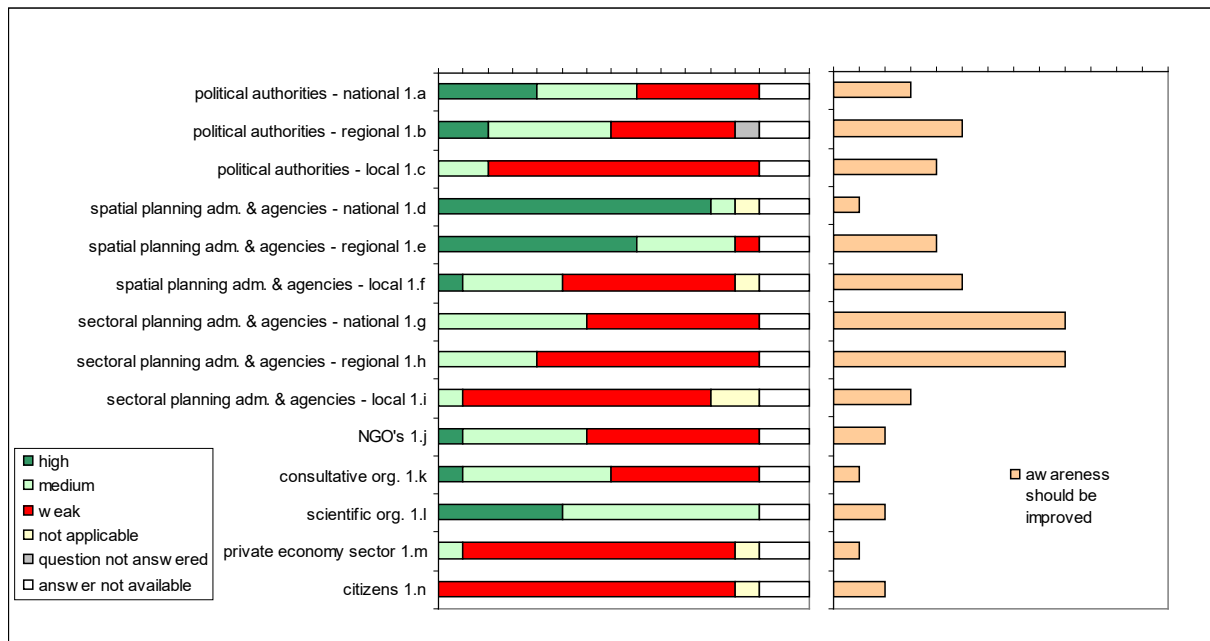
#### Questions

- B.1. How would you qualify the degree of awareness of the ESDP among the following actors? (List of actors follows.)
- B.2. For which actors - if any - do you think awareness should more particularly be improved in your country?
- B.3. If you think awareness should more particularly be improved in your country, do you think that actions could and should be taken in this domain?

#### ▪ Awareness among actors

Figure 1 shows a synthetic overview of respondents' answers. The ESDP addresses a very wide range of actors, targeting mainly the ones responsible for spatial development or other policies having a spatial impact. However, far from all target groups are evenly aware of the ESDP<sup>1</sup>. Besides, according to Belgium, the awareness of the ESDP is more linked to people (who have for instance participated to the making of the ESDP or to consultations) than to target groups as a whole such as administrations.

Figure 1 Degree of awareness of the ESDP among actors and opinion as to which actor's awareness should be improved (cartographic representations in annex 3)



The answers show that awareness is especially high among public administrations in charge of spatial planning: most spatial planning administrations and agencies at both the national and regional levels are acquainted with the ESDP. Knowledge about the ESDP is less

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to evaluate precisely the awareness of the ESDP message among relevant actors in the context of this study. As Belgium puts it, a more accurate evaluation of the real knowledge of the ESDP would indeed require in-depth exchanges of thoughts with politicians, civil servants, etc. and this overview is only a gross estimate.

evident among political authorities. Quite many respondents consider that awareness of political authorities should not be particularly improved in their country.

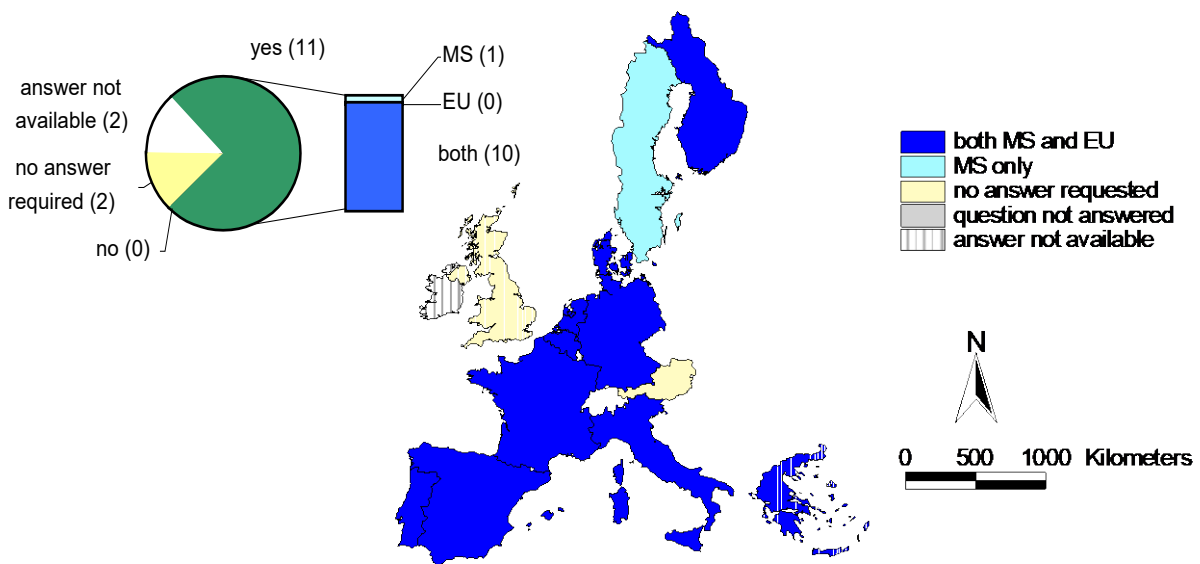
Emphasis is rather put on the consciousness-raising of sectoral planning administrations and agencies at national and regional levels, all of them having a low consciousness of the ESDP. But while the awareness at the local level is relatively low (spatial planning institutions) or definitely low (political authorities and other sectoral administrations), there seems to be not that much need to improve that situation, even though the ESDP specifically targets the local level as one of its addressees. Two exceptions are the Netherlands and UK, where local spatial planners are aware of the ESDP and where it has brought added value.

As regards private actors, it appears that in half of the Member States non-governmental and consultative organisations potentially concerned by the ESDP have few knowledge of it, especially at the periphery of the European Union. Scientific organisations on the other hand are generally well aware of the ESDP, mainly in the largest countries. As to the private economy sector and citizens at large, their knowledge about the ESDP is low everywhere, with the exception of the Netherlands for the actors of the private economy sector.

▪ **Improving awareness**

Figure 2 presents a synthetic overview of the respondents' willingness that action be taken to improve awareness of the ESDP in their country. There is unanimity among the respondents to call for action (except for United Kingdom and Austria, which had not considered as necessary that ESDP awareness should be improved further more in their country, and consequently do not suggest to take action). All Member States but one call for a joint action of both the European Union and the Member States, Sweden favouring an action of Member States alone.

Figure 2 Should action be taken to raise awareness of the ESDP (pie chart)? If yes, by whom (map)?





The actions that are proposed by respondents are of the following kind:

- stimulate debate, reflection and communication;
- stimulate inter-sectoral co-operation;
- interpret the ESDP.

► Stimulate debate, reflection and communication

In order to improve awareness, many respondents propose various ways to induce actors to think and reflect about the ESDP. Examples include:

- Identify connections between national/regional spatial planning tools (and tools from other sectors) and ESDP orientations (France). This work has been done for instance in the Cohesion Report and should be done more systematically in national or regional documents having a spatial impact. A mere reference to the ESDP as a whole, without other detail, is however not automatically synonymous to its application (France, general comments in part A). Finland also underlines the need for better connection with Interreg III and Baltic Sea Region co-operation;
- Bring to light examples of positive influences of the ESDP (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden), for instance among Interreg projects and use this opportunity to call the attention of the media (France);
- Communicate and inform widely about the ESDP and spatial planning at European level: publications, events, seminars in the various regions of the Member States, Internet... (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom,). United Kingdom has just done that and carried on with a range of seminars in its regions about Interreg IIIB. Proceed to wide consultations (INTERREG IIIB draft programmes were subject to wide consultations in United Kingdom). Attract attention of the public at large, even at school or at the university, about spatial planning issues at the European level (Germany). Publish -in all EU languages- syntheses for the general public of documents such as the ESDP (Potsdam version), SPESP studies, Tampere 12 actions to apply the ESDP, etc. (Belgium). Organize news conference and other contacts with the media specialized in development issues. Create events, happenings, for instance through competitions for projects to apply the ESDP orientations or through a European day of debate about the development of the European space (Portugal). Organize a European debate, analyse the use of the ESDP: "who for and how?" (Germany);
- Elaborate spatial visions (France);
- Train civil servants of different levels about the main European strategies concerning spatial development (Belgium).

► Stimulate inter-sectoral and vertical co-operation

France stresses the need to make better connections with national or regional politicians as well as with sectoral administrations. These connections should be conceived in the frame of a permanent process. Finland also suggests better connection at national level with sectoral administrations. Italy recommends to make programmes for the implementation of the ESDP involving all levels and sectors.

The European Union<sup>2</sup> could play an important role in promoting co-operation among sectors with spatial impact, using the ESDP as a frame of reference. Promoting this at the EU level (among DG Transport, Environment, Agriculture and Information Technology) (Denmark) will echo at the lower levels, helping therefore indirectly the co-ordination of sectors at national

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<sup>2</sup> European Union: not only the Commission, but also the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions or the Economic and Social Committee for instance, according to the context.

and regional levels (the Netherlands). The EU could also ask for an application of policy options within the Structure Funds (Denmark).

► Interpret the ESDP

The ESDP is perceived as a policy document that is too long, too abstract - and this is accentuated by the lack of spatialisation - to be truly relevant for the local level. Its content has to be “translated”, operationalised at lower levels, in the respect of the subsidiarity principle. Besides the operationalisation of the content, a document discussed and approved at the national or regional level may also make the ESDP message more readily accepted by the lower levels than a “European” policy document produced further away.

Several countries have already explicitly interpreted the ESDP message into a national spatial planning document: the Netherlands in the 5<sup>th</sup> Report on Spatial Planning, Austria, Denmark, etc. Other countries, such as Italy, Spain and France, propose initiatives going more or less in the same direction or propose to try to make more systematic references to the ESDP in their spatial planning documents.

This strategy allows for a better understanding of the meaning of the ESDP in a national context by other sectoral policy departments as well as private actors. The necessity to translate the message of the ESDP is seen as a key condition if one wants the local actors as well as the other regional and national sectors to take the ESDP message into account.

## IV. Use of the ESDP

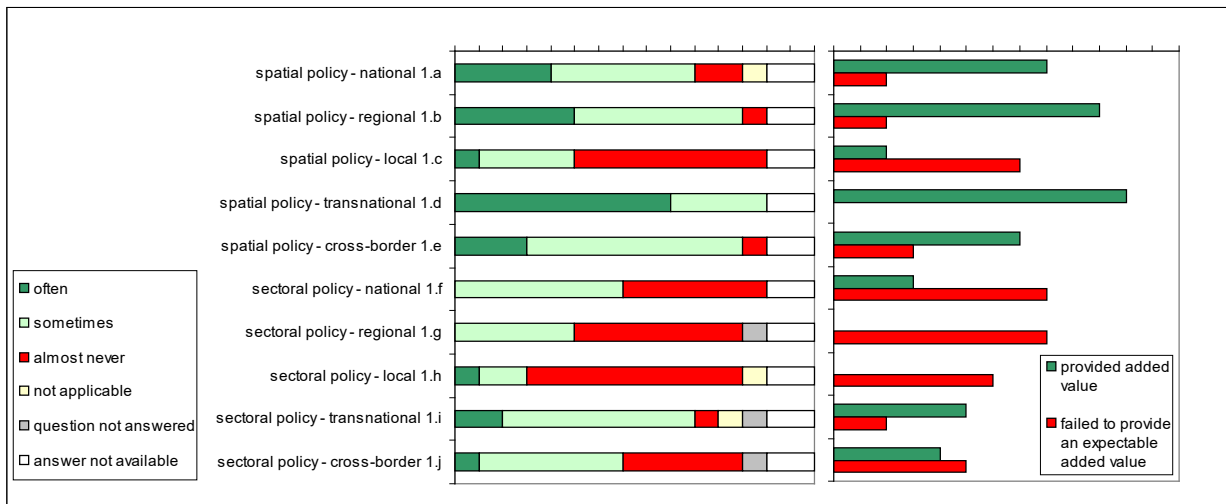
### Questions

- C.1. How often has your country made use of the ESDP? (List of policymaking processes follows.)
- C.2. For which of the mentioned policies has the ESDP provided added value to the actors in charge of the decision? Failed to provide an expectable added value?
- C.3. If you think that the ESDP has failed to provide an expectable added value to the actors in charge of the decisions, do you think that actions could and should be taken in this domain?

#### ▪ Frequency of use and added value

Figure 3 indicates what has been the use of the ESDP in policymaking processes at various levels. At the national and regional levels, the ESDP has been used at least sometimes for the making of spatial policies, except at national level in 2 countries; Belgium where the national level has no competency, and Spain<sup>3</sup>. When used it is reported to have provided an added value.

Figure 3 Use and added value of the ESDP (cartographic representations in annex 3)



To propose a common framework for spatial planning co-operation between Member States is one of the main objectives of the ESDP. According to respondents, this wish is fulfilled at

<sup>3</sup> In the case of Austria, the Potsdam version in 1999 of the ESDP (and implicitly the Noordwijk version as well) had not brought much novelty and added value according to the respondent when answering this question. Indeed, it is reported that the country inspired by the then ongoing ESDP process already prepared in 1996 a document that put Austrian planning in a European perspective: Örok (1996), *Austria within the framework of spatial development policy in Europe*, Vienna, 43 p. This document covers nearly all the political options of the ESDP. However, the Austrian answer also mentions that the ESDP has been used as a reference document in the context of transnational development programmes and projects where it has provided, amongst others, a useful joint basis for the co-operation with the accession countries. Moreover the ESDP has served as one of the reference documents for the work on the Austrian Spatial Development Perspective 2001. Given this, we estimate that the ESDP did provide an added value, although it might be less than expected.

the transnational level and to a lesser extent at the cross-border level: the ESDP is used and has often provided added value to the policymaking processes.

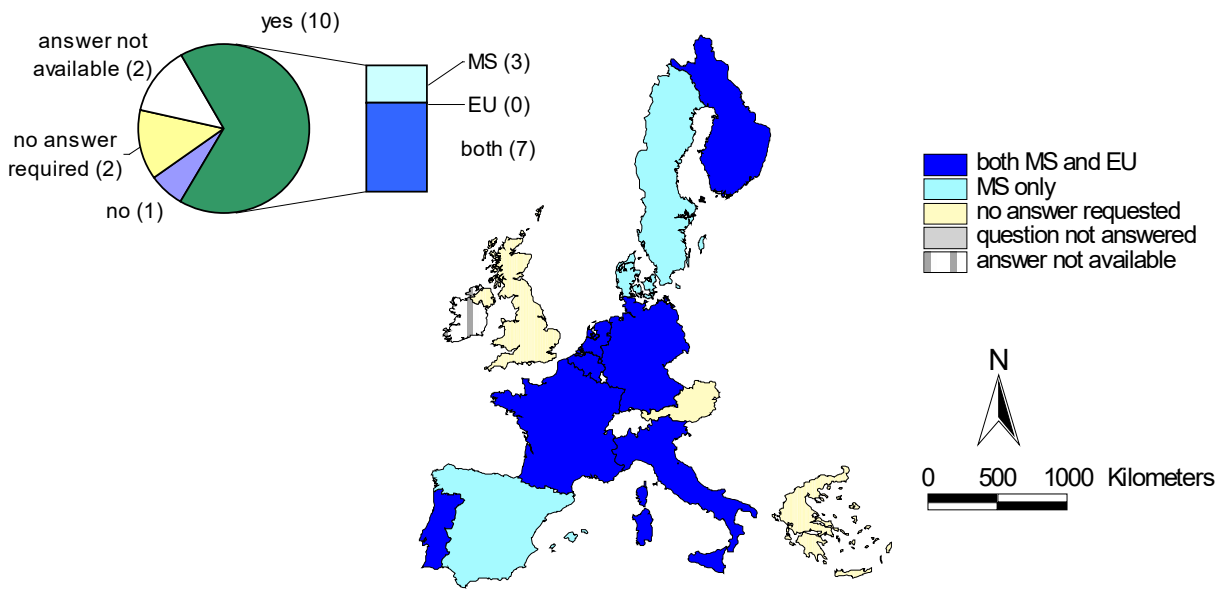
The picture is opposite when looking at the use of the ESDP for spatial policymaking at the local level, where only a few respondents mention integration, which has failed to provide an expectable added value (except in the Netherlands and Sweden), and in sectoral policymaking at all levels, where the ESDP is much less used than in spatial policies and has mostly failed to provide an expectable added value. Half or so of the Member States' sectoral policies use the ESDP only sometimes at both regional and national levels, and it fails to provide an expectable added value in most cases. A more balanced picture is found for sectoral policymaking processes at the transnational and cross-border levels: use of the ESDP is more frequent and provides an expectable added value in certain cases. However, the available information does not make it possible to differentiate between types of sectors here.

A fact which does not appear immediately from the graph is interesting to note: most of the cases where the ESDP is presented as having failed to provide the expected added value are actually cases where the ESDP has never or almost never been used.

▪ **Intensifying the use of the ESDP and increase its added value**

Figure 4 indicates that almost all respondents (except Austria, Greece and the United Kingdom) consider that actions are needed to increase the added value and use of the ESDP. Most would like both the Member States and the EU to take action while Denmark, Sweden and Spain would prefer the EU not to take part in these actions.

Figure 4 Should action be taken to improve the use of the ESDP (pie chart)? If yes, by whom (map)?



Many propositions made in the previous section, concerning the awareness of the ESDP, are more or less repeated here. Again, the propositions can be categorised as follows:

- Stimulate debate, reflection and communication;
- Stimulate inter-sectoral co-operation;
- Interpret the ESDP.

► Stimulate debate, reflection and communication

Several proposals fit under this theme: more communication from the EU about the various ways to concretely transpose ESDP options in sectoral policies, intensification of the spread of the ESDP, firm and regular statements made by politicians in charge of spatial planning issues, at EU and Member States levels, actions to persuade the addressees (as the ESDP is not binding), particularly by spreading awareness of good practices (Interreg IIC, etc.). It may be useful to initiate new specific actions to support the use of the ESDP.

► Stimulate inter-sectoral co-operation

Several respondents stress the need to make better connections among sectors of the Commission with a spatial impact, and evaluate that impact in the light of the ESDP objectives. This coordination work will have an impact at the EU level, but also indirectly upon the lower levels (“fountain effect”). The importance of the Interreg III programmes to deepen the application of the ESDP is also underlined.

► Interpret the ESDP

The ESDP being too vague for most addressees at local level, actions should be taken to explain the implications of its options and more actively connect it to local planning. The making of national or regional spatial planning documents should be promoted. In United Kingdom (where there is no central spatial planning policies or instruments), each part of the kingdom has (or is currently reviewing) its own spatial planning approach and is encouraged to take the ESDP into account.

A research has been conducted on the use of the ESDP in regional strategic spatial planning documents in England<sup>4</sup>. United Kingdom indicates that the ESDP is also taken into account at more local scales: in the London agglomeration plan and in the Glasgow and the Clyde Valley Structure Plan and associated Common Economic Development Perspective.

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<sup>4</sup> University of Liverpool (2001), *The Use of the ESDP in Regional Planning Guidance in England*, commissioned by the Planning Officers Society and the DTLR.

## V. Contents of the policy options

### Questions

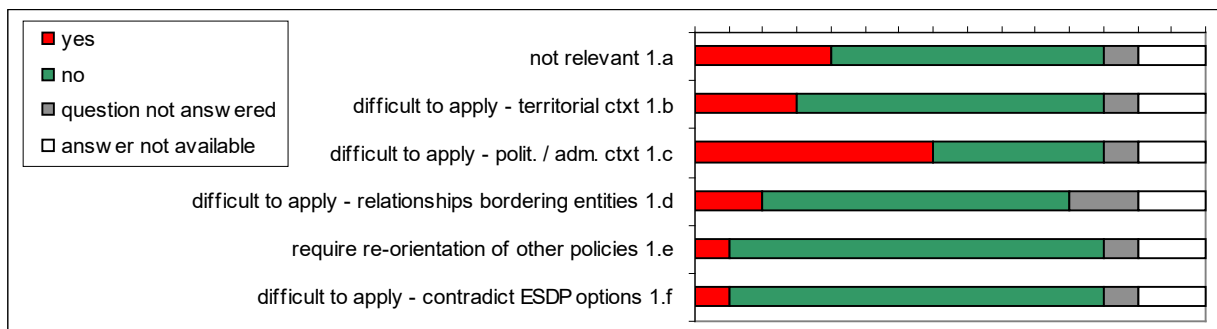
- D.1. Are some of the 60 policy options not relevant to (parts of) your country? What kinds of difficulties is there in your country to apply some policy options? (List of difficulties follows, asking for references to policy options.)
- D.2. Is there a necessity to modify policy options or ease their application? If you have any suggestions of modifications for some options or of actions to ease their application, please indicate them briefly.

#### ▪ Relevance of policy options and difficulty to apply them

Figure 5 exposes the answers related to different kinds of difficulties to apply the policy options. The answers to the questionnaire that provide reference of policy options are certainly not exhaustive and one should see the mention by Member States of some policy options as examples only. The overall impression is that respondents are satisfied with the policy options, most of them being generally relevant and applicable to nearly all Member States.

When looking at the results more closely, significant departures from the general impression come to light (see Figure 5 together with annex 2, which presents the answers to question D.1 under the form of a synoptic table with Member States' comments).

Figure 5 Difficulty to apply the policy options (some policy options are...) (cartographic representations in annex 3)



Four Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Sweden) consider that some policy options are not relevant to (part of) their territory. Certain options indeed target specific territories, such as the periphery (e.g. options 1, 26) or sparsely populated areas (option 27), and countries such as Belgium do not feel themselves concerned. Another example is the promotion of the co-operation between town and countryside (option 20) that is not considered relevant by Sweden due to its low demographic density as well as long distances between settlements, resulting in a countryside weakly polarised by remote towns. It is however normal that not all policy options are relevant for all countries. Local authorities and actors are among the best positioned to choose the most relevant policy options for their context.

Most respondents do not report much difficulty to apply policy options because of:

- Their territorial context (except Belgium, France and Italy);

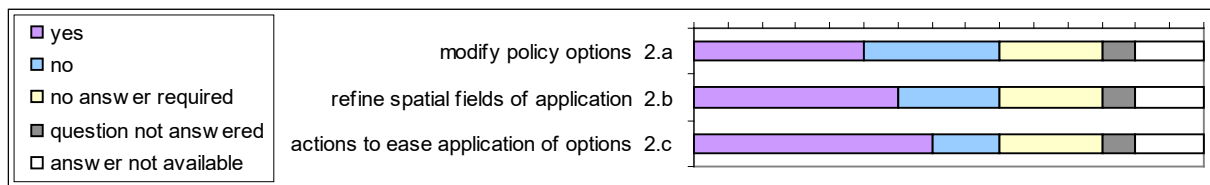
- Their relationships with bordering entities (except for Finland - with Russia - and France; Belgium observes as well that an unequal application of the ESDP can potentially generate tensions due to economic competition);
- Need to re-orientate national or regional policies (except for Spain - which previously indicated that the ESDP failed to provide the expected added value for policies at national level; Brussels-Capital Region (Belgium) comments that options difficult to apply in territorial, political and administrative contexts require a re-orientation of national and regional policies);
- A contradiction between policy options (except for Belgium that observes that potential conflict between economy-oriented and environment-oriented policy options may exist as the options are not spatialised: their territorial coherence is not self-evident).

However, it is noteworthy that more than half of the respondents experience difficulties to apply some policy options in their political or administrative context, i.e. Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain, and that this concerns many options (some respondents do not even enumerate them all and/or refer to “numerous options”) (a list of the mentioned ones can be found in annex 2). Belgium comments that spatial planning has not the needed support to play its role of inter-sectoral co-ordination, while application of most ESDP policy options relies on other sectors than spatial planning.

#### ▪ Need to modify the policy options or ease their application?

Figure 6 indicates the respondents’ attitudes towards the possible need for modification, spatialisation or taking actions to ease the application of (some of) the policy options if their application was found to be difficult<sup>5</sup>. In all cases, a majority of respondents to this question favour the taking of actions. Denmark indicates that it is too early to consider such question and that time must be given to the implementation process.

Figure 6 Necessity to modify policy options or ease their application (cartographic representations in annex 3)



#### ► Modify policy options?

Many countries take the view that there is no need to change the policy options. The Netherlands and United Kingdom consider that there is a high level of consistency between the principles of the ESDP and their own strategic spatial planning documents. The ESDP can not be more than a frame of reference given the number of national, regional and local development contexts, and it is application (part 4 of the ESDP) that introduces the real change (Germany). Policy options are the product of a an agreement between 15 MS (Portugal). The options do not need to be modified, but rather to be adequately interpreted, taking into account the specific conditions of the different territories (Spain).

France also underlines that ESDP options are the product of a compromise between 15 MS, but favours modifying the contents of the policy options in a future revision, yet only in the light of in-depth knowledge, referring to the future results of the ESPON programme. It

<sup>5</sup> Colour code on Figure 6 is neutral: the answers “yes” and “no” are not considered as indicating more or less integration in the policies of Member States.

underlines, with Finland, the fact that some policy options are overlapping with each other, are redundant with another one as they only give more details, etc<sup>6</sup>.

► Refine their spatial fields of application?

Portugal considers that in the context of the enlargement, the contents of the of the ESDP policy options will have to be improved, foremost by deepening territorial dimension. Belgium also insists on the necessity to spatialise the ESDP, although not necessarily by modifying the ESDP itself, and proposes the making of an Interreg-like spatial vision for the whole EU, taking in particular the conclusion of the Ingerop study realised under the French presidency (2000) into account.

► Take action to ease their application?

According to France, more *research* is needed to analyse the obstacle to the application of problematic policy options, while being aware that some options will always come in conflict with habits or interest or face economic competitions that reduce the possibility of application. United Kingdom states that some concepts such as balanced polycentric development and rural - urban relationships still raise questions, and has undertaken, or is undertaking, actions to clarify the meaning of ESDP principles and policy options<sup>7</sup>.

Examples of *good practices* of transnational / European application of balanced development are needed, according to United Kingdom, which has commissioned a study of good practice in Interreg IIC projects<sup>8</sup>.

An *integration of the ESDP in Community policies* can also help the application of policy options at the national or regional level. The Netherlands insists on this in their answers to several questions, and give an example regarding transport: if the ESDP is clearly chosen as a frame of reference by DG Transport for transport policy and more specifically the TEN policy, this could have effects at national level. The Netherlands precisely underline that policy option 25, balanced spreading of sea- and airports over Europe, is difficult to apply in the Netherlands with Rotterdam seaport and Schipol airport being very sensitive issues.

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<sup>6</sup> France is of the opinion that some policy options only add a few details to the main orientations, and the number of policy options could be reduced. For instance, all what comes under the actions of promotion are in general only elements of the initial strategy. The 52nd is a prerequisite to the 47th, 48th and 49th. The 5th specifies the 4th, the 8th is an inflexion of the 7th, the 16th (exchange of experiences) is useful for all orientations and should rather be placed in the chapter 4 on the application, etc.

<sup>7</sup> Polycentricity Framework for the West Midlands: WM LGA, DETR, ECOTEC consultants; ongoing urban-rural research, INTERREG IIC projects such as NETA to clarify transport options.

<sup>8</sup> Zetter, J. (2001) *Evaluation of Interreg IIC Projects in the United Kingdom*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, 55 p.



## VI. Instruments of the ESDP

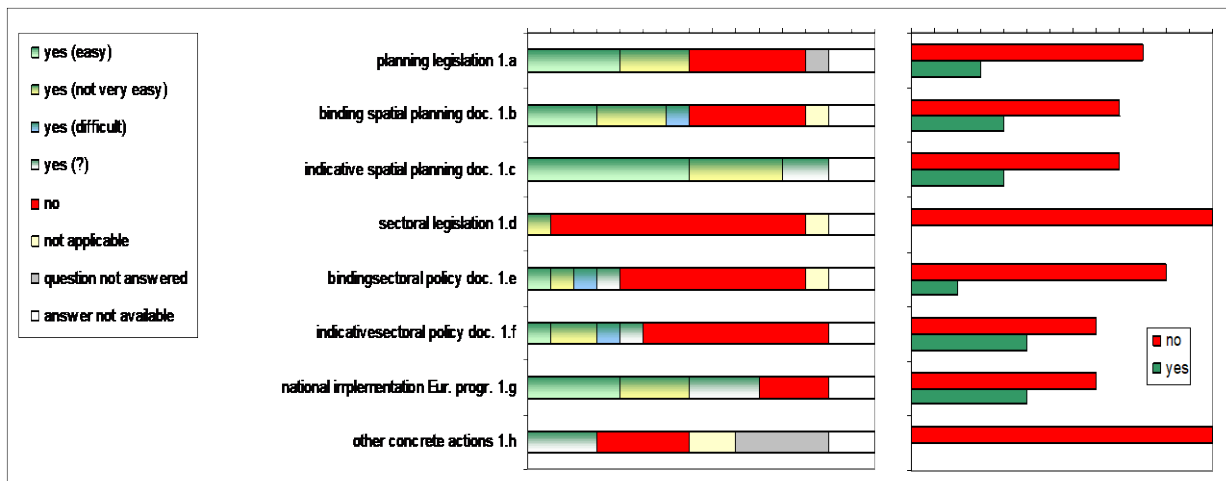
### Questions

- E.1. In your country, has the ESDP or at least elements from it been integrated into the instruments hereunder? (A list of instruments follows.)
- E.2. If you consider integration of the ESDP in those instruments in the next future, please indicate in which one? (The same list follows.)
- E.3. If you have mentioned difficulty to integrate the ESDP into one or more instruments: can you briefly indicate the nature of the difficulty? Do you think that actions could and should be taken in this respect? If you have any suggestions for possible actions in order to ease integration, please indicate them briefly.

### ▪ Integration of the ESDP into legislation and policy documents

Figure 7 shows an outlook of the answers to questions E.1 and E.2.

Figure 7 Current and scheduled integration of the ESDP into various policy documents (cartographic representations in annex 3)



Graph on the right indicates whether implementation is scheduled or not.

### ► Spatial planning instruments

Concerning spatial planning legislation and binding spatial planning documents, the ESDP message is integrated to (some of) them in only half of the Member States, with two other countries intending to integrate it in the next future. Some respondents have specified the type of difficulty they encountered in the process of integrating ESDP in those tools. In Denmark there were some problems regarding “regional willingness to implement on basis of “must”, “ought to” or “can”. Finland experienced difficulty regarding formulation of some ESDP principles in a way that they could be a part of its national (binding) land use guidelines.

All respondents indicate that the ESDP has been integrated in indicative spatial planning document(s) / guideline(s) in their country, the exercise having been easy or moderately difficult. Four Member States intend to integrate the ESDP message in other such documents in the next future. Austria has integrated the ESDP message on several

occasions the Netherlands have done it as well<sup>9</sup> and Denmark underlines some difficulties it has experienced: the implementation of ESDP basic concepts in the National Spatial Planning Report showed the lack of policies concerning rural areas and villages in the ESDP.

► Sectoral instruments

The picture of the integration into sectoral legislation, binding and indicative sectoral policy documents is somewhat similar in pattern to the one of spatial planning documents (better integration for the indicative documents), but with much less success and relatively more difficulties where integration of the ESDP takes place. Some Member States mention that the situation is very differentiated between sectors. Germany mentions as an example that the ESDP was taken into account in the case of the federal transport infrastructure plan.

► National implementation of European programmes

All Member States apart from Austria, Denmark and Finland, have integrated (elements of) the ESDP in their national implementation of European programmes. Only three mention difficulties in this process. Belgium for example indicates that integration in European programmes is sometimes difficult because of the institutional context (European programmes address States whereas most of the concerned competences are regional).

► Concrete actions of another nature & other instruments

The other instruments mentioned by certain Member States that integrate the ESDP message are the Interreg IIc/Interreg IIIb projects/programmes (Austria), Urban policy (Finland), the 'prospective' (France) and (partly) the State Development programmes and plans<sup>10</sup> (Germany).

Not much future integration of the ESDP message can be expected in the types of instruments where it is almost absent today, at least if we refer to the answers to question E.2, because among the respondents which plan to integrate the ESDP in one instrument, most have already done so in the past. It is interesting though to note that difficulty with integration does not prevent from persevering (among the 17 cases where integration in an instrument is scheduled after having already been attempted, 10 were cases where integration was "not very easy" or "difficult"). Changes in the picture may however be expected for three instruments for which respondents plan a first integration: binding spatial documents (2 MS), indicative sectoral policy (3 MS) and national implementation of European programmes (1 MS).. In short, integration in spatial planning documents will most probably remain the most widespread, as well as national implementation of European programmes. In contrast, it cannot be expected - in the light of the answers - that integration into binding sectoral policy documents and legislation will be much improved in the future.

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<sup>9</sup> The Fifth Report on Spatial Planning, 2000, is the main instrument for the translation of the ESDP, in spatial as well as in sectoral policies at all levels.

<sup>10</sup> Landesentwicklungsprogramme bzw.-pläne (z.T.).

## ▪ Difficulties experienced to integrate the ESDP

Besides difficulties that specifically concern a given instrument (see previous point), other more general difficulties are mentioned by the respondents in question E.3.

### ▶ Status of the ESDP

Greece regards the unofficial character of the document as a difficulty. France points out that, as far as the legislative instruments are concerned, the informal character of the ESDP does not allow to take it explicitly as a reference, yet the ideas and orientations remain, for instance in the sustainable planning and development of the territory act<sup>11</sup>. The ESDP is nevertheless quoted as a reference in various non-legislative documents<sup>12</sup>. Also France indicates in the general comments that central administrations, although involved, sometimes have difficulties to refer to a text that they attribute more directly to the Commission rather than considering it as the result of an intergovernmental work of spatial planning administrations.

### ▶ Difficulty of horizontal (cross-sectoral) and vertical cooperation

Belgium, Portugal and Spain report conflicts between spatial and sectoral policies, lack of culture of co-operation. Belgium also underlines difficulties to promote spatial and integrated approaches (change in minds, time consuming processes). Italy points out institutional difficulties linked to the share of competences at national, regional and local level and to the role they must play (guidelines for the national level, responsibility for binding legislation for regional and local level). The Netherlands indicate that the 5<sup>th</sup> Report on Spatial Planning gives guidelines for the sectors with spatial dimensions. Translating the ESDP (via this document) into sectoral structural outlines can sometimes be hampered by suspicion from the sectors, and requires subtleness.

### ▶ General character and insufficient awareness of the ESDP

Portugal reports an insufficient diffusion of the ESDP (together with Spain) and difficulties to translate the general orientations of the ESDP into operational instruments.

However, according to France, although it is not easy to integrate the ESDP into national instruments, it does happen, on a slow pace but continuously. The ESDP, jointly with other factors such as the EU policies or the policies of neighbouring countries, has certainly contributed to integrate more systematically the European context (go beyond its boundaries in the dynamics of development).

Austria and Finland point out that a large part of ESDP contents had already been applied in their country before the ESDP was adopted. It can be noticed however that, while Austria does not mention any difficulty of integration in an instrument, Finland found integration in spatial planning legislation or binding documents not very easy.

## ▪ Need to take action to ease the integration of the ESDP?

Here as well, as indicated in Figure 8, there is a majority of respondents who think actions should be taken to ease the integration of the ESDP. However, Germany, United Kingdom

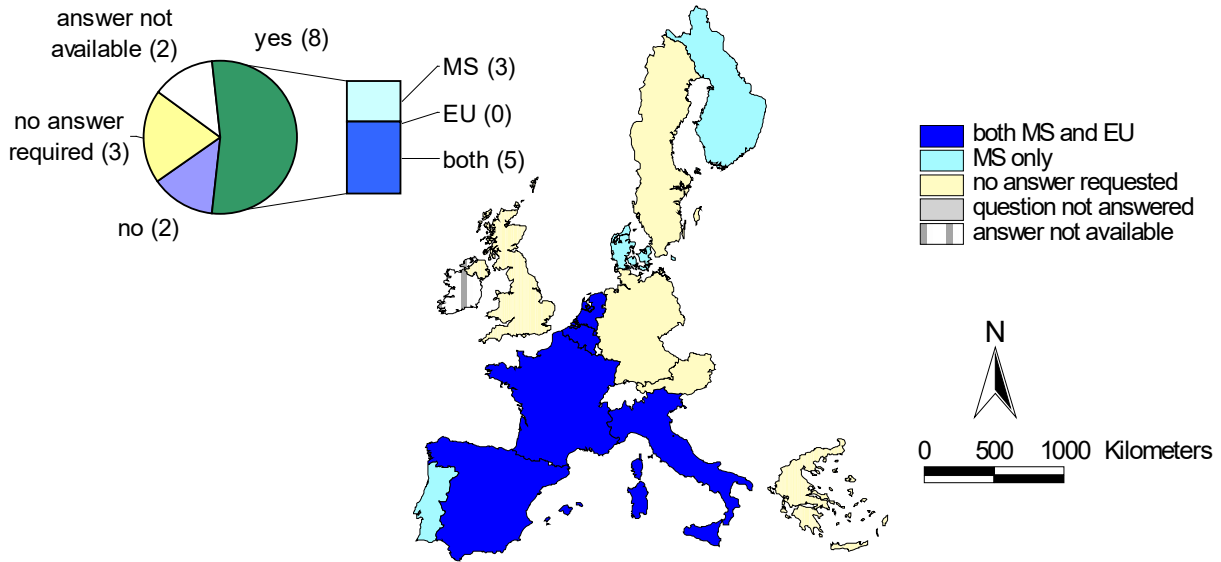
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<sup>11</sup> „Loi sur l'aménagement et le développement durable du territoire“ (LOADDT, June 1999), of which the preamble and general articles are similar to those of the ESDP.

<sup>12</sup> Such as in preparatory documents for public services plans, in documents related to the promotion of the co-operation between cities and the setting up of city networks, in others concerning the implementation of the Objective 2 programme, etc.

and Sweden had not mentioned difficulties to integrate the ESDP in their policy documents and consequently have not answered the question (no answer required). Austria and Greece do not favour the taking of action either. Among the eight Member States that want to take actions, three (Denmark, Finland and Portugal) would prefer no involvement of the EU.

Figure 8 Should action be taken to ease the integration of the ESDP into various instruments (pie chart)? If yes, by whom (map)?



The proposed actions are in general logically linked to the mentioned difficulties. The same categories of suggestions as in part B (awareness of the ESDP) and C (its use) come up:

- Stimulate debate, reflection and communication;
- Stimulate co-operation;
- Interpret the ESDP.

► Stimulate debate, reflection and communication

Portugal and Spain insist on the necessity to reach the public at large, to improve communication and information about the orientations of the ESDP. Portugal also underlines the need to develop a spatial planning culture and to improve public participation in this domain. Spain feels that integrated development strategies should be promoted. France considers that exchange of experience and dialogue between States and regions about the most significant cases should be encouraged.

► Stimulate co-operation

Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands point out that an inter-sectoral dialogue at the European level could help to implement spatial approaches in the Member States. For Belgium, European policies are still too sectorised (each policy having a DG, a commissioner, a budget and a programme, with few co-operation organs) and should give the example of better integration. For Germany, taking the ESDP into account in the competent Councils of Ministers and in general decisions taken at the European level would help to integrate ESDP orientations in sectoral programmes. Nevertheless, efforts should also be made at the national level as well (Belgium).

Greece asks for a better integration of spatial and regional policies.

In matter of vertical co-operation Denmark notes that voluntary pilot projects characterised by co-operation between national (regional) and local level (counties) have taken place through the last 10 years in the country and indicates that this co-operation has proven to be a good model for implementation of national spatial policies on a voluntary basis.

► Interpret the ESDP

Finland insists on the necessity to produce a national interpretation of the policy options. Portugal suggests a wider and better concretisation of some ESDP orientations.

## VII. ESDP process

### Questions

- F.1. Does the ESDP contribute to co-operation in your country? (List of different kinds of co-operation follows.)
- F.2. If you consider that the ESDP should contribute more to co-operation, do you think that actions could and should be taken in this respect? Do you have any suggestions for possible actions?
- F.3. How important for your country do you consider the following issues linked to the ESDP process? (List of issues.)
- F.4. How important for your country do you consider the following aspects of the ESDP process? (List of aspects.)
- F.5. Please indicate if you have any suggestions for possible actions in order to improve one of the previously mentioned aspects that you consider important.
- F.6. How useful for your country do you consider the following instruments in relation with the ESDP process? (List of instruments)
- F.7. For each of the previous instruments you consider useful, please indicate for which aspect(s)? (List of aspects.)
- F.8. Please indicate your suggestions, if any, for possible actions in order to improve usefulness of one of the previously mentioned instruments.

### ▪ Enhancing co-operation using the ESDP

As the ESDP puts it itself: *“Co-operation is the key to an integrated spatial development policy and represents added value over sectoral policies acting in isolation”* (ESDP, 161). And further: *“The ESDP provides the framework for integrated application of the policy options. Its application is not the responsibility of one authority but of a wide range of spatial development (land use, regional planning, urban planning) and sectoral planning authorities. The ESDP recommends three levels for spatial co-operation: the Community level, the transnational/national level, the regional/local level.”* (162).

and associated maps in annex 2 show us that in 5 countries only, the ESDP provides a significant contribution to both vertical and horizontal co-operation: Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom.

In a general way, ESDP provides a higher contribution to co-operation between spatial entities (all three types: inside Member States, cross-border and transnational). Transnational cooperation shows by far the highest score, as 9 respondents consider it provided a large contribution.

The situation is contrasted among the Southern States, with Greece considering that the ESDP only contributed weakly to co-operation (of any kind) while in Italy the ESDP is said to contribute “largely” to all five sorts of co-operation.

In Belgium, the ESDP is said to constitute one of the rare arenas of contact and exchange between the three regions of the country, as there is no institutionalised area for interregional co-operation in spatial planning and development in the country.

Figure 9 Does the ESDP contributes to co-operation between... (cartographic representations in annex 3)

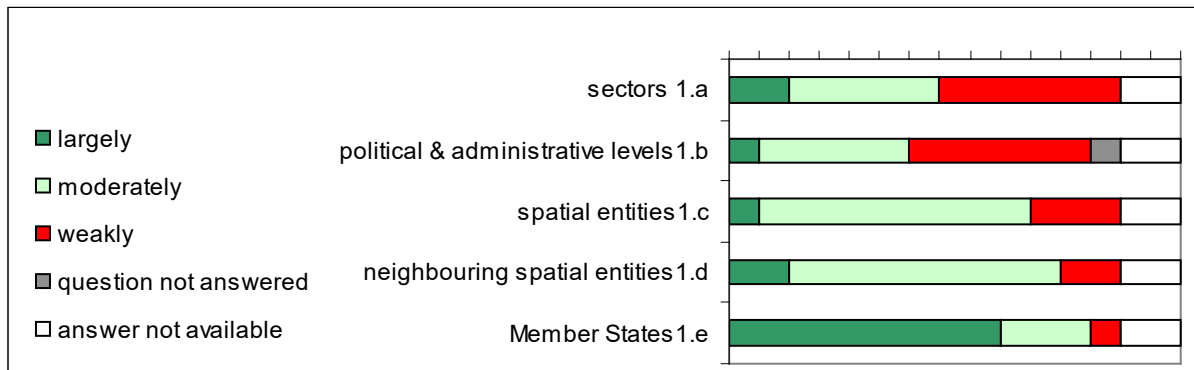
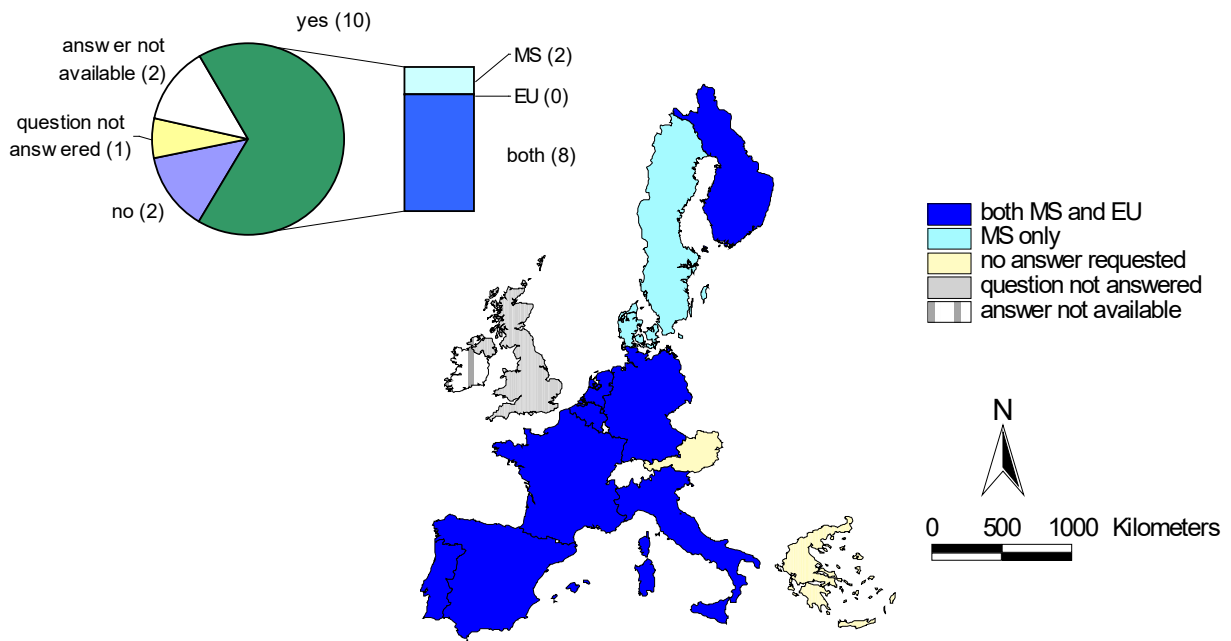


Figure 10 indicates that a large majority of the respondents wish that action be taken to help the ESDP reinforce co-operation (except Austria and Greece, United Kingdom having not answered). All but two (Sweden and Denmark) would prefer that both the Member States and the EU take action.

Figure 10 Should action be taken to enable the ESDP to contribute more to co-operation (pie chart)? If yes, by whom (map)?



Some suggestions stem from the answers in order to improve the different forms of co-operation:

► Stimulate cross-border and transnational co-operation

Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Germany: they all underline the necessity to continue the various Interreg programmes, Denmark points out that the trans-national Interreg programme is “by far” the most important instruments for the application of the ESDP and for raising awareness on spatial planning issues at EU level. For Portugal, the possibilities of application of Interreg will have to be better investigated. This co-operation will need to be increasingly directed towards applicant and third-countries as well (Finland).

Belgium considers that the EU should carry on more integrated co-operation programmes. Portugal thinks that co-operation should be improved in the domain of trans-national transport networks.

► Stimulate inter-sectoral co-operation and co-operation between EU and MS

Spain and United Kingdom insist on the promotion of integrated approaches. development strategies at national or EU level. Another possible way to improve the co-operation with other sectors is to acknowledge and strengthen the spatial dimension of EU policy, notably regional policy. Spain considers that explicit reference to the ESDP should be made in planning and programming documents.

Regarding vertical co-operation, the Member States and the Commission could, without modification to mutual competences, set up a permanent co-operation platform to discuss spatial development (France). In Belgium, there should be more co-operation between the three Belgian Regions and with the federal level. Denmark considers that actions in national context are most important.

Furthermore, the ESPON programme is seen as an excellent means to develop and share knowledge and therefore become a potential catalyst to improve co-operation in general (France, Portugal). Portugal also suggests exchange of experience between universities and research centres.

▪ **Importance of different issues related to the ESDP process**

Figure 11 tells us how important for the respondents various issues connected to the ESDP process are. Whatever the situation regarding ESDP integration, all proposed issues get a good mark. Among the 13 respondents, only 5 consider one or several issues as not very important. Three issues even receive an outstanding mark:

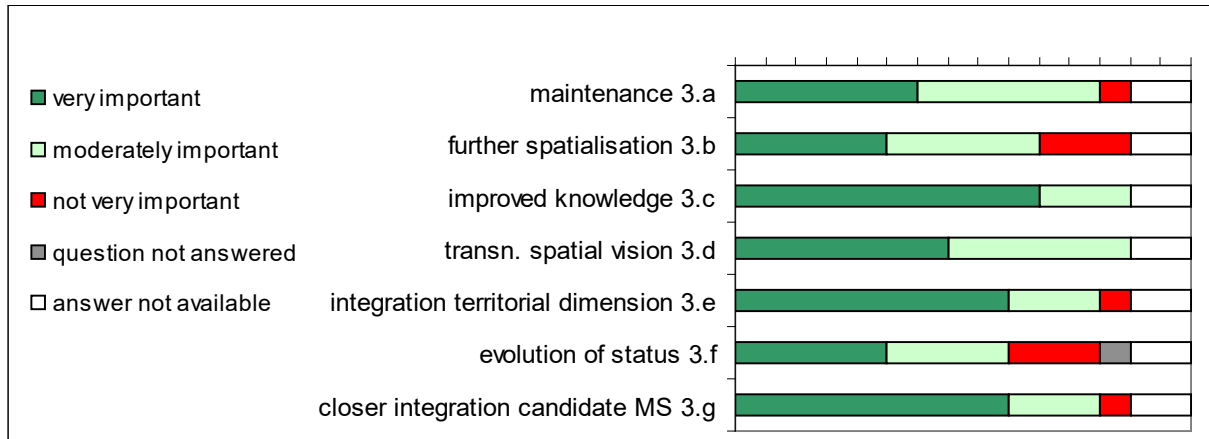
- The need to *improve knowledge* about European issues, for instance through the ESPON programme (as Sweden puts it: ESPON is essential in the policy-making processes of the ESDP);
- The integration of the *territorial dimension in European policies* (except for Sweden);
- The closer integration of *candidate Member States or third countries* (with the exception of Greece).

For the other proposed issues, the opinions are more diversified:

- *Further spatialisation*: if on the one side spatialisation through *transnational spatial visions* seems to be moderately or very important for all respondents, on the other side the further spatialisation of the ESDP itself is seen as very or moderately important for some countries but not very important for others (Austria, Sweden and Finland);
- The countries that stress most the importance of the *status of spatial planning* are two Nordic countries, Denmark and Sweden, together with Germany and the Netherlands, while Austria, France and Greece consider it as not very important. Belgium adds that if there is a true recognition of the added value of a European level to spatial planning, the status itself is not important anymore;
- Maintenance / improvement of the ESDP relevance: only Austria finds this issue not very important, others find it either moderately or very important. This point is seen by some Member States as deriving from the points “improving knowledge”, “further spatialisation”, etc.



Figure 11 Importance of various issues linked to the ESDP process (cartographic representations in annex 3)



▪ **Importance of different aspects related to the ESDP process**

Figure 12 shows that almost all aspects of the ESDP process make high or very high scores. For half of the aspects there is unanimity to consider they are at least moderately important. For the other half, there are only a few respondents that consider them as not very important, the only exception being the formal status of the process.

For the majority of respondents, essential aspects of the ESDP process are its existence, continuity and consistency, and effectiveness (operational results). France recalls that continuity and effectiveness are very important as they assure the credibility of the ESDP ideas and principles.

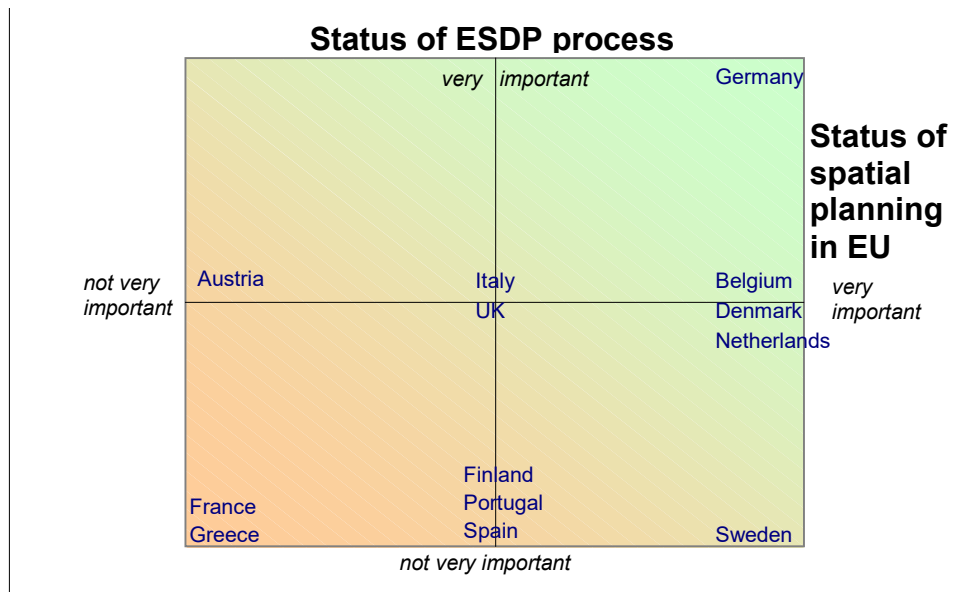
Fairness (e.g. transparency) and spatial extension of the ESDP process come after but are also judged relatively important. Fairness is particularly valued by northern Member States. As for spatial extension, Germany insists on the need to expand the spatial focus of the ESDP and to refine it in order to prepare for the enlargement. Strength (e.g. mechanisms, organs) and depth (e.g. domains concerned) are mostly considered as ‘moderately important’.

Only one respondent considers the question of the *formal status* of the ESDP process as very important. For the others, it is moderately important for half of them while it is unimportant for the other half. The issue of the formal status of the ESDP process seems to be somewhat less important than the status of spatial planning at the European scale, as we can see on Figure 13 from a comparison between question 3.f on Figure 11 and question 4.h on Figure 12: Austria is the only Member State to give more importance to the status of the ESDP process than to that of spatial planning in Europe. Opposite positions appear: while for Germany, both issues are very important, for France and Greece, neither is important. France thinks that giving a formal status to the ESDP process is less important than what it should help to achieve: giving a more formal acknowledgement to the objective of territorial cohesion.

Figure 12 Importance of various aspects of the ESDP process (cartographic representations in annex 3)



Figure 13 Comparison between importance given to the evolution of the status of spatial planning in Europe (question F.3.f) and importance of formal status of the ESDP process (question F.4.h)



Despite the importance given to most aspects of the ESDP process, only 8 respondents have answered the question asking for ways to improve them, and answers are not all specific suggestions regarding the ESDP process, but for example comments on its importance.

Suggestions may be seen along three strands:

- Stimulate debate, reflection and communication;
- Clarify steps and contents of the agenda to pursue the ESDP process;
- Develop operational approaches.

► Stimulate debate, reflection and communication

United Kingdom underlines the need for policy discussion within the CDCR working group on spatial and urban development and for research within the frame of ESPON in order to assist in policy development and application. United Kingdom also feels that there is a need to provide practical examples of application through Interreg and Member States' own experiences.

Other respondents also underline the importance of the ESPON tool, which Sweden considers as essential in the policy-making processes of the ESDP. More generally, the Netherlands underlines the necessity to progress in matter of spatial research and map material.

According to the United Kingdom, strengthening the input from practitioners in the ESDP process is also needed to help secure realistic outputs from the process and to increase awareness and share ownership. This objective can be achieved for instance via occasional seminars on the results of actions in the Tampere and ESPON programmes with representatives from local government and others, through gaining more advice from practitioner experts.

Spain recalls the necessity to broaden circulation and improve knowledge of the ESDP.

► Clarify steps and contents of the agenda to pursue the ESDP process

The Netherlands regard the approval of the ESDP as the start of a long-term process of spatialisation of the EU policy and internationalisation of national spatial policies and consider that in almost all fields, progress must still be achieved. Portugal suggests to evaluate the coherence of activities of the ESDP process. United Kingdom considers that the ESDP process needs to develop and illustrate the ESDP principles and their application, particularly in relation to the following:

- Balanced development at all levels, and particularly the transnational / European level;
- The European level context in relation to enlargement and the spatial impact it will have;
- The spatial approach at all levels.

Some respondents insist on specific tools. France states that it is important to maintain a body that allows to express opinions (CSD/CDCR), as well as to ensure success and to value results of instruments like the ESPON and Interreg III. Portugal wishes that the current or planned works regarding clarification of the status of the CSD and CDCR go on<sup>13</sup>.

► Develop operational approaches

Spain recalls the need to develop integrated development strategies and wishes: implementation of the operational mechanisms of co-ordination. Belgium suggests to confront policy objectives and options of the ESDP with EU sectoral directives and programmes, in order to help identify means to implement them and possibly missing tools, but also in order to allow measuring on a comparable basis (common indicators) implementation of ESDP options in the various Member States. Exchanges of experience and reorientations of ESDP options / existing European, national and regional policies could then rely on this basis, the expected result being that European citizens and decision-makers get a better perception of the ESDP added value.

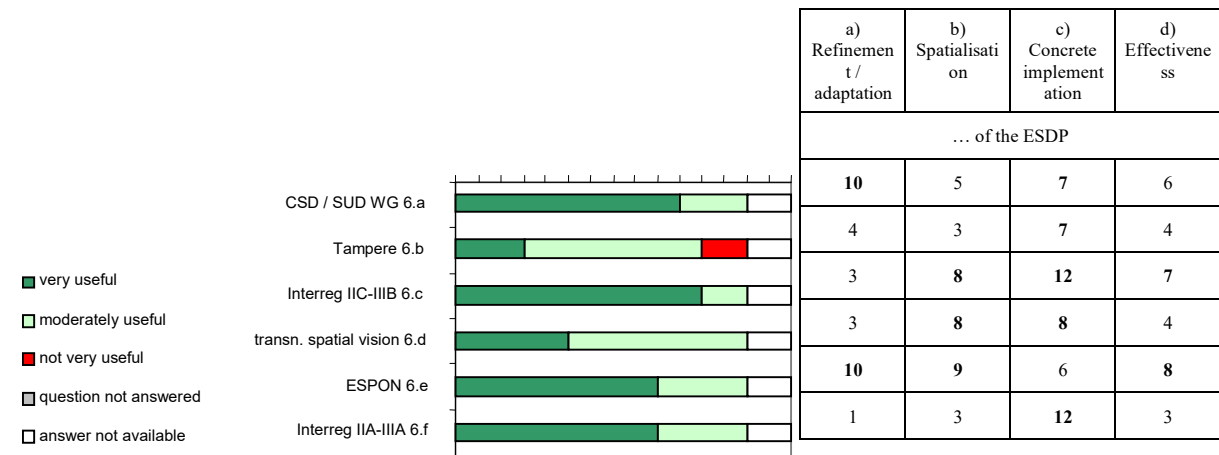
▪ **Usefulness of various instruments in relation to the ESDP process**

Figure 14 combines the answers to two questions: global usefulness of various instruments related to the ESDP process, and aspects for which they are useful as estimated by the respondents.

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<sup>13</sup> It may be reminded that this answer was given in April 2001.

Figure 14 Usefulness of various instruments (cartographic representations in annex 3) relative to specific aspects of the ESDP



Numbers relate to the respondents who have selected a given choice and are highlighted when higher than the half of the 13 respondents.

Four out of the six instruments are much or very much appreciated:

- The *Interreg programmes IIC-III B* are the most appreciated instruments, particularly for the concrete application of the ESDP. They appear also as one of the most polyvalent instruments. Denmark also adds “awareness of the ESDP” to the aspects possibly improved by this instrument.
- Interreg *IIA-III A* are also appreciated but mostly for their contribution to concrete implementation of the ESDP and less so for the other aspects.

Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands insist on relevance and/or effectiveness of Interreg programmes for implementing the ESDP.

- The *CSD/SUD WG of the CDCR*, which is considered useful most of all for the refinement or adaptation of the ESDP, but also for the other aspects. Belgium adds that if the CSD/sub-committee is quite useful now, it will be essential in the hypothesis of a revision of the ESDP (assuming that the subcommittee of the CDCR can function for this task as the CSD did it);
- The *ESPON programme* appears as a polyvalent instrument, very useful to adapt and spatialise the ESDP, but also to help implement it concretely and improve its effectiveness.

For the two other instruments, opinions are more divided:

- The *Tampere Action Programme* is considered as moderately useful by a majority of respondents. Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands take the view that the Tampere Action Programme is very useful (the latter remind that the Tampere programme actually encompasses Interreg and ESPON). In contrast, it is the only instrument judged not very useful (by France and Spain). Its major usefulness concerns concrete implementation of the ESDP.
- A majority of respondents consider the *Transnational Spatial Visions* as moderately useful, the rest finding them very useful. Usefulness concerns both spatialisation and concrete implementation of the ESDP.

The questionnaire provided the possibility to add other aspects to the four proposed ones, and several respondents used this possibility:

- Belgium adds “*Monitoring and assessment of the ESDP*”, for which the CSD / SUD WG is useful.
- Finland adds “*Better integration of the ESDP policy options into Structural Funds programmes*” as an aspect for which CSD / SUD WG, Tampere action programme and Interreg (IIC / IIIB and IIA / IIIA) are useful.
- Sweden adds “*Enlargement*”, for which trans-national spatial visions are useful.

The questionnaire also offered the possibility to mention other actions / instruments of the ESDP process.

Figure 15 presents the actions and instruments added by the respondents: other European programmes and documents are concerned (Interreg IIIC, Cohesion report, Phare, Tacis, Framework for Sustainable Urban Environment, Integrated Coastal Zone Management...).

Figure 15 Usefulness of additional instruments, for specific aspects of the ESDP process

Mentioned by:	Action / instrument of the EU:	Usefulness			For which aspect of the ESDP				
		very useful	moderately useful	not very useful	Refinement / adaptation	Spatialisation	Concrete implementation	Effectiveness	others, namely:
Belgium	Objective 2 (urban theme)		X				X		
Belgium (BXL)	Urban Exchange Initiative group Raphaël programme (heritage) Life, Eco et Natura 2000 programmes (environment), programme COSTC9 (urban planning)		X				X		
Denmark	Cross-sectoral integration	X					X	X	
	In-depth integration into guidelines for Structural Funds	X				X	X	X	X <sup>14</sup>
Finland	Interreg IIIC	X	-				X		X <sup>15</sup>
France	Cohesion report and aftermath	X			X			X	
	Evolution of community policies and progress of the territorial cohesion concept	X					X	X	
Germany	Phare, Tacis		X						
	Urban development	X							
Sweden	Framework for Sustainable Urban Environment	X							
	ICZM	X						X	

Member States also expressed comments and suggestions to improve the usefulness of the above-mentioned instruments. As some respondents have already handled the topic of instruments under question F.5, suggestions are not numerous. Several countries take the occasion to recall some important concerns which justify their attitude toward instruments:

- Denmark states that ESDP is considered as an important document which should act as guidelines and inspiration for the Member States and as guidelines for a cross-sector coordination at EU-level;

<sup>14</sup> Raising awareness of the ESDP.

<sup>15</sup> Better integration of the ESDP policy options into Structural Funds programmes.

- For the Netherlands, the three most important instruments are the CSD / SUD WG, Interreg III and the ESPON; all three instruments should as much as possible be viewed in coherence with each other.
- Netherlands also states that political weakness of spatial planning at EU level is an important problem, and welcomes the initiative of the Belgian Presidency to organise a common meeting for ministers of regional policy and spatial planning (Namur, July 2001).

Suggestions concern various time horizons. Some short-term suggestions may be considered as outdated now as they refer to the context of 2001 (to implement the ESPON, to clarify the respective status of CSD and SUD WG of the CDCR,...). Longer-term suggestions mainly concern the domain of reflection, communication and debate.

- Portugal considers that communication about the ESDP should be improved (broader diffusion of the policy options and of the conditions for their application).
- The ESDP is an instrument for sustainable development and not a regulatory document. This function to provide “impulse” to development should be put to the fore and better communicated (Germany).
- Portugal and the Netherlands underline the importance of the ESPON programme for research and analysis.
- Belgium suggests that the different documents and results of research concerning spatial planning at the European level (ESDP, SPESP/ESPON, a selection of the best Interreg IIC projects, the twelve actions of the Tampere Action Programme, etc.) be more widely synthesised and translated in the different EU languages.
- France feels that there should be a common reflection on the methodology (strategy, objectives, priorities, use...) of the transnational Spatial Visions, which are interesting instruments, involving intense co-operation and a bottom-up approach.
- Portugal proposes to evaluate actions of the Tampere Action Programme<sup>16</sup>.
- .
- Denmark and Germany recall the importance of the Interreg instrument. Germany considers that it should more contribute to the ESDP specific strength, i.e. to allow to go beyond national borders that constitute obstacles to development. Besides Interreg, Denmark regards the Structural Funds guidelines as one of the most effective instrument for implementation of the ESDP.

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<sup>16</sup> This was before the Belgian Presidency announced that a progress report on the Tampere programme would be presented by at the informal ministerial Council of Namur (July 2001).