



*Ministero delle Infrastrutture
e dei Trasporti*

ESPON ITALIAN EVIDENCE IN CHANGING EUROPE

edited by
Maria Prezioso



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As experimental people we do not act as the
theoretical ones: the originality of an idea is not
intended to be printed on a sheet of paper but
to prove it through an original experiment
(Blackett '62)

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List of abbreviations

AC	Alpine Convention
ADES	ESPON Project: Airports as Drivers of Economic Success in Peripheral Regions
ARTS	ESPON Project: Assessment of Regional and Territorial Sensitivity
BRIC	Brazil, Russia, India, China
CaDEC	ESPON Project: Capitalisation and Dissemination of ESPON Concepts
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBP	Capacity Building Policies
CEC	Commission for Environmental Cooperation
CEMAT	Council of Europe - Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/regional planning - Conférence Européenne des Ministres de l'Aménagement du Territoire
CLIMATE	ESPON Project: Climate Change and Territorial Effects on Regions and Local Economies in Europe
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
DEMIFER	ESPON Project: Demographic and Migratory Flows Affecting European Regions and Cities
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EATIA	ESPON Project: Territorial Impact Package for Transport and Agricultural Policies
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EDORA	ESPON Project: European Development Opportunities in Rural Areas
EGTC	European grouping of territorial cooperation
ENPI-CBC-MED	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument - Cross-Border Cooperation - Mediterranean sea basin
ESI	European Structural Investment (Funds)
ESPON	European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion
ESPONTrain	ESPON Project: Establishment of a transnational ESPON training programme to stimulate interest to ESPON2013 knowledge
ET2050	ESPON Project: Territorial Scenarios and Visions for Europe 2050
EU2020	Europe 2020 Strategy
EUROISLAND	ESPON Project: European Islands and Cohesion Policy
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EU-SILC	EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
FOCI	ESPON Project: Future Orientation for Cities
FUAs	Functional Urban Areas
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GERD	Gross Expenses in Research and Development
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
GIS	Geographical Information System
HDC - IRC	Human Development and Capability - International Research Centre
IC	Institutional Capacity
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INTERCO	ESPON Project: Indicators of Territorial Cohesion
INTERSTRAT	ESPON Project: ESPON in Integrated Territorial Development Strategies
IT	Institutional Thickness
ITDS	Integrated Territorial Development Strategies
JWG	Joint Working Group
KIT	ESPON Project: Knowledge, Innovation, Technology
LUA	Large Urban Area

LUZ	Large Urban Zone
MAN-3	Mass at Nuts 3 model
MASST	Macroeconomic, Sectoral, Social, Territorial model
MED	Europe in the Mediterranean Programme
MEGAs	Metropolitan European Growth Areas
METREX	European Metropolitan Regions and Areas network
METROBORDER	ESPON Project: Cross-border polycentric metropolitan regions
MIT	Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
NSS	National Spatial Strategy
NUTS	Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques
ODR	Old age Dependency Ratio
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	Operational Programme
P.I.G.S.	Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain
PIA	Polycentric Integration Area
POLYCE	ESPON Project: Metropolisation and Polycentric Development in Central Europe: Evidence Based Strategic Options
PST	Project Support Team
PTR	Territorial Regional Plan
R&D	Research & Development
ReRISK	ESPON Project: Regions at Risk of Energy Poverty
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
RSA	Report on the State of the Alps
RUICS	Regione Umbria Innovation and Competition Scoreboard
SEARCH	ESPON Project: Structured Empirical Analysis for Convergence Regions: Identifying Success Factors for Consolidated Growth
SeGI	ESPON Project: Indicators and perspectives for services of general interest in territorial cohesion and development
SGPTD	ESPON Project: Secondary growth poles in territorial development
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIESTA	ESPON Project: Spatial indicators for a 'Europe 2020 Strategy' Territorial Analysis
SME	Small and medium size enterprises
SMART-IST	ESPON Project: Institutional capacity for territorial development
SOIA	System of Observation and Information on the Alps
SPAN-3	ESPON Project: Spatial Perspectives at NUTS 3 Level
SPESP	Study Programme on European Spatial Programme
SS-LR	ESPON Project: Spatial Scenarios: New Tools for Local-Regional Territories
SURE	ESPON Project: SUccess for convergence Regions' Economies
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TANGO	ESPON Project: Territorial Approaches for New Governance
TeDI	ESPON Project: Territorial Diversity in Europe
TERCO	ESPON Project: European Territorial Cooperation as a Factor of Growth, Jobs and Quality of Life
TerrEvi	ESPON Project: Territorial Evidence Pack for Structural Funds Programme
TIA	Territorial Impact Assessment
TIGER	ESPON Project: Territorial Impact of Globalization for Europe and its Regions
TIP RED	ESPON Project: Transport Infrastructure for Peripheral Regions' Economic Development
TIPTAP	ESPON Project: Territorial Impact Package for Transport and Agricultural Policies

TNA	Transnational Networking Activities
TPG	Transnational Project Group
TRACC	ESPON Project: TRansport ACCessibility at regional/local scale and patterns in Europe
UERA	Urban Europe Research Alliance
UPM	Union pour la Méditerranée
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators
WTO	World Trade Organisation

24. THE COHESION POLICY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF 2014-2020. THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE RELAUNCH OF EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION AND THE ROLE OF MACRO-REGIONS

Angela D'Orazio¹

24.1 INTRODUCTION

The process of development of European policy is now at the crucial stage for the determination of guidelines for the next Programming period 2014-2020.

The renewal of the European institutions since the new Treaty of Lisbon (2009), provided a more solid basis for action in the territorial field: cohesion policy aims to be figured more and more according to a multidimensional view that aspires to be the economic and social especially territorial.

The European cohesion policy developed by the Structural Funds and other instruments oriented to convergence has suffered a change of perspective in recent years in relation to the adequacy of the models of economic development of reference, in particular with respect to so-called regional development policies (Barca et al. 2012).

The drive for recognition of territorial diversity has come primarily from the Committee of the Regions and, in the Commission, from DG Regio.

A process of gradual insertion of the territorial issue in official documents demonstrates this paradigm shift justified from the point of view of the economy by the adoption of models of endogenous local development that have gradually found their role in the official forums (Commission of the European Communities, 2008).

It is within the cohesion policy that conflicting views about the idea of Europe to build, about possible models of economic development of reference, about actions to be implemented to achieve the objectives.

Two moments of the debate of the last decade are represented by two separate documents but commissioned by the European institutions: the Sapir Report (2004) and the Barca Report (2009).

In the first report, prepared at the time of negotiation of the current EU budget, the proposal was to implement structural policies at European level, either by weakening the cohesion policy or the agriculture policy, aimed at the improvement of the 'major' infrastructure and research networks, without particular attention to the territorial dimension, considering them as 'space-blind' interventions and assessing these opportunities in terms of system efficiency and not of territorial coverage.

In the second report, explicitly aimed to cohesion policy, instead the fundamental role to the territorial dimension in development policies was claimed: the approach to be followed should be place-based, since the juxtaposition of sectoral investment does not guarantee effectiveness and the regarded territory is a discriminating factor in terms of efficiency.

These not new issues had found a first recognition in the adoption of the first Territorial Agenda in 2007², documents not formally adopted by the Commission or the Parliament: the strengthening of

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² 'Territorial Agenda of the European Union: Towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe of diverse regions' (2007). Based on the work produced by the ESPON - (European Spatial Planning Observation Network), the Member States produced the

Europe's competitiveness in the world can be reached using his territorial diversity at its best and in innovative ways. But it is in the Fifth Cohesion Report (CEC, 2010), the first published after the Treaty of Lisbon, where the emergence of four key issues are emphasized: territorial dimension of access to services; environmental dimension of sustainable development; functional regions and territorial cooperation; measure of the territorial impact of policies.

The current strategy Europe 2020 (2010) A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which is the reference for the next ten years as at the time it was the Lisbon-Gothenburg Strategy, is part of this evolutionary framework - of progressive emergence of territorial dimension - which accepts after nearly a decade as a founding idea for the Union the notion of territorial cohesion in its dual dimension of long-term political goal and a shared competence between the Union and Member States. "Cohesion policy and its structural funds, while important in themselves, are key delivery mechanisms to achieve the priorities of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Member States and regions" (Commission of the European Communities, 2010a, p. 22).

However, in this context, the declared territorial dimension of the strategy is only implicit in the general formulation. It is clear the issue of territorialisation of policies, namely the need to adopt a territorial approach, both in the preparation and in the implementation, to identify useful actions adapted to regions and cities: "Europe 2020 Strategy has a territorial dimension although it remains somewhat implicit. A territorial dimension and a place-based approach is integral to the implementation of the strategy. The aims of Europe 2020 require that territorial diversity is acknowledged and that full advantage is taken of the distinctiveness of Europe's regions and municipalities. A territorial dimension is also needed to fully grasp the different types of challenges for regional development of the Europe 2020 strategy. Last but not least, acknowledging the territorial dimension and its richness also allows for better inclusion of the key public and private stakeholders at local and regional level. The inclusion of a territorial approach into the elaboration and implementation of the Strategy could add up to the creation of more policy coherence and the formulation of tailor-made actions for regions and cities" (ESPON, 2010, p.5).

The debate on the future regulation of the Structural Funds, in particular regarding the role of the territorial dimension and of the tools useful for the so-called territorialisation of European policies collects these concerns³ and the current formalization of the new regulation tries to make the necessary activities operational by understanding local contexts at different scales.

24.2 IN SEARCH OF A NEW PARADIGM FOR EUROPEAN REGIONAL POLICY

The discussion on the Programming of the new period has confronted different and opposing views regarding the policy model to be adopted; visions that also involved different logics of action for the European level (Faludi, 2010).

What was in question were either the premise and the same objectives of cohesion policy through a rethinking of its articulation in particular in supporting territorial development at the local level. (Polish Presidency, 2011).

document 'The territorial state and perspectives of the European Union (TSP)': a so-called evidence-based document that has provided the basis for the policy document of Leipzig. It contains recommendations for a "policy of integrated spatial development" aimed at mobilizing the potential of cities and regions in Europe, for sustainable economic growth but also for employment.

³ The main documents dealing with the question, either formally adopted or the product of working groups are: the fifth Cohesion Report (CEC - European Commission, 2010), the Barca Report (Barca Report, 2009), the work for the meetings of the High Level Group Reflecting on Future Cohesion Policy (CEC, European Commission, 2010b, 2010c) the work on the revision of the budget (CEC European Commission, 2010d), the Declaration of Toledo (Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Development, 2010), the Territorial agenda renewed (Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development, 2011).

A significant part of the budget was devoted to a development 'place-based' strategy having in cohesion policy its main tool and that was implemented completely renovating the logic and mechanisms of allocation: in a word, the underlying idea of public policy.

According to Barca (2009) a reform of this type should involve a different conception of policies, a concentration of priorities, a change in governance and requires three conditions to be implemented: a political high-profile commitment, changes to be prepared and implemented already in the 2007-2013 Programming period in order to test the restructuring of the successive period by a rethinking of the negotiation process.

The place-based approach locates at the hub a local multi-level process of 'negotiation' that places as objectives of regional policy either the reduction of under-utilization of territorial potential and the reduction of social exclusion; that identifies functional regions as areas of intervention - but chosen through a policy process; that identifies as instruments of intervention the provision of packages of public goods and integrated services and the introduction of an institutional change; that, on the one hand, takes as a method of external intervention the conditionality of benefits, and on the other the collection of information and the definition of priorities and preferences locally.

In brief, what appears in the transformation are the very premises of European regional policy (Thissen e Van Oort, 2010) and the proposal of a new paradigm.

Over the past decades the European development policies have been concentrated on overcoming the differentials in wealth measured in terms of GDP among European regions based on traditional economic development models for which the active policies implied aid in direct investments in infrastructures.

In fact, the current interpretation of the European economic model was the one that identified a core and a periphery and measured the level of European integration as affordability, i.e. in terms of the distance of the individual states or regions from other national markets and in relation to the relevant trade-weighted exchanges. The States and the least developed regions had to be helped because of the higher cost to be incurred to reach the central markets.

But the overall activities of collaboration and cooperation developed over the years, both at the level of informal meetings of Ministries responsible for spatial planning, both relating to initiatives of DG Regio (now DGXVI) and to other European Programmes not explicitly dedicated to the objective of macroeconomic convergence, have introduced different models of interpretation of the forms of development of the European territory.

In particular, starting from the studies developed in Europe in 2000 (Commission of European Communities, 1991), both the evidence of the diversity and complexity of these forms, diversity not due to a few macroeconomic indicators, along with the need to find a way to develop a strategy for European territorial planning have begun to emerge. What this might mean has been the subject of extensive debate since the formulation of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP - CEC, 1999), and later in political and academic forum (Faludi, 2009; Peyrony, 2010)

The ESDP has provided the elements that still inspire the formulation of guidelines and position papers.

However, when it is recognized that the development of a region is linked to multiple dimensions is evident that Programming guidelines and related interventions cannot be considered sectoral but they involve an integrated strategy that is to be territorial, that is adapted to that territory.

But then one of the central issue concerns the scale of the policy guidelines and the subject who takes responsibility for the decision.

During the 1990s studies of macro-regional level were carried out (Commission of European Communities, 1994) both in the preparation of the cited ESDP in relation to specific sectoral policies such as

infrastructures (Trans European Networks) or natural heritage conservation (Natura 2000) that laid the foundation for the recognition of the possibility of different areas of intervention.

The activities of transnational cooperation (cooperation areas such as the Mediterranean or Alpine Space) have substantially contributed to the formation of models of collaboration for the implementation of the European spatial development policy. And a recognition has been given to the role that this type of cooperation plays in territorial development because of its ability to increase the 'European competence' of regions and cities that have been involved in these Programmes (Le Galès, 2006; German Presidency, 2007; Dühr and Nadin, 2007).

The integrated approach to territorial development has been characteristic in these projects since in many cases it has been generally necessary to produce a common vision of development rather than simply talk to counterpart sectors of the different participating institutions.

24.3 TERRITORIAL DIMENSION IN NEW COHESION POLICY 2014-2020

The discussion about the past Programming period (European Commission, 2013) has directed the current policy guidelines as you can detect the new General Regulation of the Structural Funds (EU 1303/2013).

It was decided to concentrate structural policies on a smaller number of priorities closely linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, with the aim to focus on results, monitor progress and facilitate implementation.

The thematic objectives are described in Article 9: "In order to contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth as well as the Fund-specific missions pursuant to their Treaty-based objectives, including economic, social and territorial cohesion, each ESI Fund shall support the following thematic objectives: (1) strengthening research, technological development and innovation; (2) enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT; (3) enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF); (4) supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors; (5) promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management; (6) preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency; (7) promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures; (8) promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; (9) promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination; (10) investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning; (11) enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration. Thematic objectives shall be translated into priorities that are specific to each of the ESI Funds and are set out in the Fund-specific rules. But while the need for a stronger link between cohesion policy and the economic governance of the Union is underlined, in order to ensure that the effectiveness of expenditure under the Structural Funds is based on sound economic policies, on the other hand the need for an integrated territorial approach is explicitly introduced".

In fact, since the main social challenges the Union has to meet today- globalization, demographic change, environmental degradation, migration, climate change, energy use, economic and social consequences of the crisis - may have different impacts in different regions⁴ drafting partnership agreements and Programmes from the Member States, the choice and combination of thematic objectives along with the selection of investments and of Union priorities and the corresponding specific objectives are to reflect the needs and the potential of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in each Member State and each region⁵

⁴ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Annex I 6.3,

⁵ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Annex I 6.2.

The integrated territorial approach in dealing with territorial challenges, provides that the Structural Fund Programmes mirror the diversity of European regions, in terms of characteristics of employment and of the labour market, interdependencies between different sectors, commuting patterns, ageing and demographic changes, cultural, scenic and heritage features, vulnerability and climate change impacts, land use and limited availability of resources, the potential for a more sustainable use of resources, including renewable resources, institutional and governance arrangements, connectivity, accessibility and links between rural and urban areas⁶.

The processing of partnership agreements and Programmes related to individual funds must therefore envisage⁷ a phase of study and evaluation that seems organized as a strategic planning model (Archibugi, 1996) that aims to⁸:

a) analyse the characteristics, development potential and the ability of the Member State or region, in particular in relation to the main challenges identified in the Europe 2020 strategy;

b) assess the main challenges faced by the region or Member State and identify the bottlenecks and missing links and gaps in innovation, including lack of capacity for planning and implementation that inhibits the growth and long-term employment potential to identify the sectors and activities possible subject of policy choices and intervention and then the concentration of resources;

c) assess the difficulties of cross-sectoral, inter-jurisdictional or cross-border coordination, in particular in the context of macro-regional strategies and sea basins;

d) identify measures to achieve a better coordination between the different territorial levels, taking into account the territorial scale and context suited for the design of policies and for the institutional and legal framework of the Member States and the various sources of funding for an integrated approach linking the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth to local and regional actors.

In making this assessment, then, the territorial dimension of cohesion should be guaranteed, if, in formulating the strategy for smart sustainable and inclusive growth in the affected areas, we will consider the following factors⁹:

a) the role of cities, urban and rural areas and the fishing zones and coastal areas, as well as areas that have specific geographic or demographic handicaps;

b) the specific challenges of the outermost regions of the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border and mountain regions;

c) the links between urban and rural areas in terms of access to infrastructure and services of high quality at affordable prices, and the problems of the regions with a high concentration of socially excluded communities.

In this 'discourse' main directions of studies of the 90s ring out, "Transport infrastructure improvements" the "Urban areas to be improved" and the "Development potential to be Realised" (from forest, rural areas, industrial, tourist inland, areas for technological diffusion and cross-border cooperation on planning).

The wealth of knowledge in terms of methodological approaches and in terms of elements of knowledge that the ESPON 2013 Programme can give to develop the political processes of elaboration and implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy ESPON (2010) finds confirmation in the indications of the method of the new General Regulation of Structural Funds.

⁶ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Annex I 6.4.

⁷ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Article 15, paragraph 1, letter a

⁸ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Annex I 6.4.

⁹ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Annex I 6.5.

As part of the Programme the potentials that guide European development were in fact identified in particular in terms of regional localization. Under Priority 1 “Applied research” the interrelationships between different dynamics (demography, climate change, energy) and political implications (for example, through the territorial impact assessment) were explored.

On the other hand the results of studies of Priority 2 “Target analyses” are used in the formulation of a framework of European policies adapted to the possible development of city-regions and macro-regions.

In general, the projects consider the actual practices of governance trying to contribute to cities and regions empowerment.

All activity allows you to continually update the platform of scientific data, indicators, territorial comparisons and survey methodologies.

Such a wealth of knowledge allows for a comparison framework at regional level covering the whole of Europe and offers itself as a basis for any action of territorial cooperation at different geographical scales.

24.4 NEW CHALLENGES OF TERRITORIAL COOPERATION: THE ROLE OF MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES

The priorities set by the EU are translated into practical actions in the Member States and their regions through structural Programmes. The key to achieve these objectives on a European scale is the participation of all levels of government.

Cohesion policy operates by providing essential public goods in order to enable countries and European regions to concentrate resources to improve the economic, social and territorial cohesion and achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Regulations define a common set of rules in order to improve the consistency between instruments, to promote synergies and achieve a greater impact in the implementation of the various Funds (European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for rural Development (EAFRD) and the European maritime and fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The general document recognizes a strong cross-border interdependence then it is emphasized that cohesion policy aims to strengthen ties between the more and less developed regions to maximize the “spillover effect” from the centres of growth to the surrounding areas.

In this perspective the central role that takes on one hand, the characterization of the territories, on the other the construction of macro-regional development strategies is emphasized (Dühr, 2011).

In fact, the Common Strategic Framework (CSF), the document that sets out guidelines to facilitate the process of strategic planning and sectoral and territorial coordination for Union interventions in the framework of the Structural Funds and other policies and other relevant instruments of the Union, must take account the main territorial challenges of the various types of territory.

Among the planned contents, there are ways to address the main territorial challenges for urban, rural, coastal and fisheries areas, the demographic challenges of the Regions or the specific requirements of the geographical areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps but also the challenges of the outermost regions.

The CSF should define priority areas for cooperation activities under the Structural Funds, taking into account, where appropriate, macro-regional and sea basin strategies.

In this context, a “macro-regional strategy” is defined¹⁰ as “an integrated framework” approved by the European Council, which could be supported by the Structural Funds among others, to address common

¹⁰ General Regulations UE. 1303/2013 Article 2 Definitions Paragraph 31

challenges relating to a defined geographical area, [challenges] related to the Member States and to third countries within the same geographical area, thus benefiting from enhanced cooperation that contributes to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

It is stressed that the need for this type of strategy would be also supported by national and regional Programmes, since there are no specific additional funding: it is necessary to identify new ways to more efficiently use of the existing resources in financial, legislative and infrastructural terms and for the benefit of the whole area.

Macro-regional strategies (and even the sea-basin strategies) are a relatively recent phenomenon of cooperation¹¹ with broader implications with respect to the system of funding Programmes of the European Union (European Commission, 2013). The same Fifth Cohesion Report gives a key role in this type of strategy.

The purpose of a macro-regional strategy is to organize cooperation between countries or territories by mobilizing stakeholders at local, regional and national level around a vision that puts in place the existing policies with their relevant financing systems.

It is considered essential, given the current budget constraints, introducing innovative approaches that make the most of the policy directions and related funding an optimal way.

This implies also the introduction of the cooperation among financial institutions either in order to apply new financial instruments or to attract private capital.

The macro-regional approach as illustrated by the first Resolution on the matter¹² provides an integrated framework to deal with clearly identified problems at the level of the area that present a size that is too large to be solved in national level but that also are specific to the European dimension in general.

The added value of macro-regions lies in the strengthening of cooperation among states and regions reason that the European territorial cooperation Programmes are a key element for the attainment of objectives of macro-regions¹³.

In this context it is interesting the case of the Alpine transnational cooperation for which there is the Alpine Space Programme but also a formalized permanent tool of cooperation as the Alpine Convention. The cooperative activities that characterize this strategic area of Europe make it a natural object for this type of initiative.

In this area, the Alpine Convention, signed in 1991, activated since 1995 and ratified by the European Union in 1996, operates on an area 200,000 square kilometres and stretches over 8 countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland). It has as its basis the recognition that conservation and sustainable development of the Alps as a territory inhabited by 14 million people require actions that cross national borders. Clearly it is necessary to seek and ensure an integrated development that invests on environmental economic social and cultural issues.

The Alpine Convention is a treaty that applies to a specific territory, and therefore assigns a key role to regional and local authorities.

The coverage does not coincide with that of the European Alpine Space cooperation Programme that includes the regional territories in their entirety, whereas the Alpine Convention identifies a sub-

¹¹ The concept of macro-regional strategy was introduced for the first time in 2009 with the adoption of the EU Strategy for the Baltic (EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea), the other macro and operational strategy adopted is that of the Danube macro-region (2011EU Strategy for the Danube region.). And the Macro Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region (EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region) that will integrate the Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Basins (Maritime Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, 2012) is under approval. With regard to the strategy of sea basins in 2001 the Commission adopted the Atlantic strategy and in 2012 the Adriatic-Ionian strategy.

¹² European Parliament Resolution of 6 July 2010 on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the role of macro-regions in the future cohesion policy 2009/2230 (INI) (European Parliament, 2010).

¹³ European Parliament 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 (INI)), paragraph 24

regional boundary to be restricted to areas with mountain characters. In Italy, for example, the autonomous regions of the Valle D'Aosta and Trentino Alto Adige are entirely included, but not the entire region of Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto.

In this area there is an ongoing process of building the proposal concerning to a macro Alpine region.

Starting from 2011, during the 11th Alpine Conference (Brdo/Slovenia March 2011) within the Alpine Convention the Working Group on the macro-regional strategy was settled, which has formally expressed the contribution of the Alpine Convention in the next 12th Conference (Poschiavo, Switzerland, September 2012) (Alpine Convention, 2012), thus identifying the areas of interest for the definition of priorities and value-added factors that a macro-regional strategy could provide.

A macro-regional strategy “should be based on identifiable, and agreed, features and challenges – geographic, cultural, economic or other. However, the definition should not be rigid but rather functional, so that the proposed policies and projects can be applied to the areas for which they are most applicable. In other words, the strategy should be place-based rather than administratively organised, so that it addresses the real needs of the identified locations” (DG REGIO, 2009 p.7).

In the construction of the macro-strategy the importance of considering the results of the ESPON Programme has been highlighted as an instrument of knowledge aimed at the future renewed policy of territorial cooperation.

The project TerrEvi Territorial Evidence Packs for Structural Funds Programmes (ESPON, 2013) for example, identified the references of interest in the activities 2007-2013 for the cooperation area of the Alpine Space.

To cite some examples in CLIMATE project (ESPON, 2011) on the effects of climate change the possible impacts on competitiveness and cohesion both at European and regional level are analysed. The Alpine Space is a case study for which the project provides an investigation into the adaptive capacity in this area.

In the project GEOSPECS (ESPON, 2012) strengths and weaknesses and development opportunities for specific types of territories and regions are highlighted, in particular the mountainous areas. The project TeDi (ESPON, 2010) focuses on 'territorial diversity' in sparsely populated areas or remote areas, mountainous areas and islands, and contributes to a better understanding of development processes in this type of area.

24.5 CONCLUSIONS

At the base of the introduction of macro-regional scale is the idea that creating functional regions, articulated around shared objectives and developmental problems, may help to improve the effectiveness of regional policy of the European Union¹⁴ meaning that the enhancement of the specific characteristics of the regions could result in a far more efficient use of the Structural Funds and the creation of added value at regional level¹⁵.

Along with this new level of geographic scale then another different reference in the articulated system of multilevel governance that characterizes the EU emerges, and it is clearly mentioned in the cited resolution (European Parliament, 2010) about the role of macro-regions in the cohesion policy.

To improve the effectiveness of regional policy in the future Programming period it is necessary to support and develop the idea of an integrated approach and the creation of strategies for macro-regions

¹⁴ European Parliament, 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 ((INI)) point C

¹⁵ European Parliament, 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 ((INI)) point 8.

that are strategies throughout the European Union, but it is also important that their implementation does not lead to a renationalisation of cohesion policy¹⁶.

Macro-regional strategies should be designed so as to achieve a new level of synergy able to reduce the current disparities among regions, in order to create a permanent space of shared prosperity with a high level of competitiveness - essential to tackle the problem of an ageing population and new patterns of globalization.

This new cooperation framework 'macro-regional' approach is characterized by a strong 'top-down' approach, which gives Member States a decisive role in the development of cooperation, creating a new level of governance¹⁷.

At the same time the development of large-scale strategies such as macro-regional strategies are helping to promote the role of the local and regional levels in the implementation of EU policies in the most general sense¹⁸.

The point of interest is therefore the role of stimulus that European territorial cooperation has had in highlighting the need for 'new' glances on European territory: glances that identify areas of common development (wide areas at a European scale) for sets of regions of several different countries, belonging or not to the European Union.

¹⁶ European Parliament, 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 ((INI)) point D

¹⁷ European Parliament, 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 ((INI)) paragraph 17

¹⁸ European Parliament, 2010, Resolution 2009/2230 ((INI)) paragraph 25

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The book is part of the activities of ESPON Contact Point Italy. It includes the results of the contribution of the Italian partners in the development of projects under the ESPON 2013 Programme, which stands for European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion. The texts summarise and highlight, among other things, the relations with the regional development policies of Italy, placing them in a framework of transnational cooperation involving the 28 + 4 EU Countries.

Addressing aspects of European territorial policy, ranging from innovation and knowledge accessibility, from the polycentrism to metropolitan areas, from migration to globalization, the authors highlight the position of Italy and of regions also in relation to the objectives set by Europe 2020. A place is devoted to the regional experiences that in the ESPON found a stimulus and an opportunity for discussion, as well as to the concepts behind the vocabulary, to the principles of guidance, and new planning models in Europe, and to the training experiences aimed at the younger generations and the decision makers

The book forms part of the initiatives of the Italian Presidency of the European Union and is co-financed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation (MIT) in charge of the national ESPON Programme. It is aimed at researchers, institutional users, policy makers, at "practitioners" and "non-specialists" including students, so that they can make use of the results of the constant and rigorous work also respectful of the territorial diversities that have characterized the experimental and applied research since 2007, so contributing to the growth of Italian society as an integral part of the European system.

The ESPON Monitoring Centre, for those who still do not know, can be a journey into the European territory, its territorial, economic, social, cultural diversities to integrate and make cohesive and sustainable, by maintaining and developing the increasing potentials of competitiveness and, at the same time, by innovating and disseminating new ways, methodologies, tools and practices to make the territory a common and shared good. Data, references and useful policy recommendations to the growth of the country are also included in the book.

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