

## Luxembourg interventions at the DG meeting Brdo

### 14.5. Territorial cohesion

*(First intervention)*

#### **Point 2: implementation of the first action programme - discussion**

Mrs President, first I would like to thank the Slovenian Presidency for preparing the report and the coordination of the action programme. In general taking also into account latest initiatives of the incoming French presidency we have an impressive number of actions

The particular challenge will be to keep the public informed. In that sense the Webpage is indeed an important tool. We appreciate the efforts of the Portuguese delegation to set up the page and we hope it will be in operation soon as there is a high demand on sound information. Keep the language question simple we prefer it to be in English only. The name should be territorial-cohesion.

Also it is important to go to the stakeholders – an initiative such as under the German presidency where a stand presentation on the territorial Agenda was communicated by members of our NTCCP (Network of territorial cohesion contact points) *at* the events of the stakeholders should be guiding us in this effort.

The new actions and working groups under priority 2.4. are very interesting and meet the core of our mission. However, here as well it is important to already foresee the communication of the results to stakeholders and the political level.

The new actions also show us the limits of what we can actually master with our human resource capacities. Therefore the intelligent governance of territorial cohesion on the EU level is key for the implementation of our concerns; I will come back in detail under point 3 of the agenda (territorial cohesion process)

I would like to close with our agreement in the recommendations made by the presidency in the paper presented taking into account the comments I was making. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Slovenian presidency for organising this event and keeping the Territorial Agenda process as well as the action programme rolling.

*(Second intervention)*

### **Comment on the implementation of the actions**

We are happy with the work of the Slovenian Presidency on action 1.1.

Now with regard to the actions we are leading with the special responsibility of Luxembourg:

Action 1.2. The decisions on the Priority 2 expression of interest on cross border polycentric metropolitan regions was postponed by the ESPON Monitoring Committee due to missing formal documents from participating countries in the ESPON programme.

Concerning action 4.1. and 4.2. I just would like to confirm our efforts as Managing Authority to help to support the mutual benefit of the ESPON and the implementation of the action programme. If there is time I would like to invite Peter Mehlbye to give an overview on the state of progress.

However, I would like to use this opportunity to ask for your support in building up the administrative backbone of the ESPON 2013 Programme in all participating countries. Although simplification was one of the key words of the new Structural Funds regulation it appears that in reality we are confronted almost with the opposite especially for the objective 3 Programme on European Territorial Cooperation.

Although the degree of formalism is rather high I would like to remind you that at the end of the day we will only be successful in implementing the programme if all procedures are in place in all countries. Without intending to name any particular countries and without wanting to appear too much in teacher style let me say that we as Managing authority would appreciate if those who are in delay with setting up their national ESPON control systems would proceed with high priority and a positive attitude for the benefit of all of us. Let me also thank those having their homework thoroughly done on time.

*(Third intervention)*

### **Point 3: Territorial cohesion process**

Let me first thank the Commission for their efforts to consult member states in drawing up the green paper on territorial cohesion. We think it is a challenging task which should be addressed in a common effort.

As pointed out in our first intervention I think it is very important to proceed in the territorial cohesion process very soon with regard to the ambitions set in the territorial agenda and the challenges ahead of us.

We started the debate in Luxembourg on what Territorial cohesion in the Treaty could mean in real terms by responding to the question asked in the TCUM Committee. We submitted a discussion paper to the TCUM last week and I would like to share with you some key thoughts of the paper.

To our understanding and considered in the light of the Lisbon aims, the key challenge for strengthening territorial cohesion is to enhance the territorial capital and potentials of all EU regions and promote territorial integration, i.e. by promoting trans-European synergies and clusters of competitive and innovative activities. In practical terms, territorial cohesion implies: focusing regional and national territorial development policies on better exploiting regional potentials and territorial capital - Europe's territorial and cultural diversity.

So, if *territorial cohesion is the policy objective, territorial development policies are the policy tool*. In this light, territorial cohesion is an integral part of economic and social cohesion but at the same time covers more than EU Cohesion policy in the narrow sense. It adds an integrated and long-term approach to the process of exploiting territorial potentials that has to be addressed across different policy levels and sectors.

In practical terms of governance we need to shape our mind on how to implement territorial cohesion in practise. In principle we see a core task of territorial cohesion in coordinating policies towards the cohesion objectives which leads to the necessity to act on three levels:

1. Ministers for spatial development and territorial cohesion together with the Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions and the Economic and Social Committee need to have a forum, why not an informal council, to more specifically define the objectives of territorial cohesion. An important tool is certainly sound information where we see a key role of the ESPON.
2. Coordination addresses sector policies so we need mechanisms to benchmark the territorial effects of sector policies and consult those policies on their territorially

relevant effects and measures. This could mean in practice to include the territorial impact question in the impact assessment procedure of the general secretariat, it could mean an inter-service group within the Commissions on the territorial cohesion.

3. Certainly the instruments of regional policy are the most important instrument for territorial cohesion. We do not support an own territorial cohesion Fund as the reduction of the already existing number of Funds is an important objective in order to reduce bureaucratic and administrative obstacles for an integrated policy and fund management. However, the territorial cohesion objective requires an appropriate representation of those responsible for territorial cohesion in member states in the monitoring of regional policy.

Finally I would like to highlight that the shared responsibility between EU and national level should also mean two times half of the responsibility. Taking into account proportionality and subsidiarity this can only mean in practice the framework responsibility of the EU level (Guidelines on cohesion) and the implementation responsibility (national reference frameworks and operational programmes) by member states. Concerning controls this should also mean a shared responsibility and not double control.

This is certainly a first sketch of the ideas discussed in Luxembourg. We are happy to discuss further detail receive and feedback on our first reflections.

If you allow a last word on the EGTC. This is, indeed, a powerful tool to progress in practise on cross-border development and cohesion. We will use the EGTC in the greater Region as well as in the bilateral cross-border territorial development for instance with France where an EGTC will be created in the near future.

## 15. 5. Urban policy

*(First intervention)*

### **Point 2 of the agenda Implementation of the Leipzig Charter**

Thank you Madame Chair, in Luxembourg we entirely agree in the necessity to better coordinate planning and urban development within the general frame of our territorial development and cohesion policy. We are just in the process of the creation of a new development pole in the North of our country by connecting 2 small cities and 6 municipalities into one unity – the so-call “Nordstadt”. A convention was set up between all actors in order to proceed with the implementation and we work on regrouping these 6 municipalities into a so-call urban community.

In addition, we are exploring, how we can make use of new instruments such as Urban Development Funds in cooperation with the EIB and the Jessica Initiative. So far the deepening of the work at the urban/territorial intersection is of particular value for our national initiatives towards an integrated policy making. In this whole process Concertation and moderation among all relevant actors and stakeholders is of high importance.

Another main contribution of Luxemburg to the implementation of the Leipzig Charter consist in setting up a information unit for urban policy the so-call CIPU: Our minister believes that a more active participation in the urban discussion, both, at the EU level and at a local level contributes to a better understanding of urban problems and will consequently allow a better identification of efficient measures.

In order to allow a better transfer and link between the knowledge created at the European level and the local urban discussion, he initiated the creation of a national network in the field of urban policies.

He is convinced that:

- a targeted exchange of best practices and knowledge,
- a more innovative network between the different policy fields,
- and the active participation of actors responsible for urban development (competence for urban development at the local level belongs to the municipalities),

are important keys to implement strategies for a more sustainable urban development. That is why 3 Ministries and 3 major urban agglomerations and the University of Luxembourg – so all relevant urban actors were invited to participate in the creation of this national network.

The cooperation between these actors will mainly focus on the establishment of a ‘National Information Unit for Urban Policy’.

By settling the Unit at the University of Luxembourg the following advantages are possible:

- the embedding in a scientific surrounding;
- the exchange with current research initiatives on a national and international level;
- the free access to existing databases, to electronic specialist literature, to ‘grey’ literature a.s.o.;

The main tasks of the CIPU will be to have the role of contact point for national and international actors regarding urban issues, including the search for relevant information to provide to the urban stakeholders, and its dissemination nationally, the identification of specific needs and of consequent relevant research projects. The range of tasks will be continuously adapted to the local needs by the partners. The idea is to create one national central unit for urban issues which will be the ‘contact point’ for international organisations as well as for local actors.

The different ‘national contact point’ functions such as ‘EUKN National Focal Point’ or ‘Urbact National Dissemination Point’ will be taken over by this Urban Unit.

The targeted exchange of information will be the main focus but also

- the identification of specific local needs,
- as well as the identification and the initiation of research projects,

are within the possible range of tasks.

The convention has been signed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. The CIPU will be operational in June 2008, but important we all have to act now.

*(Second intervention planned, which could not be made due to time constraints at the end of the meeting)*

### **Point 3 of the agenda: Contribution of integrated urban planning in tackling climate change challenges and improving energy efficiency**

Let me thank the Slovenian Presidency to put this point on the agenda.

We believe strongly that integrated planning of transport and settlements contributes to the improvement of environment.

This is particularly true for in Luxembourg in the agglomeration Southwest of the capital city of Luxembourg which is the most dynamically developing area of Luxembourg. Just to remind, Luxembourg as a country has the highest GDP/capita but also the most cars per capita, the fastest growing economy, population and number of cross-border commuters in the EU.

So this fast development is in major parts driven by the agglomeration of the capital of Luxembourg which comprises of five local authorities having to prepare their new land use plans until 2011 whilst The sectors plans for transport, housing, economic activities and landscape are currently prepared on the national level.

In June 2005, the spatial planning department initiated the development process „Southwest of the City of Luxembourg” in order to reach the overarching objective of an integrated planning of transport and land use.

The involved partners of 5 local authorities and the Ministry of the Interior and for Spatial development signed a “convention on a between the local authorities integrated and coordinated development of the agglomeration Southwest of Luxembourg”

The project is supposed to support a coordinated development of the settlement, to set priorities which substantially contribute to the reduction of transport in the area of the convention and thus to improve the environment and the energy consumption which is one important action to tackle climate change.

The chose integrated approach is the condition for success for a coordinated planning of the development of land use and transport infrastructure. Only the active participation of the concerned actors will allow for an interwoven progress of the in parallel running planning processes.

A pilot project within this major process addressed the issue of a cross-local authority harmonisation of the management of parking space and the question on how the transport policy objective of an increase in the use of public transport can be monitored by the limitation of parking space.

Apart from the main objective “Support to the transport reduced development of the settlement structure” we are thinking about a second pilot project called „ Improving energy efficiency»

Main issues for a future inter local authority cooperation could be:

- exchange of knowledge and experiences focused on energy efficient urban planning; (relevant actors within the partners convention and others)
- revision of legal frameworks (Plan sect., PAG, règlement des bâtisses) in order to include measures that promote energy efficient urban planning;
- The establishment of a common ‘energy’ database ;
- information activities (brochures, conferences ...)

Finally we agree with the conclusions of the presidency. Thank you for your attention.