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TOWARDS A EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL AGENDA POST 2020: WHAT SHOULD IT CONSIDER AND INCLUDE? CONCEPTUAL PROPOSALS AND IDEAS

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Territorial Thinkers is an independent platform of experts, highly experienced in European, national, regional and local policy development with a territorial dimension.

Territorial Thinkers aim to support on-going policy development processes by presenting arguments, evidence, ideas, options and recommendations to policy makers.

Territorial Thinkers are convinced from experience that a clear territorial dimension in policy conception and in programme strategies and implementation releases a new innovative and cooperative dynamism which should be captured and used positively to achieve European policy objectives.

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TOWARDS A EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL AGENDA POST 2020

WHAT SHOULD IT CONSIDER AND INCLUDE?

European policy, directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly, addresses the territory of the EU. This fact has been recognised and supported by an essentially intergovernmental process that has agreed on European spatial development perspectives and territorial cooperation agendas and has, at different points in time over the last decades, influenced policy orientations at the EU level towards territorial development objectives and long-term goals. Since 2007, Territorial Cohesion is anchored as a goal in the EU Treaty giving a shared competency to EU Member States and EU Commission.

The uptake of a territorial dimension to EU policy has over the years improved, supported particularly by programmes and projects (co-) financed by the European Structural and Investment/Regional Development Funds (ESIF/ERDF). However, so far, the influence of a territorial approach on overall European policymaking has been considered by many as inadequate, as the often substantial interdependency between European policies and European territories has not been taken sufficiently into account.

Lately, the European Commission has published draft Regulations for the next period of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). These draft Regulations emphasise more than before the territorial dimension and the need for a more integrated development of Europe's territory.

This positive development offers a welcoming new opportunity for an updated European Territorial Agenda post 2020 to provide arguments and generally make the case for linking the territory more strongly into current relevant European policy development, thereby achieving a greater recognition of the strong relationship between those policies and the development of Europe's spaces, places and flows.

Europe and its internal affairs, as well as the global context, have been rapidly changing since the 'Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020' (TA2020)¹ was adopted in 2011. To cater for these changes, EU member states are currently in the process of updating the TA2020.

This Territorial Thinkers' Briefing 3 puts forward ideas on the conceptual needs and requirements for an updated European Territorial Agenda post 2020 to contribute to the challenging political journey it will have to undertake.

As a major input into this political process, ESPON is producing a Territorial Reference Framework for Europe. This Territorial Thinkers' Briefing 3 intends to provide a supportive sidekick to the ESPON and other policy supportive work

¹ 19th May 2011, Gödöllő, Hungary

concerning the revision of the Territorial Agenda, as we strongly believe that many voices are needed to further strengthen the territorial dimension of policy making. Hopefully this briefing, with its recommendations and ideas, can bring inspiration and clarity to the further discussion in support of reaching the best possible, efficient and relevant policy input to the next Territorial Agenda for the European Union.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSALS

1. Europe needs more than ever a high-level policy document outlining longer-term **territorial development perspectives, policy orientations and implementation principles**. As decision-making in all policy sectors and at all levels of policy-making come together on the territory, i.e. in the towns, cities and regions – the ‘places and spaces’ - in Europe, giving policy **guidance for the European territory cannot be a marginal policy document**. The aim for the TA post 2020 must be to make it a broadly agreed and politically recognised instrument for decisions and continuous dialogue between all territorially relevant policy areas.
2. The **European TA post 2020 needs to be ambitious, yet realistic**. In short, it needs to prepare for **a renewed and contemporary understanding of territorial cohesion by expressing the longer-term policy orientations, priorities and design** for a balanced European territory, including overall settlement structures, networks, connections, nature areas etc. that future decisions and initiatives should pursue and support. Without a convincing future-oriented vision of European territorial development over the next 3-4 decades it will be difficult to achieve synergies with many sector policies and actors.
3. More than ever before, **a global outlook is necessary by all levels of government and implies a stronger responsibility for the European level**. The TA post 2020 for the development of the European territory will have to consider new opportunities and challenges on how principal European territorial structures and networks (1) efficiently support the growing flow of goods and people and European competitiveness in the world and (2) prepare Europe for a sustainable future in the triangle of globalist efficiency, ecological viability and societal cohesion. The debate on these global questions has an evident territorial dimension where the TA post 2020 should contribute with a territorial input to the solutions that have to be achieved at many levels.
4. **Current territorial trends and scenarios for the future points at new and unforeseen territorial challenges**. The EU, its member states, regions and cities today face several challenges related to socio-economic fragmentation, territorial concentration, immigration flows, climate change impacts, lagging regions, depopulation areas, inner peripheries to mention but

a few. These challenges all have a territorial dimension and need diverse answers according to the territory in question. The territorial context is therefore essential to consider adequately in policy decisions at all levels. This is a must to maximise economic benefits in different territories, target environmental challenges efficiently, and limit increasing territorial imbalances and a social divide within and between regions in Europe and between different groups of society. For the continued political support to further European integration, it is crucial that EU citizens experience the European territory as a balanced and harmonious continent offering opportunities and good living conditions in all parts of Europe.

5. **A stable policy framework for the TA process is needed** for translating the European longer-term policy orientations and implementation principles for integrated territorial development into action. Such a framework would also support the TA post 2020 in being a recognised policy document, to embark in dialogue and negotiations, and in making ambitious use of existing policy instruments. It should be the aim that all levels and sectors become aware of the territorial dimension in their policy making and project activities. **The policy framework should therefore aim at including member states as well as key political bodies at EU level.** In terms of content, it should cover a wide array of issues, stemming from external, global issues to more internal and structural issues, and communicate with a clear link to the territorial reality and categories relevant for the citizens.
6. **Contributing to a territorially balanced growth and overcoming fragmentation requires a broad ownership and involvement of a wide range of players on the ground.** Doing justice to the slogan “Europe closer to the citizen”, the TA post 2020 and its implementation should involve **both a clear top-down and a stronger bottom-up approach.** In today’s increasingly interdependent world, the EU level and the member states need to take a conscious step to ensure European territorial interests and longer-term development. It is now time for the EU level to take responsibility and to voice the vision for an integrated territorial development of the entire territory. In parallel, more attention should be paid to involving people in creating innovative new development based upon cooperation and mutual interdependencies of more and less prosperous areas. Acknowledging demographic forecasts and economic concentration tendencies, Europe needs ambitious, tailor-made regional and local visions catering for different lifestyles and clever use of endogenous potential and options for territorial cooperation.
7. **More territorial cooperation needs to be stimulated to create additional development.** Given today’s development challenges, cooperation between administrative entities based on spatial-economic realities is a must and not a luxury. Indeed, most challenges cannot be solved by single administrative territories or single sectors. Joining forces and exploring common opportunities

provides a new window of opportunities and win-win making the entire cooperation area better off. Mismatch of functionalities, both as regards sector and territorial competences – is another aspect calling for encouraging territorial cooperation which can be territorial, sector and/or societal cooperation.

8. **A stable European coordination unit should be entrusted and resourced** to ensure that European territorial development perspectives, policy orientations and implementation principles are translated into practice. It is crucial for the TA post 2020 to ensure a stable European level body to facilitate and monitor the necessary policy processes. Probably, with the ambitions for ESIF 2021-2027 to foster integrated territorial development, this body is best placed within the European Commission. Support from a thorough monitoring of the implementation and the production of new territorial evidence is equally important and could be entrusted to the ESPON programme. Hitherto, the TA 2020 implementation seems to have suffered from a lack of clear responsibility and inadequate resources, which must be addressed and solved to make the TA post 2020 and onwards a success.

REASONING AND ARGUMENTS

Ongoing globalisation and growing interconnectivity, the aftershocks of the global financial crisis of 2007, the increasing - individual and territorial - fragmentation of societies, the rising influence on Europe of external developments, especially in Africa, Near East and Far East but also the USA, the accelerating climate change and its consequences are but some factors that make a revision and update of the Territorial Agenda 2020 necessary.

The ongoing political climate and current disagreement among EU member states calls on the one side for a renewal, redefinition and reaffirmation of European policies, including for the European territory. On the other side, to improve the understanding of Territorial Cohesion as a shared competency of the European Commission and the EU Member States will require that the role of true European thinking and acting is reinforced. At the same time territorial cohesion and territorial development policies must be reconnected to people and places and must take the uniqueness of living conditions and diversity of aspirations into account.

All in all, a proactive European policy development and design is needed.

The updating of the TA 2020 will have to manoeuvre cleverly in this policy climate. The supporting reasoning and arguments behind the above recommendations and proposals for an updated Territorial Agenda post 2020 are presented below,

focusing on three aspects: its broader context, ideas for its content and nature, and ideas for its implementation modalities.

I Context for an updated European Territorial Agenda

The current context for a successful update of the European Territorial Agenda includes three main components: (1) external impacts on European societies, (2) internal territorial challenges that must be tackled, (3) existing territorial structures that represent today's territorial reality as it has grown over history. For each component, European territorial policy responses are indicated.

a External impacts

Despite the renaissance of isolationist and protectionist thinking in international relationships, what happens elsewhere in the world - in global and international geopolitical and economic contexts - has far-reaching, and even increasing, external impacts on just about all elements of contemporary European society: population/demography, economic investments, trade, technology, infrastructures, environment, etc. These impacts create ever stronger interdependencies and new challenges and opportunities for Europe to which territorial policy-making at all levels could accomplish a major contribution.

The ongoing globalisation is putting the world, and Europe in particular, under new pressures. Moreover, the increasing power of global finances, and especially the global financial crisis of 2008, have produced an increasing and unsustainable level of inequality. Social and territorial fragmentation between winners and losers of globalisation and modernisation is rising, and basic societal consensus and cohesion is deteriorating. Social integration and even democracy as a basic fundament of our societies is under pressure.

In parallel, just when multilateralism is being attacked, the global climate change challenge is becoming more urgent, and requires increased international cooperation and coordinated measures at all levels and in areas faced with severe risk to care for future generations of Europeans.

Against this backdrop, competition will continue to grow ever more globally and focus on the ability of Europe to provide efficient policy responses, in territorial terms, for example, to ensure logistics to flows of goods and people via international hubs of ports and airports.

All these developments have a variety of impacts on different territories whether it be EU member states and/or specific regions or urban economies. Social and territorial cohesion, based on a renewed consensus about goals and directions of societal development, a new social contract, is urgently needed. And territorial policy-making at all levels is a decisive instrument of exploring and debating new directions, near to citizens.

b Internal challenges

Actual global development trends form one important factor for the increasing internal fragmentation in Europe and the increasing imbalances between regions, larger and smaller cities and towns, segregation of the population, etc.

However, it seems that decisions within Europe, at EU level, within member states, their regions and local authorities can not successfully counteract this overall trend of concentrating economic growth, accessibility, provision of services, jobs, education, etc. towards the largest urban agglomerations, often to the detriment of living conditions in less dense and affluent regions. The notion of inner peripheries is used to capture this development and segregation of the population which can be observed in all parts of the European territory.²

This in turn sets a general focus on social issues and societal integration, the lack of which often hampers the acceptance of national politics, the EU, immigration policies, etc. Moreover, also the impact of climate change has a diverse territorial pattern within Europe, its regions and cities, and policies for sustainability and sustainable living conditions need to echo that diversity through both European and place-based strategies.

European evidence and analyses based on comparable data is available within ESPON and other sources. This territorial evidence on territorial dynamics in different territories (larger and smaller cities, different types of rural and urban regions, etc.) and sectors (energy, IT, transport, etc.) can help shaping sound and well-informed policy responses in an updated TA post 2020.

Many challenges and opportunities are taken up in national contexts, in regional and urban development programmes and projects tailored to diversity, often supported by ESIF/INTERREG as part of macro-regional, transnational, cross-border and urban cooperation and actions, as well as in relevant sector policies at respective levels. However, so far, an overall European territorial dimension has not been sufficiently included, and territorial development has been largely driven by national, regional and/or local policy ambitions without strong coordination and enough attention to the interdependencies that exist between different territories in today's society.

This increasing multitude of factors influencing policy options at all levels calls for a stronger integration of policies and cooperation in larger territorial units and functionalities, involving sector cooperation and cooperation with civic society. The European Commission's emphasis on integrated territorial development is a sign of this evolution, but it has been up until now insufficiently implemented to be fully effective.

² Inner peripheries are territories whose general performance, levels of development, access to services of general interest and quality of life is relatively worse than their neighbouring territories. See ESPON Policy Brief of October 2018.

c Existing territorial structures

The existing structures of the European territory, built up in the course of history, represent a vast capital for future development. This includes basically everything that has a place or takes up space within the European territory: the existing urban settlement structures, infrastructure networks for road, rail, sea, IT, energy, etc., and it includes rural structures based on agriculture, forestry and environmental protection.

The European territory can be considered as a space of both structures and flows; the structural elements carry the activities that generate the flows of goods, services and people. This is the reality of the EU Single Market and Customs Union as well as international trade, financial flows and tourism.

The European territorial structures represent both potentials (a relatively compact territory compared to other continents) and challenges, mostly stemming from imbalances between regions in terms of development levels and living conditions. Both territorial potentials and challenges need to be tackled at the most effective administrative level, with the European level being more actively involved than at present. The fact that decisions with territorial impacts often have a long term, sometimes even irreversible effect, calls for a long-term perspective in policy making.

The existing territorial structures are at the same time crucial for human well-being as they provide daily living environments for EU citizens. These are the places people live and work, move around in and get informed, enjoy their leisure time etc. Some prefer urban life, others have priority for more rural or more remote locations. Important is, however, that the European territory offers a multitude of places with different living conditions that EU citizens can choose from. Profound differences in living conditions become visible in the daily living environment and may influence the perception of the EU and contribute to positive and negative political reactions.

Therefore, there is a need to voice pro-active ideas, to articulate perspectives and orientations for the overall long-term goals and objectives for the development of the European territory.

Here the updated European Territorial Agenda post 2020 should lay the foundation for the longer term development of the European territory through entering into dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders on the importance of a European dimension of integrated territorial development and propose concrete first steps of action.

Indeed, actions of implementation could in the first phase be modest and later become more ambitious. However, it is important to formulate well and be clear on the goals and objectives for the European territory and key territorial structures, networks and patterns that should be the reality in the long-term. Only

then is there a reliable reference framework for well informed decisions today with long-term territorial impact, which makes clear what policies should achieve and which allows for evaluating what has been achieved.

II Content and nature of an updated European Territorial Agenda

The revision of the present Territorial Agenda 2020 requires a careful look at its objectives.

On the one hand, its objectives are still valid. To some degree, they are even more valid today than back in the days when the TA 2020 was agreed. This would suggest that a revised Territorial Agenda could largely rely on updating the wording and references to key policy documents to re-emphasise the need to work towards the objectives set out.

Territorial policy priorities from TA 2020

1. Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development.
2. Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific re-gions.
3. Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions.
4. Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong lo-cal economies.
5. Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises.
6. Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions.

On the other hand, the challenges underlying the objectives of the Territorial Agenda 2020 have even grown stronger and are expected to accelerate further in the light of recent developments and emerging trends. This takes the issues at stake to a new level. Indeed, the ongoing ESPON study on a European Territorial Reference Framework currently argues that the key challenges are no longer purely territorial or sectoral but overarching concerns of European fragmentation, increasing interdependencies and mismatching functionalities.

Key challenges for Europe (from ESPON project in progress)³

Fragmentation and disintegration

- The economic geography of Europe is changing – accompanied by an increasing fragmentation
- Fragmentation has a social, cultural and political dimension

³ see www.eu2050.eu

- Fragmentation has “place-based” causes and consequences (e.g. “places that do not matter”)

Spatial interdependencies...

- Social and economic developments in one place have major impacts on development perspectives in other places
- Increasing negative and positive spill-overs and externalities
- Links and flows induce “new territorialities”

... mismatch of functionalities

- Policy decisions and actions reach beyond administrative borders
- Misalignment between geographical jurisdiction for policy making and the geographies affected

This could suggest that the objectives for a revised Territorial Agenda post 2020 need to be taken to another level. However, for the TA post 2020 to stand a chance of gaining political acceptance, the messages need to be recognisable and easily understandable by citizens and politicians, and not be considered yet another abstract, academic exercise.

It is very important, that the TA post 2020 demonstrates its territorial nature and roots, and that it stays as concrete as possible in messages and actions. But there is a need to be ambitious in the policy orientations and corresponding actions, and to cut across sectors and levels of governance and to cooperate between territories to a larger extent.

The Territorial Agenda post 2020 will build on the necessity of cohesion in Europe and could deliver a useful input for a more detailed and renewed common understanding of territorial cohesion. For sure, much more could be done to make territorial cohesion an even stronger element of EU policies. While each and every single EU member state has its own view and policies on its respective territorial development, also in a European and international context, the European Commission could do more to fill this “shared competency” with substance on a truly European level.

A renewed understanding of territorial cohesion should build on the approach to place-based development. Taking seriously, (a) the diversity of endogenous development potentials, (b) the diversity of territorial impacts of future trends such as migration, climate change or the 4th industrial revolution, and (c) the diversity of lifestyles and understandings of quality of life in Europe, territorial cohesion needs to encompass a wide variation of positive future development paths. The reality on the ground and the diversity and specificities within the European territory should be fully endorsed as no uniform development across all European regions and cities makes sense.

With such a renewed and deeper understanding of territorial cohesion, European policy orientations for territorial development could provide a strong framework for forward-looking territorial development of the European continent based upon a true European perspective of thinking. To cement a political fundament, this framework needs to be made operational by a wide range of bottom-up processes involving people on the ground in local communities and regions. If European policy orientations for territorial development manage to connect with and empower local communities to develop their own vision for their area and its role in Europe, it may contribute to overcoming fragmentation.

So, a new vision for the European territory is needed, a policy design that can provide an orientation and a framework for stimulating multifaceted bottom-up visions and widespread territorial cooperation.

This vision should manage to be both inward and outward looking and bridge the internal reality of different territories with global challenges and the relationships with European neighbours, near and far, South and East.

III Implementation mechanisms of an updated European Territorial Agenda post 2020

All the above point to an imperative to rethink policy making in Europe and take a much stronger integrated and inclusive approach, giving more recognition to places and groups of societies. The explicit focus of the ESIF post 2020 on integrated territorial development is a positive step in this direction.

Territories that have been side-lined in the prevailing focus on growth, innovation and jobs as well as territories driving economic development need all to look towards a promising future. Key policy makers and influencers need to be on board and believe in this new take on policy making to prevent our societies and territories from breaking apart and at the same time see Europe develop further in a territorially balanced way.

As stated above, Europe's challenges can only be overcome by bringing both more overall clarity and more diversity to the table. Therefore, reaching out to places and groups which usually are not involved in European policy making and allowing for diverse regional and local visions of the future will be necessary.

It is important to note, that the Territorial Agenda for the European territory is not a once-off exercise. The TA post 2020 will hopefully lay the foundation for a politically more ambitious and visionary process during the following decade, however every TA needs to be updated periodically, and build on continuous cooperation.

The following lines for action offer an input on initiatives that could feed into a renewed, integrated territorial development thinking:

a *Convince key decision makers that a stronger territorial dimension of policy making is in the interest of all policy sectors and levels.*

1. **A communication campaign** to convince key policy makers of the benefits and win-win of having an integrated place-based approach to the European territory. The communication effort should cover all levels and relevant sector authorities, at European level (EP, EC, CoR), but importantly also reach out to national, regional and local actors. Clever use of illustrations and cartography may facilitate the understanding.
2. **Projects of European interest** need to be identified as follow up of TA post 2020 that are important for the territorial balance and functioning of Europe to be promoted both for internal and external reasons. Cooperating and cutting across sectors in line with territorial policy orientations would reveal where synergies could be achieved, and the EU level should activate funds to support the long-term orientations for the European territory.

Ideas on how this could be done

- A revised Territorial Agenda post 2020 needs to find political support beyond the ministers responsible for spatial planning. Using the existing intergovernmental setting of the Territorial Agenda the new version should be elevated to a new level and receive serious recognition among national politicians and EU Commissioners in charge of overarching policies.
- Links between the EU Territorial Agenda and the Urban Agenda for the EU need to be improved and strengthened. Both approaches are essentially place-based. Urban (and non-urban) actors are key to implement the Territorial (and Urban) Agenda.
- Territorial analysis, scenarios and policy orientation – e.g. provided by ESPON – need to be brought more prominently to the attention of key decision-makers and the general public. This also requires that members of the intergovernmental cooperation on the Territorial Agenda invest in translating ESPON results in information documents that can be directly related to ongoing debates in their countries.
- Territorial projects of European interest should be new strategic projects in line with the territorial policy design at EU level, such as infrastructure flows to Ireland after Brexit, inner area rehabilitation, immigration flows and centre localisation, hubs for world-wide trade and connections, missing infrastructure links, climate change mitigation zones, global economic metropolitan zones, nature zones for balanced protection and tourism, etc. Macro-regional and transnational cooperation programmes could play a role in the implementation. Moreover, Territorial Impact Assessments as developed and promoted by ESPON should be obligatory.

- b Reach out beyond the usual stakeholders, a territorial dimension may not only centre around the thriving territories and prominent players.**
3. **New players and “ordinary people” need to be brought on board.** The work towards a renewed Territorial Agenda post 2020 should involve more than just the usual stakeholders and make sure that also other players have their stake and say in it. Only then can it combat societal and territorial fragmentation in Europe which is driven by the feeling of not being adequately represented and recognised by the key decision makers.
 4. **Diverse future perspectives and objectives** should be encouraged when broadening the range of stakeholders involved. Indeed, the overall vision for Europe may be much more multifaceted than the current innovation, growth and jobs agendas. Taking the discussions about place-based development and endogenous potential seriously, it is about time to ensure that the territorial diversity of Europe becomes visible from bottom-up endeavours.
 5. **Models of joint visioning processes** must be implemented to deal with the diversities within the European society and to overcome the growing alienation between citizens on the one hand and experts and politicians on the other. This implies the need for suggesting bold visions and deep discussions with citizens and stakeholders.

Ideas on how this could be done

- Under the future Policy Objective 5, ESIF programmes should actively encourage the development of bottom-up participatory territorial visions. This should include the discussion of European visions and scenarios. In many parts this also involves capacity building of local communities, administrations and civil society to actively engage with visions for their area and its role in Europe. This can be a task both for ERDF and ESIF programmes. ESPON could play a facilitating role to feed such discussions with European perspectives and anchor them in European thinking.
- To a certain degree INTERREG programmes can provide a framework for linking the work done in various countries and encourage cross-border and transnational debates, cooperation and development. Innovative ways to approach such processes could be supported in the future INTERREG strand on innovation strategies. Even more than at present, INTERREG should accept and meet the challenges of the often difficult relations to Europe’s neighbours, South and East.
- At the European Week of Cities and Regions, the multifaceted results of bottom-up visions could be presented e.g. in form of a huge gallery work on the futures of Europe. Similar things could also be done at national level.

c Implementing the revised Territorial Agenda for Europe will require continuous work.

Rather than focusing on quick fixes and specific funding regimes, the proposal is to establish a thorough cooperation culture in Europe.

6. **Territorial cooperation** would be an important track of actions and in principle open for involving national, regional and local actors and sectors. Territorial cooperation should be promoted across all levels of borders. Territorial cooperation programmes should be flexible enough to allow changing foci on functional realities or inner area improvement, or other challenges or potentials that create the necessary bottom-up interest for the cooperation to become successful and bring added value for the participants. In that sense territorial cooperation concerns all geographical levels be they macro regions and transnational territories, cross-border areas or urban development. Moreover, added value through cooperation is not only relevant for INTERREG.
7. **Sector cooperation** is another important, but challenging, line of action. Here actions could promote territorial concerns related to the European principles for territorial development which should be considered in upcoming sector policy design, and/or it could be testing new working relationships involving sector representatives in finding integrated solutions for a specific territory together with local actors.
8. **Societal cooperation** would be a third line of cooperation integrating citizens in dialogue on relevant projects. Using a territorial entity as a starting point for local processes brings hands-on views on possible improvements of social problems, living conditions and well-being.
9. **A stable coordination body for European territorial development** should be established and resourced to process the communication, cooperation, implementation and regular update of European territorial policy documents, such as the TA post 2020. The anchoring of this coordination body should ideally be at EU level with the participation of all member states.

Ideas on how this could be done

- Every ESIF programme, not only under INTERREG, should have a clear approach to foster cooperation between places, sectors and societal groups.
- The REGION Star initiative could be complemented by (or turned into) a COOPERATION Star initiative presenting every year the most successful and/or innovative cooperation actions (not only considering Interreg).
- ESPON could be asked to develop a monitoring system for cooperation in Europe as well as facilitating cooperation initiatives with targeted analysis results.

- A White paper on Territorial Cohesion might be needed to provide concrete proposals for Community action in the field of Territorial Cohesion.
- Monitoring territorial cohesion and the implementation of the Territorial Agenda should be envisaged to demonstrate the progress made and keep the Territorial Agenda going.
- An stable coordination body for integrated territorial development of the European territory should be set up and resourced. A strong responsibility for the EU level should boost the understanding and uptake of the TA post 2020 and following TA's.

FINAL REMARK

The authors are convinced that the need for dealing more explicitly and emphatically with the territorial dimension of EU policies is not an option but a necessity requiring concrete measures and actions. In this light, the revision of the Territorial Agenda 2020 into a post 2020, longer-term strategy on how to respond to this necessity is an important and urgent proposal. This Briefing from Territorial Thinkers aims at supporting this initiative by providing many suggestions and ideas, some almost inevitable, some more ambitious and 'out of the box' than others, but all worth reflecting upon.