14th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning (CEMAT) (Lisbon, Portugal: 26-27 October 2006) on "Networks for sustainable spatial development of the European continent: bridges over Europe"

Resolution No. 2 on Territorial governance: empowerment through enhanced co-ordination

adopted at the 14th session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) of the member states of the Council of Europe, in Lisbon,, on 27 October 2006

The ministers responsible for spatial/regional planning of the member states of the Council of Europe,

Wishing to provide a consistent follow-up to part VI of the Guiding Principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent (CEMAT Guiding Principles), concerning the "Strengthening of co-operation between the member states of the Council of Europe and participation of the regions, the municipalities and the citizens";

Taking into account the growing relevance and recognition of governance principles and postulates in building increasingly consolidated and dynamic socio-spatial development frameworks in European territories and societies;

Having regard to the 14th session of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, at Budapest in February 2005, as well as the Warsaw Summit of Heads of States and Government of the Council of Europe, in May 2005, which highlighted the crucial relevance of territorial governance for the promotion of the strengthening of democratic and good governance status;

Drawing attention to the more recent reflections developed by the European Union on the governance issues, observed at the 2nd meeting of the High Level Group on Governance and the European Union, which took place in London in November 2005;

Following the premises and objectives suggested in the work programme of the Committee of Senior Officials for the period 2004-06, highlighting the theme "Networks for sustainable territorial development: bridges over Europe", and its priority topics: the role of polycentric development and territorial governance;

Taking note of the upcoming territorial agenda of the European Union being elaborated by European Union member states;

Commit themselves, within their means and competences, and recommend that the governments of the member states, at its different levels and sectors of political action, heed the following principles and guidelines for the development of effective governance attitudes and frameworks:

1. Establishing a clear conceptual framework for the principles of territorial governance

a. Conceptualising territorial governance

Territorial governance may be seen as the way in which the territories of a national state are administered and policies implemented, with particular reference to the distribution of roles and responsibilities among the different levels of government (supranational, national and sub-national) and the underlying processes of relationship, negotiation and consensus building. In this respect, the principles of subsidiarity and reciprocity advocated in the CEMAT Guiding Principles are of particular relevance. Territorial governance can be further understood as the emergence and implementation of innovative shared forms of planning and managing socio-spatial dynamics. The traditional leading role of the state is challenged by far more inclusive and co-responsible engagement of key-actors in spatial development. Each country's socio-political culture, legislative framework, institutional capacity, typical organisational arrangements, and its traditions of creating partnerships and implementing development strategies will generate different challenges to territorial governance, and different perceptions of, and attitudes to, it.

Sound territorial governance aims to manage territorial dynamics by indicating the spatial consequences of policies planned by the public and private sector. It aims to negotiate commonly agreed objectives and a framework of shared responsibilities by the use of spatial development strategies and policies.

b. An emerging political agenda

Already identifiable in the European political and policy agenda, territorial governance is today seen as an increasingly significant aspect of achieving the aims of territorial policies; territorial governance is still maturing as a concept and in action. The concept is still not sufficiently clear, but awareness of it is growing among different actors at different levels. The dissemination of governance practices, being quite irregular, does not seem to depend on the state's political and institutional structures (federal, centralised or other).

c. The development challenges for territorial governance in a polycentric context

It is clear that polycentric development requires different administrative and organisational structures – namely, polycentric forms of governance. There is a growing emphasis on networks in socio-economic activities and urban development, and this is associated with increasingly network-like decision-making structures. Briefly, the success of polycentric development and territorial governance depends on the strength of their supporting networks and steering capabilities, at spatial, policy and political levels. These structures need to devise optimal strategies to balance healthy competition and co-operation between cities belonging to a polycentric urban structure. They need to establish complementarity, by allocating specific functions to individual nodes within such polycentric urban networks in order to harness the respective strengths of the participating cities, as well as to be in overall charge of the co-ordination of regional actions.

2. Proposing guidelines for the implementation of territorial governance contexts and dynamics

The key aim being to develop a wide framework for the effective political and technical promotion of governance-based development solutions, by creating and using innovative policies, strategies and implementation mechanisms,

We consider the following to be

a. the key action areas:

– Enhancing cultural appropriation of the principles of territorial governance;

– Creating and supporting innovative policies in the implementation of governance-based solutions and strategies;

– Identifying the challenges and opportunities for individual and institutional stakeholders;

– Securing promotion of best practice by constantly monitoring and assessing identified examples;

– Promoting a virtual knowledge network including periodical research dissemination and targeted, added-value exchange of current practice.

b. the main territorial governance fields of action, considered as eight vectors of action:

– Jointly devised strategies – deepening the development of discussed, concerted and contractualised processes among territorial actors and stakeholders, in the building of territorial visions and strategies;

– Decentralisation and other forms of restructuring of spatial development responsibilities at regional and municipal levels, in terms of strategic planning and policy coherence, but also at city and community levels, in terms of more operational development of projects;

– Vertical institutional co-operation (public–public), holding to the principles of subsidiarity and reciprocity, linking efforts and responsibilities at different public administrative levels, enabling synchronic dynamics in the achievement of spatial objectives;

– Horizontal institutional co-operation (public–public), expanding projects where different public bodies are co-responsible for different sectoral policies, especially at regional and local levels;

– Trans-national and cross-border institutional co-operation, expanding the practices developed in contexts like Interreg and several other international spatial development co-operative initiatives among all Council of Europe member states and neighbouring countries;

– Horizontal public–private co-operation and partnership, especially with private business, developing the contractualisation of partnerships, in accordance with Resolution No. 1 of the 13th session of CEMAT, Ljubljana, September 2003;

– Participative civic and NGO involvement, increasing participatory possibilities for civil society's multiple forms of expressions in spatial development processes and projects;

– Deliberative civic and NGO involvement, encouraging areas and forums of possible co-responsibility on the part of civil society.

c. the implementation challenges:

– Instruments for strengthening territorial cohesion naturally vary between countries, but national and regional territorial development policies and strategies can have a pivotal role since they offer an integrated, area-based framework for territorial governance. This needs to build on a strong network of stakeholders with a sound base of local knowledge, information and expertise.

– Existing administrative structures may be expected to resist changes induced by territorial governance principles, because they will wish to maintain their status-quo powers and independence. This tension must be managed with great care, so that all the actors embrace territorial governance principles and practices as a step towards more qualified and motivating professionalism, and to more effective territorial development and cohesion.

– Development of the Pan-European Network of Regions of Innovation can be, in this sense, an important platform for training local and regional authorities dealing with spatial planning, as stated in Resolution No. 2 of the 13th session of CEMAT, Ljubljana, September 2003.

3. Creating and supporting innovative policies in the implementation of governance-based solutions and strategies

a. Territorial governance principles aim to reinforce public decision-making systems and qualify the exercise of executive responsibilities.

Examples of this are to be found as each country's central administration is increasingly challenged by new co-ordination patterns with supranational and regional levels. These emerging systems, which embody multi-level governance, tend to structure themselves around the concept of subsidiarity, and require more flexible and demanding institutional forms of vertical co-ordination.

b. Territorial governance is closely associated with the growing number of policy and socio-economic networks.

Examples can be found in the increasing permeability of regions and countries to their neighbouring territories as spatial development partners. The expanding number of transnational and inter-regional development strategies now in evidence will require wider and more effective forms of horizontal co-ordination.

c. The effectiveness of territorial governance is closely dependent on an increasingly conversant and participatory civil society; informed public opinion and active citizen engagement are key factors in securing democratic and efficient public action.

This will be increasingly evident as the state's changing role becomes clearer: as it becomes more entrepreneurial and dynamic, the state opens up public strategy bit by bit – vision, policy-making, practice – to economic actors and other parts of civil society. Importantly, this implies the growing importance of cross-sectoral partnership creation and capacity-building.

4. Identifying the challenges and opportunities for both individual and institutional stakeholders

a. Several types of challenge can be understood in getting different territorial actors culturally engaged and empowered by responsibility. These challenges include developing several things – empirical approaches to subsidiarity, open discussion strategies, partnerships and contractualised projects – and the enhancement of civic and community expressions.

Territorial governance implies the empowerment of an increasing multiplicity of actors, who must be included in the conception, construction and implementation of spatial development visions.

b. This understanding highlights the importance of strategic management of the different actors' involvement, and achievement of consensus and shared responsibility in identifying and selecting strategic development objectives. Therefore, more robust and effective frameworks need to be set up and put into action, enabling stakeholder mediation and management, and capitalising on results rather than seeking to neutralise differences of opinion.

5. Assessing and monitoring territorial governance: knowledge and practice development

Facing the diversity of the European territory

There is great socio-cultural, political, institutional and administrative diversity in the group of member states of the CEMAT territory, and this presupposes a wide range of patterns of adaptation to more effective forms of territorial governance. In this context, understanding what might be the optimal policy design for good territorial governance is demanding, yet necessary. Member states should aim at promoting the greatest possible dissemination of existing territorial governance principles, experience and practice.

Identifying and monitoring domestic adaptation patterns

Patterns of domestic change should be closely monitored and interpreted, and member states should take this as a key policy objective in order to maximise the implementation potential of territorial governance principles. The framework for these relevant analytical procedures should be drawn from the vectors of action listed above (point 2.b).

Taking into account similar current experience at European Union and Council of Europe levels, the Committee of Senior Officials should be given the task of following up this highly relevant point. The Committee should address the constant and targeted dissemination of ongoing research in the member states. Furthermore, it should be expected to articulate the link between such knowledge and domestic policies targeting the principles of territorial governance.

Enhancing and capitalising on knowledge networks

Where additional resources are available, they should seek to complement ongoing research, while avoiding duplication. Development of a wider culture of territorial governance requires strengthening institutional capacity, which can be improved by greater and more targeted flows of information and increased

sharing of experience and attitudes right across Europe. Adequate conditions should be created to support knowledge networks, especially in financial and institutional support, as well as to strengthen existing links between research and policy communities, and increase the availability and quality of existing data for comparative research. Acquisition of the required capacity for constantly and effectively monitoring and assessing territorial governance enhancement should make the best possible use of existing networks, such as the projects developed by ESPON, the URBACT Community Initiative Programme, the Interreg III initiatives/future Objective 3, and the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN).