

7th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (The Hague, Netherlands: 22-23 October 1985) on "The evolution of the decision-making process in regional spatial planning"

Resolution No. 2 on The evolution of the decision-making process in regional/spatial planning

The ministers taking part in the 7th CEMAT,

1. Aware of the fact that the general aim of their meetings is to continue reflecting on current political issues and to endeavour to establish common European regional/spatial planning strategies, as part of their regular pooling of experience and information on regional/spatial planning systems and policies;
2. Mindful of the major objectives of regional/spatial planning and the guidelines for their application defined during their previous sessions, as well as the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter adopted in 1983;
3. Having studied the evolution of the decision-making process in regional/spatial planning on the basis of three reports submitted by the ministerial delegations of the Netherlands, Switzerland and France, and noting that the characteristics of existing systems differ from one country to another and that the process under consideration evolves in accordance with changes in society;
4. Having noted that certain countries already have regional institutions vested with independent powers enabling them to apply legislative and administrative measures in matters of regional/spatial planning;
5. Finding that there is in Europe a clear trend towards decentralisation, a policy which is ultimately intended to bring the decision-making process of governmental bodies as close as possible to the citizen;
6. Bearing in mind that decentralisation is not confined to transferring powers from one level of authority to another, but also provides for co-operation by groups representing sectoral interests, participation by the public and the development of a sense of identity at regional and local level;
7. Aware of the fact that this tendency also has major implications for transfrontier co-operation;

8. Having noted with interest that the governmental authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Land of Baden-Württemberg have undertaken to organise, in close co-operation with the Council of Europe, a seminar on transfrontier co-operation in 1986;

9. Having noted with interest the proposal by the Standing Conference and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) to set up a committee to study the problems of frontier regions;

10. Hoping that public authorities at all levels, within the framework for co-operation of their respective countries, step up transfrontier co-operation in order to establish joint regional/spatial development plans;

11. Reiterating their resolve to continue and intensify their political and technical co-operation;

12. Agree to arrange for the regular exchange of experience concerning the operation of political and administrative spatial planning systems of member states, with particular reference to changes in the distribution of powers and functions as between the relevant national, regional and local bodies, and to align their policies in the long term at European level;

Recommend that the governments of member states, within the framework of their co-operation:

13. afford the various institutional levels the funds and the staff necessary to implement a decentralised planning policy, matching any devolution of powers with corresponding financial provision;

14. encourage local and regional authorities in frontier regions, at the earliest phase in decision-making, to engage more intensively in dialogue, concerted effort and co-operation across frontiers with a view to joint planning;

15. mount common action programmes for development and planning schemes and encourage the preparation of bilateral and/or trilateral spatial planning master plans for frontier regions;

16. enable the competent bodies to define special policies and measures for the development of frontier regions, with due regard to the national and European context;

17. give inter-state commissions the necessary structures and terms of reference for taking the decisions required for joint spatial planning and arrange for regional and – where appropriate – local authority involvement in the work of such commissions;

18. continue to promote the establishment of inter-municipal or inter-regional spatial planning boards in transfrontier regions;

19. those governments not having signed to give further consideration to signing and ratifying the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities and making all the necessary arrangements for putting it into effect;

Recommend that the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe:

20. prepare an action programme for transfrontier co-operation comprising:

- a series of periodic seminars on different aspects of transfrontier co-operation,
- supportive measures for pilot projects, especially in frontier areas requiring economic redevelopment;

21. instruct the competent committee to draft a model agreement, under the Outline Convention, for transfrontier co-operation in spatial planning;

22. consider development problems in frontier regions as a priority area for European co-operation and include them in the third medium-term plan for intergovernmental activities;

23. consider, in this context, the problems of transfrontier co-operation, while bearing in mind the need to offset the imbalances affecting the European economy and European regional planning as regards, among other things, maritime regions such as those of the Mediterranean;

24. promote studies of the effects of decentralisation on transfrontier co-operation in the field of regional/spatial planning;

25. provide the necessary backing for the CEMAT's work, particularly as regards the organisation of seminars, such as those on frontier regions;

26. include regional/spatial planning questions in the work of the Council of Europe Study and Documentation Office of Transfrontier Co-operation;

27. give effect to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1013 (1985) on transfrontier co-operation and CLRAE Resolution 165 (1985) on co-operation between European frontier regions;

28. study the activities and powers of inter-state regional/spatial planning commissions and make suggestions for improving their working methods, with particular reference to representation on them of local and regional authorities;

29. request the Secretary General to report to the next CEMAT on action taken by the Council of Europe on transfrontier co-operation and the results accomplished;

30. invite the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe to:

- examine, with the local and regional authorities concerned, arrangements for improving joint decision-making in frontier regions, particularly regarding regional/spatial planning and environmental protection;

- compile a list of “frontier region development projects of European interest” on the basis of proposals by local, regional and national authorities;

Instruct the Committee of Senior Officials:

31. to pursue its study of the structures of decision-making in the field of regional/spatial planning in member states, with a view to preparing a comparative European compendium;

32. to study the role of regional/spatial planning strategies prepared at regional level and the problems which they raise, and their integration into a national and European system of regional/spatial planning;

33. to investigate the possibilities of fostering transfrontier co-operation in the field of regional/spatial planning.