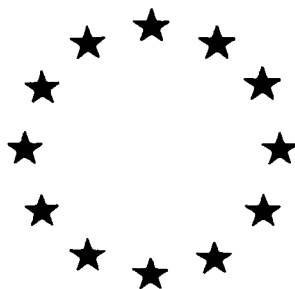


COUNCIL  
OF EUROPE



CONSEIL  
DE L'EUROPE

**EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR REGIONAL PLANNING**

Torremolinos (Spain), 1983



COE166614

**EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
SPATIAL PLANNING CHARTER**

CEMAT (83) 4

STRASBOURG  
1983

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS  
RESPONSIBLE FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

6th session  
Torremolinos (Spain)

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EUROPEAN REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING CHARTER

adopted on 20 May 1983

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Council of Europe  
Strasbourg  
CEMAT (83) 4

PREAMBLE

1. The European Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, meeting at their 6th session organised under the auspices of the Council of Europe, considering that :
2. - regional/spatial planning is an important instrument in the evolution of European society and that the intensification of international cooperation in this field represents a substantial contribution towards a stronger European identity ;
3. - cooperation in this field calls for an analysis of national, regional and local development concepts with a view to the adoption of common principles designed particularly to reduce regional disparities and to reach a deeper insight into the use and organisation of space, the distribution of activities, the protection of the environment and the improvement of the quality of life ;
4. - the profound changes brought about in the economic and social structures of the countries of Europe and their relations with other parts of the world demand a critical review of the principles governing the organisation of space, to avoid their being wholly determined by short-term economic objectives without taking into consideration social, cultural and environmental aspects ;
5. - the objectives of regional/spatial planning need new criteria for the orientation and the use of technical progress, in conformity with economic and social requirements ;
6. - all European citizens should be enabled to participate, in a suitable institutional framework, in the introduction and application of regional/spatial planning measures ;

ADOPT THIS CHARTER

7. and present it to the people as well as to policy decision-makers at local, regional, national and international level.

## THE CONCEPT OF REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING

8. Regional/spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society.

9. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organisation of space according to an overall strategy.

### Its European dimension

10. Regional/spatial planning contributes to a better spatial organisation in Europe and to the finding of solutions for problems which go beyond the national framework and thus aims to create a feeling of common identity, having regard to North-South and East-West relations.

### Its characteristics

11. Man and his well-being as well as his interaction with the environment are the central concern of regional/spatial planning, its aims being to provide each individual with an environment and quality of life conducive to the development of his personality in surroundings planned on a human scale.

12. Regional/spatial planning should be democratic, comprehensive, functional and oriented towards the longer term.

Democratic : it should be conducted in such a way as to ensure the participation of the people concerned and their political representatives,

Comprehensive : it should ensure the coordination of the various sectoral policies and integrate them in an overall approach,

Functional : it needs to take account of the existence of regional consciousness based on common values, culture and interests sometimes crossing administrative and territorial boundaries, while taking account of the institutional arrangements of the different countries,

Long-term oriented : it should analyse and take into consideration the long-term trends and developments of economic, social, cultural, ecological and environmental phenomena and interventions.

### Its operation

13. Regional/spatial planning must take into consideration the existence of a multitude of individual and institutional decision-makers which influence the organisation of space, the uncertainty of all forecasting studies, the market pressures, the special features of administrative systems and the differing socio-economic and environmental conditions.

It must however strive to reconcile these influences in the most harmonious way possible.

## THE FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Regional/spatial planning seeks at one and the same time to achieve :

14. - Balanced socio-economic development of the regions  
Taking into consideration the economic processes affecting Europe as a whole, the specific regional characteristics and the important role of development axes and communication networks, it should control the growth of regions which are congested or developing too fast, encourage the development of backward regions, and maintain or adapt the infrastructures that are essential to the stimulation of economic recovery in declining regions or those threatened with serious employment problems particularly through manpower migration at European level. Peripheral areas which have special requirements and structural potential for socio-economic rebalancing should be better linked up to the industrial and economic centres of Europe.
15. - Improvement of the quality of life  
~~It encourages improvement in the quality of everyday life, in respect of housing, work, culture, leisure or relationships within human communities, and the enhancement of the well-being of each individual~~ through the creation of jobs and the provision of economic, social and cultural amenities which meet the aspirations of different sections of the population and which are sited in places where they will be used to the optimum.
16. - Responsible management of natural resources and protection of the environment  
By promoting strategies to minimise conflicts between the growing demand for natural resources and the need to conserve them, it seeks to ensure responsible management of the environment, the resources of land, subsoil, air, water, energy resources, fauna and flora, paying special attention to areas of natural beauty and to the cultural and architectural heritage.
17. - Rational use of land  
In pursuit of the above defined objectives, it is concerned in particular with the location, organisation and development of large urban and industrial complexes, major infrastructures, and the protection of agricultural and forestry land. Every regional/spatial planning policy must be necessarily accompanied by a land-use policy in order to make it possible to achieve objectives which are in the public interest.

## PURSUIT OF REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING

18. The achievement of regional/spatial planning objectives is essentially a political matter.

19. Many private and public agencies contribute by their actions to developing and changing the organisation of space. Regional/spatial planning reflects the desire for interdisciplinary integration and coordination and for cooperation between the authorities involved :

20. . It seeks coordination between the various sectors

This effort for coordination concerns mainly the distribution of population, economic activities, habitat, public facilities and power supplies ; transport ; water supply and purification ; noise prevention and waste disposal ; protection of the environment and of natural, historical, cultural assets and resources.

21. . It facilitates coordination and cooperation between the various levels of decision-making and the equalisation of financial resources

The various authorities involved in regional/spatial planning policy need to be given the power to take and carry out decisions, as well as adequate financial means. In order to ensure optimal coordination between local, regional, national and European levels, also as regards transfrontier cooperation, their action must always take into account any measures introduced or planned at the level above or below their own and, consequently, they must keep one another regularly informed.

At local level : coordination of local authority development plans, having regard to the essential interests of regional and national planning ;

At regional level : the most appropriate level at which to pursue a regional/spatial planning policy, coordination between the regional authorities themselves and local and national authorities as well as between regions of neighbouring countries ;

At national level : coordination of different regional/spatial planning policies and regional aid arrangements as well as harmonisation of the national and regional objectives.

At European level : coordination of regional/spatial planning policies in order to achieve objectives of European importance and general balanced development.

22. Public participation

Any regional/spatial planning policy, at whatever level, must be based on active citizen participation. It is essential that the citizen be informed clearly and in a comprehensive way at all stages of the planning process and in the framework of institutional structures and procedures.

STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN COOPERATION

23. The European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) constitutes the ideal political instrument for cooperation and initiative at European level.

- It will intensify relations with the bodies of the Council of Europe and the European Community, as well as with the relevant intergovernmental organisations. It will present regular progress reports on European cooperation in this field to the Parliamentary Assembly and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.
- Besides organising and intensifying political cooperation between States, it will promote cooperation in the main technical planning fields such as long-range forecasting, regional statistics, cartography and terminology. It must acquire the scientific, administrative, technical and financial tools essential to the pursuit of its aims, in particular by drawing up a European regional planning concept.

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24. The Ministers ask all institutions, administrations and organisations dealing with regional planning problems to have regard in their work to the contents of the Charter.

25. The Charter can be revised with a view to adapting it to the needs of European society.

26. The Ministers undertake to recommend to their respective governments that the principles and aims set forth in the Charter be taken into consideration and that the international cooperation be promoted with a view to achieving real European planning.

## A P P E N D I X

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

All principles set down in the present Charter have already been developed in the work of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning on rural, urban, frontier, mountain and coastal areas and on islands.

1. Rural areas with a primarily agricultural function have a fundamental role to play. It is essential to create acceptable living conditions in the countryside, as regards all economic, social, cultural and ecological aspects as well as infrastructures and amenities, while distinguishing between under-developed and peripheral rural regions and those close to large conurbations.

In such areas the development of the urban framework, of social and economic structures and of transport must take account, in all spheres, of their specific functions and in particular of the conservation and management of the natural landscape.

2. Urban areas contribute greatly to the development of Europe and usually present the problem of controlling their growth.

A balanced urban structure requires the systematic implementation of plans for land use and the application of guidelines for the development of economic activities for the benefit of the living conditions of town dwellers.

Special attention should be paid to the improvement of living conditions, the promotion of public transport and to all measures to curb the excessive movement of population away from the town centres to the periphery.

The rehabilitation of the architectural heritage, monuments and sites must be an integral part of an overall town and country planning policy.

3. Frontier areas, more than all others, need a policy of co-ordination between States. The purpose of such a policy is to open up the frontiers and institute transfrontier consultation and co-operation and joint use of infrastructure facilities. States should facilitate direct contacts between the regions and localities concerned in accordance with the European Outline Convention on transfrontier co-operation between territorial authorities in order to promote increasingly close contacts between the populations concerned.

In the frontier areas, no project which could have harmful consequences for the environment of neighbouring countries should be carried out without previous consultation of those States.



4. Mountain areas : In view of the importance of these areas for the ecological, economic, social, cultural and agricultural functions they fulfil and their value as depositories of natural resources, and of the many constraints from which they suffer in these fields of activity, spatial management policy must give special and suitable consideration to the preservation and development of mountain regions.
5. Regions with structural weaknesses where living and working conditions have made little progress, particularly for historical reasons, or which could be left behind by changes in their economic base, need special assistance related to the disparities which exist between living and working conditions within the various States.
6. Regions in decline : Specific policies should be developed in favour of regions where economic activity has strongly slowed down following industrial restructuring and ageing of their infrastructure and of their industrial equipment, very often monostructured. This situation is accelerated by the worldwide competition resulting from the new international division of labour.
7. Coastal areas and islands : The development of mass tourism and transport in Europe and the industrialisation of coastal areas, islands and the sea, demand specific policies for these regions in order to ensure their balanced development and co-ordinated urbanisation, bearing in mind the requirements of environmental conservation and regional characteristics. Regard must be given to the specific role and functions of coastal areas in the land-sea relationship and of sea-transport possibilities.