

12th European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) (Hanover, Germany: 7-8 September 2000) on "Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent"

Resolution No. 1 on A 10-point programme for greater cohesion among the regions of Europe

We, the ministers of the states of the Council of Europe attending the 12th session of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning, in Hanover on 7 and 8 September 2000, have discussed the contribution that spatial development policy can make to achieving the goal of social cohesion in Europe.

We wish to thank the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe for their participation and for their contribution, in particular for the work carried out concerning the mountain regions.

We believe that social cohesion in Europe, which was defined as one of the main objectives of the Council of Europe by the heads of state and government of our member states at their second summit on 10/11 October 1997, has to be accompanied by sustainable spatial development policies that bring the social and economic requirements to be met by the territory into line with its ecological and cultural functions;

We consider that one of the aims of the Council of Europe is to strengthen local and regional democracy in Europe by means of a territorially more balanced development of our continent;

We consider the Council of Europe as the European organisation in which all the states of Europe can co-operate on the basis of equal rights, and consider the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and its committee to be a suitable political body to contribute to the co-ordination of common, Europe-wide territorial development goals and strategies;

We are convinced that trans-European, inter-regional and transfrontier co-operation between states, regional authorities and local authorities in the sphere of spatial development has to be strengthened, especially between the countries of western Europe and central and eastern Europe, in order to ensure the social and territorial cohesion of the European continent as a whole.

The results of our conference are as follows:

1. We consider the adopted document "Guiding principles for sustainable spatial development of the European continent" to be:

a major contribution to implementation of the strategy of social cohesion adopted at the second summit of heads of state and government in 1997;

a policy framework document which takes into account relevant activities of the Council of Europe and its bodies, and in particular the work of its Parliamentary Assembly and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, in the field of continental spatial development policy and which could contribute to strengthening the European integration process by means of transfrontier, inter-regional and transnational co-operation;

a coherent strategy for the integrated and regionally balanced development of our continent, while based on the principles of subsidiarity and reciprocity, which strengthens competitiveness, co-operation and solidarity among local and regional authorities across borders, thereby making a contribution to democratic stability in Europe.

2. We recommend to our national and regional authorities that

the Guiding Principles be used as a basis for national regional planning and spatial development measures;

the Guiding Principles be implemented in national and international spatial development projects as appropriate;

the co-operation with the central, eastern and south-eastern European states undergoing reforms to help them establish regional governmental and administrative bodies be continued and intensified in order to facilitate better spatial integration of the various regions of Europe.

3. We welcome

the progress made in co-ordinating common spatial development goals and strategies through the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), in the European Union, the Baltic Sea region (VASAB 2010), the North Sea region (NorVision), central and south-eastern Europe (Vision Planet) and the

Mediterranean region (MED-OCC and Archimed), as well as regional co-operation mechanisms (Central European Initiative, Black Sea Economic Co-operation Council, Baltic States Council).

4. We agree

to co-operate in spatial development projects in the Interreg III B co-operation areas and call for all member states of the Council of Europe, regardless of whether they wish to accede to the European Union or not, to be included in spatial development co-operation among EU member states. This also applies to co-operation in the sphere of spatial research;

to continue the project forum launched by Germany within the framework of Interreg activities.

We call on

the European Union to revise the current regulations governing project co-operation between Interreg initiatives and the Phare and Tacis programmes in order to facilitate co-operation that is better co-ordinated,

the non-member states of the EU to explore, at the same time, their own possibilities of achieving better co-operation with the programmes concerned.

We suggest

that the states on the Black Sea and in the Euro-Mediterranean region should co-operate on appropriate future-orientated spatial development visions, based on the Guiding Principles document.

We stress

that the speedy development and implementation of the pan-European transport network (especially the 10 Pan-European Transport Corridors), as an indispensable prerequisite for good access to large areas across the entire continent, has to be expedited, and point out that the agreements reached on the shape of the networks should, if necessary, be reviewed and augmented, taking sustainable spatial development and environmental aspects into account,

that the dialogue between the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) and European institutions, especially the European Commission, and international organisations such as the OECD and the UN institutions (ECE/CSD) on spatial development issues should be intensified, both within Europe and beyond its borders, and that the division of responsibilities among these institutions should be defined more clearly in order to avoid a duplication of activities.

We request

the European funding institutions to apply the Guiding Principles document as part of a wider basis of information when taking decisions on the provision of assistance to spatial development projects.

We invite the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

to contribute to implementation of the Guiding Principles, in particular through, Council of Europe instruments,

to take into account the Guiding Principles document and its integrated approach for decision-making in discussions and votes in the Committee of Ministers on projects with a spatial impact,

to maintain in the inter-governmental programme of the Organisation the activities of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT),

to start immediately a training programme to help regional and local planning authorities in the new member states of the Council of Europe to perform as well as possible the tasks within their competency,

to convert the Committee of Senior Officials into a steering committee.

We call on the local and regional authorities of Europe

to support the efforts being made by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning to achieve regionally balanced sustainable development in Europe, applying the principles of partnership and subsidiarity.

We will forward the results of our conference to our governments and parliaments, and make them available to the public.