

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RECOMMENDATION No. R (84) 2

OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING CHARTER

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 January 1984
at the 366th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Recognising that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress ;

Having regard to Consultative Assembly Resolution 687 (1979) on European regional planning ;

Having regard to the opinion of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on the preparation of a European Regional Planning Charter appended to its Resolution 113 (1980) on the progress of European integration ;

Considering that regional/spatial planning is a tool which is important to the progress of European society and that closer international co-operation in this field is a valuable means of strengthening European identity ;

Convinced that in order to achieve co-operation in this field it is necessary to analyse national, regional and local conceptions of regional/spatial planning with a view to the adoption of common principles (designed, in particular, to reduce regional disparities) and hence to the achievement of a better general conception of the use and organisation of space, the distribution of activities, environmental protection and the improvement of the quality of life ;

Convinced that the radical changes which have occurred in the economic and social patterns of the European countries and in their relations with other parts of the world make it necessary to review the principles governing the organisation of space in order to ensure that they are not formulated solely on the basis of short-term economic objectives without due consideration for social, cultural and environmental factors ;

Considering that the objectives of regional/spatial planning necessitate new criteria for the choice of the direction in which technical progress is pursued and the use to which it is put, and that these criteria need to be in keeping with economic, social and environmental requirements ;

Convinced that all European citizens should have the opportunity in an appropriate institutional framework to take part in the devising and implementation of all regional/spatial planning measures,

Recommends that the governments of member states :

a. base their national policies on the principles and objectives set out in the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter prepared and adopted by the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning and appended to this recommendation ;

b. ensure that the Charter is distributed as widely as possible among the public and among politicians at local, regional, national and international level.

Appendix to Recommendation No. R (84) 2

EUROPEAN REGIONAL/SPATIAL PLANNING CHARTER

The concept of regional/spatial planning

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

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

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

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.

Regional/spatial planning should be democratic, comprehensive, functional and orientated 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 co-ordination 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

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 :

— 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 with the industrial and economic centres of Europe.

— *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.

— *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.

— *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.

Implementation of regional/spatial planning objectives

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

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 co-ordination and for co-operation between the authorities involved :

- *It seeks co-ordination between the various sectors*

This effort for co-ordination 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.

- *It facilitates co-ordination and co-operation 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 co-ordination between local, regional, national and European levels, also as regards transfrontier co-operation, 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 : co-ordination 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, co-ordination between the regional authorities themselves and local and national authorities as well as between regions of neighbouring countries ;

At national level : co-ordination of different regional/spatial planning policies and regional aid arrangements as well as harmonisation of the national and regional objectives ;

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

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 co-operation

The European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning (CEMAT) constitutes the ideal political instrument for co-operation 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 co-operation in this field to the Parliamentary Assembly and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe.

— Besides organising and intensifying political co-operation between states, it will promote co-operation 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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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.

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

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 co-operation be promoted with a view to achieving real European planning.

Appendix to the European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter

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.

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 underdeveloped 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.

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.

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 Communities or 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.