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Summary of the statement

of Mr. Jens Gabbe on

TERRITORIAL STRATEGIES SUPPORTING TERRITORIAL COMPETITIVENESS AND COHESION

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1. Actual trends and challenges for border / cross-border regions

- Based on ESPON-documents and the “Territorial Agenda” the following territorial aspects / trends and challenges are important for border / cross-border regions:
 - to improve the competitiveness of Europe in view of globalisation,
 - to prevent geographical concentration by means of a polycentric development with due regard to metropolitan regions and urban areas,
 - to make a better use of territorial resources (inclusively the regional diversity) for the aims of growth and employment,
 - to improve the consideration of the effects of EU enlargement and the relations at the external borders of the EU,
 - to mitigate challenges related to climate changes, energy and raw materials sources as well as aging and migration on the labour market.
- Moreover,
 - all **endogenous potentials** (metropolitan regions, urban centres, towns, rural areas etc.) should be used,
 - new understanding of the „territorial governance“ and co-operation is wanted,
 - mutual consideration of local, regional, national, and European policies is necessary.
 - necessary programmes and measures to cope with the global crisis are putting high pressure on the budgets of the regional / local authorities in border regions. The currently invented funds are limiting considerably their future scope of activity.
- These territorial trends and challenges **influence in particular border regions**, due to e.g.:
 - the national and sometimes even European peripheral location,
 - cross-border effects related to climate and environment,
 - the risk of becoming solely a transit zone through Trans-European Networks,
 - the risk of aging and migration from rural areas,
 - increasing energy prices (in rural areas a car is often the sole and most important means of transport),
 - the effects of EU enlargement (former external borders and borders between new EU member states have become internal borders and new external borders have emerged),
 - difficult governance due to different structures, competences and legislation on both sides of a border,
 - in the actual situation the focus is on large projects, R & D etc., all together measures traditionally not prioritising border / cross-border regions.
- Border / cross-border cooperation normally is not a national priority, but it becomes more and more a European priority:

- Cross-border co-operation is a corner stone of European integration and territorial cohesion.
- It creates a European, political, institutional, economic and socio-cultural added value (see the AEBR paper: Added value of cross-border co-operation).
- It has concretely contributed to the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy already (see the AEBR paper on Lisbon Strategy), as cross-border co-operation always adds value to national measures due to:
 - ✓ additionality of cross-border programmes and projects,
 - ✓ synergies through cross-border co-operation,
 - ✓ joint research and innovation,
 - ✓ cross-border networking,
 - ✓ exchange of best practice and know-how,
- The **potential** of cross-border cooperation is **hardly exploited** (e.g. cooperation in public health, Research and Development, prevention of double-investments [critical mass], provision of infrastructure, environmental protection, services of common interest).
- As the competence of neighbouring states for spatial development ends at the border, in the overall part the importance of cross-border relations is mentioned. However, in the sector-specific plans these relations are mostly missing and thus should be included in the future, e.g. crucial centres across borders (the possibility of a cross-border metropolitan region), potentials of universities and research facilities, health care facilities of supra-regional importance, risk sources (nuclear facilities, hazardous waste sites), potentials of cross-border networks of municipalities related to supply and a supra-regional cultural offer, etc.

2. **Spatial development concept in border / cross border regions to meet the new challenges and to use development opportunities**

- Cross-border cooperation in connection with spatial planning at European level contributes to territorial cohesion and helps to solve the spatial fragmentation of the EU, the inconsistencies and lack of coherence caused by national differences. Only then the new challenges of climate change, ageing of the society, coherence of renewable primary products for usage of energy and food (close connection between territorial policy and cohesion policy) can be better faced in border regions.
- The new challenges have direct impact on border areas, especially if they are rural ones. Without an adequate territorial policy in favour of rural areas a migration to metropolitan areas and urban agglomerations will continue to grow together with important emigration from border regions / rural areas. Unfortunately negative examples can be found even today in several border regions.

- A decentralised cross-border spatial development concept / strategy is an instrument to meet the new challenges and to use development opportunities. It should:
 - go beyond a traditional format of analysis and case studies and proactively explore new avenues of creating territorial development, meeting main challenges and prepare innovative actions,
 - realise multi-thematic territorial analysis (cross-cutting), mainly for initiating more comprehensive processes,
 - identify a set of themes/topics that are of particular relevance for the respective cross-border area,
 - focus on targeted research activities that are truly used-demand oriented,
 - actively involve and commit all partners / stakeholders firmly through the entire life cycle of the strategy and its implementation.
- Main Challenges for a decentralised cross-border spatial development concept:
 - organising the preparation / elaboration process
 - designing the policy dimension of a cross-border development concept
 - Ensuring the short- and medium-term application of a cross-border development concept after its finalisation,
- Main challenge for cross-border governance:
 - as long as “new governance” is dealing with outdated hierarchies and with national administration structures and competences, this will remain difficult to be realised: these differences between states can not be adapted. The lowest common denominator will apply as a common level, as everyone can only act within the framework of his own competences.
 - The consequence out of it is: to develop and to use in practice instruments for cooperation (like the EGTC), at which the different administration levels and their competences are not decisive. In a cross-border structure common decisions are taken, which are then going to be implemented on both side of the border by the partners in the respective states (following the existing national administration structures and competences). It is about instruments, not administration levels of cooperation.
 - In “new governance” no comparison of competence or a cooperation of equal levels of competence are helpful, because they do not exist on the same level and with equal content in different states. Thus “New governance” is about execution of important tasks with suitable instruments, while the competences remain at the national, regional and local bodies. There can only be a delegation of tasks to an instrument.
 - The secret of successful cross-border cooperation is to avoid the terms “administration level” and “competence”, to work with practicable instruments and execute tasks.

3. Ideas for improvements and adjustments

a) General

- Sectoral policies (European and national) have to be reviewed regarding their spatial effects (e.g. transport, agriculture and education). Therefore it is reasonable to develop long-term horizontal strategies and programmes, especially cross-border, in which in medium-term practical oriented sector policies become integrated (interdependency, because the results of the medium-term sectoral measures in turn have an impact on the actualisation of the long-term strategies / programmes).
- The consideration of the political aims of Territorial Cohesion and Territorial Agenda in the sectoral policies at European and national / regional level must be improved in the future.
- Likewise it is necessary, that the EU-policy pays stronger attention to the national / regional / local policies and vice-versa.
- Cross-border spatial development concepts should in particular address strategic themes:
 - Cross-border polycentric or metropolitan development,
 - Patterns of rural-urban relationship,
 - Accessibility and connectivity of the cross-border area to existing TEN-corridors,
 - Territorial effects of demographic and climate change,
 - Territorial dimension of the Lisbon-Strategy (R&D potentials, economic restructuring, cross-border labour market).
- Consideration of cross-border spatial development concepts (that are available in many cross-border regions already) in national spatial planning with the aim of a genuine region-specific planning across borders;
- Inclusion of cross-border co-operation structures at regional / local level in this planning on a regular base,

b) At national level

- While implementing sectoral policies it's essential to demand future-oriented statements in national spatial strategies for cross-border co-operation. For the aim of a sustainable spatial development of border regions, particular attention should be paid to the following cross-border tasks:
 - to strengthen the endogenous regional potentials across the borders;
 - to strengthen the regions on both sides of the border, not in the sense of administrative and national borders, but in the sense of economic borders (e.g. excellence centres or life science regions in cross-border rural areas);
 - to think in terms of „concentration, complementarity, competitiveness and creation of a critical mass“ (e.g. health care, waste disposal, water management, cross-border disaster prevention and rescue) is as important as thinking in terms of „knowledge, cognition and finances “ (e. g.

public/private cooperation or cooperation between knowledge facilities/economy, specialised training facilities and SMEs);

- other examples are:
 - ✓ Development of joint transport and telecommunication infrastructure;
 - ✓ Provision of public and private services across borders;
 - ✓ Organisation of cross-border labour markets;
 - ✓ Preservation and sustainable use of cross-border natural resources (in particular in mountain regions, coastal areas, wetlands etc.),
 - ✓ Preventive measures as regards the effects of pollution.

c) At regional / local level

- Cross-border co-operation between regional and local authorities should be necessarily intensified in the future, in order to realise a sustainable spatial development, through:
 - precise analysis of current and future problems related to spatial development;
 - analysis of legal obstacles affecting cross-border co-operation in planning;
 - cross-border co-ordination of all planning and measures related to spatial development on a regular base;
 - ongoing cross-border information and spatial monitoring supported by socio-economic spatial development analysis;
 - development of cross-border sectoral development plans (e.g. for transport, economy, R & D, tourism, free space and settlement development);
 - specific cross-border infrastructural planning for border regions, which are particularly affected by the planned expansion of (Trans-European) transport axes;
 - identification of important urban regions (urban networks) up to cross-border European metropolitan regions in border areas;
 - cooperation at regional and local level in cross-border interdependent areas of larger centres and in fragmented urban centres;
 - identification of protected areas, habitat connectivities and cross-border nature parks as well as cross-border landscape architecture;
 - coordination of local planning in border municipalities;
- Moreover, it would be desirable for the medium-term future to elaborate joint cross-border regional plans directly binding for all public planning as the most far-reaching form of cross-border spatial development providing the base for cross-border local planning.
- All measures related to spatial development and regional policy should be included in “Regional cross-border development concepts” and “Operational Programmes” in the future in order to facilitate the enforceability.
- Good examples of such planning are given among others at the German-French-Swiss, the German-Dutch, the German-Polish and the German-Czech border within the framework of INTERREG IIIA. In these cases a future-oriented cross-

border co-operation takes place at regional level between the spatial development and regional policy.

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