The emergence of trans-border spatial development policies for small EU Member States: The case of Luxembourg

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Abstract: Spatial effects due to an increasing EU wide integration of economic and political activities occur on a higher scale. Smaller national states are becoming aware of the limits of their original political influence in contrary to the developments they are exposed to. The case of Luxembourg is investigated in order to show how joint planning approaches are needed especially by smaller Member States. This paper concludes on the necessity of trans-border spatial planning and development, describes the trans-border activities set up in the past and the present and addresses future approaches and requirements of the EU spatial development policy under these circumstances.
1. Introduction

Spatial planning policy across borders and on the EU level has become popular in the second half of the nineties which mainly expressed itself by the introduction of spatial planning in the Interreg IIC community initiative and even more by the elaboration process and finalisation of the European Spatial Development Perspective. Much is said about the general importance of an European spatial approach (EURREG 1997, Williams 1996), but arguments differ from different angles such as a Northern or a Southern view or a more sectoral approach (Boehme 1999, Dermathas 1997, Williams 1997,). Now, the specific perspective of small Member States could be best addressed by the most "extreme" cases of Luxembourg. This opportunity also allows to defuse some information on the Luxembourg planning system which inheres some interesting features but is not well documented in the literature in particular due to the size of the country (Vries/Broeck, 1997). Section two introduces the principles of spatial planning in Luxembourg and section three describes how Luxembourg planning activities are woven into trans-border planning activities and institutions. Finally some conclusions are drawn on the meaning of trans-border planning for small states in general and the emerging tasks after the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) was present in its final version in May 1999 in Potsdam.

2. Spatial planning in Luxembourg

Apart from Belgium, which is in a special political situation due to a very strong federalism, all Member States of the EU dispose of national spatial planning policies (see Table 1). In particular many bigger Member States of the EU use the possibility to allocate the authority for spatial planning a sub-national level and to give guidance on the national level. The question arises whether there is apart from the necessary spatial financial co-ordination of policies within a national state any compulsory reason to introduce a national plan or policy guidance for planning and spatial development exists. Are there any criteria available which underline from a thematic (not the political) point of view whether there is a need for political co-ordination on the supra national level? Just to adjust the scale see also Map 1: Luxembourg compares in size (2586 km²) with the Saarland (D), the Province of Limburg (NL) or the County of Cheshire (UK) and

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1 I am in debt of Maryse Scholtes and Mike Wagner, Ministry for the Interior, Luxembourg for many valuable information and comments.
2 Belgium is not without any supra-regional planning policy as the regions participate with the Benelux spatial planning association (see also section 3.1.).
with a population of about 403 thousand inhabitants in terms of population density with Thueringa (D), the North-East of Italy (I) or East Anglia (UK) (Eurostat 1997).

Table 1: National spatial planning instruments in the EU Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of instrument</th>
<th>National perspectives1 or plans</th>
<th>General policy guidance</th>
<th>Sectoral or issue based guidance</th>
<th>No national instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Set out the broad pattern of spatial development</td>
<td>Set out general policies to apply across the country</td>
<td>Set out (which may be spatially specific) for particular topics such as infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member State</td>
<td>Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands</td>
<td>Austria, Denmark Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Sweden, UK</td>
<td>Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, UK</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National perspectives may be part of an economic planning or regional policy document, and considerable variation in depth of analysis in these documents is evident.

Source: European Commission 1997, 55

At first needs to be clarified what actually is understood by planning policies? Under the notion of the comparative study of DG Regio a national policy covers either a general policy guidance, a perspective or plan for the whole territory and/or sectoral or issue based guidance. This general policy is followed by the strategic planning for the identification of the broad development patterns and can be binding or indicative. The strategic instruments are in most cases located at lower levels of government. The next instrument represents the framework or master-plan regulating the land use in many cases implemented by local authorities through the final regulatory planning comprising zone plans and implementation instruments. (European Commission 1997, 52)

Planning in this notion is still perceived as land use planning in the narrower sense but currently there is a shift apparent towards a broader understanding of spatial development policy. This notion considers that the spatial development needs more than land use planning in terms of the preparation and implementation of a plan by the responsible authority. Spatial development policy acknowledges the fact that the resulting land use is influenced by a range of sector policies on all governmental levels which can (but not compulsory) affect private and public decision makers in their decisions on locations. (Schindegger 1998).
The new Spatial Planning law of Luxembourg (April 1999), replaces the law of 1974. The key element of the law represents the so called ‘Programme Directeur’ (PD) a reference framework for orientation prepared by the national level for the local authority level which takes the responsibility for drawing zone plans. The PD also aims on the coordination of sectoral policies on the national level. The PD displays the national
priorities and measures of spatial planning in Luxembourg. The first PD was set up on that legal base in 1978 following a revision in 1988. A third PD is currently in the legislative process after the revised spatial planning law was accepted by the Parliament in April 1999. New, sustainable development represents the guiding principle for spatial planning. The Ministry for Spatial Planning, since autumn 1999 incorporated into the Ministry for the Interior into the “Direction de l’Aménagement du Territoire et de l’Urbanisme” (DATUR), is responsible for the co-ordination of those sector policies which influence regional development and land use and its balance. The Ministry aims for a balanced structure and economy of the regions as the PD lines out.

The main principles of spatial planning comprise co-ordination, co-operation and process orientation in the horizontal and vertical dimension (see also Figure 1). These principles are applied on the base of an "open and innovative" planning philosophy in order to reach a high acceptance in the society. In this terms all relevant actors were involved in drawing up and will be involved in the implementation of the PD. The co-ordination encompasses the thematic (horizontal) integration of sector policies and the spatial (vertical) integration of the policies on all governmental levels. The former has been realised by the establishment of six thematic interdepartmental working groups under the lead of an interdepartmental Committee CIAT (Comité Interministériel à l’Aménagement du Territoire) in spring 1995 which formulated and tested the thematic bricks of the PD. The latter was achieved by a consultation with relevant actors on the national, regional and local level. Apart from the action on the national level based on the already cited planning law the regional level is only a technical instrument of spatial planning and definitely not a governmental level. In fact, this instrumental level of action was hardly applied so far apart from planning natural parks. The new planning law foresees associations of local authorities for the consultation of regional plans as the law for inter local authority co-operation is also hardly applied. In fact, local authorities mainly collaborate on an informal base. Planning on the local level is fully allocated at

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3 Starting point of the reform has been the policy statement of the government (22nd of Jul. 1994) and a Ducal Decision (1st of Feb. 1995), see "Arrêté grand-ducal du 1er février 1995 portant énumération des ministères et détermination des compétences ministérielles".

4 The themes of working groups were: new forms of local authority colaboration, decentralisation, Programme Directeure, European Support Programmes, nature parcs. In addition a working group on industrial and commercial sites and transport policies was etablished.

5 A testimony of the State Council concluded that the self-commitment of the government in the respect of the Programme Directeure is self-evident (Orientierungsrahmen 1998).

6 Loi du 14 février 1900 concernant la création des syndicats de communes, an expection has been the colaboration on natural parcs. (Loi du 10 août 1993 relative aux parcs naturels).
the local authorities’ level and consists of zone plans on a general and a part level.\(^7\) These plans represent the legally binding base for the development of settlement. Both laws, the spatial planning law and the law of planning for local authorities consider the autonomy of local authorities but also the intervention into that autonomy of the upper level for the sake of public interests.

**Figure 1: Relation between the levels of spatial planning**

Consequently the PD was set up in an interactive process between the actors of interdepartmental working groups, hearings with local authorities and consultations in the government council in four steps: Orientation phase, action phase, projecting followed by a formal consultation process. The final draft of the PD was accepted by the chamber and will go through a consultation process after the new national parliament was elected in May 1999 and the new councillors on the local authority's level were elected in autumn 1999. When the PD is accepted at all levels the implementation of this framework for orientation via the national sectoral plans and the regional/local authorities' zoning plans and other decisions on spatially relevant measures will take place.

\(^7\) On the scale of zone plans 1:2500 (plan d'aménagement général, PAG) and part zone plans (plan d'aménagement particulier, PAP) 1:500/1000, Loi du 12 Juin 1937 concernant l’aménagement des villes et autres agglomérations importantes.
3. Trans-border and supra-national spatial policies in Luxembourg

It is interesting to note that trans-border aspects are included in the main outline of the structure of the Luxembourg’s spatial planning system. The PD considers as constitutive elements (see Figure 1) the ESDP, the spatial perspectives elaborated by the CEMAT (European Council), the "grande région" Sarre-Lor-Lux+ (SLL+) as part of Interreg IIC, the second Structural Perspective Benelux, the trans-border Interreg IIA co-operation and the perspectives which will be elaborated under Interreg III. Apart from these activities other organisations exist which also operate in the field of spatial planning. The strong impetus on the trans-national and supra-national planning perspectives becomes obvious looking at the spatial of Luxembourg in Europe (see map 1).

3.1. The structural outline Benelux

Starting with the longest lasting supra-national initiative, the Benelux co-operation was established in 1944 and converged into the still existing "Union Economique Benelux". The interests in some kind of spatial co-ordination constantly increased particularly in the trans-national context and lead to the introduction of a Commission responsible for spatial planning "Commission Spéciale pour l'Aménagement Du Territoire" (CSAT) in 1969, by which spatial planning was introduced into the activities under the Treaty of the (Benelux-) Union. It took until 1986 for the Ministers to decide on the final version of the first trans-national structural outline "Esquisse de Structure Globale Benelux en Matière d'Aménagement du Territoire". This document encompassed policy proposals for the whole territory which needed to be implemented via the national planning policies and legislation. In addition, the document included recommendations about procedures for the co-operation. All recommendations require voluntary implementation and formal sanctions were not foreseen in case a Member State refused to implement the agreed recommendations. Looking back, after the second Outline was presented in 1996 and adopted in 1997, it appears as the first perspective has been just a "étape" towards the second version which was called for by the Ministers at their meeting in 1994.

8 The CSAT was responsible for the current exchange of information, the development of a comprehensive spatial planning visions and the elaboration of a perspective for border regions. in 1975 at the third conference of the Ministers the decision was taken to develop a common plan or perspective for the whole territory.

9 In fact the national developments moved relatively fast away from the proposed structure of the first perspective. The visionary dimension of the document has not been very strong. It also has became clear that the implementation by the different levels of government was not easy to achieve because of deviating competence on the different governmental levels in the countries involved (Benelux 1996).
The currently valid second perspective concentrates on 6 issues in total: the philosophy of the perspective, four sectoral issues (location policy, principle infrastructure, rural areas and principal ecological structure) and the co-operation issue on different scales in the Benelux area as well with the other directly or indirectly bordering countries Germany, France and the UK. The title of the document "Benelux 1996: Espace de Coopération. Deuxième Esquisse de Structure Benelux. Bruxelles" already stresses the main issue of the whole project called co-operation. (Benelux 1997a, b)

Although much effort was put in drawing up the perspective and discussing the draft in a public debate there remains little uneasiness about the value of the project. On the one hand there is indeed a need to co-ordinate spatial development on the trans-border level in this densely populated area, particularly in the North of Benelux. On the other hand these activities are slowly overtaken by schemes and incentives for a co-ordinated spatial development on the EU-level. The main differences between the Benelux perspective and the EU, apart from the area covered, is the potential funding and the more powerful governmental organisation involved with EU initiatives. Therefore in principle, the Benelux membership has been valuable for Luxembourg in economic terms but it does not seem to be the most emerging case for Luxembourg's trans-border spatial development policy as Luxembourg often only represents the Southern “far end” tail of the co-operation area in spatial terms. Nevertheless most important issues for Luxembourg are the North-South axis in transports and the co-operation on natural resources and rural development - an area which represents the links particularly to Wallonie of Belgium.

3.2. The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)

The reform of the Luxembourgian planning law took place in parallel to the preparation and consultation of the ESDP (in 1997-99). After the consultation the ESDP could be named as a guiding document for the PD as it applies comparable aims and policy proposals of the ESDP for the national territory of Luxembourg which was intended and is very obvious viewing the PD. The PD considers the sectoral and the territorial approach of the ESDP by breaking it down to the Luxembourgian needs on the national and regional level. The former Luxembourg Ministry for Spatial Planning used the unique situation to reform the Luxembourgian planning perspective towards a modern understanding of spatial development policy as outlined above. A framework for spatial development under the common goal of sustainable development considering the economic, ecological and social dimension was co-operatively defined on the base of
horizontal and vertical consultations. The advantages of organising the PD closely to the ESDP are twofold: it would not be a surprise if the European policies, particularly spatially orientated ones such as Community initiatives Interreg, other Structural Funds or the Trans-European Network policy take notice of the ESDP and support the implementation of proposals made there, and other, particularly Luxembourg surrounding Member States, will also take notice of the ESDP. Therefore, access points for common approaches are much easier to detect.

3.3. Structural Funds and the Community Initiative Interreg

Financial incentives by the EU in the field of spatial planning and development are only given in the trans-border context as only these kind of measure are covered by the EC/EU Treaty. The Interreg IIC and now the new Interreg IIIB Programme explicitly mention spatial development. In addition, operational programmes so far available show the variety of measures with Luxembourghian participation.\(^\text{10}\) The highest level of cooperation represents the elaboration of a spatial vision for the North-Western-Metropolitan Area (North-Western-Metropolitan Area Spatial Vision 2000) which was deduced from the Central Capital Cites' Area of the Europe 2000+ study (European Commission 1995). A consultation document on the spatial vision is published about in September 2000.\(^\text{11}\) It looks as it becomes more important for Luxembourg as the Benelux outline because it better considers the location of Luxembourg in between the surrounding countries.

Apart from the Interreg IIC/IIIB approach the future reference point for the trans-border aspects of spatial planning will probably become the Saar-Lor-Lux+ spatial development concepts, also co-financed by Interreg, which is currently in preparation.\(^\text{12}\) There, Luxembourg represents more or less the centre of the investigated area and the approach seems to be rather comprehensive and also concrete proposals for measures are formulated.

\(^\text{10}\) Commission Communication to the Member States laying down guidelines for operational programmes which Member States are invited to establish in the framework of a Community Interreg initiative concerning trans-national co-operation on spatial planning INTERREG II C (Official Journal 96/C 200/07)

\(^\text{11}\) Expected for mid of the year 2000 and covers the area from Ireland via South and West England to North-West France, Benelux, and the Western parts of Germany.

\(^\text{12}\) Initiated by the Saar-Lor-Lux Regional Commission, see section 3.4., together with France (Lorraine with the departements Meuse, Meurthe-et-Moselle Moselle and Vosges), Germany (with Rheinland-Pfalz - region of Trier and the county of Westpfalz, Saarland) and Belgium (Walonie, with the province of Luxembourg).
The relative importance of the EU financed concepts and perspectives derives from the fact that trans-border perspectives already financed by the EU may have a higher chance of being realised as deduced measures will implicitly have a higher chance of being also co-financed by the EU. Further projects envisaged in that frame of Interreg II C with participation of Luxembourg are a network of cross-border cities network, co-operation in transport systems network and network of landscapes.\textsuperscript{13}

### 3.4. Other trans-border approaches

Apart from the outlined approaches which are directly embedded in the EU or the Benelux context other wide ranging activities for trans- and cross-border co-operation on different governmental levels are apparent. These co-operations link into different parts of the policy system such as local authorities, administration, members of any kind of parliament which also are affecting more or less spatial development and planning are also apparent (see Table 2). Some important measures such as the SLL+ spatial development concept, guidelines for cross-border planning activities and mutual information on spatially relevant issues were initiated by the Regional Commission (Table 2, No. 1). It is true that others such as the summit (No. 2) or the inter-regional council of members of parliament (No. 3) reached publicity but apart from proclamations (which, without any doubt also serves an important purpose) not many visible results were achieved. There rests the suspicion that the activities of these institutions follow a kind of business cycle connected with events such as the finalisation of the Common Market and the Maastricht Treaty – an increasing commitment and achievements are only visible by considering all activities as a long term result. But reviewing Table 2, another question is suggesting itself: are not the number, the different kind of institutions and the deviating delineation (without a co-ordination between them) of all this types of co-ordination institutions rather disturbing than promoting the trans-border co-operation? Indeed, the efficiency is not very high and there are voices claiming that too many institutions are involved, particularly concerning the first four institutions mentioned in Table 2 (Moll 1992). It must be seen that apart from these institutions the whole organisational structure of the Community Initiative Interreg Programme exists in parallel disposing of an own budget. It appears that politicians use the events of reunion rather for public relation reasons while hard results are fairly scarce. Programmes comfortably upholstered by financial means may better achieve the implementation itself.

\textsuperscript{13} Of each also including Dutch cities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Regional Scope</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Spatial Planning related activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Summit meeting SLL</td>
<td>Laender level: Rheinland-Pfalz &amp; Saarland, Regional level: Lorraine, National level: Luxembourg, Wallonie.</td>
<td>Biannually</td>
<td>The government leaders of the participating countries/regions. Every summit is devoted to a special theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. COMREGIO, Forum trans-border contacts on the local authority level</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>See 2</td>
<td>Financial support by local authorities to private enterprises in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (RI) Research Institute</td>
<td>The government leaders of the participating countries/regions.</td>
<td>Since 1981</td>
<td>Twelve working groups on a range of themes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Working group of chambers of commerce</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>See 2</td>
<td>Financial support by local authorities to private enterprises in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inter-regional Council of Chambers of Crafts</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>Financial support by local authorities to private enterprises in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Co-operation of Banks SLL</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>Financial support by local authorities to private enterprises in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (IUR) Inter-regional Council of Unions</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>Support of economic, social and cultural interests of workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. SLL Charter University co-operation</td>
<td>University co-operation</td>
<td>See 1</td>
<td>Trans-border co-operation and student exchange.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Theory reconsidered: the meaning of trans-border policies

Reconsidering Map 1 it becomes very obvious that three countries in the heart of the EU surround Luxembourg. The city Luxembourg represents one of the three European capitals, major infrastructure lines are crossing and passing the territory, the country belongs to the most important banking places in Europe and the country also belongs to the wealthiest regions of the EU. One could conclude that being an economically powerful country does mean not to care what the others in planning matters do. But this is only true for bigger countries and nowadays even not for the biggest EU country.

4.1. The story of the economic theory of federalism

Economic theory of federalism reveals the main reasons why is not just politeness to bother about the surrounding countries in particular by a small national state like Luxembourg. The theory argues that, in principle, small territorial units serve best the preferences of the inhabitants of that particular territorial unit because there is least need to compromise due to a low number. However, there are a range of arguments which lead to the conclusion that independent decision making by the authorities of the bordering territorial units cause high inefficiencies because the subject of making politics are somehow spatially interrelated in terms of spill-over and external effects. In that case co-ordination of neighbouring territorial units by a co-operative approach is recommended as a first "soft" solution. If interference is too strong "hard" solutions in terms of implementing co-ordinating bodies or even introducing an upper governmental level for the co-ordination of that policy is recommended.14 The following indications reveal the situation where stronger co-ordination is advisable (Tiebout 1956, Olson 1969, Oates 1972, Eser 1996) 15:

1. **External effects**: The increasing political and economic integration leads to increasing entanglements and dependencies between territories. Social and economic developments lead to influences across the borders. Far reaching developments may

14 It is very interesting to observe how the EU developed on the background of this normative explanatory background see for the case of regional policy Eser 1996, other EU policies Wallace 1993.

15 Fischer 1991 summarises seven fields for a necessary trans-border co-operation on the local authority, regional and national level which are considered by the principles outlined in the text: (1) increasing sectoral dependencies, (2) increasing institutional dependencies because of complex organisational and settlement structures, (3) over-exploitation of natural resources and landscapes, (4) regional disparities, (5) uncoordinated investment along borders, (6) competing support programmes along borders, (7) borders for fees (post), language, information (newspapers), utilities etc. This list could be extended by the co-ordination of infrastructure and central places (Pallgast 1995, Dick 1991).
affect the whole territory of a small state. For example the location of a shopping mall or a power plant or sewage plant could lead to spill-over through the whole territory of a small national states.

2. **Network infrastructure**: accessibility is one of the keys for competitiveness and wealth in an economically integration world. A small country much depends on the accessibility from outside the territory into the territory and vice versa. As the territory is small the political influence on the access to the supra-national networks such as motorways or railroads on a European scale (e.g. Trans-European Networks) is rather small, which can be levelled out by cross-border cooperation.

3. **Ruinous competition**: Small states may not dispose of the financial power to succeed in a competitive environment for example with public infrastructures such as airports or ports.

4. **Co-ordination as a source for increasing efficiency**: Up to that point only the avoidance of "bads" has been mentioned but this could be turn also in a positive notion: co-ordination delivers "goods". As an example the co-ordination involved for the introduction of the Common Market lead to increasing economic efficiency which is (after having introduced some necessary regional policy measures) of benefit for all inhabitants of the EU.

Reviewing the issues addressed by the trans-border spatial development policy such as European transport systems, accessibility, trans-border city-networks, or the connection of natural areas across borders it is very obvious that the appropriate issues in terms of the outlined indication is met. The external dependencies increase more or less in most policy fields automatically together with a decreasing size of a territory. Thus, the advantages of co-ordination also increase, in particular in such spatially relevant sectoral policy fields. A central point is the fact that, so far, all kind of trans-border co-ordination between different countries in spatial planning is voluntary. One important reason for that lies in the fact, that, apart from nationally relevant infrastructures, land use planning belongs to the tasks of lower governmental levels in most countries. Therefore, the co-ordination at the trans-border level only takes place if all affected partners are aware of the advantages of that kind of co-ordination (Eser 1997).  

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16 Opportunistic behaviour may disturb the co-ordination, well described by the transaction cost theory, investigating co-ordination processes between the two poles markets and hierarchies, see Williamson 1989.
4.2. Obstacles for co-operation in the Saar-Lor-Lux+ context

But one has to keep in mind that the special situation in the SLL area hampers coordination, or better, the co-operation has to deal with the obstacles for coordination:

- the area cuts four National States of which only one is involved, with the hole territory;
- the co-operation involves actors from very different governmental levels of all countries with considerably deviating authorities (from Luxembourg as a state to the County of Westpfalz);
- not all parts of the area look back to the same strong relations in the past (e.g. the Saarland and Lorraine traditionally have stronger relations than e.g. the region of Trier and Luxembourg);
- the territories differ considerably in their socio-economic structure (from the banking place of Luxembourg to the old industrial Lorraine and Saarland to the (for Germany peripheral) West-Palatine;

This features help to explain, why on the one hand many institutions have been created and on the other hand co-ordination is hard to achieve. The current problem is to find the appropriate institutional structure. It is obvious that too many weak but not any strong and leading institution is existing. The current situation is dominated by fragmentation and unclear distribution of tasks as the brief overview reveals. A clearer delineation of competence between all these institutions is absolutely necessary in order to achieve an effective and efficient co-ordination of Luxembourg and its neighbouring regions.

5. Conclusions

What kind of conclusions could be drawn? Reference should be made not only to the ESDP but the also to involved process as the ESDP was adopted at the meeting of Ministers responsible for spatial planning in May 1999. The next step will be the application of the ESDP and the questions is where to put the emphasis? From the view point of Luxembourg, and I would like to generalise this view to all smaller Member States of the European Union, are several points emerging:

- Co-ordination of sector policies on the EU level, particularly the Trans European Networks (TEN) which have strong effects on the spatial perspectives: As small Member States do hardly dispose of any the financial means and the direct political
influence on the of TEN just by national policies so these networks belong to the top priorities of small states to be dealt with at the national level.

- Diffusion of "best practice" knowledge about trans-border (i.e. inter-regional, trans-national and cross-border) co-operation particularly about possible and working institutional settings. Most of the territory of small Member States belongs to border areas, in fact in comparison to a larger country the whole territory could be a single border area suffering from the constraints of all border areas: being exposed to all kind of spatial developments which cannot be directly influenced but which need somehow to be co-ordinated.

- Using Interreg III to support this kind of co-operation: Trans-border (external) co-operation always leads to higher cost than internal co-operation because of a variety of reasons such as different languages or legal systems. The EU aims for the integration of the Member States, consequently a balance in that areas where the costs of integration are particularly high seems to be most justified.

Guidance in that respect should be provide by tow forthcoming documents which will be finalised in the second half of the year 2000.

The “North West Metropolitan Area Spatial Vision” (2000) for the spatial trans-national perspective: The vision so far picks up the spatial vision developed in the PD for the Saar-Lore-Lux area and specifies that this area belongs to the “counter weight global gateways and economic centres” of North West Europe. The spatial vision supposed to give guidance to the Programming Document of the North West Metropolitan Area under Interreg IIIb and it will be interesting to compare whether the important points mentioned above are finally considered by the programme.

The Spatial development perspective SaarLorLux+: The perspective is elaborated in a co-operative process between the regions and envisages proposing concrete action for the whole areas. In the ideal case it will provide the link between the spatial vision and the PD of Luxembourg specifying the needs and source for co-operation – an evaluation of the success of this efforts will be possible in the beginning of 2001 after the publication of the report.

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