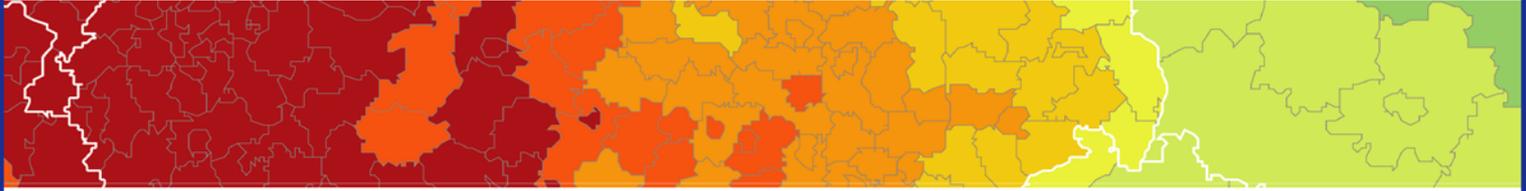


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



Territorial Reference Framework for Europe

Discussion Paper No. 1
Key Policy Messages

**Strategic Advisory Forum supporting
paper for the meeting on 14 March 2018**

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Abbreviations

CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
EC	European Commission
EGTC	European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EMU	European Monetary Union
ESDP	European Spatial Development Perspective
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investment
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
S3	Smart Specialisation Strategies
SAF	Strategic Advisory Forum
TA 2020	Territorial Agenda 2020
TAEU	Territorial Agenda of the European Union
TEN-T	Trans-European Transport Networks

1 Introduction

The following section introduces the project and the key concepts discussed in this paper and the corresponding meeting.

The European Territorial Reference Framework project. In the framework of the ESPON programme, Mcrit, EPC (European Policy Centre), Spatial Foresight and Politecnico di Milano have been commissioned to undertake a project concerning the development of a European Territorial Reference Framework. The project is an input for the development of the upcoming policy debate on a Territorial Agenda post-2020. It will develop a long-term territorial development perspective for Europe to assist in informing about the territorial dimension of EU post-2020 strategic policy.

The key questions to be asked. The following questions are posed in the process of the European Territorial Reference Framework:

- What are the key long-term challenges and opportunities that will shape Europe's territories and regions to 2050 and beyond?
- What should Europe's territory ideally look like in 2050 in order to achieve EU cohesion and convergence goals?
- Which key thematic policy areas should future territorially relevant strategic EU policies focus on in order to address key long-term (2050) development challenges and opportunities facing Europe's territories, regions and cities, and in order to promote the advancement of cohesion and convergence goals?
- What is the most appropriate and efficient EU investment strategy to address differentiated territorial development challenges in Europe and to maximise the potentials of cities and regions in the framework of post-2020 EU strategic policies?
- How can the governance of a Territorial Agenda post-2020 be strengthened and implemented in practice, in order to bring about greater strategic coherence and integration with other EU strategic policies and investment programmes?

The work of the project. In the framework of the project a number of activities and steps are envisaged. The project commences at a time when the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework is being widely debated. The nature of this debate is important for the project. There is a need to consider early opportunities for how this project can integrate the current debate into the project and also how the dominant themes of the post-2020 debate have relevance for the development of the European Territorial Reference Framework. To provide an evidence base, the project team will work on the development of two main scenarios, one based on a mid-term timeframe (by 2030) and one based on a long-term vision (by 2050). The findings of these scenarios will be the basis for discussion in the different participatory activities of the project. Concerning the latter, the project team will engage in a number of participatory events to collect input and feedback to further develop the project work, collect feedback that shows that the project is of high academic value, present the project results and

discuss the findings, but also inform and inspire policy makers involved in policies relevant for territorial cohesion and other horizontal policies.

The role of the Strategic Advisory Forum (SAF). The Strategic Advisory Forum is composed by 17 high-level strategic thinkers on the current and future territorial development of Europe. The Strategic Advisory Forum will contribute to the development of the European Territorial Reference Framework through discussing, debating and reflecting upon selected working results of the project team, including the possible future scenarios for the territorial development of Europe. Approximately five meetings are envisaged. The Preliminary meeting dates and thematic focuses are:

- 14 March 2018: Key messages of the European Territorial Reference Framework
- 12 June 2018: Territorial trends and on-going debates
- 2 October 2018: Mid-term scenarios (by 2030) and policy pathways
- 20 November 2018: Long-term territorial vision (by 2050)
- 12 March 2019: Final European Territorial Reference Framework

Chatham House rule apply to all meetings. When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. Prior to each meeting, a short summary discussion paper will be prepared. After each meeting, a paper will be drafted on the main reflections and conclusions of the discussion, which will be circulated to the members of the Strategic Advisory Forum.

Definitions first

Before going through the detailed chapters of this paper, it is useful to provide some first definitions of the key concepts that will be used in the paper and discussed at the first meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum.

Territorial Cohesion agenda. As part of the EU's Cohesion Policy, Territorial Cohesion (in its many interpretations and applications) forms a key element of the current post-2020 debate concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework. Many commentators / contributors to the debate will not differentiate between the discrete elements of the Territorial Cohesion agenda, in terms of function and governance. As such, terms such as territorial cohesion, territorial cooperation, territorial collaboration, place-based policy making – as well as a more general and loosely termed – Territorial Agenda – are often used interchangeably in the current debate. However, for the purposes of this study the term Territorial Agenda is applied in a more narrow sense focusing on a specific policy document and the process around it. Please see below for an explanation of this.

Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020. The Territorial Agenda 2020 has been developed through an intergovernmental process and agreed through political consensus among the ministers of Spatial Planning and Territorial Development in an informal ministerial meeting in Gödöllő, under the Hungarian Presidency of Spring 2011. It acknowledges the

challenges and recognises the potential of territorial development in the EU and it highlights the importance of the territorial aspect in EU policies to achieve the objective of territorial cohesion. For more information see section 2.1.

European Territorial Reference Framework. This is a project which has been launched by ESPON to respond to policy demands. Based on pan-European stakeholder dialogues, a Territorial Reference Framework for Europe will be developed as a more scientific input to help inform, catalyse and animate the upcoming intergovernmental policy debate on a Territorial Agenda post-2020. The work shall also help to inform other EU policies, including the future Cohesion Policy, and other territorially relevant sector policies. For more information see www.eu2050.eu

ESPON. This EU programme aims at promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation through providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels. For more information see www.espon.eu

Structure of this paper. The paper introduces the topic of the first meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum and summarises the main discussion points. The paper is structured along two further chapters. The first chapter sets the scene, going through the steps of the development of the Territorial Cohesion objectives and the Territorial Agenda through time and gives some first insights on its outlook towards 2020. Furthermore, it addresses the EU post-2020 debate on the main future priorities of the EU and points to the need for oversight of the relationship between the current post-2020 MFF policy debate and reflections and the relevance and influence of the territorial context within this debate. The final chapter presents key messages underpinning the European Territorial Reference Framework, and contains key themes which were discussed at the first meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum.

Key messages identified in this paper

- The social and territorial fragmentation following the changing economic geography demands spatially sensitive (and tailor made) policy responses.
- The negative externalities of developments in one place imply effects in other geographies, which demands a wider geographical perspective of policy decisions.
- The mismatch between the geographical delineation of impacts of economic and societal developments and the geographical jurisdictions of decision making demand more territorial cooperation at all levels.

2 What you need to know – some background information

Two policy processes are relevant for developing the European Territorial Reference Framework. Firstly, the Reference Framework shall feed into the upcoming policy debate on a Territorial Agenda post-2020. This chapter will thus start with a brief overview of the current status of the Territorial Agenda. Secondly, EU Cohesion Policy and the debate about the post-2020 EU budget, the Multiannual Financial Framework (2021–2027), provide important framework conditions for the formulation and implementation of a Territorial Agenda post-2020.

This context is important because it acknowledges an EU ‘hierarchy’ of objectives with a clear territorial focus, ranging from the territorial dimension of EU Cohesion Policy to the more specific objectives of this study on a European Territorial Reference Framework. Correspondingly, the European Territorial Reference Framework should remain aware of, and – where appropriate – connected to, the current post-2020 debate. As well as being influenced by the outcomes of this debate, there are also potential opportunities for ‘upstream’ influencing of this agenda, in terms of the EU’s longer-term direction in relation to territorial and ‘place-based’ policy making.

2.1 The Territorial Agenda post-2020 debate

The Territorial Agenda post-2020 will be elaborated in an intergovernmental process, which started in late 2017. The following (tentative) key steps outline the currently envisaged road towards the next Territorial Agenda:

- 2018: Key policy areas and priorities, implementation and governance mechanisms,
- 2019: Key actions, actors and roles, communication plan,
- Early 2020: Complete final draft,
- Late 2020: Approval at an informal ministerial meeting (German EU Council Presidency).

The starting point for the debate on a Territorial Agenda post-2020 is the current Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (TA 2020) agreed by the Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development in 2011 (MSPTD, 2011a). It updated and reviewed the first Territorial Agenda of the European Union (TAEU) from 2007 (MUdTCEU, 2007), which in turn based itself on the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) from 1999, often referred to as the “Mother Document” (Faludi, 2010) of European spatial planning (European Commission, 1999).

The TA 2020 provides strategic orientations for territorial development and underlines the territorial dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, the successor of the Lisbon Strategy and adopted by the Council in 2010 (European Commission, 2010). The TA 2020 identified six territorial priorities for future territorial development in the EU:

- Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development,
- Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions,

- Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions,
- Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies,
- Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises, and
- Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions.

The TA 2020 was accompanied by a background document, the Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union (MSPTD, 2011b). It provides evidence on trends influencing territorial development, changing territorial structures and gives an overview of relevant EU policies, as well as some perspectives on territorial challenges and what results from this for the priorities and implementation of the TA 2020.

The TA 2020 states that the Member States and the EU institutions have a shared role in the implementation of the TA 2020. Nevertheless, it is not considered for decision-making in EU policies. Hence, its relevance for public policy decision making is decreasing gradually (Medeiros, 2016). Its complexity, abstract character and the lack of implementation mechanisms increases the weakness of the TA 2020 in strategic EU policy considerations and points at its eroding strategic value (Böhme et al., 2015). This is closely related to the fact that cooperation on territorial matters takes place mainly in the intergovernmental realm as intergovernmental cooperation, and is not always the most straight forward vehicle for implementation. Here, it largely depends on available resources and thematic priorities of Member States, which often diverge between Member States (ibid.).

The main policy documents which underpin the study on a European Territorial Reference Framework (the TA 2020 and the ESDP) are characterised by a lack of thematic focus, an unclear division of competences and responsibilities, and basically no implementation mechanisms. This is to be taken into consideration when working on the Territorial Reference Framework for Europe and feeding into the upcoming policy debate on a Territorial Agenda post-2020.

2.2 The EU Cohesion Policy post-2020 debate

The second main policy process, which is important to understand when discussing a European Territorial Reference Framework, is the debate on the **EU's post-2020 funding strategy and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** which is already on-going. The following key dates are important:

- May 2018: Proposal for the post-2020 MFF by the Commission,
- June / July 2018: Legislative proposals for post-2020 EU programmes,
- December 2018: Council meeting to discuss the progress report on the next MFF,
- Late 2019: Final agreement between EU Member States on the post-2020 MFF.

The study is therefore timeous, offering a short window of opportunity for strategic engagement with this debate. If the ambition for this study on a European Territorial Reference Framework – **the future sustainability and enhanced value of the spatial dimension across relevant EU policies up to 2050** – is to set out a long-term, relevant

agenda it should seek to align itself with the current debate, through a strong, solution-oriented focus which is linked to the EU's territorial cohesion commitments.

The current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) debate has already set out key challenges which will influence both the size and direction of the future EU budget. These include, i.a., the following questions:

- How can the Brexit gap in the budget be addressed?
- Which 'new priorities' will be included (e.g. migration, security and defence)?
- What role will/can the MFF play in improving the resilience of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and what are the linkages to the structural reform agenda?
- In how far shall/can the MFF encourage structural reforms?
- How can the MFF boost the transformation of Europe's industry?
- How can the EU promote an 'open but protective' environment in light of challenges arising from globalisation?

Some of the above issues are linked to populism and Euroscepticism, which is also creating political uncertainties.

In the context of the double gap (Brexit and new priorities) and a reluctance of net payers to fully compensate for this effect, 'traditional' EU policy and investment programmes (including Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy) are likely to be subject to budgetary pressures, with stronger conditionalities being attached to many funding streams. This points to a need to identify synergies at all levels to create greater leverage potential for targeted investments, and a redoubling of efforts to address EU added value through the post-2020 financial framework.

The EU's economic prospects are more positive than they have been for quite some time, with most core indicators (including GDP growth, investment and employment) offering grounds for renewed confidence. However, the recovery remains fragile and its sustainability is far from assured. In addition, concerns over economic and social disparities across the EU's territories have become more pronounced, based on an increasing recognition that geographically concentrated discontent (which might be caused or perpetuated by a concentration of social and/ or economic challenges) can spill over into political instability (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017). In this context, concerns about an uneven geographical spread of the benefits associated with economic integration – in the form of the EU single market, monetary integration or the EU trade agenda – have become more visible.

The narrative underpinning the role and impact of the Single Market is changing, in relation to its relevance for economic growth and its implications in terms of regional imbalances (ESPON, 2014). Global trade and economic integration become at least as relevant as the Single Market, regional impacts are far more complex than decades ago, and traditional narratives supporting Cohesion policies as compensation for further integration to 'peripheral regions' need to be redefined in many respects. Furthermore, excessive disparities between

European Union and its neighbouring countries are placing further pressures on humanitarian conflicts challenging the core of European values.

The changing face of Europe's economic geography is a theme which is gaining some traction in the current post-2020 debate. Its causes – while not entirely known – are increasingly aligned with the need for greater geographical sensitivity in understanding both causes and effects of social and economic disparities. Equally, the agglomeration logic, long held as the route to economic growth, has come under pressure for providing weaker productivity gains and higher social and environmental costs than originally expected (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

These developments highlight potential for a strong geographical dimension to actively support the narrative underpinning the post-2020 debate, and to effectively address the key challenges the EU faces. EU policy makers have started to recognise that geography matters for the EU's sustained future. This is reflected in recent EU Reflection Papers (European Commission, 2017c) and the 7th Cohesion Report (European Commission, 2017b) calling for more targeted support for EU citizens in places which have been left behind. In the same vein, the recently published 'Renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy' highlights the need to provide "tailor-made and joined up support to address the specific challenges of regions going through an acute crisis or falling into decline" (European Commission, 2017a). There is a growing recognition that one-size-fits-all policies cannot address effectively the differential challenges faced in different geographies, for example regions potentially caught in the middle income trap or those who are negatively (including those affected disproportionately) affected by global competition or technological change.

However, despite these warnings, the geographical impact of the EU's wider policies and frameworks (including possible adverse consequences faced by less mobile populations) has so far **failed to be integrated in a comprehensive manner** in on-going policy debates. An example is the lack of attention granted to the Cohesion Policy's territorial focus in the recently launched Cohesion Policy public consultation exercise.¹ There continues to be only limited visibility of territorial cohesion objectives in the emerging narrative concerning future policy and investment solutions.

To a large extent, this lack of read-across between territorial cohesion objectives and the current policy debate is caused by the amorphous nature of what underpins a place-based approach. To achieve greater traction, it might be helpful to clearly set out in what way geographic considerations matter for territorial cohesion within the context of the current policy debate:

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-eu-funds-area-cohesion_en

- Place-based policies can address differential outcomes which are caused by differences between territories, i.e. the specific geography under question is an explanatory variable for the outcome differential. For example, mountainous areas which experience transport challenges because of their geography or a regional concentration of socio-economic disadvantages such as unemployment, unskilled labour force or low rates of female participation in the labour market, creating negative externalities locally which affect the long-term economic prospects of the region.
- Place-based approaches or ‘treatments’ to policy make a material difference to the outcomes of the targeted geography. There is a need – in this context – to use comparative data to show either:
 - counter-factual evidence of outcomes in a similar geography with the same challenge where such an approach to policy making was not applied and where outcomes were less positive; or
 - where outcomes in the same geography (over time) are materially different when comparing non-territorial policy making solutions to a more tailored, territorial policy treatment in the targeted geography.
- Place-based approaches can help to overcome the negative impact of geographical disconnect if evidencing that there are positive outcomes from these connections, such as a reduced unemployment differential. Connecting places which are not geographically bordered, including programmes like Interreg Europe, can also potentially generate clear economic benefits and outcomes (e.g. creating new scale advantages or increasing innovation activity due to collaborative efforts) which would not have occurred otherwise.

In short, there is a **gap between the EU’s recognised territorial challenges and the application of geographically focused solutions, and therefore a need to make a place-based approach more relevant for the current policy debate**. While it is not the purpose of this study to address this paradox, it is – nonetheless – a prevailing, influential, contextual factor which should be understood in the context of this study.

2.3 Territorial Cohesion & EU post-2020: a better-connected narrative?

It seems that both policy processes addressed above (Cohesion Policy and the Territorial Agenda) operate in a parallel universe, both thematically and time-wise. The thematic challenges for the debate on the future Cohesion Policy are already on the table and subject to discussions whereas the Territorial Agenda post-2020 process is only about to get off the starting blocks.

Conceptual understanding of the parallel universes

Besides the pragmatic differences pointed out above, there are also conceptual differences between the two policy processes. The below points present some of the opposites of the territorial cohesion aspects as they feature on the policy processes around the Territorial Agenda and EU Cohesion Policy.

Territorial Agenda

- Spaces and places which are not institutionalised by definition
- Communities of places
- Functional relations
- “Anywheres” (Goodhart, 2017)

Cohesion Policy

- Institutionalised and clearly defined territories
- Territorial administration complexes
- Territorial relations
- “Somewheres” (Goodhart, 2017)

Considering the time tables, there is only a short window of opportunity for the European Territorial Reference Framework to be linked to the debate about, and support efforts to strengthen the territorial dimension of, the future Cohesion Policy. Hence, it is even more important to develop meaningful, precise and even contentious key messages that can be fed into the Cohesion Policy debate at rather short notice.

The study is therefore timeous to support the positioning of a Territorial Agenda post-2020 more clearly within this debate. If the ambition for this study – the future sustainability and enhanced value of the Territorial Agenda post-2020 across relevant EU policies up to 2050 – is to be realised, there is a need to ensure that territorial policies are positioned in the current debate.

For this reason, the content of this paper focuses on key messages which can link to both of these settings (the current post-2020 debate and establishing a clear direction of travel for this study).

One question remains for the post-2020 Cohesion Policy: Is there still room for a better articulated critique of the Territorial Cohesion agenda and what this offers to address a wide range of EU-focused challenges and opportunities? Or does the historical, prevailing narrative of the TAEU and TA 2020 limit the extent to which this will be considered relevant and useful to the current debate?

However, Europeans still feel attached to ‘communities of place’, at the same time as they share multiple identities and belong to many virtual communities supported by emerging social networks and communication means. Cities, made of public spaces open to anybody, remain a common cultural dimension shared by all Europeans.

All EU investment programmes are competing for a place in the EU’s post-2020 future, seeking to demonstrate not only that they are a ‘good’ use of European funding but that they offer greater European value than other areas of spending. In this context, territorial policies

must seek to boost its visibility, relevance and added value. The key challenges addressed in section 3 can serve as starting points for this.

At a more general level, the importance of the spatial dimension for effective policy delivery implies among others the following points (that derived from the discussion at the first meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum):

- People, traditions, habits, identities and institutional capacities show a huge diversity across Europe. A stronger spatial dimension to policy making can offer more relevance and specificity to generate a stronger strategic fit between policies, institutional capacities and people. This helps to ensure that policies are fit for purpose and fit for place, in line with people's needs.
- The territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy balances between the objectives of compensating regions in need and supporting regions with potential. Either way, a stronger spatial dimension can imply focusing on 'place relevant thematic objectives'. The needs of the territory would thus drive the nature of the supporting policies, offering clearer targeting for investments.
- A stronger spatial dimension can also generate improved focus on how places link better to each other (in different parts of Europe and also between places in Europe and elsewhere in the world). This could support how different EU territories connect to each other (including an improved approach to integrated value chains). This could also offer stronger foundations for interregional learning and joint investments.

The above points provide an illustration of key messages from the Strategic Advisory Forum discussion and underline that a stronger spatial dimension of European policies is not a quick fix. There is no 'one size fits all' solution. An improved spatial dimension of European policies needs to be integrated by decision makers at all governance levels (local to European). Indeed, multi-level governance, shared management, openness and participation are important for policies which make best use of the territorial diversity of Europe.

To summarise, place-based policies involve more targeted responses to on-going policy challenges at all levels of governance.

3 A step-change in setting out the role and added value of the EU's Territorial Cohesion agenda

Europe faces a wide range of far reaching development challenges and the upcoming policy choices will be decisive for Europe's direction of travel. Consequently, the European Territorial Reference Framework should address these challenges and provide insights on how a stronger spatial focus could offer relevant and effective responses.

Given the post-2020 influencing timetable, there is a current opportunity to formulate some key messages and further nuance these with territorial research on scenarios and visions.

3.1 Challenges ahead

As outlined in many previous studies (e.g. ESPON, 2017, 2018; European Commission, 2017) there are a wide range of development challenges ahead. Three of which we believe are particularly important for understanding the spatial dimension of the future of Europe. While ESPON and territorial policies usually start with territorial and regional development challenges, this paper focuses rather on overarching challenges which have, or might benefit from, a spatial dimension.

The remainder of this chapter identifies three key challenges which are highly visible (yet not currently well-defined or embedded) in the post-2020 debate. Policy responses which are currently aligned to these challenges are outlined, as well as possible, further routes to addressing these challenges. The role of the European Territorial Reference Framework in supporting how these challenges could be addressed is also outlined, recognising that – in the 'hierarchy' of territorial cohesion objectives – it could play a specific and unique role.

3.1.1 Fragmentation and disintegration

Challenge 1: *The economic geography of Europe is changing, accompanied by an increasing fragmentation of society and territories.*

This fragmentation – which is, in part, the result of economic and social developments in Europe – puts Europe's potential to respond to globalisation at risk, given the widespread recognition that cities and regions in Europe require to strengthen their approaches to joining forces, to improve prospects for growth and competitiveness.

Understanding fragmentation and disintegration: The European Single Market and trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) have supported efforts to continuously develop political, social and cultural cohesion, and to reduce barriers to achieving this. However, today there are many different types and complexities of EU fragmentation, with some as cause and others as consequence of a range of trends. These include political choices, the social fabric within and across different regional contexts, geographical landscapes and economic circumstances in different locations. Inequality between and within countries has been recognised as a crucial factor driving fragmentation, including political instability.

The current trend towards fragmentation threatens EU cohesion (in all its formats). Different geographies of the EU perceive different 'everyday realities' and different future prospects. This can be seen, increasingly, in social and economic disparities and asymmetric economic growth perspectives. Increasingly wealth is concentrated to specific groups in society and specific types of cities and regions.

This fragmentation trend and its political consequences are a fundamental threat for overall European integration². "There are signs that the European integration processes could come to a halt or even be reversed. Brexit is the most prominent example. The recent and on-going controversial discussions about financial support mechanisms for losers under globalisation and the economic crises, about joint handling of the refugee issue, joint police efforts, i.e. about solidarity in general in Europe, show that further European integration may not necessarily remain the main trend in coming years." (ESPON, 2017: 19) The effects of possible disintegrations in Europe would be reductions in economic growth in all regions as shown in various studies (ESPON, 2017, 2018).

Current policy responses: Macro-level analyses, heavily relied upon during the economic crisis era, have been insufficiently sensitive in highlighting the various forms of fragmentation which are posing domestic, political challenges and / or threatening EU integration and cohesion. There is a growing awareness, across the EU, of the need to improve understanding of the root causes and prevalence of different types of fragmentation. There is also a growing recognition of the need for policy solutions to address growing economic and social disparities. This narrative has spilled over into the debate concerning the EU's post-2020 priorities.

Opportunities for future spatial support in responding to the challenge: The changing nature of Europe's economic geography has led to social and territorial fragmentation. Spatially sensitive, and tailor-made policy responses building on the variety of territorial assets in Europe can help to overcome fragmentation. In the longer-term, this could also benefit the social and economic well-being of places and the people within them.

A proposed role for the project: The European Territorial Reference Framework should identify which changes are needed to address (and mitigate) the challenge, i.e. identify the drivers / root causes of fragmentation, in order to generate a robust evidence base for policy solutions.

3.1.2 Interdependencies and (their) externalities

Challenge 2: *Social and economic developments in one place have major impacts (positive and negative externalities) on development perspectives in other places and vice versa.*

² http://www.epc.eu/documents/uploads/pub_7020_counteringaregressiveilliberaleurope.pdf?doc_id=1781

In an increasingly interconnected world, most things we do in one place impact developments in other places and what is done elsewhere can impact on where we are living and working. In consequence, local development is shaped by a place's characteristics and interdependencies with other places (ESPON, 2017).

It is all too often the case that positive externalities are under-reported or not acknowledged whereas the effects of negative externalities can become heavily magnified. An improved evidence base which identifies, defines and communicates the presence of EU positive externalities (such as the many positive examples of the Single Market) also offers a clear framework for sustaining and further developing routes to EU integration. On the other hand, ignoring, or failing to capture, define and address negative (cross-border) externalities, threatens to further perpetuate fragmentation and disintegration in Europe.

Understanding relations and interdependencies: In the economic field, the European Single Market has catalysed cooperation across Member States, and the network of links and relations between players in different places and different Member States has steadily grown over the past decades. Still, there remain many barriers to effective operation of the European Single Market. These barriers exist at local, regional, national and EU levels. Evidence of positive outcomes from cross-border and trans-national collaboration (whether geographical or otherwise) range from increases in employment rates, reduced unemployment, positive impacts on growth, more innovative policy responses and (increasingly) scale benefits from new forms of collaboration (such as joint investment activities which boost innovation efforts and support industries to globalise) (Vanguard Initiative, 2017).

The increasing web of relations and interactions has also led to increasing interdependencies between places. This, in turn, creates a stronger propensity for the emergence of positive and negative externalities. Therefore, both the cause and effect of specific actions, policies and interventions require to be better understood in a wider territorial context. This not only concerns interventions within Europe, but also the effects that interventions in other parts of the world have on local and regional development in Europe. When designing policies for regions negatively affected by globalisation, a spatially targeted approach and focus on linkages between places should be considered as an alternative to the traditional 'compensation approach'. Again, this points to the value of understanding root causes of externalities and shifting away from investment responses which lack a clear diagnosis of the issue.

Current policy responses: A wide range of existing EU tools, policies and programmes already provide a framework for EU geographies to collaborate and generate mutual benefits and strong positive outcomes. These include Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), macro-regional and sea-basin strategies, Interreg transnational cooperation and Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3). These approaches have various objectives but they contain many common themes and aspirations such as promoting greater domestic and EU solidarity, quality of life, stronger linkages and networks, and citizen empowerment. Many of them aim at

large-scale cooperation through networks or along corridors rather than between neighbouring regions.

The 2014-2020 programming period has seen an increase in demand for approaches that aim at (further) developing linkages, in particular approaches that operate across the borders of Member States. This demonstrates increased awareness and demand across EU geographies for new forms of collaboration, partnership, networks and inter-connectivity. A macro-level exploration to understand both their nature and the benefits of their removal could help future policy action (as is partly done by the ESPON study on cross-border public services).

Arguably, this emerging trend, which has been underpinned by a 'territorial' ethos, has not yet been well-captured or utilised as a positive driver for EU integration. These approaches often lack a clear, underpinning rationale for the evidence-base to support their alignment with the parallel objective of 'addressing fragmentation'. In some cases, greater inter-connectedness can even deepen territorial disadvantage and divergences (for example where improved transport links support more economically successful territories).

The potential policy added-value from actions which promote linkages between places are not very widely acknowledged. In the current debate concerning the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), there are some voices calling for greater investment in programmes which promote such inter-connectivity but this is by no means a view which is universally shared or understood, not least because the underlying rationale for such actions is not clearly set out or communicated.

There is a clear case for EU intervention where evidence of negative externalities poses threats beyond the borders of the geography of the problem's origins. This is an argument frequently used, for example, when the EU seeks to act to contain the risk of the spread of financial problems across the Eurozone – i.e. addressing negative cross-border externalities.

Opportunities for future spatial support in responding to the challenge: Increasing European integration, accompanied by deeper social and economic linkages across European geographies, requires a better understanding of positive and negative externalities. By understanding better the nature of the challenge or opportunity in the context of the appropriate geographical 'unit', new and revised policy responses can be shaped. This is relevant at local / regional, member state, cross-border and EU levels. Strengthening local and regional economies, and seeking to address the root causes of disparities will require a stronger focus on understanding and supporting geographically, functional interdependencies. Understanding functional interdependencies can also help to better approach them as levers for local and regional development and supporting interregional integration in Europe. Within this context, there could be more compelling reasons to link economically weaker and stronger places.

Given the high level of global integration of the European economy, worldwide interdependencies of European places need to be taken into account. This also implies a more robust consideration of global trends and how these impact on different places in Europe.

A proposed role for the project: The European Territorial Reference Framework should identify which changes are needed to address (and mitigate) linkages between territories as lever for development while avoiding further fragmentation in Europe, e.g. by breaking down global interdependencies to local or regional scale.

3.1.3 Mismatch of functionalities

Challenge 3: There is a *misalignment between geographical jurisdictions for decision making and the corresponding geography / geographies affected by policy making.*

Building on challenge two, noted above, there is increasing awareness of the 'reach' of jurisdiction for policy making when compared to the policy impacts which can be felt beyond this reach. This implies that a single administrative territory (be it a municipality, region or country) should not disregard neighbouring territories or other administrative levels in its policy development. Globalisation processes and impacts create place-specific challenges that spill over from neatly and geographically defined boundaries relating to administrative jurisdictions. This is a phenomenon which is not widely understood or considered in the context of EU policy making (through the whole spectrum of local policy making through to the EU level). The EU's goals and the underpinning architecture of the Single Market imply a continuation of a European model with an open society and economy. However, the implications of this are not well-considered in terms of proactive or reactive policy making. Place-based decision making should consider place-specific interrelations.

Understanding functionalities: The relations and links between players in different places build on place-specific characteristics. Striving for a place-based approach improves performance of development policies (by stimulating endogenous development potential and tailoring policy to local circumstances) and properly outlines the role of territorially bound assets (factors) such as settlement and accessibility infrastructure (Barca, 2009; Zaucha et al., 2013).

There exists a mismatch between the geography of place characteristics (including impacts of economic and societal developments) and the geography of decision making. Policy decisions and actions can reach beyond administrative boundaries or can be concentrated only on parts of a place, for example. This has generated an increasing focus on functional areas of varying types. Depending on the issue at stake, functional areas can, for example, address wider urban regions, rural regions or cross-border regions. The most frequently used types of functional areas are (ESPON, 2017):

- Functional urban regions. Cooperation between authorities in a city and its functionally interlinked surrounding urban areas, e.g. the commuter catchment area;

- Functional rural regions. Cooperation between authorities in neighbouring rural areas which are functionally interlinked e.g. through commuter or service provision patterns;
- Functional urban-rural partnerships. Cooperation between authorities in neighbouring urban and rural areas which are functionally interlinked;
- Cross-border regions. Cooperation between adjacent territories across national borders. Examples are Interreg cross-border regions, Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) regions, Euro-regions or bilateral cooperation.

Current policy responses: Beyond traditional approaches to geographically-focused policy making, there is growing awareness of, and demand for, policy responses to new and emerging challenges and opportunities which might require specific, tailored and targeted support (or ‘treatment’) in places which transcend existing geographical boundaries and governance arrangements (PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, 2016). The nature and prevalence of this development is currently not well-understood.

The need for a stronger place-based focus and importance of functional areas, and their lack of territorial synchronisation with administrative boundaries, make governmental cooperation an imperative for territorial development (Böhme et al., 2015; Committee of the Regions, 2015; ESPON, 2014, 2017; European Commission, 2015; MSPTD, 2011a; Zaucha et al., 2014).

Instruments such as European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg), Leader, Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) or Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) are steps in that direction. However, demand for and uptake of such instruments is – at best – variable. They are often considered as rather cumbersome, bureaucratic and complex.

Opportunities for future spatial support in responding to the challenge: There are opportunities to develop a more coherent evidence base concerning territorial impacts of economic and societal developments and the potential for place-based policies. In particular, a stronger narrative (including concrete practice examples) could be generated and disseminated concerning the mismatch between the specific geographical jurisdiction of policy making and the reach and impact of such policies. Correspondingly, the demand for designing approaches to cooperative policy making could be better defined and explored (whether at local, regional, national, European level). This could provide a strong state-of-play overview of the rationale and demand for place-based policy responses at the level of functional areas.

A proposed role for the project: The European Territorial Reference Framework should identify which changes are needed to address (and mitigate) the mismatch of functionalities and to prevent any new governance approaches from developing the same structural problems.

3.2 Actions for the European Territorial Reference Framework

In understanding the above noted challenges, there is growing awareness that the spatial dimension matters for both the decisions which are taken in different places and in the geographically differential outcomes which can be observed.

This corresponds with a growing demand to adopt a more spatially sensitive 'toolkit' to generate better evidence both to understand and to take action to address such challenges. The unit or level of action to address different forms of fragmentation and linkages depends on the nature of the issue and the most relevant and effective course of corrective intervention.

European Territorial Reference Framework. The European Territorial Reference Framework offers a timely opportunity to provide insights on how a stronger spatial focus might help to address the above challenges. Against this backdrop, specific actions could be formulated which could be addressed within the context of the European Territorial Reference Framework, recognising the wider context of the territorial cohesion hierarchy of objectives, under which the European Territorial Reference Framework is positioned. Specific areas for further consideration are:

- **Territorial evidence** is needed on the fragmentation and linkages between places and how this might develop in the years to come. The scenario and vision work, which forms a critical element of the study on a European Territorial Reference Framework, needs to clearly address these above challenges and set out conclusions of how this may develop both in the context of a spatially-sensitive policy making approach and in the context of the status quo (where spatially-sensitive policy making is more the exception than the rule).

This also implies generating a deeper appreciation of the value of using a place-based framework to assess and act on problems associated with fragmentation – i.e. stimulating stronger demand for the value of such a policy making framework. This could, in turn, encourage greater demand for the numerous analytical 'tools' with which to generate robust evidence for the nature of the problem. This also strengthens the argument for improved evidence-based policy making to address such challenges.

- **Convincing arguments and key messages** need to be formulated to advocate a stronger focus on geography. Policy messages – and effective dissemination and diffusion of such messages – are required and should be better targeted at players beyond the group of usual suspects of ESPON and the Territorial Agenda. Key messages need to provide a clear and consistent rationale that a strengthened spatial dimension in policy making will enhance the policies' effectiveness and impact.

This includes also arguments supporting action to challenge the continuation of an agglomeration approach to economic growth where that approach can be shown to adversely affect outcomes and future economic prospects in parts of the territory which were intended to benefit from it.

- **Need to act now and not wait until later** – the time planning and work programme of the elaboration of the European Territorial Reference Framework implies the presentation of key messages in early 2019. However it is critical that key messages are formulated now, so that the intergovernmental policy community around the Territorial Agenda post-2020 can adapt and apply these to prepare an entrance into the wider, post-2020 policy debate.

There is significant scope in the current debate to make the case for further aligning programmes and actions and, so generate momentum for this type of ‘inter-connected Europe’ action, under the banner of the EU’s future Territorial Cohesion agenda.

Key messages to be advocated by the European Territorial Reference Framework

- The social and territorial fragmentation following the changing economic geography demands spatially sensitive (and tailor made) policy responses.
- The negative externalities of developments in one place on developments in other areas demand a wider geographical perspective of policy decisions.
- The mismatch between the geographical delineation of impacts of economic and societal developments and the geographical jurisdictions of decision making demand more territorial cooperation at all levels.

Key actions for the European Territorial Reference Framework

- Territorial evidence is needed on the current status of fragmentation and linkages and their potential future developments. This includes a deeper appreciation of the value of using place-based frameworks.
- Convincing arguments and key messages need to be formulated in a way that they can be targeted, disseminated and diffused to a wider group of players. They must advocate the added value of a strengthened spatial dimension in policy-making.
- The time to act is now as the intergovernmental policy community involved in the Territorial Agenda post-2020 process needs time to adapt and apply them, and this way feed them into the post-2020 policy debate in due time.

4 Conclusions and discussion points

This paper introduced the discussion points for the first meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum. Following the discussions at the meeting of the Strategic Advisory Forum, this paper was revised and further developed. While some of the discussion points were integrated in the previous sections of the paper, the following provides a summary of the discussions at the Strategic Advisory Forum.

There was a general agreement that the European Territorial Reference Framework should contribute to strengthening the spatial dimension of overarching European policies and that the current post-2020 debate offers an important opportunity to increase the visibility and significance of this

The Strategic Advisory Forum followed largely the lines of arguments developed in the input paper prepared for the meeting. In the discussion it was made clear, that it is important for the next working steps to differentiate between (a) short term actions to ensure a stronger place-based dimension of EU policies post-2020, and (b) the long-term vision for the European territory possibly also touching upon more fundamental issues (e.g. linked to the marked economy and the European Single Market).

Furthermore, the discussion confirmed the three key challenges identified in the paper and stressed the need to further elaborate them in the context of the next working steps of the project (including the work on trends and scenarios).

The discussion of the Strategic Advisory Forum also pointed to a number of additional areas to be considered in the work on the European Territorial Reference Framework.

Additional points were raised during the meeting which are noted below. These points offer valuable insights and examples of the challenges and tensions which are prevalent across many parts of Europe.

The principles and 'framework' which is proposed in this paper for seeking to better define and analyse issues which have a territorial dimension are highly relevant to the examples raised below:

- **Placing the EU in a global context.** It is important to avoid an exclusively Europe-centric perspective when considering the spatial dimension of issues and challenges. For example, the new wave of global, industrial transformations (based on the new 'knowledge economy') is expected to have a sizeable territorial impact, which should be taken into account in policy responses to this trend. In addition developments outside of Europe, e.g. in China, the United States or India have a strong impact on future developments in Europe. This implies that more attention should be paid to relevant domestic policies and investments both in these countries and from these countries to Europe. An example is Chinese investments in the context of the Belt & Road initiative

(BRI), which may compete with EU funds targeted at regional economic development, for instance in Central and Eastern Europe.

- **Investing in regions with potential or in regions with needs?** One part of the discussion centred also on the role of EU Cohesion Policy and the spatial dimension of discontent. In short, the European Territorial Reference Framework should explore whether EU Cohesion Policy should, continue to focus on regions in need (in an extreme case establish permanent compensations for the negative externalities), or should rather focus on regions where development potential can be strengthened (in an extreme case abandon places with a less positive trajectory).
- **Middle income trap.** The current narrative underpinning the EU's Cohesion Policy agenda includes a focus on regions stuck in a 'middle income trap' with the aim of providing support to foster a smooth 'industrial transition'. This issue also requires greater evidence and analysis to better understand root causes. There is a risk that (early) solutions are sought which might, in fact, mask a wider range of challenges. The territorial dimension of this 'middle income trap' issue requires a more holistic understanding.
- **Multifaceted territorial inequalities.** Disparities between places and regions are manifold and in many regards are increasing, partly because public policies (following an agglomeration logic) have – arguably – offered better support to strong places more than those lagging behind. Such path dependency, public policies might be perpetuating (and possibly widening) the wide range of disparities which are being felt across Europe. This is why the European Territorial Reference Framework, must focus not only on disparities and fragmentation as challenges but also on the root-causes behind them. The study should focus not only on economic outcomes (such as GDP per capita) but also on social and political outcomes as well as public perceptions. This implies a stronger analysis of citizens' current concerns and the factors driving discontent and populist voting patterns. Further, specific issues such as youth unemployment, access to health care services, environmental and climate aspects, institutional legacy, and natural and human resources deserve further investigation through a territorial lens to better understand the nature of these challenges in relation to the 'place' dimension.
- **Challenging the value of 'space-blind' policies.** It was noted that EU 'blanket' policies with a spatially blind dimension (such as the macro-economic conditionality in the current programming period) are insufficiently sensitive to their impacts on different territories. This study offers an opportunity to challenge the effectiveness of this type of EU approach in addressing disparities in the post-2020 period.
- **Focus of future (post-2020) EU Cohesion Policy.** More concrete discussions about EU Cohesion Policy post-2020 stressed the need for more place-relevant objectives to support interregional integration. 'One size fits all' does not work in different geographies, with different institutional capacities. To remedy this, some of the proposals suggested a

stronger prioritisation in the Policy's future objectives on place-based potentials and needs. Policies need to consider the most relevant 'granularity' for analysis and intervention. This would require to go hand-in-hand with a stronger commitment to improving the institutional capacity of programme areas. Regional policies need to be tailored to institutional capacities.

- **Links and flows as levers in future Cohesion Policy.** Another discussion point optimising the value of interregional integration by building stronger links between places across Europe and focusing on flows as levers for development and cohesion. Establishing and strengthening interdependencies between regions (and going beyond the spirit of European Territorial Cooperation programmes) was felt to offer a renewed focus on the specific value to different territories from providing relevant connection routes.
- **Strong endorsement for a refreshed 'inter-connected Europe' narrative.** There was clear support for the EU's post-2020 agenda to reinforce the value of Europe's 'connectivity' trajectory and to provide stronger messages and evidence of how this benefits EU citizens.

Building on the points discussed during the first Advisory Forum, the project team will continue its work on the European Territorial Reference Framework. The next concrete steps will focus on the analysis of spatial development trends and scenarios.

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Annex 1

Further background to the study

Mission

This Applied Research Activity will contribute to the intergovernmental process towards the preparation and adoption of a Territorial Agenda post-2020, which is scheduled to be agreed during the German Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2020.

While the Territorial Agenda post-2020 is a key milestone, it is also explicitly intended that this Applied Research Activity will also assist in advocating for an improved territorial dimension in other relevant post-2020 EU level policies, the framework for which shall be agreed during forthcoming presidencies. The specific focus should therefore be how to strengthen the governance and implementation of the future Territorial Agenda in order to achieve greater coherence with other macro-level EU policies and investment programmes

Aims of the service contract

The main aims of the service contract are, as follow:

- An understanding on the purpose and meaning of a new Territorial Agenda +2020
- An understanding of the possible evolution of European policies and how their territorial dimension will be and should be, considered.
- The update/refinement of territorial scenarios being developed in the ET2050 project³, including the update of the regional economic forecasts and Cohesion policy impacts
- The design of a territorial Vision, as a territorial development roadmap for Europe, building on the pathways, policies and key reports underpinning the EU's territorial agenda
- Proposal for the content and process towards an updated Territorial Agenda +2020, as a Territorial Reference Framework for Europe.

Main Outputs

The main outputs of the Applied Research Activity should be a consolidated and integrated Territorial Reference Framework for Europe which shall include: (A) a long-term territorial development perspective; and (B) realistic and achievable mid-term policy proposals for the governance of investment programmes and improvement of intergovernmental process on territorial cohesion.

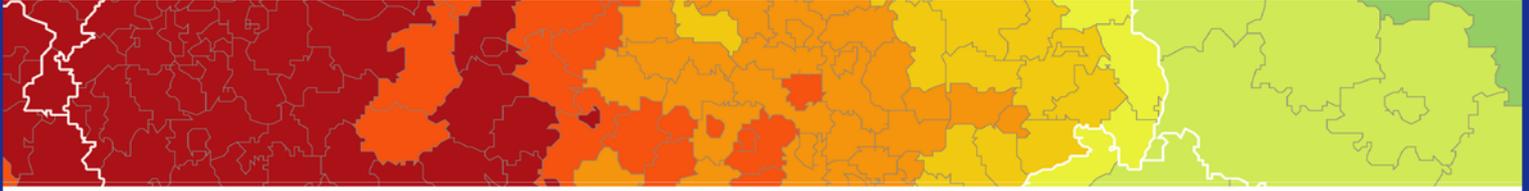
- **Long-Term European Territorial Development Perspective.** The analysis should result in the production of a long-term territorial development perspective in order to overcome

³ <http://www.et2050.eu/>

the uneven territorial development challenges and harness opportunities to promote cohesion and convergence. Employ the analytic baseline developed by the ESPON ET2050 project and secondary data sources (e.g. the JRC LUISA Territorial Reference Database) in order to establish a common updated baseline. Deploy the territorial scenarios developed as part of the ET2050 project for the future evolution and development of the European territory. This may involve, as necessary, further refining, validating and updating the scenarios consequent to baseline analysis through examination of other secondary data sources, as appropriate (e.g. the RHOMOLO Model)

- **Mid-Term Policy Proposals.** Informed by the above long-term perspective, identify the most important mid-term strategic policy priorities for EU level policy action to 2030. This analysis should be selective and focus on those key policy areas that would merit a practical, concrete EU level shift towards integrated place-based action for Cohesion Policy post-2020, particularly during the period 2021–2027. The outcome of this analysis should be to produce a series of well-developed and workable policy proposals to be considered in the political debate on the Territorial Agenda post-2020 and other future territorially relevant EU-level policy frameworks.

The study will be underpinned by a deliberative process, which aims to gather the participation of a wide and diverse range of views, feedback and inputs from a wide range of stakeholders.



ESPON 2020 – More information

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