

Seven Storylines for Possible Futures of the European Territory

(Draft)

A contribution to ESPON 2020 applied research activity 'European Territorial Reference Framework'.

Which spatial future for Europe 2050?

A quarter century ago I wrote a paper on the future territory of Europe (Kunzmann 1996) . In this paper I presented a few spatial scenario-plots or rather narratives or storylines with visions of the future of European territory. These scenarios were not based on the compilation and analyses of quantitative data, not on trend extrapolations nor on the outcome of ambitious modelling exercises, rather on armchair evidence and very intuitive qualitative assessments. The narratives, reflecting, aimed to feed imagination in which directions European space may develop. The purpose of that paper was to present some spatial development trends in Europe at the turn of the millennium, to sketch factors influencing future spatial development in European cities and regions. These narratives where:

- *Euro-Megalopolis Europe?* The concentration of economic activities has generated a densely urbanized area between London, the Randstadt, Paris Frankfurt, Munich und Northern Italy with a few metropolitan satellites such as Barcelona, Madrid Berlin, Vienna and Rome.
- *Themepark Europe?* While China has gradually taken over as the global industrial hegemon, Europe has turned into a theme park for tourists from around the world, who wish to experience and urban and cultural heritage in a slow sustainable environment.
- *A Europe of Sustainable Regions?* Homeland spirit and awareness of resource conservation, has promoted regional production and consumption, supported intra-regional economic circuits and favoured inward looking development strategies for sustainable regions.
- *Europe going East?* Getting over the angst of Russian power and closely cooperating with Russia, Eastern Europe turned into a region where a region where industries and agriculture flourish, where Berlin, Warsaw, Kiev, Minsk, Prague and Budapest became the metropolitan hubs of revived East-West development
- *Virtual Europe?* New digital technologies have turned city regions in Europe, which offer a high quality of cultural milieus and scenic spaces for the post-industrial “creative class”, into attractive places where work-life balances can be realized by a new mobile generation of Europeans.

Now, almost a quarter century later, and almost three decades after Michael Wegener and myself, contributed a paper The Pattern of Urbanisation in Western Europe 1960-1990 to a report for the Directorate General XVI of the Commission of the European

Communities as part of the study 'Urbanisation and the Function of Cities in the European Community' to which I had contributed the much quoted image of the European bunch of grapes (Kunzmann 1991), the world has not much changed.



The European Bunch of Grapes (Kunzmann 1991)

Nevertheless the above scenarios are still offering options for spatial development, though the means to really intervene into spatial or territorial development by cohesion policies and spatial planning will remain negligible. Despite changing US American (America First!) politics towards Europe, inspired by business interests, the world's economy is still globalising though re-nationalisation sentiments. In the wake of the US, and following a similar egoistic spirit, countries like Hungary, Italy, Poland or the United Kingdom (BREXIT), are building new mental walls to control free trade (and migration). National policies are dominated by inward looking populism. Conservative, autocratic governments claim to represent the will of a majority of citizens people, who express their angst of globalisation. Liberal values and democracy are losing support. Europe as a peace project is under continuous critique and an all-embracing extensive bureaucracy of the European Union is seen as the evil spirit to self-governed local and regional development. Spatial development and planning at all upper levels of planning and decision-making above local governments has a low profile. Since the European Development Perspective has been approved in Potsdam by 15 countries in 1999, no follow-up version has been launched since. (Faludi/Waterhout 2002; Nadin 2006, Kunzmann 2007). Efforts to replace the ambitious European Spatial Development Perspective by a concept of territorial cohesion did not have a political impact. The document remained very much an insider paper, a kind of a European samizdat, which was circulated and read but in academic circles.

The number of books and essays on the future of Europe and on European space exceeds the reading capacity of those, who dream of the European project over the past decades. Too many popular, literary, scientific and political authors develop scenarios and visions to articulate their concerns about Europe and to show their own pathways into the future (a few examples are: Cacciare 1994,;Horsmann/Marshall 1995; Cohn-Bendit 2009; Menasse 2012; Negt 2012; Green 2015; Offe 2016; Prantl 2016; Guérot 2017; Kratsev 2017). The fan community of readers is simply overwhelmed to follow all these European dreams and to separate innovative and creative ideas from the mass of paper tigers. Hence efforts to screen and sum-up all the scenarios that have been written in the past on the territorial future of Europe to show pathways into the future must inevitably fail. The mental distance between academic writers and policy-making representatives of European citizens, between

citizens and policy makers in national and European parliaments is widening fast. The decision-making terrain is dominated by market rationales, where economic

stakeholders, such as global corporations, hedge funds and globally active investors, with advice of international banks, such as Lehmann Brothers and think tanks and auditors such as KPMG, PWC, Deloitte, EY, or McKinsey, follow their own road maps.

In 2014 an ambitious scenario project that has been carried in the context of the ESPON programme. It has concluded that Europe should be made open and polycentric (ESPO 2014; Kunzmann/Spiekermann/Wegener 2016). While enlightened liberal-minded planners welcome any effort to consider Europe as territorial unit with open borders and spatial development based on polycentricity, conservative political groupings across Europe rather prefer to close borders to protect their homelands and wealth from migration and asylum seekers. Moreover polycentric spatial development rather follows market rationales than guidance by intervening planners and their ambitions. The conclusions aimed to provide quantitative information on spatial development trends in Europe. The map attached to the text shows an image of Europe as an Open and Polycentric Europe, where city regions are interlinked by dense network of infrastructure (road, rail, airports, energy corridors and pipelines), without telling the reader, who should do what, why, where and when. Based on much empirical information this image is static. It does not give alternative development trends emerging from European and global economic development policies. The image suggests that the status quo of today will be the spatial reality in a distant future. Neither the well-argued text nor the maps will inspire politicians to take actions or opinion-leading media to report about it.

In the framework of the ESPON programme, Mcrit, EPC (European Policy Centre), Spatial Foresight and the Polytechnic University of Milan have been commissioned to undertake a follow-up project concerning the development of a European Territorial Reference Framework (ESPO 2018). The project aims to provide 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 in the process of the European Territorial Reference Framework, are:

- 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?

20 years after the above-mentioned speculations about the future of the European territory. I felt encouraged to warm-up previous narratives scenarios to add some creative speculations to the big-data modelling approach of the ongoing ESPON project.

The seven narratives presented thereafter are not road maps for the future of European space. Too many externalities will influence future spatial and territorial development in Europe. They will give some hints which political priorities will be given to polycentricity, infrastructure, knowledge, rural and tourism development, even if territorial cohesion in Europe will remain the overriding rhetoric aim of European regional policies, though it is widely acknowledged that spatial conditions in Europe that have evolved in Europe over more than 2000 years cannot be changed with EU regional and cohesion policies over a period of few decades. Cohesion policies can just cushion some of the existing shortcomings for efficient and successful economic development. city regions of Sofia, Belgrade or Frankfurt will hardly be turned into global cities, such as Greater London or Paris.

Given the socio-economic and politico-administrative context in the member countries of the European Union and the dominance of the power of the global financial system at least seven trends will persist:

1. Post-industrial economic development will further concentrate in densely urbanized more or less cosmopolitan city regions. Depending on the attractiveness of the core city and political leadership these city regions and the quality of the commuter infrastructure will expand further to their immediate hinterland from 60 to hundred and more kilometres. Around a strong core these city regions will be polycentric and benefit from a certain spatial functional division, including city related biological sound agriculture, animal husbandry and second home tourism.
2. Future infrastructure development will focus on inter-linking these city regions by road, high-speed rail and efficient airports. Depending on pressure of intraregional infrastructure will be gradually improved by investments in public transport and smart mobility systems. This will certainly differ from country to country (e.g. from Ile-de-France to Riga, from Frankfurt to Oslo).
3. Population in rural regions of Europe will further decline. Agriculture will be more and more dominated by large-scale industrialized farming, or by specialized products (e.g. wine, vegetables, orchards). Social services provided to the remaining population (e.g. education or health) will be digitalized and heavily subsidized by the (regional, national and European) public sector. Areas not suitable for agricultural production will be gradually afforested or just given back to nature. Increasingly rural regions outside the city regions will be the target of second home investors seeking week-end or holiday relief from the stress in compact city regions.
4. Innovative knowledge development will be the key for future European competitiveness. Supported by considerable public and private research funds research& development will cluster in city regions, preferably around high-ranked prestige universities, science parks and globally active industrial corporations. Higher education will continue to be favoured at the costs of professional education.
5. Tourism in various specialized forms and for a broad range of younger and older , groups (depending on affordability the endogenous natural, scenic and cultural capital) will be a major functional base for regional economic development outside

larger city regions and large-scale agricultural areas. Assuming that political turmoil in Europe will not result in another serious economic crisis, wealth will continue to grow among middle class citizens living in highly urbanized city regions a second home development will further increase, contributing , although only marginal, to the rural economy.

6. Global warming and climate change will not have much impact on these spatial trends. Increasing renewable energy production, new mobility concepts, and ecologically more responsive agricultural approaches will certainly be promoted, though such policies will only have micro-locational implications. The dominance of economic over ecological policies will persist against all rationales.
7. Digitalization, a field, which is widely cheered by global consumers, who benefit from the convenience of smart technologies had just started 25 years ago. It is conquering societies and industries across the world. At present not much can be said about the spatial impacts of smart technologies, of e-shopping, e-medicine or e-learning on cities and regions.

At the time of writing it is most probably that the United Kingdom will leave the European Union, albeit more and more people and enterprises in the UK have realized that the exit will bring about considerable challenges for citizens and enterprises the British Islands, even for Greater London.

How will Europe develop in the decades until 2050? Most probably not much will change? European regional, cohesion and transport policies will not really raise the present territorial regional capital, it will not change of prevailing economic development trends. It has to be acknowledged that in times of globalization Europe is not an island. The future development of Europe depends on developments outside its territorial borders, on political and economic development developments in the Middle East, Africa and Russia, even on developments in China and the United States. What could have spatial impacts on territorial development, are macro-political developments outside the borders of the European Union.

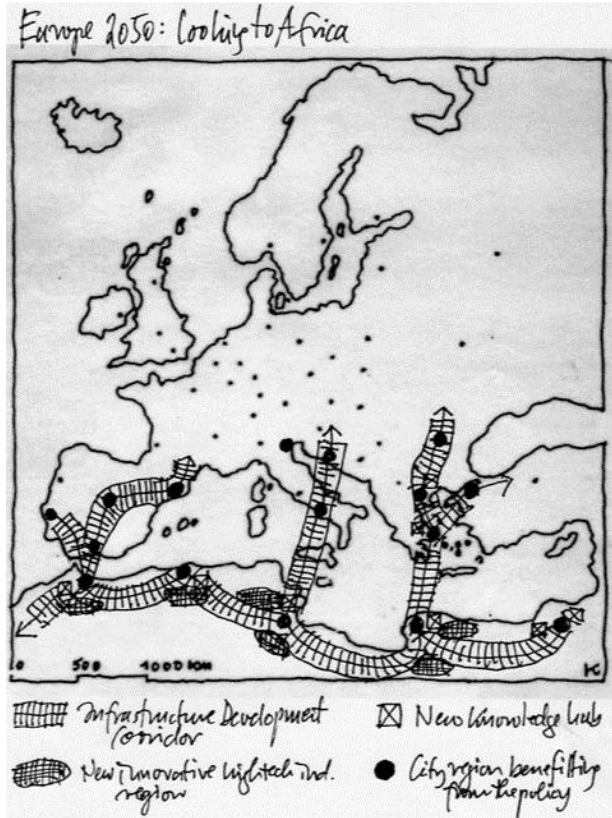
How will European space develop? What would be **if**? If, the permanent discord of member states of the EU with Russia would be surmounted? What would occur if the angst of the Chinese peril could be replaced by a close Eurasian cooperation with China in the context of the Chinese Belt & Road project? How could the European Union and the prospective member states of the Balkan benefit from the development potential of the Middle East by ignoring controversies with Turkey? What could bring along a totally new concept for European-African cooperation , beyond traditional unfair trade cooperation and moralistic pastoral development aid policies? What would change territorial development in Europe, once inward looking policies dominate and even lead to a gated European Union with high walls for people and goods? How would a two, three or even a four-speed speed Europe change spatial development in the two, three or four macro-regions of European space? Finally, what would happen, if the European Union were returning to a bunch of inward looking nationalist states with closed borders?

The following seven storylines will speculate on such developments: they aim to bring provocative food for thoughts into the discussions and raise awareness for the spatial implications of policy decisions on European territories, driven by people, political

parties, the financial and economic worlds and their academic advisors and professional think tanks. The idea behind these narratives is to explore, which spatial implications may result from political currents and from related public and private locational decisions on investments. The storylines focus on major spatial impacts, for transport infrastructure, cities, industrial and knowledge development, agriculture and tourism.

1. Europe 2050: Looking to Africa

In 2015 a wave refugees and asylum seekers and young migrants fleeing came to Europe to start a better and safer life in the European Union. They escaped from terrorism in Middle East or civil war atrocities and unemployment in Africa. Europe has not been prepared for such an influx that stirred up considerable political discussions and , strengthened right wing and populist movements across all member states of the EU. After long and controversial political debates about appropriate policies, even on detainment camps in North Africa, a bold idea inspired the controversies. Upon initiative of the French government a visionary agreement with the People’s Republic of China has been made by the EU to jointly develop efficient road and rail, air and port linkages and jointly create a northern African industrial corridor with a series of free industrial zones along the Mediterranean coast over a period of 30 years. The cooperation aimed to reduce migration to Europe and provide industrial jobs, education and training for Africans, who left their home countries in Central Africa for economic reasons and to provide products and production-oriented services for the large African market. The cooperation with China was sought to overcome old colonial sentiments, to attract capital from the Chinese Development Bank and Chinese state owned corporations, to benefit from Chinese experience in implementing large infrastructure projects and to open-up the immense potential of solar energy plants in the Sahara with Chinese competence. The storyline takes up the thread of an earlier proposal of Nicolas Sarkozy for a Mediterranean Union.

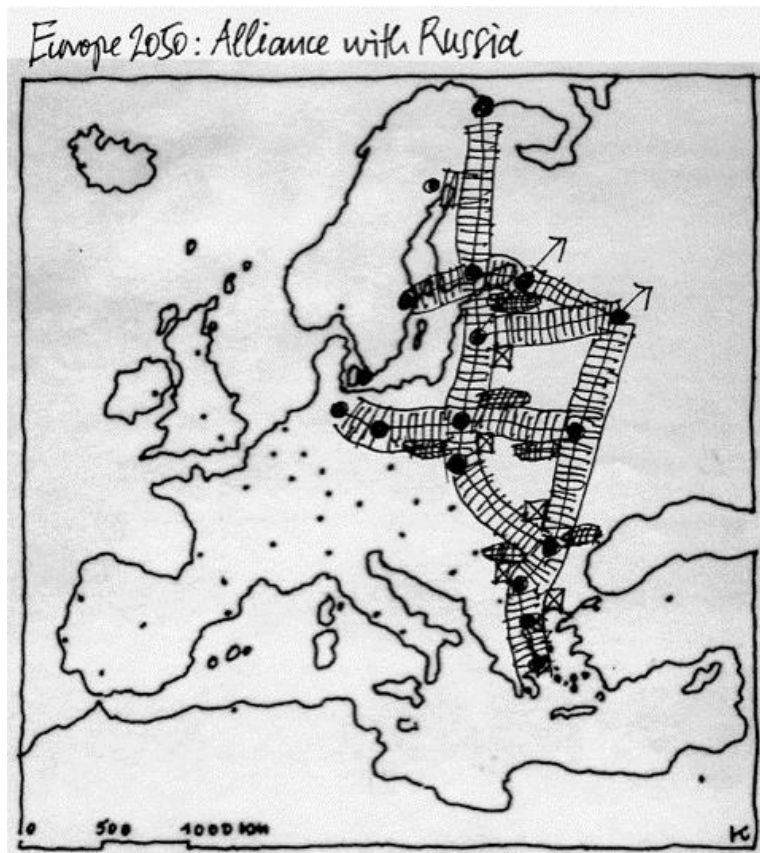


- New industrial zones were developed near existing city regions with good access to newly developed ports on the Mediterranean coast. Port city regions in Spain, Italy, Croatia, Albania and Greece considerably benefitted from the programme. This in turn prioritized North-South infrastructure development, linking the new industrial region in Northern Africa to city regions in the EU. This triggered-off corporate decisions of EU industries to invest in these new industrial zones, produce cars and consumer goods as well as benefitting from the slowly growing consumption power in Africa. Germany and French industries, such as Siemens, Peugeot or Bosch which, due to strict German migration laws, could not find labour translocated some of their production to the new industrial zones of North Africa.
- Infrastructure development in North Africa had been paralleled by a EU funded programme to build a series of science and technology parks linked to universities and technical colleges, specialising in engineering, solar energy development, computer sciences and business management. In cooperation with EU institutions and large industrial corporations, who translocated production from the EU to the new development corridor, the new universities and colleges offered specialist education and training in Arab, English and French languages for target groups in Northern and Central Africa.
- Learning from Spain, the Netherlands and Israel, and made possible by the provision of cheap solar energy, numerous industrial agricultural glass house complexes mushroomed along the corridor, producing vegetables and fruits for both local markets as for export to the consumers in the European Union.
- Wise sustainable regional and local development strategies had achieved that traditional tourism along the Mediterranean coast has not been negatively affected by the ambitious industrialization project.

2. Europe 2050: Alliance with Russia

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, caused by aggressive Russian policies to win power over the Crimea and the industrial region of the Donbas Basin, the political relationship of Europe and Russia has been tense. The old trauma of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, and the angst of Russian intervention into the Baltic States, Poland and the Czech Republic (stemming from developments during the Second World War and the Prague Spring thereafter) has been dominating policies in Central and Eastern Europe. Such tensions had been additionally aggravated by US American power-politics towards Russia. However, the gradual withdrawal of the US from Europe, a consequence of US isolation policies during the post-Putin era, opened the road for a closer economic cooperation with Russia during the 3rd decade of the 21st century. Benefitting from the country's enormous energy reserves and the enormous consumption requirements of the Russian middle class political and cultural relationships changed a new alliance between the EU and Russia evolved. This changed perspectives of spatial development in the European Union, too. First Many Russian investors, who had left Russia to buy up property in Western city regions, returned and contributed to the economic renaissance and the diversification of Eastern European and Russian regional economies. Russian minorities in Eastern Europe became the

bridge builders between Europe and Russia. Though which regions in the EU benefitted from the new European-Russian Alliance?



- Obviously, priorities in infrastructure development focussed on the improvement of long neglected East-West corridors, linking Russian and Eastern European urban regions by road, high-speed rails and air to the West. East-West energy networks were further improved to provide gas and oil to the EU member states. The port of Hamburg, losing its traditional linkages to the Middle East and North America turned its interest to the East. Climate change had opened the Northern Sea route from Shanghai, via Russia and Norway (Kirkenes) to ports in the EU, shortening travel time from 37 (via Suez) to 19 days.
- City regions in Central and Eastern European, Warsaw, Poznan, Katowice, Minsk, but also Prague, Budapest and Berlin, though particularly the Baltic cities and Helsinki gained from the opening to the East. Similarly the Medicon Valley of Copenhagen/Lund/Malmoe gained from the new West-Eastern alliance and cooperation with Russian health and pharmaceutical industries. Innovative industrial zones made the substitution of Western European and Chinese products possible. These zones were developed along the new infrastructure corridors, befitting from qualified labour in the adjacent city regions.
- Universities, as well as science and technology parks in European city regions intensified or revitalized old socialist partnerships with Russian partners. The high digital competence of Russian mathematicians and engineers, combined with Western technologies contributed considerably to the creation of competitive

regional economies on both sides of the borders of Russian and European territories. Kaliningrad and Krakow resumed their traditional role as European science centres.

- Large-scale industrial agriculture in Eastern Europe had been modernized, producing the European demand for grain and crops. This in turn created new opportunities for more biologically sound and specialized small scale agriculture, horticulture and husbandry in Western Europe.
- Increasing wealth and open borders caused and enabled citizens in Russia and Eastern Europe to explore tourist regions in central and Western Europe. Tourist regions in the Balkan and most Mediterranean and North African tourist regions gained from the new European Russian Alliance. Many Russians and Eastern Europeans invested their capital to buy up second homes in Northern and Central Europe and in the regions of the former Yugoslavia.

3. Europe 2050: Opening to the Byzantine Empire

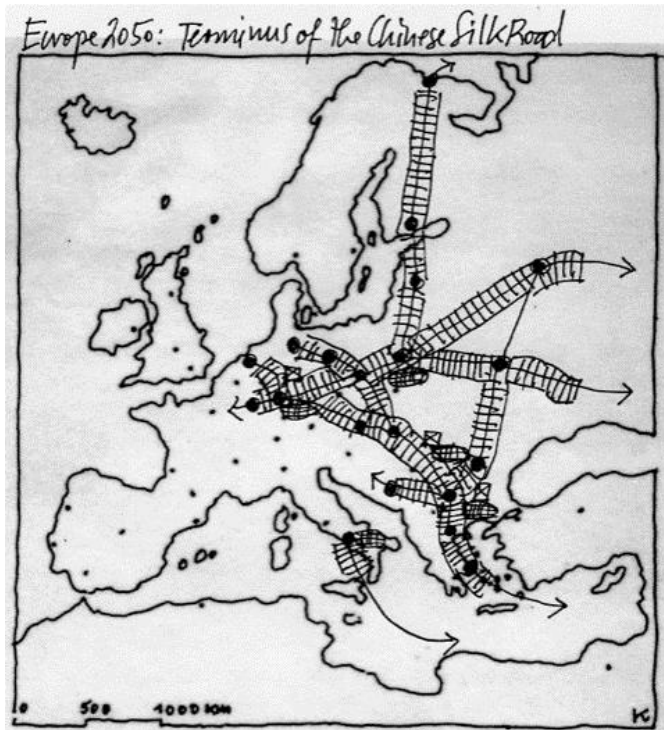
Since decades the South Eastern territories in Europe of former Yugoslavia have been waiting for being accepted as full members by the European Union. It has rather been a matter of time for Croatia, Serbia, Albania and North Macedonia to join the European Union, after having solved their long standing internal disputes on language and territory in the 3rd decade of the 21st century. Overcoming the long-standing conflicts with Greece, even Turkey became a closely associated member of the European Union. Finally the wars in Syria and Afghanistan had come to an end and the Kurds had got an status of autonomy. Georgia, Armenia and Turkmenistan became associated members of the EU. With the peaceful settlement of internal religious conflicts, regional economies in the Balkan and their neighbours prospered. The new political situation made it possible to develop strategies to link the Middle East closer to Europe. Turkey was seen as the ideal bridge for opening-up Europe to the oil-rich states on the Persian Gulf. A new liberal Byzantine empire had evolved. The new Byzantine-European alliance had significant economic and spatial impacts for the whole Danube macro region.



- Infrastructure development (Roads, high-speed railways and seaports, which had been substantially backlogged during decades of war, economic stagnation had been speeded up in the Balkan region. Central and North-western Europe were linked to the ports of Venice, Trieste, Koper, Rijeka, Durrës and Piraeus. The new airport of Istanbul, well connected to its Northern hinterland, became to most important passenger and airfreight hub in the region. First efforts of Italian and Chinese cooperation to link the port of Piraeus under Chinese management (to Serbia, Hungary and Romania) had pioneered infrastructure development in the region.
- Particularly the city regions of Belgrade, Zagreb, Sofia, Salonika, Skopje and Tirana gained form the economic rise of the European South-Eastern corridor, Though also the city regions of Vienna/Bratislava and even Munich benefitted from new economic optimism, and from the huge number of migrants in these two city regions, who had escaped from the war and established thriving new import-export businesses in these cities.
- Parallel to economic development, the knowledge capital of the region experienced a renaissance, too. Universities in Istanbul, Athens, Salonika, Zagreb and Belgrade, which had long engineering traditions, became anchor points for thriving science& technology parks. With the help of the EU, Athens, the cradle of civilisation, politics, philosophy, architecture, as well as fine and performing arts a new European campus had been established. In the middle of the 21st century it became a worldwide renowned centre of liberal arts and political science.
- The economic recovery of the macro-region strengthened traditional regional agriculture. Supporting funds, new agricultural technologies and changing consumer demand favoured the revival of traditional agriculture and orchards. Abundant labour has been available. Investors from China and the Gulf states expanded their claims on agricultural land in the region.
- The tourism capital of the region gained from the new political interest in the South-eastern European corridor, North-Macedonia, Albania and Montenegro became the second-home paradise of the Russian middle class.

4. Europe 2050: Terminus of the Chinese Silk Road

In the beginning of the 21st century the Chinese Government had launched an ambitious strategy to raise its status as a world economic power. The ambitious Belt & Road strategy aimed to promote its international reputation and to win political allies for strengthening, to expand its economic hinterland to Central Asia and beyond and to support its ailing state industries. To this end, and to be independent from international financial funds from the Asian Development Bank dominated by Japan and the World Bank dominated by the United States, the Chinese government had established its own Development Bank to provide easy accessible funds for a broad range of projects along the Eurasian development corridor that reached from Beijing on land and sea to Europe. One of the more visible projects of this ambitious long-term strategy were the train link from China via Russia to Duisburg in Germany, and the acquisition of the port in Piraeus. The strategy included increasing acquisition of European high technology enterprises and investments of Chinese investors in European urban property and rural latifundia. Governments in Eastern Europe, though also Greece and Italy welcomed the Chinese strategy that came along with generous funds for infrastructure development. They opened the doors to China and benefitted from the efficiency of Chinese engineers and reduced environmental standards, which were linked to Chinese investments. (Kunzmann 2008, Kunzmann/ Koll-Schretzenmayr/Schmid 2010; .



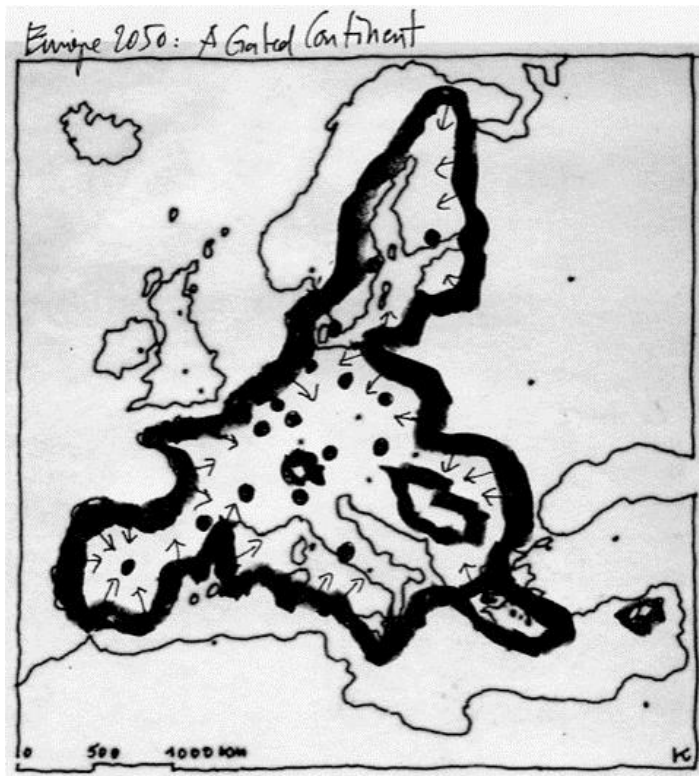
- Infrastructure linkages from Greece to the Balkan, as well as East-west linkages (rail, road and telecommunication) improved and provided much better accessibility to Eastern European regions. The inland port of Duisburg became has final destinations of the gradually improved Eurasian rail corridor that shortened transport time from China to Europe and vice versa to less then ten days. The new

infrastructure land corridor to China made import-export business between Europe and Asia much easier and more safe. Global warming contributed much to a longer opening of the Arctic Silk Road, linking Hamburg and the ports along the Baltic Sea to the Chinese ports of Dalian, Tianjin and Qingdao.

- The city regions of Hamburg and Düsseldorf, though also the city regions of Athens and Naples that were less reluctant to Chinese influence were favourite locations of Chinese investment. From there Chinese investors partnering with European enterprises increasingly influenced regional markets. The close cooperation of
- German and Chinese motorcar producers and the gradual introduction of electric vehicles had a significant impact on car production regions in Germany. The commitment of Chinese enterprises to local development vanished gradually.
- Near renowned engineering centres renowned in China, such as Paris, Turin, Aachen, Eindhoven, Stuttgart or Munich, European-Chinese Science & Technology parks strengthen the cooperation between European and Chinese industries. These universities and their innovative engineering schools became the favourite choice of Chinese master and post-doc students .
- Chinese investment in large scale industrial agriculture and forestry and the acquisition of Syngenta had considerable impact on Agricultural development in Europe. Particularly agriculture in Eastern Europe benefitted from the insatiable demand of Chinese consumers. More and more wineries in Burgundy and Tuscany changed ownership to Chinese investors.
- Since the beginning of the 21st century the number of Chinese tourists increased considerably. Chinese cultural and health tourism, with all its implications for gastronomy dominated the renowned tourist spots between Copenhagen and Florence. More and more Chinese acquired second homes in regions, where first Chinese pioneers had prepared the ground, such as in Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Alsace or rural Germany.

5. Europe 2050: A Gated Continent

The immense migration flows to Europe from the Middle East and Africa year after 2015 played populist movements across Europe in the hands. Europe First!. Encouraged by US American policy to close the border towards Mexico, and driven by a few member states, the European Union had decided to change its mind and close doors to Europe's labour market and social welfare system. Borders were closed and a virtual wall around Europe with only few gates for qualified industrial and cheap agricultural labour had been built. Again caused by US American and NATO appeals, national expenditures for defence had been raised. EU cohesion funds were shifted to border regions.



The willingness to open up the European Union and accept new members and expanding the territory of the single European market, ceased. As a consequence border regions towards the South and the East of the European Union received more financial support for infrastructure development, for support to strengthen regional administration and for agricultural development. Cohesion funds for infrastructure development were shifted from the regions in the midst of Europe to regions that were identified as essential for defending the territory of the European Community. Union.

- European Particularly gateway cities benefitted from such policies. Priority was given to transportation corridors linking gateway cities to the core regions of Europe. Generally, as more financial support was given to border regions, other regions had to develop and improve their infrastructure networks at their own regional or national expenses. Core regions and city regions with defence industries and installations, benefitted economically from the renaissance of cold war policies. Private investment was focussing more on core regions to avoid financial risks in border regions.
- Innovative knowledge development followed general development trends. It happened primarily on already established knowledge locations. The willingness to promote knowledge development in border regions along the mental wall ceased.
- Border regions experienced a gradual shift in agriculture and forestry reacting to population decline and the loss of regional consumer markets.

- Tourism and particularly second home development stagnated in selected border regions. Gradually these border regions suffered from population decline, which in turn had significant implications for the provision of public services in these areas.

6. Europe 2050: A Four-Speed Union

The dissatisfaction with the development of the European project caused old and new members of the further enlarged European Union to compromise on a four speed Europe. A group of core countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Luxemburg, France, the Nordic countries and the Baltic States and Slovenia, together with Switzerland and Northern(!) Italy as associated members, decided to go ahead with political integration and joint financial budgets. A second group of countries, the Mediterranean coalition (Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Malta, Cyprus, Croatia and Southern Italy) decided not to accept the integration policy of the EU core group, but to cooperate closely to defend their respective national interests. A third group of countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia) preferred to maintain their nationalist status and developed their own cooperation strategies with the European Union. A fourth group of old and new EU member states (Bulgaria, Romania, North Macedonia, Serbia and Albania), together with the Ukraine, Belorussia, Armenia, Georgia and Turkey as associated members, coordinated their political and economic strategies loosely linked to EU policies. The spatial implications of the four-speed Europe reality varied from macro-region to macro-region:



- Infrastructure development in further urbanizing city regions of the core group of countries focussed on policies to reduce congestion. Considerable investments were made into public and rail based-goods transport, resulting in a dense and efficient public transport system that inked people, enterprises and logistic

centres. As a consequence of the economic slow down of the second and third group of member states, transeuropean infrastructure development prioritized transport and energy corridors linking the larger city regions to the core regions in the North West.

- City regions including secondary cities in their hinterland in the core regions of the European Union flourished, though intra-regional disparities further increased, despite EU Cohesion funds. In contrast city regions in the other macro-regions slowed down economically, while rural regions in these regions were more and more lagging behind.
- Knowledge developed followed the same path. Established knowledge centres in the 1st speed macro-region raised their global competitiveness, knowledge development in the other European macro-regions slowed down due to the lack of public funding and the weakening European cooperative spirit. The deliberate focus on endogenous development in these regions, however, raised the innovative competence of SMEs.
- Agriculture in North West Europe gradually specialized on biologically sound vegetables and fruits to meet changing consumer demands of their urban population. agro-development in the Mediterranean macro-region suffered increasingly from water shortage, caused by lack of public funding, mismanagement and from losing larger consumer markets.
- Tourism development in the four-speed Europe until 2050 will follow the path of economic development and the consumption power of people working and living in the regions. Second home development will compensate for the rural exodus outside the larger city regions. Any other spatial changes are difficult to anticipate.

7. Europe 2050: A Dystopian Archipelago

In the wake of populism in Europe and the exit of the United Kingdom, but also supported by the business-driven “America First” policy of the United States, intra-European cooperation eroded fast. During the second and third decade of the 21st century, driven by nationalism and anti-European sentiments, one EU member state country after the other withdraw from the idea of a strong European Union, not formally but mentally. Still gaining from economic advantages of the single economic market, and a European free trade zone, the willingness to consider the European Union as a political power, the acceptance of European wide regulation ceased away year by year. The political consequence was that the richer European countries stopped their support for other member states and just made marginal contributions for a much-reduced European budget.. Agricultural policy was further downgraded. Funds for cohesion policy were significantly cut down. Populist movements across Europe had achieved their inward looking aims. The mayors of big city regions ruled Europe The ambitious project of a European Union, which had made so much progress since its birth in Rome in 1957 has come to an end. The opportunity of creating a politically, culturally and economically strong European counterweight to North America and Asia vanished. Rather than cooperation,

competition dominated national policies with significant implications for the quality of life of European citizens across the continent. The aim to reduce territorial disparities in Europe has become utopian. Overcoming intra-national disparities dominated the political agenda in all EU countries.



No narrative concerning the spatial impacts of the BREXIT?

It would have been tempting, too, to speculate about the spatial implications of the BREXIT on the European Territory. In recent years much has been reported about the implications from Ireland, particularly Northern Ireland and the translocation of selected financial services from London to Frankfurt, Paris, Amsterdam and Dublin. Other impacts will be felt in regions with a high share in export to the United Kingdom, as for example in the automobile production regions in Germany and France. However, there is not much evidence that the impacts of the exit of the UK will significantly change spatial development on the continent, albeit the EU budgets for agricultural, regional and cohesion policies will be reduced. The Brexit will not really justify a change of the ongoing and anticipated future territorial cohesion policies of the European Union. Though, there might be a slight chance that the BREXIT will not take place. Then the above scenarios may have to be amended....

One more dimension should be raised. It is the impact of financial markets on spatial development in Europe. It would have been worthwhile to speculate about such implications. Will the Eurozone further expand or will some countries even leave the Euro-zone hoping to raise the international competitiveness for their products? Such speculation and the impact on spatial development has to be left to experts in the world of finances.

Conclusion

Obviously, the future of the European Union and Europe as a whole will differ from the different futures described in the above narratives. Many of the spatial, development trends sketched in the above narratives can be questioned, My interest was to explore some possible spatial consequences of political development trends. My narratives are based on my understanding of the economic role single European countries play in the beginning of the 21st century. They are very speculative, not based on empirical data, but on observations, on essays and research reports written by researchers and journalists, monitoring developments across Europe. All storylines relied more or less on political actions to intervene into market-led economic development, to set priorities and to regulate markets. Such actions are difficult, if not impossible to anticipate and predict. The purpose of the narratives was to enrich the academic debate on spatial development in Europe beyond the mere updating and extrapolating of development trends and beyond expressing popular and well-known, but often hardly achievable development aims. The arguments put forward in each narrative could be explored in much more depth, though the purpose of my imaginative exercise was just to add another dimension to our discourse on scenarios for the future of Europe. The narratives should sharpen our understanding, of what will happen to European space,

if.....?

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