



Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020

Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse
Regions

agreed at the Informal Ministerial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial
Planning and Territorial Development
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TERRITORIAL AGENDA OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2020

I.

Territorial cohesion is a common goal

For a more harmonious and balanced state of Europe

(1) We, the Ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development, in cooperation with the European Commission and with the endorsement of the Committee of the Regions, have reviewed the Territorial Agenda launched in 2007 and agree upon the new Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020 (TA2020).

(2) TA2020 takes into consideration the recent developments described in the updated Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union, on the Commission's Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial cohesion and on the Europe 2020 Strategy.

(3) We state that the TA2020 is our action oriented policy framework to support territorial cohesion in Europe as a new goal of the European Union (EU) introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon (Art 3.TEU). It outlines objectives in accordance with the time horizon of major policy documents until 2020.

(4) The objective of the TA2020 is to provide strategic orientations for territorial development, fostering integration of territorial dimension within different policies at all governance levels and to ensure implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy according to territorial cohesion principles.

(5) We believe that the objectives of the EU defined in the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth can only be achieved if the territorial dimension of the strategy is taken into account, as the development opportunities of the different regions vary.

(6) We welcome the proposal of the European Commission expressed in the Fifth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion to better integrate territorial cohesion into Cohesion Policy. Cohesion Policy is a key framework through which the EU can address territorial development challenges and helps unleash territorial potential at local, regional, national and transnational levels. The TA2020 does not pre-empt future agreements such as the next financial perspective and the next legislative package for Structural Funds, but emphasises the importance of considering the territorial dimension.

(7) In line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Art. 174 and 175), all policies and actions of the Union should contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion. Therefore those responsible for design and implementation of sectoral policies should take the principles and objectives of the Territorial Agenda into consideration. The coherence of EU and national policies is of utmost importance for territorial cohesion. Most policies have significant territorial impacts, influencing the development opportunities of territories in different ways. The co-ordination of different sectoral policies, to optimise territorial impact and maximise coherence can significantly increase their success, and help avoid, at all territorial levels, negative effects from conflicting policies. The optimal balance of sustainability, competitiveness, and social cohesion can be realised through integrated territorial development.

(8) We believe that territorial cohesion is a set of principles for harmonious, balanced, efficient, sustainable territorial development. It enables equal opportunities for citizens and enterprises, wherever they are located, to make the most of their territorial potentials. Territorial cohesion reinforces the principle of solidarity to promote convergence between the economies of better-off territories and those whose development is lagging behind.

(9) Territorial cohesion complements solidarity mechanisms with a qualitative approach and clarifies that development opportunities are best tailored to the specificities of an area. Regions might need external support to find their own paths of sustainable development, with particular attention paid to those regions lagging behind. Regional interdependencies are increasingly important, which calls for continued networking, cooperation and integration between various regions of the EU at all relevant territorial levels.

(10) We call states, regions, cities (incl. small and medium sized towns), other territories and sectoral policies at all relevant levels to contribute to common European territorial priorities. We shall facilitate their ability to respond more effectively to the key challenges Europe faces through closer cooperation. We believe that such cooperation is key to fostering smart, inclusive and sustainable growth and territorial cohesion in the EU.

(11) We consider that the place-based approach to policy making contributes to territorial cohesion. Based on the principles of horizontal coordination, evidence-informed policy making and integrated functional area development, it implements the subsidiarity principle through a multilevel governance approach. It aims to unleash territorial potential through development strategies based on local and regional knowledge of needs, and building on the specific assets and factors which contribute to the competitiveness of places. Places can utilize their territorial capital to realise optimal solutions for long-term development, and contribute in this way to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives.

(12) We believe that diversity of territories is a potential for development, and that the distinctive identities of local and regional communities are of key relevance in this regard. Territories with common potentials or challenges can collaborate in finding common solutions and utilise their territorial potential by sharing experience. Territories with complementary potentials, often neighbouring, can join forces and explore their comparative advantages together creating additional development potential.

(13) We are convinced that inclusive, sustainable and efficient use of Europe's territory and resources is a key element of cohesion. The better use of territory can contribute positively to the development of economies; fair access to services of general interest; infrastructure and public goods; and wise management of natural and cultural assets.

II.

Challenges and potentials for territorial development

Driving forces and their territorial aspects

(14) Based on the main conclusions of the updated Territorial State and Perspective of the European Union we draw attention to the main territorial challenges. We are convinced that a coordinated approach is needed to transform these into potentials for sustainable and harmonious territorial development.

Increased exposure to globalisation: structural changes after the global economic crisis

(15) Accelerating globalisation and growing vulnerability to external shocks have been experienced by local and regional communities. In some cases even the prosperity, sustainability and stability of cities and regions have been threatened. The effects have been even more visible during the recent financial and economic crisis. As the long-term effects of the crisis on development opportunities vary territorially, the timing of recovery and the range of possible policy responses differ across regions. The crisis, however, provides an opportunity for a transition towards more sustainable and resource efficient economic structures if appropriate actions are taken

(16) Globalization can bring about important territorial consequences at EU, national, regional and local levels. Metropolitan and other urban regions, international and global gateways are assets for the development of the whole European territory, provided that other regions benefit from their dynamism and are connected through networks. Local endowments and territorial characteristics have growing importance for regions in order to cope with and recover from external shocks.

Challenges of EU integration and the growing interdependences of regions

(17) Deepening and widening of EU integration is challenged by internal factors such as regions divided by administrative borders, and differences in fiscal discipline and commitment between Member States. Changes in one part of Europe can have effects in other parts of the continent due to the growing interdependences of regions. The challenge of the core-periphery division is still present, even on the national scale. Cohesion at the external borders is crucial, as disparities and differences in legal, social and

political systems have important consequences especially in terms of migration and trade. The growing interdependence of regions generates demand for better connectivity at global, European and national level. Integration barriers at local and regional level can result in the underutilization of human, cultural, economic and ecological resources of the border regions and increase their peripheral position and social exclusion.

Territorially diverse demographic and social challenges, segregation of vulnerable groups

(18) Europe faces increasing and territorially differentiated demographic challenges. Ageing and depopulation will bring about changes in many regions, including rural and peripheral regions and lead to severe impacts for social and territorial cohesion, public service provision, labour market and housing. Other regions have growing populations and face other pressures. Significant intra-European migration after the EU enlargement and immigration mainly from less developed non-EU countries constitute specific challenges and opportunities especially in urban areas.

(19) Exclusion from the socio-economic circuit definitely has a strong territorial character. The risk of exclusion is higher in areas with low accessibility, weak economic performance, lack of social opportunities or other particular territorial circumstances. Vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities often end up concentrated in certain urban and rural areas and their integration is hindered as a result. Where these territories are part of larger administrative units the problem can be hidden within official statistics.

Climate change and environmental risks: geographically diverse impacts

(20) The impacts of climate change vary considerably across Europe in terms of geographical regions with different types of impacts and different degrees of vulnerability. The increased risk of sea level rise, drought, desertification, floods and other natural hazards calls for territorially different responses. Regions have different opportunities to embed adaptation and mitigation into their strategies, decreasing greenhouse gas emissions and adjusting their socioeconomic systems to a low carbon economy. Climate change may also lead to new development opportunities, such as within agriculture, green economy and renewable energy production. The challenges of climate change draw attention to the territorial coordination of policies, especially climate, energy, water management, agriculture, housing, tourism and transport.

(21) The environmental quality of air, soil and water is diverse across Europe and air pollution and noise cause serious health problems. In certain cases it correlates with social inequality. Disparities in the access to clean air, water and soil do not only appear between countries and regions but also between urban and rural areas as well as inside cities.

Energy challenges come to the fore and threaten regional competitiveness

(22) Certain European regions face challenges of security in energy supply, as they are heavily dependent on fossil fuel imports or specialized in energy intensive activities. Significant imports from third countries vulnerable to economic or political instability increase problems for energy security. Rising energy prices and emissions draw attention to the need for sustainable energy solutions such as realising the potential of renewable energy resources and shifting towards greener, low carbon economic activities. Insufficient energy infrastructure and dependencies created by existing networks call for diversification of energy production and supply, as well as development of energy market and integration. Some territories such as islands and remote and sparsely populated areas can be more susceptible to energy shortages and rising prices, while urban sprawl contributes to high, unsustainable energy consumption rates.

Loss of biodiversity, vulnerable natural, landscape and cultural heritage

(23) Natural and cultural heritage are parts of territorial capital and identity. Ecological values, environmental quality and cultural assets are crucial to well-being and to economic prospects and offer unique development opportunities. Overexploitation of these resources to provide for increasing demand, as well as industrial hazards can cause serious damage and may threaten territorial development. Urbanisation, intensification of agriculture and fisheries, transport and other types of infrastructure development, particularly where they take place in a territorially uncoordinated manner, can cause severe environmental problems. Increased and uncoordinated exploitation of maritime space

and marine resources may have consequences for sustainable territorial development. Changes in land- and sea use, urbanisation and mass tourism threaten cultural assets and landscapes and may lead to fragmentation of natural habitats and ecological corridors. In historic and cultural environments, as well as in areas for new development or constructions, attention paid to the character of the place can improve the coherence and quality of the built environment.

III.

Territorial Priorities for the Development of the European Union

(24) We believe that the challenges for territorial development need common attention and where appropriate joint efforts to handle them and utilise territorial potentials. We therefore define six territorial priorities for the EU which can contribute to the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

1. Promote polycentric and balanced territorial development

(25) We stress that polycentric and balanced territorial development of the EU is key element of achieving territorial cohesion. Where the most developed cities and regions within Europe cooperate as parts of a polycentric pattern they add value and act as centres contributing to the development of their wider regions. Urban development policies also have a significant role in this regard. Polycentric territorial development policy should foster the territorial competitiveness of the EU territory also outside the core 'Pentagon area'. We encourage cities to form networks in an innovative manner, which may allow them to improve their performance in European and global competition and promote economic prosperity towards sustainable development.

(26) At the same time we aim at polycentric development at the macro-regional, cross-border and also on national and regional level in relevant cases. Where possible, it is important to avoid polarization between capitals, metropolitan areas and medium sized towns on the national scale. Small and medium-sized towns can play a crucial role at regional level. Policy efforts should contribute to reducing the strong territorial polarisation of economic performance, avoiding large regional disparities in the European territory by addressing bottlenecks to growth in line with Europe 2020 Strategy.

2. Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions

(27) We declare that the objectives and concerns identified by Ministers responsible for urban development in the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, and the Marseille and the Toledo Declarations on Urban Development should be taken into account in territorial policy making at all levels. We support all the efforts, which help to make cities motors of smart, sustainable and inclusive development and attractive places to live, work, visit and invest in. Accordingly, we recommend applying an integrated and multilevel approach in urban development and regeneration policies. The cooperation and networking of cities could contribute to smart development of city regions at varying scales in the long run. Cities should, where appropriate look beyond their administrative borders and focus on functional regions, including their peri-urban neighbourhoods.

(28) The development of the wide variety of rural areas should take account of their unique characteristics. Rural, peripheral and sparsely populated territories may need to enhance their accessibility, foster entrepreneurship and build strong local capacities. Some rural areas tend to be vulnerable territories rich in cultural and natural values. We support the safeguarding and sustainable utilization of this territorial capital, the ecological functions and services it provides. Special attention may need to be paid to underdeveloped peripheral rural and sparsely populated areas where disadvantaged social groups often suffer from segregation. Territories facing severe depopulation should have long-term solutions to maintain their economic activity by enhancing job creation, attractive living conditions and public services for inhabitants and businesses. In rural areas where agriculture and forestry are still important forms of land use, modernisation of the primary sector through resource-efficient investments in new and alternative sectors and preservation of high quality arable land and ecological functions are essential.

(29) We acknowledge the diverse links that urban and rural territories throughout Europe can have with each other, ranging from peri-urban to peripheral rural regions. Urban-rural interdependence should be recognised through integrated governance and planning based on broad partnership. We welcome place-based strategies developed locally to address local conditions. In rural areas small and medium-sized towns play a crucial role; therefore it is important to improve the accessibility of urban centres from related rural territories to ensure the necessary availability of job opportunities and services of general interest. Metropolitan regions should also be aware that they have responsibility for the development of their wider surroundings.

(30) We recall that specific geographical endowments have significant influence on the development opportunities of many regions and Member States. This is also recognised by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Art. 174). Coastal zones, islands, including island states, mountainous areas, plains, river valleys and lake basins and other types of territories have special – often cross border– features, or suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as low population density, which influence their development potentials. Outermost regions (Art. 349) have specific and permanent constraints, notably due to the distance from the mainland, and a specific international context. These specific potentials can be unleashed and problems tackled jointly by actors from different states or regions in an integrated way.

3. Territorial integration in cross-border and transnational functional regions

(31) We consider that the integration of territories through territorial cooperation can be an important factor in fostering global competitiveness. In this way, potentials such as valuable natural, landscape and cultural heritage, city networks and labour markets divided by borders can be better utilized. Attention shall be paid to areas along external borders of the EU in this regard. Territorial integration and co-operation can create a critical mass for development, diminishing economic, social and ecological fragmentation, building mutual trust and social capital. Cross border and transnational functional regions may require proper policy coordination between different countries.

(32) We support transnational and cross border integration of regions going beyond cooperation projects and focusing on developments and results of real cross-border or transnational relevance. European Territorial Cooperation should be better embedded within national, regional and local development strategies.

4. Ensuring global competitiveness of the regions based on strong local economies

(33) We recall that economic competitiveness can be enhanced by the development of globally integrated economic sectors and strong local economies. The use of social capital, territorial assets, and the development of innovation and smart specialisation strategies in a place-based approach can play a key role. The global and local strands are mutually reinforcing and interlinked, and should therefore be developed in parallel to each other. Strengthening research, human capital, the capacity for innovation and bringing ideas to the market are essential.

(34) Furthermore, integration of local endowments, characteristics and traditions into the global economy is important in strengthening local responses and reducing vulnerability to external forces. Improving local economies through development of local products and markets, business environments, locally-oriented training provision, partial self-sufficiency and building up cohesive and strong local communities can be effective tools. It is important to preserve and improve the innovation capacity of all regions. Diversification of the local economy can decrease vulnerability.

5. Improving territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises

(35) We believe that fair and affordable accessibility to services of general interest, information, knowledge and mobility are essential for territorial cohesion. Providing services and minimising infrastructure barriers can improve competitiveness, and the sustainable and harmonious territorial development of the European Union. Among others it is important to secure access to road, rail, water-based and air transport, and to other infrastructure facilities such as broadband and trans-European

energy networks. We support decentralized, efficient, secure and environmentally-friendly production and use of renewable and low carbon energy.

(36) We support effective inter-modal transport solutions especially within city-regions; sea-overland connections and efficient airport-railway relationships. The increasing importance of global linkages creates the need for balanced intercontinental traffic including greater use of overland connections with Asia. Further development of Trans-European networks (TEN-T) linking the main European centres, such as capitals, metropolitan regions and TEN-nodes and improving linkages between primary and secondary systems should be an essential component of the integrated network. Development of secondary networks is important, especially at regional and local level. We encourage the accessibility of urban centres in peripheries where a combination of social and economic disadvantages can result in the segregation of vulnerable groups. Transport connections across territorial barriers such as those to islands and overseas territories should be developed where appropriate.

6. Managing and connecting ecological, landscape and cultural values of regions

(37) We underline that well-functioning ecological systems and the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage are important conditions for long-term sustainable development. We are all responsible for ensuring they are well functioning, protected and enhanced. Joint risk management is particularly important, taking into consideration different geographical specificities. We support the integration of ecological systems and areas protected for their natural values into green infrastructure networks at all levels.

(38) The high value of European urban and rural landscapes should be protected and developed in qualitative terms. Areas rich in natural and cultural landscapes may need special attention in order to make best use of these assets. Environmentally friendly job creation and strengthened recreational functions can complement conservation. The local, regional and trans-regional management of cultural and natural heritage is of key importance. We support the protection, rehabilitation and utilization of heritage through a place-based approach. Improving regional and local identity by strengthening awareness and responsibility of local and regional communities towards their environments, landscapes, cultures and other unique values is also important.

IV.

Making EU territorial cohesion a reality

The governance and implementation mechanisms

(39) We consider that the Lisbon Treaty has important implications for the future of territorial development policy in Europe. Member States and EU institutions have shared competence in contributing to territorial cohesion and therefore a shared role in the implementation of the TA2020.

(40) We are aware that enhancing territorial cohesion calls for effective coordination of different policies, actors and planning mechanisms, and the creation and sharing of territorial knowledge. Implementation instruments and competences are in the hands of EU institutions, Member States, regional and local authorities and private actors. Multi-level governance formats are required to manage different functional territories and to ensure balanced and coordinated contribution of local, regional, national and European actors in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity. This needs vertical and horizontal coordination between decision-making bodies at different levels and sector-related policies to secure consistency and synergy.

Territorial coordination of policies

(41) We are convinced that recognizing the territorial dimension and the coordination of EU and national sectoral policies are important principles in fostering territorial cohesion. Most policies at each territorial level can be made significantly more efficient and can achieve synergies with other policies if they take the territorial dimension and territorial impacts into account.

(42) Taking territorial impacts into account during policy development can help to avoid creating barriers to implementation and unintended side-effects on other policy areas and on the territories. Policies should

take territorial differences into account, with interventions tailored to the specific type of territory and the use of territorial approaches in planning. This will improve the utilisation of territorial capital.

(43) Efficient interplay of sectoral policies can be supported by their coordination at each territorial level. Territorial coordination should be supported by instruments such as assessment of territorial impacts, coordinating planning mechanisms and territorially sensitive monitoring. We emphasize that EU policies can contribute to the implementation of the territorial priorities of the EU to different extents and in different ways as demonstrated with examples in the updated Territorial State and Perspectives.

Territorial cohesion implementation mechanisms

(44) We call for a more strategic approach to enhance territorial cohesion. Designing and implementing integrated local, regional development is an important issue. The territorial dimension could be better reflected and the different starting positions, national, regional and local specificities should be recognised in the implementation and monitoring process of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

(45) We believe that Cohesion Policy and also Rural Development Policy with their integrating character and certain cross-sector nature are key instruments for encouraging the balanced territorial development of the European Union.

(46) We support deepening the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy where appropriate: strengthening mechanisms which can ensure the territorial coordination of its interventions; improving the territorial dimension of all steps of strategic programming, evaluation and monitoring activities; ensuring scope for integrated place-based programmes and projects, and integrating different funds in regional strategies.

(47) We encourage the adjustment of strategies and programmes to adequately reflect the specificities of the diverse territories. Future strategic policy documents and programmes should integrate territorial considerations taking into account the priorities of the TA2020. We support the development of experimental approaches to integrated local development in diverse territorial contexts. Where appropriate regional and local actors should be involved in the programming process.

1. Strengthening territorial cohesion at EU level

(48) We ask the EU institutions, when they participate in the design and implementation of EU policies, to take into account the principles of the TA2020 and to share them with their stakeholders and networks.

(49) We stress that improved monitoring and evaluation at EU level of territorial development and the performance of territorial cohesion efforts should be developed while ensuring that the administrative burden on Member States should not increase. The existing assessment, monitoring and evaluation practices and requirements of the EU, including those for Structural and Cohesion Funds and implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy, should incorporate relevant territorial considerations.

(50) Integrated impact assessments for all significant EU policies and programmes should continue to be developed based on stakeholder inputs. In order to strengthen the territorial dimension of impact assessment carried out by the European Commission prior to any legislative initiative, we call upon the European Commission to take territorial matters into account in these impact assessments, and we ask the Committee of the Regions to provide input from regional and local authorities.

(51) We stress that a strong methodological support and a comprehensive territorial knowledge base are required to inform EU level policy-making process. A range of bodies can deliver valuable contributions in this respect. We suggest that the ESPON programme should take into account the priorities and challenges of TA2020 in its research activity. In addition, the stronger focus on territorial cohesion and the wish to contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy will require further knowledge and methodological support to stakeholders. The current status, role and outputs of the ESPON Programme should be adapted to the future period in agreement with the European Commission to better serve European policy-making related to territorial development and cohesion.

2. Contributing to territorial cohesion at cross-border, transnational, and inter-regional level

(52) We recognise that actions at the cross-border, transnational and inter-regional level have a pivotal role to play in the implementation of territorial priorities of the TA2020. European territorial cooperation

has revealed a considerable mobilisation of potential of those cities and regions involved. Nevertheless, there remains room for improvement, especially to ensure that operations contribute to genuine territorial integration by promoting the sustainable enlargement of markets for workers, consumers and SMEs, and more efficient access to private and public services. In this regard we emphasize the importance of flexible territorial programming, which allows co-operation activities with different territorial scope to be flexible enough to address regional specificities.

(53) We recommend that territorial cooperation initiatives should be geared towards the long term objectives of territorial cohesion building on the experience of former B strand of INTERREG Community Initiative and current transnational programmes. Integrated macro-regional strategies – as currently pioneered in the Baltic Sea and the Danube regions – could also contribute in this respect. Thus we recommend that this approach is further encouraged on the basis of evaluations of the results achieved by the European macro-regional strategies under implementation.

(54) We underline the specific added value of and support the European instruments promoting exchange of good practices as well as innovative projects and the transfer of knowledge between participating organisations, such as the networking and interregional programmes (INTERREG IVC, INTERACT, URBACT).

(55) Maritime activities are essential for territorial cohesion in Europe. Economic activities such as energy production and transport are increasing rapidly in European marine environments. There is a need to solve user conflicts and balance various interests by cooperation in maritime spatial planning. The Marine Strategy Framework Directive and EU Integrated Maritime Policy calls for coordinated actions from Member States on maritime spatial planning. Such planning should be integrated into the existing planning systems to enable harmonious and sustainable development of a land-sea continuum.

(56) Building on recent experiences, where appropriate full advantage should be taken of the new opportunities offered by the legal instrument of European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Furthermore, voluntary coordination of planning activities along borders within the framework of an EGTC should be explored where it is perceived as an added value.

(57) We welcome all initiatives coming from public authorities at diverse levels, contributing to develop long term territorial strategies across borders, and ask European Commission to provide its support where necessary.

3. Strengthening Member States' contribution to territorial cohesion

(58) We recall that in the national context the main task of national, regional and local authorities is to define the tailored concepts, goals and tools for enhancing territorial development based on the subsidiarity principle and the place-based approach in line with the EU level approach and actions. It is up to the authorities in Member States to determine their own strategies and the relevant measures they intend to apply, which will depend on their own geographical specificities, political culture, legal and administrative system.

(59) We encourage Member States to integrate the principles of territorial cohesion into their own national sectoral and integrated development policies and spatial planning mechanisms. Authorities responsible for territorial development policy at national, regional and local levels should contribute through their own action plans to strengthening territorial cohesion as appropriate.

(60) Consideration of territorial impacts and the territorial coordination of policies are particularly important at national and regional levels. This coordination should be supported by territorially sensitive evaluation and monitoring practices, further strengthening the contribution of territorial analysis to impact assessments. These territorial aspects could be integrated into regular national and European reports and evaluations related to Cohesion Policy and Europe 2020 Strategy, avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy.

(61) We encourage regions and cities to develop and adopt integrated strategies and spatial plans as appropriate to increase the efficiency of all interventions in the given territory. Besides coordination and planning mechanisms, awareness raising and provision of territorial information and methodological

support is essential in this respect. We welcome the elaboration of the European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities as an open and flexible tool to help the cities to set up a more sustainable and inclusive development.

(62) We encourage Member States to strengthen the provision of regional and urban data relevant for territorial development and cohesion that can be delivered to the European Commission and be processed into European datasets with methodologically sound and comparable information. We encourage the European Commission to strengthen the production of European regional and urban data of relevance for territorial development and cohesion. This would improve the work of national and European Institutions.

Guidelines for future actions

(63) We consider the following actions to be important and request them to be implemented in the near future in order to incorporate territorial priorities of the TA2020 in political debates and decision making processes at the EU level and in Member States.

(64) We ask the coming presidencies and the EU Institutions to support the implementation of the TA2020 with adequate tools and actions. For this purpose, regular meetings should be organised with representatives of these institutions.

(65) We ask future EU Presidencies to continue the coordination of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) which plays an important role in strengthening cooperation among Member States in the field of territorial cohesion. It should also increase cooperation with European institutions as well as with other stakeholders including intergovernmental organisations.

(66) We believe that for the effective implementation of the TA2020 we need a framework for concrete actions and expected tangible results. We request upcoming presidencies in close cooperation with the European Commission to identify the method and actions needed to implement the TA2020, building on the assessment from the Swedish Presidency.

(67) We commit ourselves to disseminate and promote the TA2020 in our states amongst the relevant stakeholders. We ask the Polish Presidency and European Commission to support European-level communication of the document. The coming presidencies should elaborate and coordinate a communication strategy for the successful implementation of the TA2020.

(68) We support sharing best practices and developing common methodologies to foster territorial cohesion. We welcome the Territorial Agenda Annual Conferences, initiated by the Belgian Presidency, and ask the coming Presidencies to organise the conference regularly.

(69) We ask the European Commission to present an overview of the available and missing territorial indicators and formulate recommendations for improvements, particular in light of the issues related to territorial cohesion.

(70) We agree to improve the monitoring of territorial trends, and ask the European Commission and the ESPON Programme, Member States and other institutions such as the European Environment Agency on the environmental aspects to contribute to this aim.

(71) We ask the Latvian (2015) and Luxembourgish (2015) Presidencies to evaluate and consider whether the TA2020 should be reviewed, taking account of how it works in practice. We ask that the Dutch (2016) and Slovak (2016) Presidencies lead any review as necessary.