

EUROPEAN REGIONAL POLICY: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL AND FORESIGHT*

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Paper prepared for the International Seminar: "Regional Questions in Europe", Warsaw - Madralin, June 24-26, 1993, held by the University of Warsaw, European Institute for Regional and Local Development (EUROREG)

* This Paper develops concepts and themes already included in Chapters 1 and 2 of a Report prepared for the EC Commission on "New Strategies of the Community Policy for Economic and Social Cohesion", December 1992.

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1. Premise

The "Single European Act" (1986) and more recently the Maastricht Treaty (1990) introduces - as is well known - amongst the new objectives of the EEC, the "strengthening of the economic and social cohesion" of the Community. And, in particular the Community "shall aim at reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions" (art. 130a of the Single Act)¹.

For this purpose, the member states shall "conduct" and "coordinate" their economic policies. And the Community shall "support the achievement of these objectives through the structural funds and other existing financial instruments" (Art. 130b)².

In fact, these Acts do no more than ratify, that which the Community had already many years ago started by developing a so-called "regional policy" about which the Treaty of Rome (1957) had been quite laconic³.

As is well known already in the Paris Summit (1972) (at which the heads of state of four countries belonging to the first "enlargement" participated), the first concrete developments of a regional policy were suggested from which the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Regional Policy Committee were born some two years later.

And it was not without difficulty that, after long periods of negotiation, it was possible to establish procedures and rules for the utilisation of the European fund, rules which were then always retouched (for example in 1979) right up until the so-called "reform" of 1984.

The European Single Act (February 1986) states quite clearly, and even more precisely than was ever stated by previous official documents, that *all* the Community policies and consequently all the structural funds and

¹The Maastricht Treaty modifies this last expression of the Single Act with the aim to "réduire l'écart *entre les niveaux de développement* des diverses régions et le retard des régions les moins favorisées, *y compris les zones rurales*" (Art 130a).

²A modification of the Maastricht Treaty to this article allows for the possibility of "*specific actions*" outside funding.

³It was only with the additional "protocol" relating to Italy (in fact to its "Mezzogiorno") that in the Treaty of Rome the matter of the less favoured regions was dealt with.

all other financial instruments available today must be finalised exclusively with the aim of economic and social cohesion in mind.

In redefining more energetically, through the European Single Act and the Maastricht Treaty, *the objective of economic and social cohesion*, and thus discussing the ways and means by which to create -in the new context of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) post-1992 - such a cohesion (and therefore also the further reform of the funds), it is not inopportune to reflect about and ask ourselves if *the lines along which until now the "structural" policies of the Community have moved should not be reviewed, and there should not be some proposal for working substantial changes.*

One question in particular arises: whether, *regional policy* (together with social and agricultural policy), has achieved its original objectives, and whether a review of the means and methods of its work should not also be performed.

In fact *European Regional Policy* has, until now, moved according to a general line which appears, because of its nature, to have little capability of achieving its own objectives.

And it is on these general lines of the European Regional Policy, its deficiencies and its possibilities of renewal that we would like to focus - in this paper - our analysis ⁴.

2. The European Regional Policy: Founded on "Indirect" Expectations

European Regional Policy, in complete conformity with the method and formulation of those already existing in member countries⁵, has in the past

⁴In this paper we will not dwell long on describing the "European Regional Policy", such as it has developed in the course of the evolution of the Community. In fact, on European regional policy there has developed an enormous literature: amongst which we could select for further historical" analysis some informative works such as those of David Pinder (1983), Keating & Jones (1985) and of W.Molle et al. (1980).

We will limit ourselves to summarising some critical evaluations, which, on the other hand, the author has had several opportunities for developing more extensively on various occasions: for an examination which is among the most complete the reader is referred to a report delivered at a seminar held in Madrid promoted by the "Frederich Ebert Stiftung" and by the "Fundacion IESA" (Archibugi, 1982a).

For a more theoretical evaluation of the different approaches to European regional policy the reader is referred to the acute essay by Stuart Holland on "The Regional Problem", amply dedicated to the relationships between regional policy and the construction of Europe (Holland, 1976). Very interesting is also the collection of essays edited by D. Seers on "Integration and Unequal Development" (1982).

20 years been founded on supporting investment and promotion initiatives in those areas and regions considered to be "less favoured (or backward) ", establishing those areas susceptible of falling into the "less favoured (or backward)" category (with very approximate and not always significant indicators).

In this way, the European Regional Policy has shown it believes that by intensifying economic activity, especially industrial and productive activity, the advancement of these regions to a more favourable and thus more "cohesive" position within the Community could be achieved.

With these financial or functional operations, some very large territories and some entire regions have been privileged, selected in the framework of the Regional Policy of each country⁶. The interventions, more or less demonstrative, have been made by the rationale of the general requisites of the territories to which they were implemented instead of the rationale of the specific objectives to which they were directed.

⁵ In effect, the regional policy which has most greatly influenced the European one has been - at least until 1973 - the Italian one, in as much as the Mezzogiorno was the only "backward" area which was explicitly dealt with by the Treaty of Rome.

The Italian regional policy has been entirely dominated by the management of an extraordinary fund (the "Cassa per il Mezzogiorno"), completely in the hands of State finance, and made available to the territories (and the local authorities involved) of the Mezzogiorno. Italian regional policy has therefore consisted in a mere additional management of funds, distributed in favour of a determined territory (roughly a third of the entire Italian territory) in virtue of its "backwardness": this management, has been founded on the concept of "aid" (and sometimes on that of "compensation", what for is not exactly clear...), without there being ever a plan of the things to be done with the means made available and of the results to be expected from the projects. Every attempt to "reform" the extraordinary intervention in the Mezzogiorno from a mere availability of funds, to a well-programmed allocation of those same funds, has always come up against an anti-planning culture.

The Italian regional policy (or that of the Mezzogiorno) has failed in almost every way, and today one is always more tempted to ask oneself - after decades of emptiness and dogmatic optimism - if such a policy has not brought to the Mezzogiorno more damage than it has benefits, by placing it in an apparently privileged but substantially "spoiled" position. (For the author's longstanding and constant criticism of the official policy in the Mezzogiorno, we refer the reader to some of his writings available in English: Archibugi 1977 and 1978).

In essence, today's criticisms of European regional policy are founded on the same criteria as those of the Italian regional policy.

⁶ Up until 1973, at the time of entry in the Common Market of the three Nordic countries, the privileged area was that of the Italian *Mezzogiorno*; thereafter it was extended to Greenland, Ireland and Northern Ireland (and with proportionally limited interventions also to other assisted areas of France, Great Britain, Germany and Italy). Lastly with the entry of the three new countries of the South among the areas covered by regional policy were also included those of Greece and Portugal and 70% of the Spanish territory).

In the documents stating Community Regional Policy, as in those National Regional Policy documents from which the base of Community Policy was driven, there has prevailed -in respect of "objectives" - a general definition of the "area" and nature of the proposed intervention; so much so that the the rationale used to assess single national or regional request projects was: whether such a request enters or not within the "area" and "nature" of the envisaged intervention.

But the possible outcome, along the objective of economic and social cohesion, to which a request might lead was never measured - neither *ex ante* nor *ex post* - because the relationship between various types of intervention and different types of objectives had never been measured.

Structural funds, and the various chapters of Community programmes to which these funds were directed, thus became a sort of "finance counter" from which funds can be drawn for any project that fell within the general terms forseen for intervention (as well as the areas already predefined). They are not projects which developed from an evaluation of action to be taken in order to achieve *certain determined objectives ad hoc*, in one or another territory of the Community, and linked to the general aim of increasing economic and social cohesion in the Community.

3. Some Attempts to Reform the European Regional Policy

Despite the general lines, about which we have spoken, several attempts have been made on successive occasions to give a more defined and direct, content to the European Regional Policy.

3.1 *Community Intervention in the Framework of the Regional Programmes*

An attempt to evaluate more satisfactorily the use of funds according to more precise and measured objectives can be seen in the Regional Policy sector where requests for funds had to be presented in the form of "regional programmes" prepared by the regional and national authorities of each individual country. This was a first "reform" of the usage of the ERDF, implemented in 1984.

But this quite large experience of ERDF management shows that, although it led to the creation of regional programmes by states and regions which previously had not done so, it created at the same time a situation whereby it was not the requests for the ERDF that conformed to the evalu-

ated and quantified list of necessary action but rather the latter which was "made to measure" specifically for the request to ERDF.

Thus the Community, has been very careful not to define its own guidelines for Community intervention, but rather has left it up to the individual national and regional governments, to programme their own territorial interventions.

3.2 *The 1988 Operational "Reforms" of Structural Funds*

The entire subject was later reorganized in a series of Council acts which came into force in 1988 and which are generally referred to as the "structural fund reforms"⁷.

Announced and motivated in the Communication of the Commission "In order to lead the Single Act to success" (and which goes under the name of "the Delors Plan") of February 1987 (EC Commission, 1987a), the Community acts of this reform (the "Framework Regulations" n.2052/88 and the "Coordination Regulations" n.4253/88 articulated - as is well-known - the general objective of a greater economic and social cohesion (and therefore also those objectives of reducing the differences between regions and the backwardness of the less-favoured regions), in five general sub-objectives:

1. promoting the development and structural adjustment of the regions whose development is lagging behind; (this objective concerns seven countries, in whole or in part, and covers something like 21.5% of the population of the Community, without considering the further enlargement extending to the territories of what was the Democratic Republic of Germany);
2. converting the regions, frontier regions or parts of regions (including employment areas and urban communities), seriously affected by industrial decline; (this objective concerns 60 regions, in whole or in part, and covers roughly 16% of the Community population);
3. combating long term unemployment;
4. facilitating the occupational integration of young people;
5. and, with a view to a reform of the Common Agricultural Policy:
 - 5a) speeding-up the adjustment of agricultural structures

⁷As is known, it was a series of "Regulations" of the Council of Ministers dated 1988, and especially that of N.4253/88 and that of N.2052/88 which made provisions for the presentation in the logic of a passage from a project-based approach to a programme-based one - to the Commission on the part of the various member states of "plans", and in particular of "regional plans".

5b) promoting the development of rural areas; (this objective concerns 56 regions in whole or in part and some 5% of the population).

The first objective implied - as it always has - the conventional identification of regions "whose development is lagging behind" or, more simply, "backward regions".

As is well-known, the only indicator used was that of the GNP. The criterion has been to consider as "backward" those "regions" (assumed as such only those administrative regions traditionally classed as belonging to level II by the "nomenclature of the territorial units for statistics" - NUTS - which have, at least as far as the GNP is concerned, a totally debatable statistical significance) which present a GNP inferior to or in the vicinity of 75% of the Community average.

In this way, for the purposes of applying the funds destined for the first objective of the so-called "reform", the following have been considered "eligible":

- the entire national territories of Greece, Portugal and Ireland;
- the Italian "Mezzogiorno";
- 70% of the Spanish territory;
- Corsica and the French Overseas "DOM" territories and Northern Ireland.
- and lastly, the territory of eastern Germany (ex DDR)

On the basis of these five objectives, it was possible to intensify activity, defined as "planning and programming", which corresponded moreover to one of the three "inspiring principles" of the reform of the funds themselves⁸.

And thus were created the following:

- 18 plans for the first objective: one for each country except France which presented one for each of the eligible regions;
- 57 plans for the second objective;

⁸Such principles were (and still are):

that of "planning" (on the basis of plans submitted to the Commission by the member states (see art.8 Regulation 2052/88; art.5 Regulation 4253/88 and art.2 Regulation 4254/88);

that of "partnership" (between different institutions at different territorial levels) (see art.4 Regulation 2052/88);

that of "compatibility and coordination" (between the structural policy and the other Community policies and between the Funds) (see art.7 Regulation 2052/88 and the title of Regulation 4253/88).

For further information on the management of the reform of structural funds there are several exhaustive Commission documents: a "Guide to the reform of the Community's structural Funds" (EC, Commission, 1990a), and the "Annual Reports on the Application of the Reform of the Structural Funds" (EC, Commission, 1991a, 1992).

- 9 plans for the third and fourth objectives (excluding those countries already admitted under the first objective);
- 56 plans for objective 5b);

But even if, on the basis of these five objectives, a more satisfactory series of national and regional "plans" was created which led to an intensification of so-called "programming activity", it was difficult to appreciate *ex ante* - i.e. before the actual assigning of financial means - the "expected results" of the various plans proposed, or of the specific actions prescribed by these plans.

Thus it will be even more difficult to evaluate *ex post* the results obtained if they are not in some way measurable against "programme or planning parameters"; that is, if they have not already been hypothesized independently of the actual result achieved and with respect to the plan itself.

It can only be hoped that the procedures introduced by the so-called "structural funds reform", will encourage the Community - and by this the Commission and its offices - to better define *beforehand the terms of reference for the objectives to be reached*, with their application to the chosen territories and in relation to which the governments (national and/or local) have taken or would like to take the initiative of proposing or requesting intervention.

Naturally, the definitions proposed for the terms of reference to be adopted could be laid down through forms of partnership of the governments concerned, in a manner compatible with the safeguarding of the necessary operational efficiency.

In fact, too much consultation paralyses action; and an excess of negotiation with the relative organs often risks neutralising the initiative and the propositive efficacy of the Community organs. The indispensability of preventive terms of reference - essentially of a cognitive and indicative nature - could lead the Community organs into finding the right trade-off between "decision-sharing" and "decision-making" on a case by case basis.

It is, however, worth underlining that, only through a preventive definition of the terms of reference of the various projects, a definition which would therefore imply *indicative planning and programming* upstream, would it be possible to create a connection between evaluation of the results and analysis of the objectives, and therefore a real *programming*, worthy of the name, would be achieved.

4. **The Technical Conditions Needed for an Improved Management of the European Regional Development Fund and Other Structural Funds**

These improvements in planning methods can be expected through a gradual and patient improvement in the decision processes, if supported by appropriate study, reflection and the application of Decision Support Systems (DSS).

The use of these methods should in no way aim at substituting, but rather at "rationalizing", both the negotiation (national or international), and the decision-making autonomy of the *decision-makers*.

Improvement will not be a natural result of the passing of time, but rather the result of good will and commitment on behalf of politicians, officials and pressure groups working within the system under discussion.

But even from another point of view, improvements could be made in the programming of interventions promoted by structural funds. An improved *ad hoc* assessment of intervention needs, and of the priorities of the various interventions relating to the measured and identified objectives, necessarily leads to an improved qualification of the areas to receive intervention. Such an area can no longer be a generic definition of territory, but rather an area which is inherently and coherently connected with the specific objective to be reached. The territorial, or spatial, character will be expressed by the intervention itself, which will assume the objective of using to advantage resources only when such resources actually exist and only where they are susceptible to being so used; and not because they just happen to be a part of a generic territory considered in "backward" conditions.

Intervention, formulated as a circumstantiated deduction of the objectives to be reached, would lose all the features of a scattered intervention, of one of uncertain effectiveness and of that carried out for the sole reason that it was endowed with the necessary formal "requisites" which have been generically prescribed ("eligibility"). Each proposal for intervention will be evaluated according to "substantial" requisites: not only with a cost-effectiveness analysis in general, but with a cost-effectiveness where effectiveness is assessed as achievement of the specific objectives assigned to the programme or project in question.

When cost-effectiveness analysis is linked to a more organic planning process, the coordination and integration of different points of view by which the intervention is to be justified also becomes easier.

In the case of structural funds, the problem - as has been noted - is not only that of adapting the interventions to one of the five objectives stated

in the "overall regulation" of 1988 (already mentioned) but also to "other" objectives and making sure they are consistent with Community policy in general: e.g. do they respect the rules of fair competition? do they follow Community directives on public contract? and, last but not least, do they respect the environmental compatibility of the programmes and projects requested?

In this last case, in particular, respect for environmental compatibility can be ensured if the programmes and projects requested, come from an overall integrated planning, and are an operational deduction of selected programmes; these in fact - at the level of opportune territories - cannot have failed to take into consideration such compatibility.

On the other hand, only in this way can we respect the other fundamental principle which leads to European construction: the principle of "*subsidiarity*"; the Community should intervene with its own instruments only for projects of a European nature that could not be managed nor even conceived if not on a territorial European scale. In other words, projects that have a true European requisite, corresponding only to Community objectives; and projects corresponding to a common interest for the European citizen as a whole (including that of a social and economic cohesion).

Therefore the adoption of methods of programme and project evaluation, in the context of more vast and organic indicative European programming of the interventions, aimed at a greater degree of economic and social cohesion; it constitutes one of the essential components of a new and different way of conceiving this greater communitary "cohesion" in the framework of the European subsidiarity.

5. "Europe 2000": A New Approach to European Regional Policy

At the European level, a substantial change in regional policy, such as been here described and considered desirable, has been brought about as a result of the initiative taken by the Council of Ministers responsible for Regional Policies in giving birth to an evaluation of future territorial developments on a European scale. We refer here to the first meeting held in Nantes in 1989, followed later by that in Turin in 1990 and, recently the one in The Hague, held in November 1991, where it was decided - among other things - to give birth to an "Interministerial Committee for Special

Development", which should establish the guidelines for the new course regional policy is to take⁹.

In presenting the study prepared by the Commission to the Council at The Hague - a document entitled precisely "Europe 2000: Outlook for the Development of the Community's Territory"¹⁰ - the Commissioner Millan declares that *"Europe 2000 breaks new ground in regional planning at the European level..."* And after having reassured the luke-warm (towards Europe) and the diffident (towards planning) that *"This is no masterplan for Europe. ..."*, he adds: *"... It is clear, however, that there is a need - as borne out by this report, for more systematic cooperation between regional planners at the Community level and for policies and plans in fields*

⁹It would not be right to say that, even before Nantes (1989), there did not appear signs of a territorial policy of that type which today is more generally accepted. For example in a Communication of 3 June 1977 containing recommendations to the Council, entitled "Guidelines for a Community Regional Policy", the Commission putting together its objectives affirmed: *"Its comprehensive approach now places the Community regional policy in the perspective of Community land use planning. In implementing the policy, the Commission will, particularly by means of the regional development programmes, make an effort to promote a rational use of space, a balanced distribution of activities over the whole Community territory and effective "* (see EEC, Commission, *Community regional policy: New Guidelines*, Bulletin of European Communities, Suppl. 2/27, p.7). But despite these wonderful intentions 12 years were necessary before being able to begin discussion (at Nantes) of territorial planning and even today we are still at the stage of very general studies. It would moreover be very unjust if we failed to remember in this regard the intense and constant action taken in this direction for over twenty years at the heart of the Council of Europe, especially by the "Conference of Ministers responsible for Territorial Planning" (CEMAT). Right from the first CEMAT Conference (Bonn 1970) the "priority objectives" of a "common policy for territorial planning" were defined; and first amongst these was that of "reducing the historical imbalance between the industrial and the urban centre of gravity in north-eastern Europe and the outlying regions, with weaker structures and in a state of economic backwardness". But already in the fourth Conference (Vienna 1978) there was the decision to draw up a "European Map for Territorial Planning" (a decision which was definitively approved in the sixth Conference, at Torremolinos, in Spain, in 1983; and in the fifth Conference (London 1980) it was decided to examine the possibility of drawing up a "European Schema for Territorial Planning" (presented at the eighth session of the CEMAT at Lausanne, 1988 - see CEMAT, 1991). In other words, overall, the work carried out by the CEMAT, of which all 12 corresponding Ministers of the EEC Council are members, is much more advanced than that of the EEC, and it is not clear why in this latter context governmental resistance to a common territorial policy should be greater than in the context of the Council of Europe (since common sense would lead to think the contrary, given the greater integration of the EEC with respect to the Council of Europe!).

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities, Directorate General for Regional Policy, *Europe 2000: Outlook for the Development of the Community's Territory*, (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament), Brussels-Luxembourg, 1991 (EC, Commission 1991b).

such as transport or energy to be considered from a regional development point of view. Throughout the Community there is growing interest in the wider European dimension to regional planning. Europe 2000 is a first effort to provide planners with some of the information they need in a reference framework which is Community-wide rather than national or regional. ..."

Therefore, if it is true that "Europe 2000" represents the *first effort* at giving a truly European dimension to regional policy, then it also coincides with our assumption that up until now European regional policy did not have that dimension; and (our assumption) that without this territorial approach on an European scale (this is the thesis which we try to sustain and which the Author has sustained for a long time) the very efficacy itself of traditional interventions in strengthening economic and social cohesion is indeed very limited.

Europe 2000, therefore, represents an approach to European regional policy, which is correct at last, though still in the state of *in fieri*, and it represents by itself one of the clearer and more explicit forms of implementation of the subsidiarity principle.

The first document presented by the Commission at The Hague is a set of descriptive territorial evaluations, but contains a few "guidelines" on the desirable developments which are pursuable through a territorial policy at the European level. While it is becoming more impellent to create a connection between *this new approach to territorial policy* and the use of existing conventional instruments for regional policy, namely the use of structural funds. Even the reform introduced regarding the use of these funds in 1988 is more based on the old approach rather than on this new one.

Without a further development of the guidelines for the new territorial policy on the European scale (which in the document "Europe 2000" is still largely absent and which it is hoped the newly-formed "Committee on Spatial Development" will follow-up) there are no more precise methods, than those adopted since the reform of the funds in 1988, for evaluating the plans, programmes, and projects capable of being funded by the structural funds.

In the following paragraphs, we will again reemphasize the character of these changes in approach from a regional policy to a new territorial policy, and we will try to give a further contribution towards the orientation to be given to the definition of the new guidelines for territorial policy (on a Community level).

6. A "Single" Territory

The change in the general lines of the European Regional Policy, which we have just discussed in the previous paragraphs (with its impact on further improvement in the rationale of the allocation of structural funds) requires a more detailed discussion of its conceptual basis and its actual formulation. And, as before, such a discussion should aim at rendering it less indirect and generic, and more direct and "programme-oriented", and at rendering it in such a way more in line with the subsidiarity principle ("Don't do anything that can be done in a sufficient way by the States members and do only that which can be done in a better way at a Community scale, because of the size and outcome of the considered action").

As far as concerns exchange, flow of goods, money and financial services, the creation of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) will bring European countries more closely together. This will only emphasise still further the need to conceive Community policies in terms of being united and integrated, if economic and social cohesion is to be effective.

What should the guidelines of a reform of the European regional policy of the 90's be, in order to truly achieve the objective of greater economic and social cohesion?

If the Community effectively become a *single market* for goods, finances, capital, investment and currency (with the creation of a single monetary unit), and if progress is made with the so-called "Political Union", there does not seem to be any reason why the Community could not also be conceived as a *"single territory"*, *regulated and controlled by a single legal and regulatory system*, so as to ensure - as well as an effective economic and social cohesion - conditions of equal competition and production.

In such a formulation, the "regional" policies of the different member countries should merge and become *the* "territorial" policy of the Community as a whole.

This policy - in a unitarian way, and through a process of negotiation with national and regional sovereignty and autonomy - should change in character: rather than defining generic regional requisites of "backwardness" (from which derive the suitability of financial transfer), it should assign functions, roles, protection, incentives and promotion to the different parts of the territory. All this could not be realized without first identifying a *"system of territorial objectives"*, each of which has been carefully studied, comparatively assessed and selected by all at the Community level, and appropriately negotiated with States and Regions.

At the Community level this "territorial policy" could take the same form that it has taken in the European country which has been less inclined to an excess of centralized public power and whose constitution is more "federal" than the others: the Federal Republic of Germany. In this country in 1975 - after some years of negotiation between the federal government and the laender governments - a "programme of territorial order" was deliberated (*raumordnung programme*) which represented (according to the writer) historically the most advanced form of State-Regional cooperation for the real management of the territory¹¹.

This German model constitutes in fact the least legal, least imposing, but the one which is the most coherent and "cognitive" of regulations and of reference of all free interventions on the territory: both as far as concerns the blue-print planning by experts and the "plurality" of decision-making by private and public operators. These latter, are in fact destined to increase rather than diminish, in the progressively free competition and exercise of private and public and semi-public profit or non-profit making enterprise.

Territorial order is a guarantee of, rather than a threat to, the efficiency of free enterprise for any economic operator, be it public or private. And territorial order at Community level is also a guarantee of free competition and equality of conditions between economic operators in the member states who operate in a single market.

At the European level, on what should this "territorial- order" be based?

7. A Single System of Concepts and Indicators Concerning the Territory

Above all it should be based on a common *concept* and *language*.

When one talks of urban quality, or "urban effect", or protection of the environment, it is important to refer to common and well-defined concepts; otherwise the relationship between a commonly-elaborated policy, or commonly-applied interventions and the expected results will be interpreted differently because the concept from which they started will have been different.

¹¹BRD, Federal Ministry of Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development (1975). A good survey (but today largely outdated) of the policies for territorial ordering in European countries was conducted by the Commission of the EEC (DGXVI) in 1975 (EC, Commission, 1975). It would be recommendable to carry out a new one at the earliest opportunity.

If one is to define what is the "urban function", and the requisites for a better quality of urban life, it is necessary to ensure that these concepts result from a common effort to define these conventionally.

If one is to intervene to protect an area of natural environmental importance (and even more so if these areas are to be defined areas of "European", rather than just national, regional, or local, interest) thus it is desirable that basic concepts which lead to the individualisation of such areas, should have been defined and agreed by all the states *together*: moreover, it would be wise, not to deviate too radically from analogous conceptual devices, which in some fields have arisen from a combination of scientific and cultural knowledge, on a different geographical scale: eg: Council of Europe, OECD, United Nations, UNESCO and other international agencies for scientific and cultural promotion.

If one is to establish infrastructural "axes" of European interest, then it is essential that the concepts of European "interest" be defined with homogeneous criteria at European level.

The first task of a European Territorial Policy oriented at a greater degree of economic and social cohesion should be therefore that of defining in common a "*system of social indicators related to the territory and its use*". Such a system would constitute a common language, founded on common parameters (either qualitative or quantitative) based in their turn on common measurements and evaluations.

This system of social indicators¹², relating to the territory and its use, would essentially be structured in the following three categories: urban, environmental and infra-structural which would correspond respectively to the three facets of a single territorial policy and its use.

This common definition of a system of social indicators relating to the territory and its use can only be implemented by the Community itself, and in particular by the Commission.

Obviously, the usual recommendation is that this definition be implemented with the collaboration of experts with a certain awareness of the different national conditions and "cultures"; and that it be ratified by decisional organs which equally represent the different national governments. But all this is organic and structurally present in the EEC. (It is therefore unbelievable how often it is reported that in Brussels they fail to take into account the autonomy and the decisional participation of the individual national authorities, when these dominate the scene in a form which is almost hegemonic!).

¹²The most well-known and general work of establishing a system of social indicators was carried out in more than one attempt during the 1960s and the 1970s by the OECD, and then deplorably interrupted (OECD, 1973, 1974, 1976 and 1980).

8. A "Territorial Framework" To Be Used as Reference for European Regional Policy

In addition to the system of social indicators relating to the territory, which constitute the basis of a common conceptualisation, its first application to real communitary territory could be performed upon all those *territorial* realities and phenomena which are of strong and unequivocal European interest.

In other words, what is intended by a "first application" of the system of indicators mentioned above, applied to the real concrete European territory - at least for some of those phenomena which are particularly evident in respect of their common European interest - is the following.

8.1 *A Network of "Urban Regions or Territorial Functional Systems" Used as a Reference in Measuring the Needs of the "City-Effect"*

The "urban" indicators - as usually considered - will tell us what are the *minimum requirements* of the urban services, and of the cultural, managerial, recreational and economic opportunities in such a way that it will be possible to say that we are benefitting from a "city-effect" which is satisfactory for all European citizens (and this is the very foundation of greater economic and social cohesion). If further it is considered that such a city-effect cannot be achieved but for certain specific conditions or for certain minimum levels of population and users, then nothing discourages and everything indeed suggests that the Community itself (and on its behalf the Commission) should study and propose *how to structure and aggregate today's different urban locations in new "urban functional systems" capable of satisfying these minimum requirements.*

This should be a first base of reference for measuring the level of urban well-being and city-effect between comparable units of urban settlements and population; units which represent the same characteristics and the same functions at the outset. We have already talked of European "urban systems" or "urban regions" in the phase of study and analysis: it would be advisable if one could come to propose that the networks of such systems be in some way concretely mapped in the European Territorial Framework, with a view to programming the interventions, in such a way as to evaluate the deficiency of urban services and the conditions necessary for the city-effect, as lines on which to direct the policies of intervention, but in territo-

rial units which are significant and comparable¹³. More of this in Archibugi (1985); see also Klaassen (1978), Paelinck, ed. (1978), Drewett *et al* (1992), European Institute of Urban Affairs (1992), Cheshire *et al* (1986).

8.2 *A Mapping of the Principal Land-Use Aims to be Planned*

If the principles (and connected indicators) of environmental safeguarding (fixed by the system of common indicators mentioned above) suggest that the territory be used according to criteria which respect the different intended vocations, then everything suggests that the Community itself (and on its behalf the Commission) studies and proposes an approximate classification of *the aimed use of the territory*: for example that they indicate the areas of particular European interest which should be marked for specific operations of conservation of nature and/or landscape; the areas which in virtue of their properties (or absence of properties) most lend themselves to receiving activities with a great negative impact on the environment (large industrial complexes with pollution, energy plants, etc.); the areas which being the sites of certain resources should be prohibited from certain usages and should instead be made available for others, such as hydro-geological constraints (hydric faults), fluvial and lake margins, forests, conservation of the soil and of the coasts, geological risks of various types etc.)¹⁴. More of this in Para. 9 and in Archibugi (1982b).

¹³ For some time the concept of "urban network" at Community scale has become widespread. "Europe 2000" (cited in the previous chapter) has made it the subject of a special chapter in its latest document (EC, Commission 1991b) dedicated precisely to the "development of a Community urban system". And the Dutch government, at the same meeting in The Hague in November 1991, presented a report entitled "Urban Network in Europe" (Netherlands Physical Planning Agency, 1991). Many other studies have been carried out on this subject some of which were carried out on behalf of the Commission of the EC.

¹⁴ It is obviously a question of choosing the level of approximation (and perhaps of scale) with which these indications should be made. Some indications in this direction have been gathered in the works (already pointed out in Para. 5) of the "European Conference of Ministers responsible for Physical Planning" (CEMAT), which are performed in the framework of the Council of Europe. What is here asserted regarding the contents of the desired Territorial Framework of reference, also applies equally well to what has been decided in the heart of the council of Europe concerning a "European Schema for Territorial Planning". Despite the fact that the *guidelines* set down by the CEMAT (Council of Europe) have been till now far more forthcoming and far more advanced than the works carried out within the EEC, it is about time that in this latter body the works of the CEMAT be "overtaken" in the direction indicated, in as much as the political-institutional context, and the very number of the member countries, should be far more favourable

8.3 *A Network of the Principal Transport and Communication Infrastructures of European Interest*

If one considers that an improvement in the system of transport on a European scale is an essential factor for greater economic and social cohesion, above all in order to offer and supply equal conditions of access to the peripheral regions of the Community, then certainly everything suggests that the Community itself (and on its behalf the Commission) should study, design and propose a *network* of essential transport and communications which can function as a guideline to the national and community interventions to be undertaken in the field of transport and communication infrastructures¹⁵.

With all this one would achieve the construction of a "Territorial Framework of reference" for a regional and territorial policy, as well as an "environmental" one, on an European scale, agreed upon by the different countries and constructed in a homogeneous, harmonic and comparable manner.

This so-called "Territorial Framework of reference" which the Italian Minister for the Environment has in recent months been putting together on a national Italian scale¹⁶ - would serve as an instrument for assessing the *conformity* of programmes and regional development projects, as well

towards an efficacious integration of intent and mutual coordination, within the EEC rather than in the Council of Europe.

A very important chance for this "overtaking" was provided by the Maastricht Treaty in as far as it enriched the scope of community competence in the field of environmental policy (Title VII, which became XVI in the new Treaty), giving to the Council the possibility of emanating directives concerning "*les mesures concernant l'aménagement du territoire, l'affectation des sols... la gestion des ressources hydrauliques*", (Art. 130S, comma 2). This point is very important and opens new horizons for community territory policy, which it is necessary now to enrich in content.

¹⁵After many years (more than ten) of requests for the conception of a financial instrument to promote large infrastructure projects of European interest (and after a proposal made by the Commission in 1986 for an *ad hoc* Fund) finally in 1989 a first 3-Year (1990-1992) Programme of action was put under way - a programme which allowed the Community to financially distribute to infrastructural transportation projects of European interest. But a mapping of the priorities which can favour a greater economic and social cohesion is still not clear. See the Commission's pamphlet "*Transport in Europe*" (EC, Commission, 1991c).

¹⁶In this regard the reader is referred to: *Ministero dell'Ambiente e Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche* (1990). See also Archibugi (1992).

as of the various economic, productivity and infrastructural investments, with an overall plan for development and use of European environmental and territorial resources. It would also serve to assess the conformity and compatibility of not only community programmes, but also national programmes to general social, economic and environmental objectives on an European scale¹⁷.

9. The Contents of the Territorial Framework To Be Used as a Reference

In order to demonstrate what the possible contents of such a "territorial framework" might be, we will now list here the most important phenomena, useful for the policy-orientated guide-lines of use of the territory and for the determination of territorial policies, which should be "mapped":

1. A map of the "urban systems" or "urban regions", on a European scale, on which one is able to compare the different socio-economic and environmental levels of well-being and to recommend adequate policies aimed at bridging the deficiencies and shortcomings with respect to certain minimum European standards¹⁸.

¹⁷ This is also the orientation of the "Council of Ministers for regional policies and territorial planning", which, in a preliminary document of the Commission on "Europe 2000", affirmed that the approach chosen was that of not proposing a *Master Plan* but a territorial *Framework of Reference* (see EC, Commission, *Europe 2000*, etc., p.35, 1991b).

¹⁸ In "Europe 2000", this map has been drafted only for what concerns the "actual" situation (see Chapter on: "the development of an Community Urban System"). A praiseworthy effort has certainly been made in defining the *same* phenomenon on an European scale using methods capable of guaranteeing homogeneous readings. But this effort is insufficient. The territorial frame work must also indicate the territorial "guidelines" for the future development of the European urban system, not only following the methods which ensure homogeneous readings (which is an essential requisite for any comparability), but also following homogeneous methods for the determination of the territorial objectives of growth of the urban systems (obviously not ignoring constraints, tendencies, intrinsic dynamics, etc.).

Some years ago, the Commission of the EC promoted research projects (EC Commission, 1987b) which went beyond defining European "functional urban regions" (Fur, *Functional Urban Regions*), the lines along which the map of which we are talking should develop its characteristics of a programming nature. A praiseworthy, but insufficient, attempt to fix the strategic criteria in this regard has been made in the report on the "European Schema for Territorial Planning" recently compiled in the framework of the CEMAT (CEMAT 1991, see page 116 and following).

2. A map of urban use of the territory, of its classifications, and of the policies that it is advisable to adopt for each of them, regarding habitative density, traffic, and social and environmental infrastructure¹⁹.
3. A map of the different "areas of natural interest" and of the different types of conservation and management which might be recommended for each of them²⁰.
4. A map of the territories with a touristic "vocation" due to landscaping and naturalistic factors and which are to be preserved for intensive developments of other productive activities, and which are to be marked for a gradual environmental and historico-cultural recovery.
5. A map of the usage potentialities of the different coastal areas and sea-fronts with an indication of the policies and the interventions to be adopted for a desirable management of each of them.
6. A map of the different areas of high industrial concentration with an indication of the policies of reconversion and management which it is advisable to apply to each type.
7. A map of the areas according the different capacity of agricultural land-use of the soil from the point of view of environmental protection.
8. A map of the forest areas indicating their respective function of usage according to criteria of optimisation of the impact on the environment.
9. A map of the different agricultural areas according to their polluting potential with an indication of the desirable policies of reconversion and management for each respective area typology.
10. A map of the territories subject to natural risk, to allow a common classification of such risk, and a common classification of the usage constraints to be applied to such territories.
11. A map of the hydric potentialities and of the different typologies of intervention and safeguards appropriate to each area defined.
12. A map of the areas according to the different environmental climate characteristic.
13. A map of the functional network of the transport systems of European interest, as they apply to a policy of greater socio-economic cohesion²¹.

Among the literature available on this specific theme are found the works of Hall and Hay (1980), and a study conducted by the Commission of the EC by the "Fere Consultants" group (1991) on the "middle-sized cities" in Europe and their role.ó

¹⁹On this point there is work of the Corine Programme (EC, 1989, 1990b) which should be followed-up and strengthened.

²⁰As an application of a proposal made under the direction of the Council (Com-88-381 final).

²¹Some works of the Commission (DgVII) have gone in this direction.

14. A map of the network of technological infrastructures of "European interest", functional in developing a policy of greater socio-economic cohesion (one thinks of energy-ducts: electricity and hydrocarbons, etc. and structures of communications and telecommunications).

These, and other eventual "maps" which might prove useful, would constitute a "Framework" of reference for evaluating the conformity of numerous projects and programmes of territorial interventions - effected on a European or national scale, or even at a local (regional) level - with a programme of "greater socio-economic cohesion", a conformity which would be guaranteed by an optimal destination of usage of the European territorial resources.

10. From the Regional Policy to a New Territorial Policy

The system of territorial indicators and the territorial Framework of reference for the interventions are two of the instruments of "evaluation" which concern the *territorial and regional conditions* of a greater economic and social cohesion. In fact they are two instruments which derive essentially from a renewed conception of regional policy, which we have summarily described with the phrase: "from the regional policy to a new territorial policy".

In this renewed conception, the regional policy is no longer considered as a policy of "compensation" for the damages that a greater degree of economic and monetary integration (for example the EMU) might bring to the more backward regions of the Community. Nor is the regional policy any longer considered to be directed *exclusively* to particular regions of the Community (the "eligible" regions)²²: those regions which represent - in their undifferentiated territory - some particular "indicators of backwardness" (whose measurement is always more problematic, as will be explained in the next paragraph without a consideration of the real nature, of the state and of the destinations of the territories in question).

The regional policy, in its renewed conception, assumes instead the character of a "spatial" policy, of a "territorial" policy - as it is called. And as such it is no longer aimed at particular regions of the Community, but at the *whole territory*, according to its different properties and specifications and according to the priorities that such properties and specifications dictate. Such a policy is therefore aimed, rather than at indistinct regions, at

²²This is still the optic of certain studies promoted by the Commission; for example that performed by "Columbus Associates" on "*Regional Implications of Economic and Monetary Union*" (Columbus Associates, 1991).

specific areas of the territory in as much as it is - on the whole - articulated according to its different typologies (the abovementioned properties and specifications) of areas: typologies which are naturally to be defined in common, with common criteria, on a Community-wide scale²³.

From all this there follows also a renewal in the conception of the relationships between regional policy (and use of its instruments, for example the ERDF at Community level) and a policy for economic and social cohesion.

Previously, in the *old concept*, in the framework of the old regional policy, economic and social cohesion was seen essentially as the product of the tendency for the generic indicators (the Gnp in practice), of the regions defined as "least favoured", to approach the *European average* for those same indicators.

Now, in the *new concept*, cohesion becomes the product of a complex operation of "*common evaluation*" of the destined usage of the territory and of the tendency for the individual indicators (urban, environmental, social etc.) to approach *European standards* which have been defined for each phenomenon that is considered significant and comparable on a Community basis.

We are therefore talking of a new conception of "cohesion" which is more complex, but also less vague and misleading; and certainly scientifically more correct.

A territorial policy (seen as a renewed version of the "old-style" regional policy) comes to the aid of this more correct assessment of "cohesion", through its conceptual definition and practical delimitations (applied to the real Community territory) of those territorial "units" - called "territorial-urban systems" or "urban regions" - of which we have talked in the preceding paragraphs. Units which allow a comparison to be made of the data which concerns them (and which are not just the product of some occasional and casual administrative delimitation which the history of the member countries has handed down to us!).

And, moreover, it is in this very sense that the problem of "accounting" of economic and social cohesion is to be posed.

²³This new optic is present in many official documents. It has already been said that "Europe 2000" tends towards this renewed conception of regional policy. The document which however explains most clearly the contrast between the two conceptions is not that of the European Community, but that of the Council of Europe. In particular, in the already-mentioned report compiled by the CEMAT, both "approaches" to European territorial planning are amply described: the "*regional*" approach and the "*guiding image*" approach which regards the settlement equilibrium and the functional network of activities which conform to a rational "use of the territory" (see CEMAT, 1991, p.69-172).

11. "Accounting" of Economic and Social Cohesion

If one wants to *measure* the state of economic and social cohesion (or of non-cohesion) then one must use appropriate "units of measurement" or "indicators". And moreover one must apply them to appropriate statistical units of territorial survey.

Up until now cohesion has been measured on the basis of certain generic indicators (in practice only on the GNP) and moreover for large administrative units (countries and regions) of little significance as territorial units for data-collection.

It is more than ever before opportune that the Community (and on its behalf the Commission) should begin to seriously study and propose a "system of accounting of economic and social cohesion" founded on:

- appropriate statistical units (the territorial-urban systems mentioned above);
- distinct indicators for the different services and phenomena which constitute environmental well-being.

In this way a policy of intervention could be concretely oriented towards the real needs and the real drawbacks of each territorial-urban system with respect to the corresponding Community standards.

Such a system of accounting, so performed, is an indispensable prerequisite for a new regional policy of the type outlined here²⁴.

12. Territorial Policy and Social Policy

The outline of a new territorial policy, as a concrete means of management of the traditional objectives of a regional policy, and as a correct way of conceiving a "greater economic and social cohesion", has a direct bearing on the objectives of a social Community policy, at least on that part of those objectives which regard the quality of life (social services, housing, health and education etc.).

In fact there are some social needs whose most appropriate dimensions are bound to "residential" conditions and therefore to a "territorial-urban system" of programmatic reference which we have already described; it also constitutes one of the most efficient means of measuring the actual

²⁴The territorial dimension of the new "European Economic Accounting" is strongly envisaged in recent works by Stuart Holland (1987 and 1990).

state of economic and social cohesion between the different territories of the Community.

Other social needs, however, can be measured without an appropriate statistical territorial unit of reference. They cannot therefore be reduced to territorial comparisons, or they might concern any unit of comparison (be it family, geographic area, village, town of whatever size, region, country, continent, etc.).

Economic and social "cohesion", in this latter case, takes on the aspect of coordination and harmonisation of different social policies.

This harmonisation and coordination together give the "cohesion" an "indirect" contribution: and this time it cannot be criticised because it is not possible to do otherwise. In this case, "cohesion" should be intended as *a common mode of operation*, rather than in the sense of a *common level of well-being and of living conditions*. Cohesion - in this case - is to be intended as cohesion in the manner of conceiving the role of the state, of civil society, of the single operators, all of which can be translated into common methods of management and common institutional formulae²⁵.

It is what we will call "societal policy" (and not "social", exactly because we wish to distinguish it from the conventional approach of the latter).

This type of cohesion should be analysed under the profile of the management forms of the following aspects:

- the management of the relationship between the state and non-statal social initiative;
- the management of the operational programmes and projects aimed at cohesion itself and - more generally - those general processes of "management of public decision-making", above all in the fields of public expenditure, of destination of the territory, and of social regulation.

In both cases we are talking of cohesion between the manner in which to implement, or introduce, processes of evaluation and the corresponding social programming.

Economic and social cohesion - in this sense- is no longer a cohesion of the material conditions of life, but rather of the ways of conceiving the functioning of society and of social progress itself.

²⁵Since the "differences" in the manner of conceiving such questions can also be found between groups, classes and parties even within a single country, greater cohesion between the different countries at Community level must take the shape of greater cohesion between the different "majorities" which might be formed in this or that country. It is inevitable that a reflection of all this will be seen in the European Parliament.

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