

The ‘Territorial Agenda of the European Union’ as a turning point in the European territorial cohesion policies

İclal Kaya Altay¹ and Shqiprim Ahmeti²

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Abstract

It is considered that, albeit implicit, the EU has had an implicit territorial approach from its inception. Europe’s economic geography is characterized by large regional disparities directly affecting its territoriality. Response to disparities is regional policy, now called cohesion policy. The concerns on how to tackle territorial dimension of EU policies more systematically made way for an EU territorial cohesion policy. Everything finalized with ‘Territorial Agenda of the European Union, followed by The First Action Programme. This paper is structured by a descriptive language while deduction method is used. It refers to official documents as well as books, articles and assessments related to topic. The scope of this paper covers, besides the Agenda itself, background of Territorial Agenda of EU including territorial cohesion thinking.

Keywords: Territorial Agenda, Territorial Cohesion, Cohesion Policy, Territoriality

1. Introduction

Removing barriers by forming a customs union and establishing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which is considered as one of the main funding streams of the EU certainly show that, to paraphrase Faludi (2009), ‘the EU has had an implicit territorial agenda from its inception’. All these developments make many researchers to consider that, in terms of its aim and objectives, EU Cohesion Policy as such is not new. However, Albrechts (1997) stresses that the planning going on at European level is ‘implicit, fragmented, uncoordinated and dispersed in many sectoral policies. Confirming this statement of Albrechts, Healey (2006) states that the ‘struggle to establish a territorial focus in a government landscape traditionally organized around functional “sectors”... lies at the core of episodes in strategic spatial planning in Europe.’ However, ‘the search for “territorial” or “area” “integration” means a “disintegration” from some sector priorities, in order to be able to “see” an issue from the angle of the interrelations of activities in particular places.’ This is why Faludi (2009) thinks that the battle lines are thus drawn in the seminal struggle of planning with the sectors over the coherence, in a spatial or territorial sense, of policies. In order to counteract spatial imbalances, the ESDP (CEC. 1999) proposes polycentric development and it is obvious that this is continuing to be part of European Commission’s new thinking. A balanced and sustainable development, invoked in the subtitle of the ESDP, refers to polycentric development, a development model which would provide equality to everybody. It is considered that ESDP brings together a number of different policies and identifies where investment is needed, aiming to assure more balanced systems on town or cities.

¹ Asc.Prof.Dr., MSFAU Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Istanbul, Turkey, iclalkaya@yahoo.com

² Urban Planner, Msc, shqiprim_@hotmail.com

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It is important to stress that the ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective) also addresses the competitiveness of Europe. The strategy in the ESDP and its follow-ups aim to have global economic integration zones develop outside the "pentagon". Thus, it is considered that the ESDP foreshadowed territorial cohesion thinking in EU. However, even though Faludi (2004) considers that 'making and applying the ESDP is an example of Europeanisation' of spatial planning, one should know that the ESDP is not an EU document, and it is same for the Territorial Agenda (in full: Territorial Agenda of the European Union Towards a More Competitive and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions). This is why in both instances; the ministers of the member states gave their blessing at informal meetings called 'Ministerial'. Relating to this topic, Evers & Tennekes (2016) state that 'as the only spatial policy at the EU level consists of the non-binding informal ESDP and the intergovernmental created Territorial Agenda, which is more like a political manifesto than real policy'. As known, planning systems in EU are typically driven by national policies while, according to Newman & Thornley (2002), "each country has its own set of ideas about 'town and country planning', 'aménagement du territoire', or 'raumordnung'". Member states deny the EU the competence for dealing with spatial or territorial matters, this has led to a compromise which made the ESDP a legally non-binding document. In its official document the ESDP is defined as 'a legally non-binding document, a policy framework for better cooperation between Community sector policies with significant impacts and between member states, their regions and cities' (CEC, 1999). As result, being a non-binding document, it is considered that ESDP is not taken it very seriously. Conceivably, though, as regards the competence issue, the Territorial Agenda marks a turning point (Faludi, 2009) and this is important for EU territorial cohesion policies.

1.1. Pre-Discussions

Husson (2002), addressing its forgotten territorial dimension, discusses about a 'Europe without territory' (L'Europe sans territoire)— but; what a 'Europe with territory' would mean is not easy to say. On the other hand, not just planning with its controversial competence issue, but European integration generally is being considered as a contested field. The contest is between advocates of more integration and defenders of national sovereignty. As known, the EU is a product of the member states giving up specific powers or 'competences', otherwise, member states regulate their own affairs. However, it is still difficult to consider that policies remain unaffected by European integration and this is same for spatial planning. Even though it has a unique experience of integration, as an international treaty-based organization the EU seems like any regional association. One should consider that all these make the planning subject difficult, adding the fact that, to paraphrase Faludi (2009), 'the planning object is no longer a clearly delineated territory, nor the area for which that subject has a legal mandate and political responsibility'. Since territory is becoming somewhat elusive as a concept, what is the meaning of pursuing the coherence of all relevant measures as they relate to it? Critically examining European spatial planning leads one to ask fundamental questions about spatial planning as such (Faludi, 2009).

2. Territorial cohesion thinking and EU territorial cohesion policy

As said above it is considered that the EU has had an implicit territorial agenda from its inception and the view of planning as promoting development has played a role in European inte-

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gration from the start. Thus, the Spaak Report (named after the Belgian foreign minister Paul-Henri Spaak) laying the foundations of the Treaty of Rome, advocated support for regional development, also highlighting the need for coordination between existing and future regional plans (Faludi: 2009). Treaty of Rome, had proposed two instruments: a fund for financing measures necessary for regions affected by the Common Market to adapt; and an investment fund explicitly oriented towards the development of less favored regions; however, the Treaty of Rome went no further than declaring in the preamble that the member states were anxious 'to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the less favored regions' (EEC Treaty, 1957).

As known, Europe's economic geography is characterized by large regional disparities, which directly affect its territoriality. Accepting new members from Central and Eastern Europe has moved disparities center stage to Central and Eastern Europe (The last EU enlargement of 2000-2006) with the most of the funds under the 'convergence' objective going to these regions. Response to disparities is regional policy, now called cohesion policy. While the concerns of nation states for unbalanced development have been reflected in the monitoring of regional policies since the Second World War, funding for European regional policy does not exist until the mid-1970s. This was only possible with joining of United Kingdom, together with Denmark and Ireland to the Union. If the amount of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) had increased at a reasonable level, it would have been possible after the European Act of 1986 under the Structural Funds. 1986 Single European Act aim to economic and social cohesion of EU.

When it comes to disparities in Eastern Europe's regions Faludi (2009) states that 'when the Iron Curtain fell, the French understood immediately that the center of gravity in Europe was about to shift east. This was at a time when the position of DATAR had become precarious...Datar was looking for a new rationale of its existence and found this by conceptualizing the situation of the French territory in the emergent European context. It is in this context that the blue banana saw the light of day. The blue banana is a French concept from the late 1980s'. What follows is recasting that ESDP made to the blue banana by recasting it into the pentagon London-Paris-Milan-Munich-Hamburg and identifying it as the only 'global economic integration zone' of the EU. Used to be called the '20-40-50 pentagon', the pentagon area covered 20% of the territory, 40% of the population and 50% of total GDP of EU. If we consider these zones in context of territoriality and globalization, Sassen (2000) thinks that an interpretation of the impact of globalization as creating a space economy that extends beyond the regulatory capacity of a single state is only half the story; the other half is that these central functions are disproportionately concentrated in the national territories of the highly developed countries. Further, Cabus & Hess (2010) elaborate this issue by stressing that it is considered that global territorial competition is reinforcing individual cities and regions by developing complementary networks between one another (Castells, 1993), while there is also the institutional approach, in which the development within regions and nations of underlying public and private supporting networks for economic activities is the main accent for success in local economic development (Cooke, 1993). In order to deal with such a concentration of economic activity, the ESDP aimed to promote polycentric development by encouraging the growth of global economic integration zones outside this European core. Finally, there are 'costs of non-coordination' of the sector policies' incoherence that regard space. Dealing with this, ESDP aims to fit policies into some

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overall spatial framework and this is its classic spatial planning message. According to Faludi (2009), within this context, those responsible for national, regional and local planning should formulate strategies or spatial visions, while the call for integrated strategies is a key message of the ESDP. The capacity to do so is part of what is being described as 'territorial capital' in the scoping document of the 25-member states of the EU preparing the 'Territorial state and perspectives of the European Union' to be discussed below.

We should stress the fact that European Parliament continues to be supportive of spatial planning or territorial cohesion policy. It has given favorable opinions on the ESDP, as same as it did with Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter.

When it comes to post 2000 developments; the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe says in Art. I-3 that the Union 'shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States', and Art. III-14 (The policies and functioning of the Union) lists territorial cohesion as a shared competence of the EU and the Member States (Faludi, 2006). Related to this, Medeiros (2016) considers that, although the Cohesion Policy of EU, with the main goal of promoting a more cohesive EU territory from a socioeconomic perspective, operates since 1988 and its 'territorial dimension' was always present in several elements, it was only after signing the Lisbon Treaty (2009) that its scope was formally broadened by the inclusion of the territorial dimension of cohesion, alongside the social and economic dimensions. Territorial cohesion can also be found in Art. 36 on services of general economic interest of the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights - adopted at the Nice European Council in 2000- and this make researchers to consider that, albeit weak, there would be a basis for territorial cohesion policy even if the Constitution were to disappear without trace.

Faludi (2006) states that during Michel Barnier's term as European Commissioner for regional policy, the Commission invoked territorial cohesion as if it were already an area of EU policy, and it reflected on the second Cohesion Report (CEC, 2001a) which devoted a whole chapter to this issue. It followed by the 'Interim Territorial Cohesion Report' based on the work of the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON). Even though there is no official definition of what territorial cohesion means, Faludi (2006) considers that the message repeated over and over again is that it complements the economic and social cohesion goal and harmonious and balanced development of the Union as stated in the Treaty. In the other hand, the Lisbon Strategy aims to turn Europe into the most competitive area of sustainable growth in the world and it is considered that the Territorial cohesion policy should contribute to it.

2.1. EU territorial cohesion policy

Considered as a French concept, the territorial cohesion made its first appearance in Art. 16 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) where the latter recalls 'the place that "economic services of general interest" have in the common values of the Union and the role they play in the promotion of social and territorial cohesion of the Union' (Faludi, 2009). Merits for this development belong to Michel Barnier from France, Commissioner for regional policy from 1999 to 2004.

Even though the Constitution did not give a definition of territorial cohesion (Faludi 2005) distinguishes four elements in it: the quest for equity, competitiveness, sustainability and good governance., while Waterhout (2008, pp. 94–122) talks similarly about four discourses in terri-

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territorial cohesion: 'Europe in balance', 'Competitive Europe', 'Green and clean Europe', and 'Coherent European policy', with the last storyline which is considered to relate to the rationale of spatial planning.

The goal is to ensure coordinated steps in these issues, coordination which at a minimum should prevent the counteracting of EU-funded projects. ESDP's 'spatial approach' subsumes all of it. Relating to the other three storylines also present in the ESDP, researchers do not see that much differences between the substance of territorial cohesion and spatial development policy. The White paper on European governance (CEC, 2001b) particularly recommends the ESDP for giving shape to the 'Coherent European Policy' discourse (Faludi, 2009), while the working group of the Commission services contributing to this white paper proposed an 'indicative, periodic strategic orientation document ... for the coordination of Community policies and their impact: the European Scheme of Reference for Sustainable Development and Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion'.

First draft of the Community strategic guidelines appeared in 2004, when Constitution in coming seemed to recognize the EU competences on territorial cohesion policy. At that time, cohesion policy reinvented itself as an instrument of the Lisbon Strategy, considered as a reflection of the Commission towards the 'Sapir Report' (Sapir et al., 2003) on EU economic governance, which claimed that payouts to less favored regions failed to enhance competitiveness.

3. An 'evidence-based' Document as Precursor of the Territorial Agenda

Faludi & Waterhout (2006) consider that the idea of invoking evidence of policies' impacts is an old one, with antecedents going back to Patrick Geddes and beyond but its current revival has been stimulated by 'New Labour' coming into power in the UK and pursuing a philosophy of 'what works is what matters' (Clarence, 2002). Even though the ESPON had been set up to provide the analytical base for amplifying the ESDP agenda, it did not get off the ground before 2002 under the umbrella of INTERREG. It firstly covered EU 15, then the EU 29 territory (27 EU Member states plus Norway and Switzerland) and from early 2008, ESPON 2013 operates under its new title 'European observation network for territorial development and cohesion' (ESPON, 2007). With enhanced funding and with its well-oiled machine, it is one of the fixtures in the substructure of the evolving EU territorial cohesion policy (Faludi, 2009). Under ESPON 2006, which was subject to the ERDF, projects came categories as below:

- Thematic studies relating to main ESDP themes, from polycentric development to natural and cultural heritage.
- Impact studies of EU-sector policies, from transport to pre-accession aid and programmes to promote development in countries with no immediate prospect, or no prospect at all, of joining—countries being the beneficiaries of what is called 'neighborhood policy'.
- Coordinating, so-called cross-thematic studies (Faludi, 2009).

Considering the impact studies serve the objective of demonstrating that, given their territorial impacts, sector policies had to be coordinated within some kind of spatial or territorial framework Faludi (2009) also considers the logic underlying the Territorial Agenda as an evidence-based document has, rather been that of objective, scientific information providing an unambiguous and thus unquestionable basis for action. In other side, considered as an important element in the 'learning machine' of European spatial planning, ESPON 2006 is also

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considered that it had created added value for the scientific community, but less so for practitioners. This brought out recommendations for ESPON to increase the value for them, to give more focus to the program and to tackle with topical problems by providing simple solutions to them.

4. The making of the territorial agenda

There was a series of Ministerial elaborating various drafts of the "Territorial Agenda" while all the process started with the Committee on Spatial Development, who had been involved in making the ESDP, convening in the margins of meetings and producing a document on 'Managing the territorial dimension of EU policies after enlargement' (Expert Document, 2003). It is important to stress that in that time the Constitution, comprising also the territorial cohesion policy, was about to take form.

A so-called scoping document - product of drafting group which worked under the auspices of the Coming Presidencies Group- formed the basis for what later became the document 'Territorial state and perspectives of the European Union' (Territorial State, 2007) and subsequently, the Territorial Agenda. The scoping document argued for territorial development policies to help areas to develop their 'territorial capital', with its substantive priorities focusing on strengthening polycentric development and urban-rural partnership, promoting clusters of competitive and innovative activities, strengthening trans-European networks etc.

Although the Territorial Agenda and the Territorial State and Perspectives processes were running in parallel, the attention was gradually shifting to the Territorial Agenda, various drafts of which defined it as a strategic document with concrete proposals for contributing to the Lisbon Strategy. The drafts also called the European Council to discuss the Territorial Agenda, during the Slovenian presidency in the spring of 2008. As known, spring councils are traditionally devoted to discussing progress of the Lisbon Strategy, and this is considered as the first time that territorial issues would receive attention from this distinguished assembly. Even though the drafts of the Territorial Agenda of late 2006 invited the Commission to publish a communication on territorial cohesion, the January 2007 draft no longer did so. The drafts also asked for measures to ensure that the territorial impact of EU and national policies be considered in policy making, amounting to a form of territorial impact assessment (TIA). Just to remember, it is considered by Faludi (2009) that in one form or another, TIA had been on the wish list since the days of the ESDP and ESPON had subsequently produced interesting proposals for relating TIA to various dimensions of territorial cohesion.

Expressing support for territorial cohesion policy under the Constitution, these drafts also identified the key actions for the future. These key actions, to summarize, relate to: Promoting more territorially coherent EU policies, the well-known basic rationale of spatial planning, More focusing in the ESPON 2013 program, Territorial issues to play a more prominent role in the context of the implementation of the national strategic reference frameworks and the mid-term evaluation of the Structural Funds programs 2007 -2013, as well as the national reform plans under the Lisbon Strategy and Reviewing the Territorial Agenda in 2010.

4.1. The Territorial Agenda, substantive policies and institutional proposals

The final Territorial Agenda document runs to 11 pages and comes in below mentioned four sections:

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- Section I: Future Task: Strengthening Territorial Cohesion, stating that tomorrow's territorial challenges need immediate attention.
- Section II: New Challenges: Strengthening Regional Identities, Making Better Use of Territorial Diversity
- Section III: Territorial Priorities for the Development of the European Union outlining new territorial priorities for the EU.
- Section IV: Implementing the Territorial Agenda identifying actions to implement the Territorial Agenda.

The Territorial Agenda, substantive policies of which are discussed in Sections I to III, did not even attempt to conceptualize the shape of territorial of EU, something what ESDP tried to do. One could figure out that it would have been difficult to do this without maps, while not containing any map is a characteristic of Territorial Agenda. Relating to this point, Faludi (2009) considers that, where the ESDP may be considered to have been a planning document, albeit unclear, the Territorial Agenda is nothing of the kind.

Section I, explains territorial cohesion as a permanent and collaborative process involving various actors and stakeholders, and focuses on how regional adaptation policy can contribute to Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies. Everything begins by stating that "the EU is based on confidence in economic, social and ecologically progressive progress. EU Member States come together to operate a unified economy, which is about one third of the world's Gross Domestic Product. It is this economic power as well as a territory covering more than 4 million km² and a population of 490 million inhabitants in a variety of regions and cities, which characterizes the territorial dimension of the EU." (Territorial Agenda, 2007). The second paragraph qualifies the Territorial Agenda as an action-oriented political framework prepared by ministers responsible for spatial planning and development together with the European Commission, for their future cooperation purposes. It also states that Agenda will contribute to sustainable economic growth and job creation as well as social and ecological development in all EU regions (TA 2007) and it supports both the Lisbon and the Gothenburg Strategies of the European Council. What continues is the next paragraph stating that the Agenda supports the promoting a polycentric territorial development of the EU, with a view to making better use of available resources in European regions (Territorial Agenda, 2007). By this the Territorial Agenda aims to help, in terms of territorial solidarity, to secure better living conditions and quality of life with equal opportunities, oriented towards regional and local potentials, irrespective of where people live – whether in the European core area or in the periphery (Territorial Agenda, 2007). The first section of the Agenda ends by stressing that "based on articles 2, 6, 16 and 158 included in the EC Treaty, territorial cohesion has been considered as the third dimension of Cohesion Policy.

Section II begins by identifying six challenges more or less as identified in the March draft, but in contrast to that draft, where it still came third, the geographic concentration of activities caused by market forces and its dislocating effects has disappeared from the final version (Faludi, 2009). It also states, and this is very important, that territorial cohesion is a prerequisite of sustainable economic growth and job creation. Six challenges mention in the Agenda, to summarize what is said in document, relate to regionally diverse impacts of climate change on the EU territory and its neighbors; energy inefficiency and different territorial opportunities for new forms of energy supply; accelerating integration of regions, including cross border areas, in

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global economic competition; impacts of EU enlargement on economic, social and territorial cohesion; overexploitation of the ecological and cultural resources and loss of biodiversity; territorial effects of demographic change (especially aging) as well as in and out migration and internal migration on labor markets. Given these challenges, the territorial cohesion of the EU is considered as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and implementing social and economic cohesion – a European Social Model (Territorial Agenda, 2007) and is regarded as an essential task and act of solidarity to develop preconditions in all regions to enable equal opportunities for all citizens and development perspectives for entrepreneurship (Territorial Agenda, 2007). The ministers also consider that the Territorial Agenda will help to strengthen the global competitiveness and sustainability of all regions of Europe, a goal which is in accordance with the renewed Lisbon Strategy agreed by Member States in 2005.

The first paragraph of Section III states that “The Territorial Agenda builds upon the three main aims of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), which remains valid, namely

- Development of a balanced and polycentric urban system and a new urban-rural partnership;
- Securing parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge;
- Sustainable development, prudent management and protection of nature and cultural heritage.” (Territorial Agenda, 2007).

By recounting the above mentioned three policy guidelines for the spatial development of the EU according to the ESDP, the Agenda positions itself as a follow-up. It continues with the list of the priorities for developing the EU territory, a list which, to summarize, contains priorities about strengthening Polycentric Development and Innovation, strengthening the Partnership and Territorial Governance between Rural and Urban Areas, Promoting Regional Clusters of Competition and Innovation in Europe, Strengthening and Extending Trans-European Networks, Promoting Trans-European Risk Management including the Impacts of Climate Change etc.

What follows is the section IV, named as *Implementing the Territorial Agenda*. It addresses European institutions as well as the member states by pointing out what they need to do to pursue the Territorial Agenda. In this context, it calls the European institutions to pay more regard to the territorial dimension of policies.

By recommending that “the ESPON 2013 Programme, in close cooperation with the European Commission undertake a more in-depth analysis of the effects of EU Policies on territorial cohesion’, the importance of close cooperation of ESPON, with URBACT programs and Urban Audit is highlighted and, in this context, Territorial Agenda demands for more focus in the ESPON 2013 program.

Concerning with the *Actions for strengthening territorial cohesion in EU member states*, Paragraph 36 of the Agenda stresses the importance of integration territorial dimension to cohesion policies in both European and nation level by stating that “We will commit ourselves, within our competences, to integrate the political priorities of the Territorial Agenda as well as the territorial aspects of the Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 in national, regional and local development policies. In view of the conclusions of the Seminar on Governance of Territorial Strategies, held under the Austrian EU Presidency in June 2006 in

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Baden, integrating regional dimension with the strategic processes that support the alignment policy at EU and national level (Territorial Agenda, 2007) is recommended.

It is obvious that the longest list of follow-up actions taking place in the fourth section of Agenda relates to the ministers' own work program, with the paragraph 40 stating that; as a first step in their joint activities and as follow-up to the 2007 spring European Council, ministers commit themselves, within their competences, to contribute to a sustainable and integrated climate and energy policy in the EU. The ministers intended also to facilitate the debate from a territorial point of view on a long list of EU dossiers which can be summarized as; Debate on the Lisbon Process Post 2010, The 2010 Midterm Review of Cohesion Policy, The 2011 Redevelopment of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS), The ongoing Debate on the 7th Environmental Action Program of the EU, The Debate on the Transport Policy Post 2010, The Ongoing Debate on The Neighborhood Policy (Territorial Agenda, 2007) etc..

The next paragraph (paragraph 42) asks the coming EU Presidencies, Member States and all relevant institutions as well as other stakeholders to implement the actions set out in the Territorial Agenda 2008, Ministers also welcome the initiative of the Portuguese EU Presidency to facilitate the implementation of the Territorial Agenda by working out the first Action Program (to be discussed below) as well as the will of the Slovene EU Presidency to initiate its implementation through its activities (TA 2007).

Besides this, in paragraph 45 ministers ask the coming Hungarian EU Presidency to evaluate and review the Territorial Agenda in the first half of 2011.

4.2. First Action Programme

'First Action Programme for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU' (First Action Programme, 2007) was adopted on 23 November 2007 during the informal ministerial meeting on territorial cohesion and regional policy, hosted by Portuguese presidency in the Azores.

After four drafts, the end version of the First Action Programme was submitted to the ministers of spatial planning, containing below mentioned seven political commitments:

1. Implementing the Territorial Agenda in our own areas of competence.
2. Influencing EU key dossiers.
3. Giving a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies.
4. Strengthening multi-level territorial governance in the EU.
5. Implementing a communication and awareness raising strategy on territorial cohesion.
6. Understanding the territorial state, perspectives, trends and impacts.
7. Coordinating and monitoring the First Action Programme implementation.

The "Implementing the Territorial Agenda in our own areas of competence" commitment, among others, states that in the First Action Programme ministers define actions aimed to promote the integration of the territorial priorities of the Territorial Agenda in national, regional and local spatial development policies, to foster better coordination between territorial and urban policies. It also states that actions will be taken to assess how the Territorial Agenda is being taken into consideration during the implementation of the National Strategic Reference

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Frameworks and the Operational Programmes, as well as in the National Reform Programmes for pursuing the Lisbon Strategy (First Action Programme, 2007).

In following commitments ministers commit themselves to ensure that the territorial dimension is adequately taken into consideration when assessing current policies and designing the future policies of the European Union and to cooperate with sectoral policy-makers and competent institutions, in order to promote adequate consideration of the territorial and urban dimensions in the design and implementation of sectoral policies (First Action Programme, 2007).

In commitments; multi-level governance is considered as a fundamental tool for a balanced spatial development of the European Union and the importance of territorial cohesion to the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe (First Action Programme, 2007) is highlighted. This document recognizes the need for information and knowledge on the territorial state, perspectives, trends and impacts of territorial policies in the European Union and the Member States (Program), in this context, the importance of ESPON is highlighted again.

Finally, in last commitment named '*Coordinating and monitoring the First Action Programme implementation*', ministers commit themselves, within their means and competences, to gathering and providing the resources and the organization needed to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the First Action Programme (First Action Programme, 2007). In following, the Programme evolves context, including the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty which has included territorial cohesion as the third dimension of cohesion policy, stating that it would be a shared competence. The next section identifies the below mentioned guiding principles for the implementation of the Territorial Agenda:

1. Solidarity between regions and territories (in line with paragraph 3 and paragraph 8 of the TA 2007)
2. Multi-level governance (in line with paragraph 5 and paragraph 17 of the TA 2007)
3. Integration of policies (in line with paragraph 10, paragraph 11, paragraph 23 and paragraph 27 of the Territorial Agenda 2007)
4. Cooperation on territorial matters and (in line with paragraph 35 of the TA 2007)
5. Subsidiarity (in line with paragraph 30 and paragraph 33 of the TA 2007).

The third section has to do with the purpose, the time frame and the scope of the Action Programme.

As it is stated in the Program, the main purpose was to provide a framework to facilitate implementation of the Territorial Agenda and to provide ministers, European institutions and all other concerned stakeholders with a long-term basis for formulating common territorial policies. Furthermore, it aims to ensure that the territorial dimension is adequately taken into consideration when assessing current policies and designing the future policies of the European Union and bearing in mind the up-coming EU budget review (First Action Programme, 2007). The Action Programme also related to actions targeted at specific institutional actors and stakeholders, with a time horizon until the first half of 2011, when the Territorial Agenda would come up for review (Faludi, 2009). While there are EU dossiers which emerge priority treatment:

- The debate on the Lisbon process post-2010;

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- The 2010 midterm review of Cohesion Policy and the debate on the Cohesion Policy post-2013;
- The Transport Policy post-2010;
- The 2010 midterm review of the EU Rural Development Policy;
- The 2011 redevelopment of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy

The fourth section specifies 'lines of action and actions. Reflecting the seven political commitments outlined above, the First Action Programme is constructed by five lines of actions, which, to summarize, contain implementing the Territorial Agenda in the areas of competence of the Ministers at both instances, influencing EU key-dossiers and giving a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies; strengthening multi-level territorial governance at both levels (EU and member states), comparing and assessing the territorial state, perspectives, trends and policy impacts in the European Union and Member States from the point of view of territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development, coordinating and monitoring the First Action Programme implementation, assessing and reviewing the Territorial Agenda and the First Action Programme and developing a communication and awareness raising strategy on territorial cohesion and sustainable spatial development (First Action Programme, 2007). There is considered at First Action Programme that the implementation of these actions should contribute to, to summarize what is said in document, better coordination between the spatial policies of the Member States by introducing a European dimension, improved coherence between EU policies and the spatial development policies within the Member States by influencing EU policies from a territorial cohesion point of view, better understanding of the spatial system and territorial trends at EU level, improved coordination and participation of all sectors towards a more responsive territorial governance.

5. Conclusion

Although the *EU has had an implicit territorial approach from its inception and the view of planning as promoting development has played a role in European integration from the start*, the territorial cohesion, which is considered as a French concept, made its first appearance in Art. 16 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999). In following, a so-called scoping document formed the basis for what later became the document 'Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union' (Territorial State, 2007) and subsequently, the Territorial Agenda. The scoping document argued for territorial development policies to help areas to develop their 'territorial capital', with its substantive priorities focusing on strengthening polycentric development and urban-rural partnership, promoting clusters of competitive and innovative activities, strengthening trans-European networks etc.

The final document of Territorial Agenda which runs to 11 pages and comes in four sections, starts by explaining territorial cohesion as a permanent and collaborative process involving various actors and stakeholders, and focuses on how regional adaptation policy can contribute to Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies. Section II identifies six challenges which, to summarize, relate to regionally diverse impacts of climate change; energy inefficiency and new forms of energy supply; accelerating integration of regions, including cross border areas, in global economic competition; impacts of EU enlargement on economic, social and territorial cohesion; overexploitation of the ecological and cultural resources and loss of biodiversity; territorial effects of demographic change (especially aging) as well as in and out migration and internal mi-

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gration on labor markets. Given these challenges the territorial cohesion of the EU is considered as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic growth and implementing social and economic cohesion— a European Social Model. By recounting policy guidelines for the spatial development of the EU according to the ESDP, the Agenda positions itself as a follow-up in section III. What follows is the section IV which addresses European institutions as well as the member states by pointing out what they need to do to pursue the Territorial Agenda. In this context, it calls the European institutions to pay more regard to the territorial dimension of policies.

'First Action Programme for the Implementation of the Territorial Agenda of the EU' (First Action Programme, 2007) was adopted on 23 November 2007 during the informal ministerial meeting on territorial cohesion and regional policy, hosted by Portuguese presidency in the Azores. The end version of the First Action Programme was submitted to the ministers of spatial planning, containing seven political commitments, including: 'Giving a territorial/urban dimension to sectoral policies' and 'Strengthening multi-level territorial governance in the EU'. Fostering better coordination between territorial and urban policies, assessing current policies and designing the future policies of the European Union, cooperating with sectoral policy-makers and competent institutions are among other commitments. Further, multi-level governance is considered as a fundamental tool for a balanced spatial development of the European Union and the importance of territorial cohesion to the implementation of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies, towards a more competitive and sustainable Europe is highlighted.

The above elaborated Territorial Agenda was followed by a process of evaluation and reviewing which was executed under Hungarian EU Presidency in 2011, while between these two agendas stands the report of the European Parliament (EU Parliament, 2008), which actually made way for evaluation in question. Defining itself as an action-oriented policy framework to support territorial cohesion in Europe as a new goal of the European Union introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon (Art 3.TEU) and stating that it outlines objectives in accordance with the time horizon of major policy documents until 2020, the revised TA calls on reflecting to changed circumstances, especially in the light of the economic crisis and enlargement. It also calls on focusing in certain priorities, reflecting the changed challenges and policy context. Due to its limited scope (focusing in emphasizing the first Territorial Agenda as turning point in territorial cohesion policy of EU) this paper didn't say anymore about revised Territorial Agenda, but it will be addressed in a separate article or paper, due to its high importance in terms of tracing territorial cohesion policies and spatial planning at EU level.

Finally, TA 2007 demonstrates the continuity of the Community Policies' goal towards increasing regional cohesion, global competitiveness and sustainable development, as well as taking forward ESDP, a common spatial development document based on voluntary initiatives, pointing out the importance of giving a territorial dimension to community policies. In this context, the territorial agenda opens a new era in cohesion policies which evolve by including regional policies and a territorial dimension. At the same time, it shows the increasing interest towards spatial planning at the EU level.

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