



27 November 2015

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## PRESIDENCY CONCLUSIONS

### of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union on the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meetings on Territorial Cohesion and Urban Policy

Luxembourg, 26 and 27 November 2015

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At the invitation of the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Territorial Cohesion took place in Luxembourg on 26 November 2015 and the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Urban Policy took place in Luxembourg on 27 November 2015.

The Ministers responsible for Territorial Cohesion and Urban Policy in the European Union, together with the Commissioner for Regional Policy of the European Commission, the Chair of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament, the President of the European Committee of the Regions, the President of the ECO Section of the European Economic and Social Committee, representatives of the European Investment Bank, representatives from Serbia and Turkey as well as Norway and Switzerland, and representatives of relevant stakeholder organisations and several observers,

#### **(1) Considering that**

- in the framework of intergovernmental cooperation the Territorial Agenda 2020 was decided with the aim of promoting and enhancing an integrated and place-based territorial approach to support territorial cohesion, and was subject to an evaluation of the necessity to be reviewed under the Latvian and Luxembourg Presidencies;
- territorial cohesion was considered as a new EU objective in the Lisbon Treaty and the Treaty has now been in force for more than five years, which calls for an assessment of

the implementation of this new dimension in the EU policies, in particular Cohesion policy, and for a subsequent recognition of this dimension in EU legislation and policy;

- an EU Urban Agenda is currently being prepared with the aim of promoting integrated and sustainable urban development in close partnership among the Member States, the European Commission as well as other European institutions, and the cities;
- the territory and the related geographical identity are important references for the wellbeing of citizens in Europe,

**would like to convey a number of political messages.** The Luxembourg Presidency considered the discussions, proposals and follow-up actions of the common Trio Presidency Programme of Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg on territorial cohesion and urban policy in a process of multi-level and intergovernmental cooperation and summarises the results of the discussions to:

<b>General political messages on territorial cohesion and urban policy</b>
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- (2) **Welcome** the opportunity to re-launch the debate on the long-term territorial development policy and the long-term urban policy with the aim of highlighting how actions at the European, transnational, macro-regional, national, regional and local level can contribute to achieving the objective of cohesion in its wider and comprehensive meaning, in order to promote smart, sustainable, and inclusive development as currently in the philosophy of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- (3) **Stress** the significance of the urban dimension for overall territorial development and **underline** that urban issues should be clearly linked with territorial development strategies to respond to the mutual dependence of these processes for creating targeted policy responses.
- (4) **Underline** the need to further discuss and clarify how to translate the territorial cohesion objective including an urban dimension into concrete EU action, as further explained for territorial cohesion in the Reference document: “Towards a better use of the European Territory – Pathways for strengthening territorial cohesion in the European Union” (Action 1 of the Trio Programme) and for sustainable urban development in the Riga Declaration of Ministers towards the EU Urban Agenda.
- (5) **Acknowledge** the particular efforts made by the Trio to translate the territorial cohesion objective into concrete action:

- to develop and use scenarios to demonstrate the territorial impact of policies and to use visions to create a common understanding of the future of the European Territory (Action 2 of the Trio Programme);
  - to discuss possibilities to further activate and use the full potential of cross-border areas, and to contribute to the realisation of a common market and to the improvement of living and working conditions for citizens and economic actors across borders (Action 3 of the Trio Programme);
  - to improve the multilevel governance of European territorial cohesion and urban matters by efficiently using the existing governance mechanisms, such as the General Affairs Council, in order to strengthen the political debate on cohesion and the territorial as well as urban dimension of EU policies (Action 4 of the Trio Programme); and
  - to highlight the important role of small and medium-sized cities and urban areas from both a territorial cohesion and urban development perspective, underlining the significance of polycentric urban development across borders, development of functional urban areas, urban-rural linkages and the specific challenges of inner areas (Action 5 of the Trio Programme).
- (6) **Call for** the use of evidence in order to strengthen the territorial and urban dimension of sectoral policies as well as to improve the communication among sectors and governance levels.
- (7) **Stress** the necessity to take the territorial and urban dimension into account for a successful revision of the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, for better implementation of existing EU sector policies and greater effectiveness of action on the ground through an integrated place-based approach, and for the next programming period of Cohesion Policy.
- (8) **Remind** that the territorial approach is place-based and targeted to the development of functional areas, where needs and potentials are considered in a balanced and sustainable way, and **underline** that such an approach addresses development paths paying special attention to territories with geographic specificities and going beyond administrative borders, by recognising the specific needs and development potentials of places such as, for instance, border areas.

**Specific Messages regarding the assessment of the way the Union's territorial cohesion objective is implemented and the necessity of a review of the TA 2020 – ACTION 1<sup>1</sup>**

- (9) **Take note** of the achievements and the enduring as well as new challenges with regards to the implementation of the territorial cohesion objective that were identified and discussed under the Trio Presidency and **call for** further efforts to progress on territorial cohesion.
- (10) **Agree** that the Territorial Agenda 2020 is still valid and thus shall not be reviewed at this moment; instead, implementation and governance mechanisms shall be improved and communication efforts shall be intensified in the years 2016 and 2017.
- (11) **Welcome**, for this purpose, the reference document: “Towards a better use of the European Territory – Pathways for strengthening territorial cohesion in the European Union” indicating what could be done when and where, and **encourage** all relevant actors to take up actions in their specific policy context through
- the production and provision of territorial evidence and data in order to raise awareness and increase the understanding that territory matters;
  - the creation of occasions for communicating and discussing political messages with those policy-makers and stakeholders who are deciding on territorially relevant issues; and
  - the institutional anchoring of territorially relevant debates and policy-making in existing procedures.
- (12) **Invite** the upcoming Presidencies together with the EU institutions to start preparing the development of a Territorial Agenda post-2020 in the year 2018 with the aim of concluding the process by the year 2020, taking into account the lessons learned from the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020, the preparations of Cohesion policy post-2020, and the follow-up of the Europe 2020 Strategy.
- (13) **Call for** a pragmatic and integrated approach to follow up on actions in the above-mentioned reference document within the framework of existing instruments,

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<sup>1</sup> *Annex I: “Towards a better use of the European Territory – Pathways for strengthening territorial cohesion in the European Union”*

*Supporting Document: “Report to the Trio Presidency: Assessment Territorial Agenda 2020”, Spatial Foresight, 2015*

institutions and funding respecting the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality, and result-orientation, and to promote synergies between the Territorial Agenda 2020 and the EU Urban Agenda.

- (14) Remind** the important role of the actors at the EU level, in particular the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions and incoming presidencies to keep the process alive and support it by specific measures initiated by them.

<b>Specific Messages regarding Territorial Scenarios, Visions and Perspectives for the EU – ACTION 2<sup>2</sup></b>
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- (15) Acknowledge** the added value of using scenarios and visions for communicating with sector policymakers as well as policymakers at different levels of government about the importance of the territorial and urban dimension in their policy context for demonstrating the territorial impact of policies and for illustrating long-term trends in order to create a better understanding of the territorial dimension.

- (16) Underline** that many EU policies have a territorial dimension that can be assessed through a Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) and **consider**, among others, the following policy processes to be relevant domains where the development of territorial scenarios could stimulate an active and open dialogue regarding intended and unintended territorial impacts:

- The review of the Europe 2020 Strategy
- The Investment Plan for Europe
- The EU Urban Agenda
- The 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policy
- The Digital Agenda for Europe
- The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)
- The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive

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<sup>2</sup> Presidency Input Paper on “European Territorial Scenarios and Visions for 2050” (Trio Action 2)

*Supporting Document: “Territorial Scenarios and Visions of Europe for 2050: Proceedings of the Workshop of the incoming Luxembourg EU Presidency on 23 April 2015” (Spatial Foresight)*

Draft Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on “Territorial Vision 2050: What future?” (adoption scheduled for 3-4 December 2015)

- Cohesion policy post-2020
- The Impact Assessment procedure in the context of the Better Regulation initiative

**(17) Support** the development of territorial evidence and analysis, based on robust, comparable and reliable data at the adequate scale, that sets out territorial challenges on a long-term perspective, **invite** the European Commission and ESPON to continue efforts in this domain and actively cooperate in the preparation of such evidence and analysis, and **ask** EUROSTAT to improve the availability and comparability of territorial data.

**(18) Welcome** the Territorial Agenda post-2020 process, as specified in (12), to be informed by a long-term territorial scenario and visioning process for the EU starting in the year 2017 and involving relevant stakeholders from all sectors and levels of government, and **invite** the upcoming presidencies and the EU institutions to engage in this process with the aim of concluding it in the year 2020, as it was also expressed by the Committee of the Regions in their opinion on this topic.

<p><b>Specific Messages regarding provisions for the creation of integrated cross-border areas – ACTION 3<sup>3</sup></b></p>
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**(19) Stress** the need for further developing cross-border-cooperation in order to reinforce territorial cohesion in border regions for more growth, jobs and a higher quality of life for the benefit of citizens.

**(20) Acknowledge** that cross-border areas are in particular exposed to specific impediments in achieving the expected concrete results and that these impediments are predominantly related to a mismatch of standards and norms along the borders that cannot be entirely overcome by existing financial incentives and legal instruments under the current conditions of multi-level governance.

**(21) Recognise** the value and necessity of thoroughly exploring a specific tool for the attribution and application of specific provisions for the improvement of cross-border

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<sup>3</sup> Presidency Input Paper on “A tool for the attribution and application of specific provisions for the improvement of cross-border cooperation” (Trio Action 3)

*Supporting Document: “Building Legal Provisions to Overcome Obstacles to Cross-border Cooperation” (MOT) Opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 13 October 2015 on “Strengthening Cross-border Cooperation: the need for a better regulatory framework?”*

cooperation and **underline** that the approach should be bottom-up and tailor-made and voluntarily applicable.

- (22) **Highlight** the complementarity of this initiative in relation to the efforts undertaken by the European Commission, in particular the launch of a review and a public consultation on cross-border obstacles, and the support given by the Committee of the Regions in presenting an opinion on this topic.
- (23) **Recommend** a follow-up by the incoming Presidency Trio to further explore the existing opportunities for the efficient cooperation in border areas in Europe and to further analyse the necessity for developing adequate and complementary tools together with the European Commission, to be considered separately or in the framework of the preparation of the legislative package for Cohesion policy post-2020.
- (24) **Underline** that this action supports a result-oriented European Territorial Cooperation that helps to solve common problems, facilitates the sharing of ideas and assets, and encourages strategic work towards common goals.

<b>Specific Messages regarding structuring a political debate on territorial development and cohesion policy - ACTION 4</b>
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***As regards the GAC under the Italian Presidency (19 November 2014)***<sup>4</sup>

- (25) **Welcome** the initiative of the Italian Presidency to promote a regular political debate within the formal setting of the Council of the EU, taking into account the added value of such a debate for the effective implementation and result-orientation of Cohesion Policy and reiterating the recommendation made to hold such dedicated GAC meetings.
- (26) **Stress** the relevance of the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy and **underline** the necessity to further develop the integrated approach of ESI Funds.
- (27) **Acknowledge** the Council Conclusions on the 6<sup>th</sup> Cohesion report, recognising among others the reference to the territorial dimension included in the 2014-2020 ESIF regulatory framework and taking note of the fact that all territories, including urban areas, can play a key role, in line with the development needs and institutional

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<sup>4</sup> GAC conclusions Italian Presidency (19 November 2014)

arrangements of Member States, in implementing Cohesion Policy and reaching the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy by giving territorially differentiated local answers to common European challenges.

***As regards the GAC under the Luxembourg Presidency (18 November 2015)***<sup>5</sup>

- (28) Acknowledge**, in view of the COP21 Conference, the commitment of Member States to use the ESIF for the support of measures responding to climate change, with investments of EUR 45 billion for supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy (Thematic Objective 4) and, more broadly, investments of about EUR 110 billion for climate-related measures in the EU (for mitigation and adaptation) across all thematic objectives.
- (29) Underline**, based on the experience made in 25 years of Interreg, the importance of territorial cooperation and Interreg programmes also in larger contiguous areas and across the whole of Europe for achieving territorial cohesion, improving in particular the situation along the European borders, and facilitating cultural and institutional learning.
- (30) Welcome** all efforts aimed at simplifying the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, thereby contributing to territorial cohesion and supporting urban development at all levels of government.

**Specific Messages regarding small and medium-sized cities and urban areas - ACTION 5**<sup>6</sup>

- (31) Remind** the acknowledgment given by the Ministers and relevant partners in the Riga Declaration about:
- the significant role and potential of small and medium-sized cities and urban areas for balanced territorial development and the achievement of common European goals;
  - the need to work towards the EU Urban Agenda, which helps to realise the full potential and contribution also of small and medium-sized cities and urban areas; and

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<sup>5</sup> GAC Conclusions Luxembourg Presidency (18 November 2015)

<sup>6</sup> Presidency Input Paper on “Small and Medium-sized Cities in Cross-Border Polycentric Regions” (Trio Action 5) Declaration of Ministers towards the EU Urban Agenda (Riga, 10 June 2015)

*Supporting Document I: “The Trio Presidency theme of small and medium-sized cities: synthesis of the results” (EUKN)*

*Supporting Document II: “Opportunities of cross-border cooperation between small and medium cities in Europe” (LISER)*

- the necessity to provide integrated and place-based territorial support measures that are comprehensive and flexible enough to enable all types of territory to make the most of their development potentials.
- (32) **Underline** the particular importance given by Ministers in the Riga Declaration to the development of small and medium-sized cities and urban areas for fostering the diversification of economic activities and smart specialisation; for finding solutions for the provision of high-quality, accessible and cost-efficient public services; and for fostering urban-urban, urban-rural including inner areas, and cross-border co-operation within functional areas which have been subject to special attention under the Trio Presidency.
- (33) **Recommend** considering the issue of small and medium-sized cities and urban areas as a cross-cutting topic for the thematic priorities of the EU Urban Agenda.
- (34) **Acknowledge** that the theme of “inner areas” draws attention to problems of balanced economic, social, and demographic development of peripheral, isolated or remote areas; **call for** the adjustment towards flexible working methods enabling the effective implementation of inner-areas strategies; and **call for** investments in research on issues relevant to inner areas.
- (35) **Encourage** national authorities to integrate existing cross-border development strategies at the regional and local level into national, transnational, macro-regional, and European development strategies.
- (36) **Call for** a platform for cross-border polycentric regions based on existing institutions and structures to further exchange experiences and good practices, and **welcome** the interest of the Committee of the Regions to play an active role in this context via its existing platforms.
- (37) **Ask** ESPON, the European Commission, and Interact to further strengthen the knowledge base and evidence on cross-border regions, **support** the development of observatories for the collection and production of cross-border data, noting that work is under way on this issue at the initiative of the European Commission with the involvement of several Member States, **encourage** more Member States to participate in this work, and **ask** EUROSTAT to improve the availability of comparable data at NUTS and LAU levels and to further geo-reference existing data.

**Specific Messages regarding the EU Urban Agenda and the urban dimension of the refugee situation<sup>7</sup>**

- (38) Welcome** the progress achieved on the points outlined in the document “EU Urban Agenda: Roadmap from Riga to Amsterdam” and **invite** the incoming Dutch Presidency and the European Commission to take the process forward in close partnership with the Member States, the EIB, regions, urban authorities and other concerned stakeholders.
- (39) Recognise** the important role of cities in the short, medium and long term with regards to the reception and accommodation of asylum-seekers and the integration of recognised refugees and **consider** providing cities and municipalities with adequate support to deal with the refugee situation, in particular by
- mobilising, where necessary and justified in the agreed intervention logic, the European Structural and Investment Funds dedicated to sustainable urban development, in complementarity with EIB funding instruments and other appropriate funding sources.
  - accommodating the issue of migration and refugees within the EU Urban Agenda.

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<sup>7</sup> Presidency Input Paper on the “Urban Challenges of the Migration and Refugee Situation”

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## ANNEX I

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### **“Towards a better use of the European Territory – Pathways for strengthening territorial cohesion in the European Union”**

#### **1. Context and purpose**

This reference paper was presented by the Luxembourgish Presidency on behalf of the Trio Presidency and was discussed at the occasion of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on 26 November 2015 in Luxembourg. This reference paper was developed following an assessment and discussion initiated by the Trio Presidency on the state of implementation of the Territorial Cohesion objective in Europe. The assessment was motivated by the fact that the Lisbon Treaty, mentioning territorial cohesion as a new goal of the EU, has now been in force for five years.

Furthermore, the Territorial Agenda 2020 includes a clause indicating an evaluation of the necessity of a review in the year 2015. The debate about the implementation of territorial cohesion indicated some achievements, but also that more needs to be done. The TA 2020 is deemed to be still valid in its substance; however, a lack of communication and insufficient actions and activities are calling for a re-start of efforts to get the TA 2020 in motion. Many valuable proposals were made in support of a debate on how territorial cohesion could be improved in the existing framework of instruments, institutions, and funding sources by the means of raising awareness on the issue.

In order to strengthen the implementation of the Territorial Cohesion objective and the TA 2020, these proposals were summarised in this reference document. The idea of this document is to indicate pathways for actions and improvements in the implementation of territorial cohesion at the EU and the national level as these two levels are most prominently represented in debates at the EU level. In addition, there are also proposals that focus more on actions at the regional and local as well as transnational level.

The purpose of this reference document is to show interested and relevant actors and stakeholders how they can contribute to a better implementation of territorial cohesion and application of the TA 2020. Interested actors should use this document to identify issues and actions, which are welcomed at the ministerial level be effectively implemented. In this sense, the pathways indicated in this document should act as a source of inspiration for further follow-up and concrete action.

## 2. Access to the pathways

Pathways should lead to action and make a difference to the status quo. The debate took forward the following elements that were identified as cornerstones for strengthening territorial cohesion in Europe:

- The first element is the **production and provision of territorial evidence** mainly on territorial developments and the territorial impacts of policies, in order to raise awareness and increase the understanding that territory matters.
- The second element is the **creation of occasions for communicating and discussing political messages** with those policy-makers and stakeholders who are deciding on territorially relevant issues in order to create the necessary ownership.
- The third element is the **institutional anchoring of territorially relevant debates and policy making** in existing procedures.

These **access points** need to be developed at the initiative of **actors** or **groups of actors** (e.g. Member States together) with **concrete content** (e.g. addressing the EU 2020 strategy) and **action** (e.g. formulating a position – based on evidence and addressing this position at a particular occasion/event). The pathways are meant to indicate possible content and actions to be taken by relevant actors. This paper asks the actors to initiate any relevant action by defining the content and **creating the occasion** to move forward.

This shall happen under the consideration of the **subsidiarity principle** as in a **multi-level governance** approach, as the appropriate level of decision-making varies depending on the policy fields and the division of decision-making powers in a Member State or region. This may imply the delegation of decision-making powers to regional or local stakeholders and the involvement of local communities and citizens.

In this context, **voluntary implementation** partnerships for territorial development between different levels of government (national-regional-local) could be agreed in order to **promote concrete strategies and projects**, despite a lack of formal instruments, by committing all involved actors to the achievement of common objectives.

### 3. Access point: Evidence and storyline

- *Involving those institutions which can support the production of territorial evidence* by collecting data (Eurostat and national statistical offices) and developing methodologies (ESPON, JRC, DG Regio, national institutes) is key for establishing the storyline.
- *ESPON can become even more user-oriented and communication-friendly.* Many results and tools produced by ESPON might be considered as ‘prototypes’; the next step is to further test and fine-tune them to achieve a stronger user-orientation. In addition, a direct evidence support (such as policy briefs, scenarios, background reports) for dialogue situations with sector policies and other stakeholders should be regularly implemented.
- The use of *analytical means and evidence support of the European Commission* (DG Regio and the JRC) should further explored.
- *National and regional research capacities and institutions* shall be involved and contribute by reporting from the national and transitional perspective.
- A first *political interpretation of territorial evidence and easy-to-communicate storyline* why territory matters are seen as serious obstacles to overcome. The link between territorial evidence and territorial cohesion as a political objective as expressed in the TA 2020 has to be better sustained.
- *Territorial impact studies and territorial scenarios, as a kind of eye-openers, are suitable tools* for getting the attention of decision-makers. However, this material needs to be brought to the attention of the relevant decision-makers and not to the attention of “whom it may concern”.

### 4. Access point: Creating the occasion

- *Open dialogue:* Many of the dialogue-related efforts are focused on convincing other policy sectors to take the territorial dimension or the territorial impacts of their policies into consideration. Moreover, territorial policy stakeholders may need to learn more about the reasoning and objectives of sectoral policies and present their ideas in light of the question how territorial policies can support or complement these approaches.
- *Annual or bi-annual conferences* to create regular occasions for a dialogue with selected sector policies. The example of a sectoral dialogue under the Belgian Presidency back in 2010 is an often cited example of what can be done.

- *Existing conference circles or planned conferences*: It should be considered to add the dimension of a sectoral dialogue in events already foreseen. Such possibilities could be searched for in the European and national context.
- *TIA and scenarios as eye-openers*: Evidence is important for supporting the dialogue with others and underpinning statements on the territorial dimension. Territorial impact studies and territorial scenarios are suitable tools for getting the attention of decision-makers.
- *Stronger implementation focus*: Taking the example of the TA 2020, the debates and papers need to move from the agreement on general principles to more result-oriented implementing actions. This could, for example, be done by reconsidering and potentially revising the role of the European Commission, the NTCCP and ESPON.
- *Concrete policy papers*: Specific themes of the TA 2020 can be interpreted differently at different moments in time. Short and more concrete papers providing a territorial policy contribution to larger on-going policy debates could provide new impetus to the implementation of TA 2020 objectives and priorities. For instance, every year there could be one such paper that is tabled at a high-level or even informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Territorial Cohesion and then further disseminated.

#### **5. Access point: Actors and institutional anchoring at the European and national level**

- *Role of the European Commission as well as Member States*: Territorial Cohesion as a Union objective provides the legitimation for a stronger involvement of the European Commission in Territorial Cohesion matters where appropriate. Suggestions of what a stronger involvement might consist of are:
  - *Stronger advocacy of the territorial dimension* and tools like Territorial Impact Assessments among other policy sectors at the EU level, in the Member States, regions and cities. The Impact Assessment procedure of the Commission still needs to be filled with life at this end.
  - *Better coordination of EU policies* and better communication of these efforts and their results. This includes the identification of territorial aspects in EU and national policies and also the identification of key players of sector policies who can influence the territorial matters in relevant policies.
  - *Improved communication on territorial matters*. Regular publications and/or (bi-) annual conferences where the territorial policy community meets other policy sectors.

- This should be supported by regularly addressing topics related to Territorial Cohesion and the territorial dimension in *sectoral policies at EU General Affairs Council* meetings.
- *Joining the effort of the European institutions* including the European Parliament, European Commission, Committee of Regions and Economic and Social Committee, as well as the European Investment Bank.

#### **6. Access point: Content-related debates**

- *Improved links to Urban Policy:* In particular urban policy and the prospective EU Urban Agenda seem to be closely linked to the TA 2020 and, above all, seem to be able to reach further policy communities. Where the content of both policy fields is closely related, one might even consider joining efforts for defining common strategies.
- *Preparing for policy debates on future policies:* As territorial policymaking comprises a strategic dimension, upcoming discussions might be of particular interest (non-exhaustive list):
  - The review of the Europe 2020 Strategy
  - The Investment Plan for Europe
  - The EU Urban Agenda
  - The 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policy
  - The Digital Agenda for Europe
  - The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)
  - The Maritime Spatial Planning Directive
  - Cohesion Policy post-2020
  - The Impact Assessment procedure in the context of the Better Regulation initiative
  - Intra- and extra-EU Migration, including the situation of refugees

#### **7. Access point: Local and regional actors**

- *The principles of the TA 2020 and the place-based approach are often applied at the local and regional level, but without direct reference to the TA 2020 and rather as an*

innovative governance arrangement. Efforts could be undertaken to make more visible what is done at the local and regional level.<sup>8</sup>

- *Encourage actors at the local and regional level to find new solutions* and display a proactive attitude with regards to including the TA 2020 principles in their projects. NTCCP members may play an important role in their countries.

#### **8. Access point: Scenarios and Vision in the context of a TA 2020+**

- As regards a potential revision of the TA 2020 at this moment in time, the *challenges and priorities are still perceived to be relevant*. Before addressing a revision, the *communication should be improved* and concrete measures that fit into the focus of the TA 2020 should be implemented. A revision always bears the risk of redirecting the focus of the stakeholders on introspection rather than on an outward-looking engagement with other sectors. And this is something which should be avoided for the moment. Achieving *Territorial Cohesion is a long-term process* that requires commitment and engagement. A cycle of revision would deflect attention from the actual process and halt the debate across sectors as well as levels of government and with stakeholders.
- The preparations for developing a *Territorial Agenda post-2020 should start in the year 2018 under the coordination of the Trio presidency of United Kingdom, Estonia and Bulgaria with the aim of concluding the process in the year 2020 under the Trio presidency of Austria, Romania and Finland* from. This revision should be based on the lessons learned from the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020, the preparations of Cohesion policy post-2020, and the follow-up of the Europe 2020 Strategy. A revision of the TA 2020 should be informed by a long-term territorial scenario and visioning process involving relevant stakeholders from all sectors and levels of government.

The *pathway document is an “open source document”* to be further developed, updated or complemented, and it will gain life by being used and transferred into action by the European institutions, national and regional governments, local authorities and all stakeholders and actors active to promote territorial development and cohesion in Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the study “Place-Based Territorially Sensitive and Integrated Approach” (Zaucha & Świątek, 2013), the study “Territorial Agenda 2020 put in practice: Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of Cohesion Policy by a place-based approach” (CSIL, 2015), or the study “Local and Regional Partners Contributing to Europe 2020: Multi-level governance in support of Europe 2020” (Spatial Foresight, 2015).