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## Macro-regions and the European Union: the Role of Cohesion Policy



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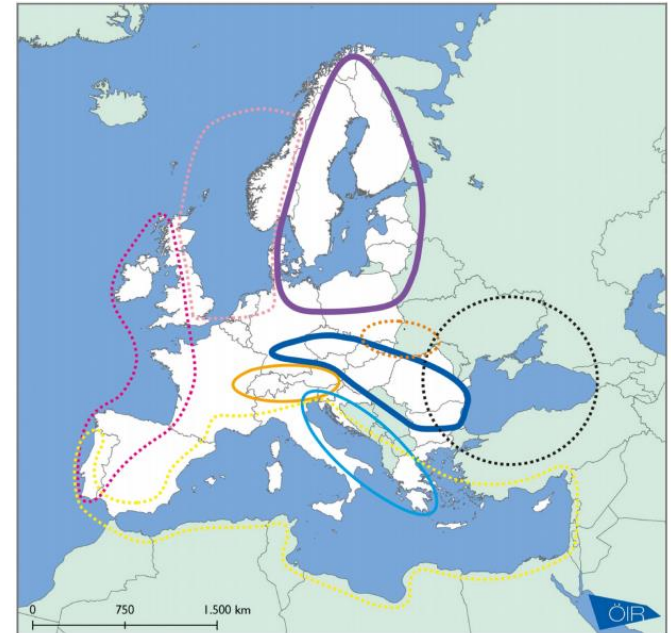
- Academic and policy debate
- The policy environment
- Cohesion policy programmes in Macro-regional strategies
  - Strategic and thematic focus
  - Financial resources
  - Coherence and coordination
  - Flexibility and inclusiveness
  - Governance
- Conclusions

- ‘Functional regions’ and ‘place-based policy making’ (Barca et al. 2012)
- Regional territorial capital
- ‘Spatial justice’ (Doucet 2008)
- ‘Territorial cohesion’ (CEC 2008).

- Macro-regional strategies a next step in European Territorial Cooperation
- 25 years of experience
- Congested policy arena



- Many regions and countries
- Broad thematic focus
- Three Nos – hinder or blessing?
  - No new institutions
  - No new legislation
  - No new funding
- Member State driven but strong role of EU institution



- Macro regional strategies are embedded in Cohesion policy programmes
  - Common Strategic Framework and Partnership Agreement
  - Regulations on ETC include reference to macro-regions
  - Inclusion provisions for enhancing capacity
  - Operational programmes
- Result orientation in 2014-20
  - Larger scale projects with greater impact
  - Provide links between funding streams
- Challenges
  - Timing issues
  - Partial relevance for programmes
  - Thematic concentration



- Cohesion policy provides a source of funding (particularly INTERREG B)
- Decline of 8.4 % overall budget  
Cohesion policy (€324 billion)
- ETC/INTERREG budget relatively small



- Mutual benefits
  - Readily available funding instrument
  - Increase visibility and reach state actors
- Lack of alignment between structural funds and strategies in 2007-13
  - Lack of readiness to engage in strategic dialogue
  - Programmes operate in a bubble
- Focus on policy coherence in 2014-20
  - Contribution to Europe 2020
  - Contribution Cohesion policy programmes artificial





- Inclusive partnerships
  - Consensual approach (conferences and consultations)
  - High level commitment and bottom up
  - Partnership approach
- Flexible geographies
  - Macro-regions have flexible borders
  - Cohesion policy programmes more rigid



- Three levels of government
  - High level (Member States, Council, and Commission honest broker)
  - National Contact points (senior administrative level)
  - Expert steering groups (thematic and horizontal priorities)
- Governance challenges
  - Top-down vs bottom up
  - Bilateral vs regional cooperation
- Implications of the three Nos
  - Lack of ownership and professionalism
  - Lack of resources requires balance between coordination and administrative burden
- Increased role for transnational cooperation programmes?



- Cohesion programmes are more than a source of funding for macro-regional strategies
- But also clear challenges of integrating cohesion policy with macro-regional approaches
  - Budget constraints
  - Involvement of external partners
  - Lack of day-to-day management of strategies

Particularly transnational programmes can play an important role and address some of the challenges

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Thank you!

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