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TERRITORIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT TO IMPROVE THE VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION OF EU POLICIES: ACTOR ORIENTED APPROACH OF EATIA

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Abstract

The instruments of the new financial perspective of the EU emphasize adaptation to local context as well as horizontal and vertical integration into wider objectives of territorial development, such as low-carbon footprint, urban environment quality, sustainable mobility, and social inclusion. “Smart development” is therefore mainly about achieving the integration and smart management must be able to monitor and evaluate the effects of policies and projects on a variety of social objectives. The European Commission uses the procedure of Impact Assessment for anticipating and preventing the negative impacts of its policies, but this procedure is not well applicable in a multi-level context and not suitable to ensure vertical and horizontal integration of policies.

This presentation will introduce an approach for Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA), as developed within the EATIA project (ESPON And TIA) and tested on 4 EU directives in three involved countries (Great Britain, Portugal and Slovenia). The presented approach is in particular intended for national and regional administrations in EU member states to inform their positions during the negotiation of European draft directives as well as to support the transposition of the EU regulation in member states with best synergies and least negative impacts. On the local level, the municipal governments could use it in preparing their sustainable urban strategies.

Contrary to prevailing efforts around the TIA, led by the academic and research communities and focusing on the (quantitative) methods and tools (ESPON, 2004, ESPON, 2005a; ESPON, 2005b, ESPON, 2006; Camagni, 2006), this project shifts the focus to governance and process issues of the TIA, aiming to provide a simple, pragmatic, and ‘policy-maker friendly’ tool which is highly adaptable to different policy contexts in member states. The approach divides the TIA process into four main stages: screening, scoping, assessment, and evaluation. Most of the work was done in the workshop discussions supported by tools such as logical chains, check lists, matrices, and maps. The rationale, methodology and the results will be presented using the example of the Directive 2010/31 on energy efficiency of buildings as implemented in Slovenia.

As the directive was not yet fully operational at the time of the project, the assessment was done as an ex-ante manner. The potential direct and indirect impacts were identified in stakeholder workshops using the logical chain as a support tool. The Directive was divided into six measures and territorial impacts were described by

33 selected indicators covering economic, environmental, social, and governance aspects of territorial development. The territorial unit of observation was NUTSIII, represented by 12 development regions in Slovenia. These were clustered in 3 groups according to their characteristics relevant for the objectives of the Directive. The evaluation of impacts was done on a multi level scale, using the objectives of the Territorial Agenda (TA, 2011) as a frame of reference for the EU level, the Strategy of Territorial Development of Slovenia (SDSS, 2004) for the national level; and the Land Use Plan for the city Municipality of Novo mesto on the local. The results of testing of the proposed TIA framework have shown that the directive performs overall positive as its impacts on urban development will be generally positive, with some variations among the measures of the Directive. Impacts on social, economic, and environmental aspects of territorial cohesion are expected to be moderately positive, while governance impacts are evaluated as negative. However, a close up of the evaluation as performed across governance levels and territorial units brought more structured information. The territorial differentiation of impacts could be found for the economic impacts, which will be more intensive in the regions and settlements with a larger number of buildings in need of renewal. Social and environmental impacts are distributed more evenly (and positive) across the regions, while governance and administration impacts have scored negative in all three groups of regions. The low territorial differentiation of impacts could be due to the dispersed type of settlement in Slovenia, lacking big metropolitan regions. When evaluated against existing territorial cohesion objectives on three different governance levels (EU, national, and local); the results disclose more variation among impacts. The most outstanding is the objective encouraging *integrated development*, where impacts are evaluated between neutral to negative on the EU level, while similar objectives on the national level (*rational and effective spatial development*) are considered to be positively affected.

Effective knowledge support for the unpredictable political process with limited time and resources demands simple and robust methods and easily manageable tools (Zonneveld & Waterhout 2009; Fischer et al. 2012). The presented results of testing the EATIA approach provide arguments where simplifications could, and where they should not be made. The majority of the existing TIA approaches are very rigorous in terms of data collection and processing and simplistic in the synthesis phase by applying (arithmetic) aggregation of the results and/or single level evaluation. We argue for a “slim” approach in the data processing and collection phase, focusing on key issues and using qualitative approaches. On the other hand, more resources should be allocated for the synthesis and evaluation phases, avoiding aggregation across topics (environment, economy, society, governance), territorial units (eg. NUTS2 or NUTS3) and governance levels (EU, national, regional/local). The application of a multi-level TIA requires active involvement of representatives from different governance levels. Whilst this is likely to yield diverging results, it would contribute to the main TIA objective, namely to tailor EU policies to national and sub-national needs and recognizing policies as being place-focused (Cars et al. 2002; Cashmore et al. 2009). Intensive involvement of the national stakeholders in the ESPON program, such as in the case of the EATIA project, would help to increase their awareness of TIA and support for using it in the policy making processes on all levels.

Keywords: territorial impact assessment, multi-level governance, vertical and horizontal integration, EU Directives, smart urban development

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