

VASAB Non-Paper, 7 Nov 2006

Comments to “The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union” - A first input from the VASAB Stakeholders` Conference in Warsaw, 6-7 Nov 2006

A selection of most important comments. Remarks more in detail and Summary of all remarks from the VASAB Stakeholder`s Conference will be send to the drafting team of the document.

Introduction

1. VASAB Stakeholder`s Conference welcomes the document as an important contribution to the development of EU policies. More concrete and developed comments will be sent within short, in order to contribute in a constructive way to this important process.

General comments

2. We believe that the document would benefit from highlighting the main messages of the document in a clear and concise way as they are well founded and important.
3. Further, it would be highly valuable to formulate the added value of territorial development policies, thus making the document more accessible and convincing to target groups less familiar with spatial planning.
4. The document could also more clearly identify inherent contradictions, e.g. between a focus on metropolitan areas and a widened gap to smaller cities or urban-rural interaction and the risk of urban sprawl.

Specific comments

5. The importance of EU`s neighbouring countries to the east, not least the Russian Federation, should be taken into account, e.g. in areas such as energy, transport etc.
6. The document would gain from treating sea basins similar to land areas, e.g. as a common resource and in need of instruments and policies to accommodate all stakeholders. (Necessity of integrated maritime policy including sea-use planning and management)
7. It would be of great interest to regional development if the document could elaborate on transnational cooperation areas and their potential for transnational territorial development. The Baltic Sea Region could serve as a concrete illustration of such cooperation areas, contributing to the understanding of these potentials.
8. The document should reflect in a better way the decisive influence of private stakeholders on territorial development. This is especially valid when addressing investments, the emergence of clusters and the position of cities.
9. The chapter on transport should also address the potential of sea transport (Motorways of the sea), and include argumentation for the importance for the sustainability of the choice of transport mode for passengers and cargo.
10. The social dimension of the sectors addressed should better be taken into account, e.g. the importance of basic services, the social context behind innovation, equal opportunities etc.