

Spatial Planning Approach: An Efficient Pattern for Accessing Territorial Sustainable Development

Case Study: European Spatial Planning

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Abstract: Sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development requires improvement in social, economic and environment dimensions of development and shift in approaches using natural source, investment management, technology and institutions and organizations to meet the needs of present and future generations simultaneously.

On the other side, spatial planning is a kind of planning dealing with land or territory and to be applied in different levels of national, regional and local. It is worth to know that there is a reciprocal relationship between sustainable development and spatial planning. Spatial planning brings integration in different levels so it is a suitable tool to achieve sustainable development. Spatial planning integrates sectorial policies from different organization and administrations. This article tries to answer this question that how spatial planning could be effective to achieve sustainable development.

In this regard, this article tries to discuss this issue with considering the visions of Europe Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) and Europe Sustainable Development Strategy goals.

Keywords: Integration, Spatial Planning, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Spatial Development

Introduction

Sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, in other words, better quality of life for everyone. Sustainable development is an inclusive concept that creates a win-win strategy from all economic, social and environmental in spatial context. As we know, sustainability is not gain by policy making, but whole the community should be engaged with it in their daily life. A healthy and balanced community is a one in which all its members are able to provide solutions for life. Sustainable development needs to have comprehensive look at spatial and timely dimension. The role of spatial planning in sustainability is back to 1990's with 21 Agenda in which emphasize on local authorities in sustainable development.

As sustainable development requires co-ordination and cooperation of all levels of community, this article chose the European Union case. European territory consist of different culture so decision making should be done in different levels and requires trans-borders policy making and all decision should be taken integrated for whole territory. So, it is a good case to study and spatial planning.

EU is an multilevel institution and includes many government which are cooperate with each other but have no complete control on development process. This means that this country should take some decisions that are not compatible with their preferences. Therefore, trans-nationality leads to integration between countries. Many territorial relations goes beyond the national borders and needs sort of cooperation in trans-national level.

The main goals of EU is global competition, cope with climate change which only a spatial approach could be better coordinate with less negative effects. It could be said spatial planning is a key instrument for creating a long-term and suitable framework for socio-economic development both within and between countries. Its main role is to achieve integration between different sectors such as housing, transportation, energy and industry and to improve national and local systems of urban and rural development and taking into account environmental considerations.

Spatial planning subordinates regulations and development. As a regulatory mechanism, the government (at local, regional and national level) has to approve its activities; as a development mechanism, the government has to provide the necessary tools such as infrastructures, services, orientation to urban development, preservation of natural resources and create incentive for investment. Spatial planning creates more opportunity for changes but the success depends on how appropriate local actions and how to engage communities.

The overall objectives of spatial planning can be summarized as follows:

- (a) Promote territorial cohesion through a more balanced social and economic development of regions, and improved competitiveness;
- (b) Encourage development generated by urban functions and improve the relationship between the town and countryside;
- (c) Promote more balanced accessibility;
- (d) Develop access to information and knowledge;
- (e) Reduce environmental damage;
- (f) Enhance and protect natural resources and natural heritage;
- (g) Enhance cultural heritage as a factor for development;
- (h) Develop energy resources while maintaining safety;
- (i) Encourage high-quality, sustainable tourism;
- (j) Limit the impact of natural disasters. [1]

Spatial planning creates strong and predictable conditions for development and so has investment, economic, social and environmental benefits. Therefore, spatial planning is considered as an important lever to promote sustainable development and improve quality of life. As well as, as said before it creates a long-term framework for development and coordinated policies in various sectors.

Materials and methods

The method of this article is documentary. To understand how sustainable development is expressed in spatial planning framework in two important documents related to sustainable development and spatial planning in Europe have been examined. The first is "Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS), 15/16 June 2006" and the next "European Spatial Development Perspective."

Results And Discussion

Sustainable development of Europe's history goes back almost to Agenda 21, an important document that in 1992 committed all members' countries to have sustainable development strategy. In 1997 sustainable development became a fundamental objective of the EU when it was included in the Treaty of Amsterdam as an overarching objective of EU policies. The first EU Sustainable Development Strategy was adapted at Gothenburg Summit in June 2001 and in 2006 European Commission published the revised sustainable development strategy.

This strategy is composed of two main parts. The first part proposed objectives and policy measures to tackle a number of key unsustainable trends while the second part, called for a new approach to policy-making that ensures the EU's economic, social and environmental policies mutually reinforce each other.

The overall aim of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy is to identify and develop actions to enable the EU to achieve improvement of quality of life through the creation of sustainable communities able to manage and use resources efficiently, able to tap the ecological and social innovation potential of the economy and in the end able to ensure prosperity, environmental protection and social cohesion.

The seven main key objectives of Sustainable Development Strategy are as follows:

- Climate change and clean energy
- Sustainable transport
- Sustainable consumption & production
- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Public Health
- Social inclusion, demography and migration
- Global poverty and sustainable development challenges

The Sustainable Development Strategy should be considered integrating economic, environmental and social issues. Sustainable strategy should coordinate the priorities and actions at all local, regional and national levels and also Europe territory. Stockholders should be involved in the sustainable strategy development process.

In the process of sustainable development, there are some factors that should be considered. Development trends are clearly communicate with each other and should be followed in sectorial policies in an interconnected framework. For example, climate change is a multi-dimensional work and relates both to energy policy as well as transportation in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Sustainable development requires international cooperation on some issues such as public health, climate change. So to achieve this goal it is necessary to use an efficient tool.

As noted earlier, spatial planning because of its nature and its approach to integrate issues can be a useful tool for achieving sustainable development. Here is going to pursue the sustainable objective in Europe Spatial Development Perspective:

In the process of planning paradigm shift in Europe towards spatial planning one of the documents prepared in the context of sustainable development goals is Europe Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) which was adopted in 1999 by 15 members. This document is an unofficial and non-binding. It is not a comprehensive plan. Although, it is described as a framework for member states but not involved in their decision making process. But, to some extent, it influence and power in the political convergence. [2]

Europe Spatial Development Perspective is considered a significant progress in the future development European territory. This document is an evidence of the willingness of member states to reach an agreement on land use and balanced and sustainable growth in Europe and to achieve a standard that has been set in Europe treaty.

The aim of the Europe Spatial Development Perspective is sustainable development at Europe's territory. This document is set based on the objective of the Europe Union, the balanced and sustainable development, particularly by strengthening the economic and social organization. This means that the coordinating of the economic and social needs for spatial development with cultural and ecological functions and thus contributes to the sustainable and balanced development of the territory on a larger scale.

Spatial Development Perspective Europe is composed of two parts. The first part is to achieve balanced and sustainable development of the territory. Spatial development policies in this document are not standard because it must be compatible with cultural diversity and quality of life of the inhabitants of Europe.

This framework allows expanding the visions from sectorial political action to focusing on the territory. One of its objectives is to achieve economic growth and reduce unemployment. In fact, combat unemployment is one of the solutions proposed to raise the GDP and the fight against poverty. Spatial development policies encourage sustainable development in Europe through a balanced spatial structure. The proposed objectives in this framework are followed at national, regional and local levels.

The framework follows three major objectives: 1) economic and social integration, 2) protection of natural resources and cultural heritage, 3) balanced competition within Europe. These three objectives can be called spatial sustainable development.

Since uneven development and different policies have different effects on local and regional communities and achieve a balanced society in Europe will not happen automatically; therefore, it is necessary to integrate different spatial actions for stability and balanced development of Europe.

The following spatial guidelines are set in ESPD to achieve this:

1) Development of a Balanced and Polycentric Urban System and a New Urban-Rural Relationship

Polycentric is a key concept in EU spatial planning system. This expression means some "urban centers" contributes to spatial developments. As have been noted in CEMAT (Committee of senior officials of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning) Resolution N°1 (2006) on "Polycentric development: promoting competitiveness, enhancing cohesion" indicates that polycentric is an umbrella theme that encompasses different conceptual debates.[3] A polycentric spatial structure refers to the morphology of the settlement system. It assumes that a plurality of urban agglomerations of similar size exist at the various levels of the urban hierarchy. as opposed to situations where a single large urban center dominates each level and even eliminates the presence of intermediary levels. The principle of polycentric spatial structure and development can be applied at the various geographical scales, from the European to the regional one.

This guideline leads to be taken more into consideration metropolitan regions and cities outside the core area of the EU. This requires a balanced and sustainable development at local and regional level. In this way, a network of cities form that even the furthest are going along with development.

In intermediate scale, polycentric leads to a balanced settlement system with growth benefiting to several metropolitan areas of various size. At regional level, polycentric has to ensure that growth and development benefits also to medium-sized and smaller towns.

Polycentric of settlement systems is considered to favor sustainable territorial development as well as the reduction of territorial imbalances.

2) Securing Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge

This constitutes to effective communication of urban centers and peripheral areas. Therefore, in addition to physical accessibility through transport infrastructure, connectivity through advanced telecommunication systems contributes to improving the intangible accessibility of areas. Accessibility depends upon the extension and quality of transport infrastructure and services. The progress of telecommunication systems has created a new form of intangible accessibility which plays a significant part in territorial development potentialities. As noted before, sustainable development requires cross borders policies between geographically contiguous areas; transnational policies in multinational space and interregional policies between contiguous areas across Europe territory. So, cooperation and integration across the territory is the main objective of European Union. Therefore, an overall transportation network which gateways points are determined on it could contribute to achieve this goal across Europe territory.

3) Wise Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage

Natural and cultural heritage is considered an asset. Many European organizations believe that spatial planning plays an important role in the conservation and sustainable use of these resources. Sustainable development is a process of change in which the utilization of resources should be consistent with the needs of the community and future potential. Thus, economic and environmental considerations are not in conflict with each other. Through spatial planning, development goes in a direction that is consistent with environmental considerations and economic objectives.

To achieve balanced sustainable development these guidelines should be followed consistently in all regions of the Europe Union. Also, these objectives should be pursued by the European institutions and governments and administrative authorities at national, regional and local levels.

Conclusion

Although the ESDP is not a binding document, but member states are calling for its long-term results. Coordination and integration features of spatial approach avoid different conflating actions. Spatial coordination plays an important role in achieving territory integration, means:

- 1- the planning for the expansion of transnational transport infrastructure and the Community's transport policy,
- 2- measures for ecological restoration, in particular, of old industrial zones, and
- 3- measures for structural adjustments in rural regions.

Similarly, cross-border and transnational coordination of spatial development contributes to the integration process of large area. Thus, the techniques of coordination become a key element that can overcome the problems and pursue the goals of ESDP and sustainable development in EU.

So, while different trends are in challenges to achieve sustainable development, Sustainable Spatial Development goals should be lead to reduce disparities, supporting balanced polycentric development, measures to revitalize declining settlements, increasing the efficiency of transport and energy networks, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, protection and improvement of the natural and made environment, to balance and maintain natural and cultural resources, investment in urban areas with the involvement of all stakeholders.

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